

HAWAII'S SBDC SUCCESS STORY - O'AHU CENTER



Holly and Ash Harding founded their first company, Bubble Shack, in the kitchen of their home. They devoted much effort to make it a success, and ultimately had a production facility, a warehouse and a retail location on O'ahu's North Shore. They developed sales channels with some 500 wholesale accounts, 3 distributors in Japan and Korea, and robust online sales. After an intense run of 10 years, they realized that this success had come at the cost of an unhealthy lifestyle. They decided to sell the company and after a 1-year break, started a new premium, high quality skincare company called O'o Hawai'i that focuses on integrative health and beauty. They now live what the company promotes: a balanced and healthy lifestyle.



They created a line of 7 products priced from \$80 to \$130, including 7 topical offerings, a Gua Sha tool and oral supplement called Hawai'i Superfood Beauty Boost. The bird-related product names stem from the brand's reference to O'ō, an extinct bird that once populated Hawai'i. For product ingredients, O'o Hawai'i relies on an array of thriving Hawaiian plants and nuts. The brand is focused on direct-to-consumer distribution and a careful selection of prestigious retailers.

After less than one year in business, O'o products are being carried by Neiman-Marcus, Duty Free Shops, and Urban Outfitters among others, and sales in Canada, Japan, Macau, Germany and Russia have begun. The company won all three judges' prizes as well as the Audience Choice Award at Deal Appeal, the investment-focused live learning competition that capped off BeautyX Capital, during Indie Beauty Media Group's BeautyX Summit of 2018.

Holly and Ash credit the help they received from the O'ahu SBDC with their first company in creating a distribution agreement and and later with guidance on the Purchase Agreement for the sale of

the company as important elements of their success. The O'ahu SBDC continues to work with them in their new endeavor, assisting with the approval of bank financing as well as for qualifying for state-sponsored exporting and manufacturing initiatives.

"We consider the O'ahu SBDC to be one of our invaluable consultants. Joe and the SBDC have provided guidance, feasibility analysis, coaching and advice for business plan creation, contractual agreements, SBA lending, networking, growth/vision/strategy and importantly, encouragement. Thank you SBDC!", said Holly Harding, CEO.