

Rain OR Shine Coffee House

5941 SE Division Street
Rainorshinepdx.com
Owners: Claire Teasdale & Molly Boyl

What is your business?

Our business is Rain OR Shine Coffee House. It's a neighborhood cafe focused on building community and being a hub for local gathering.

What was the most important thing you learned from the Small Business Development Center?

The program touched on so many things that we want to improve on and gave us the tools to get started. The first class we took, Lean Systems, really clinched it for us. Now we analyze the problem and think of the solution and a very smooth way to implement it. It can be really overwhelming because we have this huge to-do list; our mentor in the program helped us prioritize and triage everything. It was really beneficial for us to have that scheduled monthly check-in and her help in condensing down the materials that we learned in the courses to apply them to our business.



What was the biggest challenge you overcame during this program?

Diving into this program, we didn't know what to expect, especially since we didn't have a single business course between us when we started our business. It would have been really easy to say we don't have time even once a month. But we found that when we started going to the class, we made progress, instead of just the wheels grinding away doing the same thing every day and not going anywhere. That they were able to bring us up to speed in such a short amount of time and also leave us with so many materials to continue our education on our own was super valuable.

What are you doing differently as a result of what you learned?

We are doing many things differently. The program has pretty much impacted every aspect of this business. We feel empowered to put effort towards marketing now and a grassroots-style marketing effort has actually (seemingly) made a big difference for us!

What one or two things did you learn from your SBDC classmates?

We learned from all of our classmates. We learned that our business was "normal," that each business (and their owners) all have their strengths and weaknesses and that there's cross-over everywhere. We enjoyed speaking with folks who ran businesses that were significantly different than ours. It was cool to problem solve together. It's nice to have that community, to be around those who both work hard and inspire.

Are you growing now?

We are growing and sales are increasing. We have only been open three and a half years, and in that time we've identified ourselves as a reliable place and we are beginning to be recognized by folks outside of our immediate neighborhood area. We are not creating more jobs but we are creating more structured, consistent jobs. Each person is now working more hours, so they have an opportunity for higher tips, and they also are more in touch with what's going on here.