



community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

Where Are They Now? Talking Threads

“The CDP has just been a great sounding board and is great for instilling confidence.”
Carol Hayward, Owner & Manager, Talking Threads



When Carol Hayward bought Talking Threads, a custom embroidery business, sixteen years ago, it had been run on a part-time basis out of a storefront on Brackett Road in Eastham. It is now a growing business that has expanded to include silk screening and is operated out of Hayward's home.

Hayward is a CDP regular, participating in numerous workshops, taking advantage of technical assistant mentoring opportunities and most recently applying for a small business professional services grant.

Hayward's business plan was and still is primarily driven by networking. She began at local Chambers of Commerce and then initiated a long-standing membership with a local chapter of Business Networking International or BNI. It is here she established her robust customer base from local businesses, largely in the trades, retail establishments and restaurants.

Hayward first came into contact with the CDP through her networking efforts. “I met Pam (Andersen) through the BNI chapter and I shared the challenges that I was having establishing a business,” says Hayward. That's when Pam suggested Hayward participate in the CDP's Smart Start workshop. The course helped Hayward assess her strengths as an entrepreneur, analyze her products, market and customers and hone her business plan.

A couple of years later and her business firmly established, Hayward was ready to take Talking Threads to the next level. In 2016 she participated in the CDP's Grow Smart workshop, which is targeted to businesses looking to take a strategic look at how to refresh and improve their operations. The course provided her with the analysis and feedback that she needed to grow her business. “The course helped me focus and set goals,” says Hayward.

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Hayward finished her show room, purchased a third machine and hired another part-time employee. “I needed to do this to get my business out of being ‘just local’,” she says “The courses are great as they help you to see that other people are struggling with the same things as you are.”

After ten plus years, all that hard work is paying off. The majority of her clients are in the trades - Cape Associates and Shepley Wood Products have been customers for years. And business continues to grow. In December she picked up accounts in Falmouth and Sandwich.



Like most employers on Cape, Hayward struggles with staffing. Finding people and finding the right employee for the job is a challenge. “Cape Cod is a tough place to own a business,” she says. “It is a real challenge to hire the right person.” Hayward says she is hoping to hire someone by the end of May. “I am looking for someone who can run the machine, run the storefront, take orders, and help with billing.” She realized this might be a lofty goal so she took a Human Resource workshop at the CDP this past winter about hiring the “right fit.”

This spring Hayward applied to the CDP for a Small Business Professional Services Grant to help pay for a web designer and was approved. “My website is holding me back – it’s difficult to work with and doesn’t drive traffic. I need to address this if I want to grow.”

She will continue to work with the CDP to stay on track. “The CDP has just been a great sounding board and has great for instilling confidence,” notes Hayward. “Knowing that if I screw up no one at the CDP is going to judge me. You really go see them first.”