

2007 Emerging Business of the Year



“The Small Business Development Center was very helpful in terms of assisting with cash flow projections and a business plan. There were numerous details they advised me on and they also suggested some lending options. Their on-going help has been great!”

Beth Tully, Owner



**Wichita State University
Kansas Small Business
Development Center**

Metropolitan Complex, 29th and Oliver
1845 Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260

Phone (316) 978-3193
Fax (316) 978-3647
ksbdc@wichita.edu

Marcia Stevens
Regional Director
marcia.stevens@wichita.edu

Frank Choriego
Assistant Director
frank.choriego@wichita.edu

Ken Elliott
Consultant
ken.elliott@wichita.edu

Linda Sutton
Consultant
lsutton@cloud.edu

Name of Business:	Cocoa Dolce Artisan Chocolates
Owner:	Beth Tully, Master Chocolatier
Nature of Business	Premium artisan chocolates & confections, gelato and coffees
City:	Wichita
County:	Sedgwick
Phone:	316 - 866 - 2906
Web Site:	www.CocoaDolce.com
Business Structure:	LLC
Business Began:	October 2005
Employees at Start Up:	3
Employees in 2007:	14
Sales in 2007:	\$400,000
2008 Sales Forecast:	\$700,000
Start Up Capital:	\$125,000
Source of Initial Capital:	\$25,000 K-SBA, \$100,000-self
KSBDC Counselor:	Ken Elliott

When Beth Tully came to the WSU KSBDC to launch her dream of going into business creating the highest quality chocolates and confections, little did she realize how popular it would become. Beth states, “I live my passion by creating delicious confections in small batches using the finest chocolate and freshest ingredients from around the world. Every creation is free from preservatives and processed ingredients. Each is designed to be a sensual taste experience.”

Beth had a vision of selling her artisan creations in a trendy and comfortable atmosphere that would encourage customers to linger. The idea has worked well, but Beth is modifying the concept a bit for future stores. Additionally, Beth sees opportunities with wines and cheeses, which would compliment the core products nicely.

“Stay true to your dreams, create only quality products and services, hire good employees, get some outside feedback and perspectives and remain focused on good customer service.”

Among some of the issues that Beth notes were more problematic than she anticipated, managing working capital was probably the biggest issue. “Cash is always an issue with a new business and managing the ups and downs is tough sometimes.” Another issue that Beth addressed is limitations of time and space. Once the chocolates are made they must be stored somewhere. Beth explains, “If you’re making a few hundred chocolates that’s not a problem, but at 40 – 50 thousand chocolates per month, space becomes an issue.” Storing enough raw materials (hundreds of pounds of imported Belgium chocolate) frequently means packing the store room clear to the ceiling tiles. Lastly, website design has been somewhat of a headache. But on the positive side, Beth states Cocoa Dolce has been lucky to have truly great employees and there has been lots of community support for the business. With little direct selling, business has grown exponentially.

So what’s in the cards for this up-and-coming business? Currently Beth’s products are being considered by a nationally recognized retailer of premium foods. In addition, a national chain of grocery stores is currently sampling her products in-store. Beth states that she has her eye on a second retail location, possibly in Overland Park. Beth gives a lot of the credit for her success to others, but credit also has to be given to her high-energy, enthusiasm and her infectious smile. The sky’s the limit for this budding entrepreneur!