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Senator Cardin, in July of 2017 I purchased Jean Peterson Design—a graphic design company that had been in business for 20 years. Having worked at Jean Peterson Design for nearly 19 of those 20 years, I recognized there was opportunity to grow the business to something more than just a graphic design company. My vision was to create a full-service marketing agency that in the short-term would focus on growing our business within our Frederick County market and mid-long-term would need to grow outside Frederick County to achieve it's greatest success.

During the first two years in business, Postern would grow to include copywriting, press management, digital marketing such as web design, search engine optimization and social media management and execution. However, with the diversification of services came the overwhelming need to provide strategy and the development of comprehensive marketing plans and budget that would help our clients coordinate their marketing efforts to see better results. During this time, we renamed ourselves to Postern as part of our own marketing strategy.

Within the first year, Postern maintained all existing clients and began to see the growth of clients using services beyond graphic design. Now entering year three, we have more than 8 clients who use our full breadth of services, 22 who use more services than just design, and 24 others who still rely on Postern for soley design services.

During the acquisition of Jean Peterson Design, I utilized the internet to research the resources available to me at the City and County levels. Many of the resources I found seemed geared toward start-ups and businesses with income or needs much lower than Jean Peterson Design or significantly higher income or needs. Additionally, there appeared to be special programs for merchants, information technology companies, and bio-tech. I researched what I could find through the Frederick County Office of Economic Development, Frederick City Department of Economic Development, Frederick Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Services, Frederick Score, and others.

As Postern is connected directly to several of these offices, as we assist with their marketing, I was aware of some of the programs available but was needing the most assistance to ensure I was setting up all the proper business acounts accurately.

It was through my own relationships that I found the most support. An accountant to set up my business with the state and local agencies, a bookkeeper for weekly needs, a lawyer to contract the acquisition appropriately and client contracts, a brother who is a partner in a mergers and acquisitions company for the valuation, and my father who has extensive experience running his own business in the state of Maryland but on a much larger scale including launching the company public on NASDAQ. Additionally, I have hired a business coach to help with goal setting, sales and leadership training as well as staff professional development. The coach has worked with me since day one and continues to do so on a monthly basis.

Over the years, Jean Peterson Design used the resources of Frederick County Workforce Services to assist in the hiring of team members, who today are still employed by Postern. From time-to-time when I have a question related to doing business in the City or County, I reach out to my personal contacts at both the City and County Economic Development Offices. Lastly, Postern and its staff continually take advantage of training programs, networking events, and existing relationships to inform and help guide our company growth.

If there are resources available for businesses such as Postern, they aren't well promoted. Registering a business through the State should trigger ongoing promotions of resources for business owners. Business owners are busy people so those promotions could come in various forms such as email and mail or when other information is mailed. Simple reminders are very helpful.

Specifically, I would like to see resources for service businesses in the areas of planning, corporate structure, growth, sales and leadership training, human resource management, and workforce training.

In conclusion, since July 2017, I am proud to say I have grown my staff by two members, to a total of seven, and this summer we are employing our first paid intern. Finally we are also beginning to realize our growth outside of Frederick County having recently acquired a contract in Howard County.

Postern's growth has been steady and planned. My goals are for Postern to be a regionally known marketing agency in the State of Maryland, with the aspirations to at least double our staff and triple our income.