

# 2010 Emerging Business of the Year



## Thiessen-Elise Salon

Owner	John and Amber Klassen
Nature of Business	Salon
City	Salina
County	Saline
Phone	785-820-8220
Business Structure	Sole Proprietorship
Business Began	2009
Employees	7
KSBDC Consultant	Linda Sutton

**“The best thing about the KSBDC and Linda Sutton is their business planning and cash flow projection assistance.”**

**– Amber Klassen**



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One often hears the expression, “Where there is a will, there is a way.” In John and Amber Klassen’s case, it was more like “Where there is passion, there is a way.” Amber graduated from cosmetology school and opened a salon in LaCrosse for 5 ½ years, while John pursued a traditional business management career. But after John was offered an area supervisor position in Salina, he decided also to follow his passion and attend cosmetology school so he and his wife could team up and build a business together. This is where their journey began.

While John was still in school, they started traveling back and forth to Salina to do research. They heard about the KSBDC and contacted Linda Sutton. The Klassens attended several NCK SBDC seminars before and after their move. Linda played an integral role in helping them find resources to study the demographics of Salina. Linda’s assistance with projections was essential so that the Klassens knew exactly what it was going to take to succeed!

The Klassens’ road to success has been a very exciting adventure while still offering challenges. Thiessen-Elise Salon opened January 2009 just after the holidays with a recession on the horizon. The Klassens did not know anyone in Salina but were determined for their business to succeed. They wanted to use the uniqueness of their historic Salina downtown location to create a salon with a classic, sophisticated New York City-style look. “We wanted customers to have a real historical feel when they walked in,” Amber Klassen said.

Thiessen-Elise Salon uses traditional advertising, including a website [www.tesalon.com](http://www.tesalon.com). However, hosting and being a part of events have been a great success for the business. In 2010 the salon hosted the Pink Pumpkin Painting Party to raise awareness for breast cancer after winning the window competition in 2009. Proceeds from Cuts for a Cure were donated to the Tammy Walker Cancer Center. Thiessen-Elise Salon’s annual Fashion/Runway Show has also become a hit. Since the Klassens are passionate about what they do, it is easy to give back to others and the community.

John shared, “The best part about being an entrepreneur and having our own business is the sense of accomplishment. At the end of the day when you have helped your client achieve a new look and a new found confidence, have set a new system in place, and earned money doing it, it is very rewarding! Your passion for success must be greater than your fear of failure.”

### Secret to Success

**“One word we would use to describe the best thing about being a successful small business owner is- PASSION!”**