

BOSS

Corporate Catering

A Success Story Written By Angela Clements Cattell

Crystal Kirby Laiosa grew up destined to be an integral part of the food industry. Her family owned and operated both a Pasta and Butcher Shop in Brooklyn, New York dating back four generations. Her father graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in 1977 in Highland Park, New York and worked as a chef in some of New York City's finest restaurants long before coming to Ohio including the Waldorf Astoria, The Tavern on the Green and the Grand Hyatt. While growing up, Crystal enjoyed working alongside her Dad as he created delicious food masterpieces for their entire family. She knew then that she wanted a career preparing mouthwatering cuisine just like her family once she reached adulthood.



Some of Boss Corporate Catering's many desserts.

Crystal first met with Jim Gray, a counselor for the SBDC in Painesville, Ohio, in May of 2013 after attending an On Base Start-Up Business Training Class that Mr. Gray instructs for the Lake/Geauga SBDC. Although the class was very informative, she still had many questions on starting her business. Crystal needed further help with many areas such as researching industry trends, obtaining the correct licensing/permits, getting appropriate/affordable business insurance, building her website, finding loans and putting together a business plan.

In Crystal's first counseling session with Mr. Gray, they discussed some industry trends, failure rates, and lower risk options. Jim Gray guided Crystal on preparing a business plan and focusing on her financials. He introduced her to SBDCNet for research and to obtain a projections spreadsheet. Mr. Gray also advised Crystal to work with the local Library on market research to help prepare projections and a start-up budget with the intent of determining the feasibility and scope of the business.

In a follow up counseling session, Mr. Gray and Ms. Laiosa reviewed, analyzed and discussed the data received from the SBDCNet research after conducting an online market survey. Crystal was overwhelmed with the information and realized she needed more data to properly prepare financial projections. Jim Gray provided additional instructions on financial analysis, comparisons and determining net income.

Eventually, Crystal moved to Nashville where she worked as a Catering Manager for Tees Fireside. While in Nashville, she met her husband, Don. She loved her new life, but, just like her entrepreneurial family, she yearned to start her own food business. She started catering on her own for a year in Nashville, however she realized something was missing. Crystal wanted to be closer to her family in Ohio where she was ready to start a full blown catering business. With her husband's consent, Crystal and her husband moved back to Ohio to begin her true destiny. She just needed some direction on getting started. That's when Crystal discovered the Small Business Development Center.

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In the months to follow, Mr. Gray continued to advise Ms. Laiosa on private contracts, regulatory items, budgeting and marketing. “Jim had the answers, and if he didn’t, he knew where to find them, said Crystal. Jim (Gray) helped me set up everything for my business except find my kitchen.” She was amazed at the countless resources the SBDC had available or could refer.

Beyond the business help, Jim Gray goes the extra mile to be truly supportive. “Jim inspired me to work hard and to have the will.”

Now, a year after starting her business, BOSS Corporate Catering, Crystal has reached the success of which she has only dreamed. “I am not just happy to own my business, I experience pure joy doing what I do,” expressed Ms. Laiosa.

Crystal operates out of the Hungarian Culture Club in Fairport Harbor, Ohio where she rents the kitchen for her catering business. Crystal’s husband, Don, handles all the bookkeeping. Additionally, Don created the acronym ‘BOSS’ which stands for Built On Superior Service. Crystal’s father is also deeply involved in the business and offers his daily input.

When BOSS Corporate Catering first opened, Crystal mostly catered for graduation parties. After becoming part of the local Chamber of Commerce, she made further contacts and began doing luncheons for various businesses. It wasn’t long after that she opened up her business to include weddings.



Crystal Kirby Laiosa, owner of Boss Corporate Catering, shown here preparing food.

This past summer, BOSS Corporate Catering, was booked solid catering weddings. Her business is doing so well and attracting so much attention that Crystal has been asked to teach classes at the prestigious Pairings, Ohio’s Wine and Culinary Center in Geneva. She has also become Pairing’s premiere caterer. In addition, Crystal will be catering, teaching cooking classes and/or providing catering information at many upcoming events including the annual Grape Jamboree in Geneva, Ohio and a top-notch Bridal Show in November. She has also joined the Premier Wedding Collection Network to continue building her business contacts and expand her business even further. BOSS Corporate Catering will also be catering for various upcoming Christmas parties and luncheons. Crystal’s customer list includes impressive businesses such as the Progressive Insurance Corporation headquartered in Mayfield, Ohio.

Besides Crystal’s husband working with the business, Ms. Laiosa has also hired a part time assistant to help. Crystal has every intention of building her staff as her business continues to grow

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quickly.

As a successful small business owner, Crystal advises other entrepreneurs to “have a good support system in place before you start (your business). Research, research, research before you even throw a dollar into it. Definitely get help from the Small Business Development Center. Jim Gray from the SBDC made a mountain seem like a molehill.”



Check out Boss Corporate Catering at

www.bosscorporatecatering.com