

Dod Installations

2019 WSU Existing Business

As business owners, Wilt and Tina Dod have witnessed many changes in the housing market over the past 28 years.

Since they first opened Dod Installations Inc.—their stove and fireplace business in Wichita, Kansas—the market has hit its highs and lows. With that, the demand for their fireplaces and stoves and other hearth products has followed suit.

In 2016, business was going strong at Dod Installations Inc. and had been on a steady growth trend for years, keeping them busy. Then the next year's predictions came out. The 2017 Wichita Housing Forecast, published by the Wichita State University Center for Real Estate, predicted Wichita home sales to rise 5.1% and home prices to increase 3.5% over 2016 numbers. For Wichita, it would be the sixth straight year of growth following the housing bubble and the housing bust.

With bigger growth predictions in front of them, how would they handle an even busier 2017? Could they successfully manage the growth and the many challenges and growing pains that came with it?

They needed some ideas, some help, and some guidance—a sounding board from the outside.

For the Dods, finding help to navigate the approaching year would come from an unlikely source—the Wichita Area Builders Association's luncheon. As longtime members of WABA, they had attended "lunch and learns" for years. At one event Frank Choriego, a business advisor with the Kansas SBDC at WSU, delivered the keynote message. "Frank had a special

way of connecting with the group. We quickly related to him and his unique understanding of business ownership," shared Tina. After his presentation, Wilt asked for Frank's card, and the Dods reached out to Frank for a meeting.

In January of 2017, the Dods began advising at the SBDC with Choriego. "We



were excited to meet with him on a one-on-one basis to discuss our continued business growth and identify solutions and ideas for handling the challenges and opportunities that were associated with our business growth," shared Tina.

Over the next several months, the Dods met and counseled with Frank on a regular basis, going over specifics of their business and asking for Frank's insight.

How has the SBDC connection worked for Dod Installations?

They weathered 2017 with their best year of sales, profits, and growth since they started their business in 1990.

"We planned and orchestrated solutions together that have enabled us to further increase our revenues—as well as improving our management skills and expanding our horizons and vision in the areas of future planning concepts," said Tina. "Specifically, we have experienced growth and improvement reflected in our financials—but more intangibly, we feel we've become better leaders in our business with our employees

and stronger as individuals. We have experienced a greater cohesiveness within our business team because we've implemented targeted ideas to improve communications with customers, as well as with our team members—in turn, strengthening the team spirit within our organization."

What does the future hold for Dod Installations?

The year 2018 is tracking to be stronger than 2017—and the Dods are expecting an even better year for 2019.

Congratulations, Dod Installations Inc., on your incredible growth. And thank you for allowing us to be part of the process.

*Kansas SBDC Advisor
Frank Choriego, WSU*