



SMALL BUSINESS CENTER INSIDER



This Month's Local Success Story

Snack Time Sweets | Wilmington, NC

We're kicking off the new year by spotlighting Snack Time Sweets, a local Wilmington business that transformed a sweet idea into a growing success. Their story is a reminder that with the right tools, support, and determination, small businesses can thrive right here at home.



Our Center is part of a statewide network dedicated to supporting the development and growth of small businesses. Every day, entrepreneurs across our community bring their ideas to life, proving that the spirit of free enterprise is thriving. While the path to business ownership can be challenging, our team is here to provide the resources, guidance, and support you need to turn your vision into success.

What's Inside This Issue

- Free workshops
- A featured local small business success story
- Complimentary one-on-one business counseling
- Instructor insights and practical business tips
- Motivation to help you start the year strong

"A business starts with an idea; it's success begins with a plan!"

-Director, Jerry Coleman

Free In-Person Seminar Series

TAKING THE LEAP TO KICKSTART YOUR BUSINESS VENTURE SERIES

CFCC Small Business Center | Building G

Embarking on a business journey without proper guidance can feel overwhelming. Why take the leap without the essential tools for success?

Our *Taking the Leap* program requires an application for admission! These cohorts offer an opportunity for high-potential startups and founders to network with fellow entrepreneurs, exchange ideas, and gain invaluable insights. With a focus on interactive learning, participants will receive personalized guidance from experienced instructors and guest mentors. Participants can anticipate acquiring the following resources: **Business Plan Template, Financial Projection Templates, Intellectual Property Guide, Digital Marketing Strategies, Market and Industry Insights, Startup Checklist, and more!**

Speaker: Sherri May, SBTDC Business Counselor

Co-Sponsor: CFCC Small Business Center

Fee: No Cost

Part One: January 22nd

Part Two: January 29th

Part Three: February 5th

Register online at tinyurl.com/kickstartseries

UPCOMING EVENTS

Take advantage of our free and low-cost seminars designed to help you start, manage, and grow your business. With sessions offered at convenient times, you can learn about writing a business plan, marketing your products or services, managing finances, and more all created to support your success.

Scan the QR code to register for our free in-person and virtual workshops.



FREE ONLINE WEBINARS TO SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS GROWTH

Plan Your Website Like a Pro (Online)

Wednesday, January 14th
from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Legal Structures for the Small Business Owner (Online)

Thursday, January 15th
from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM

Starting Your Small Business in North Carolina (Online)

Monday, January 26th
from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

Growing Your Small Biz Sales with Shopify (Online)

Thursday, January 29th
from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM



SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT:

SNACK TIME SWEETS

Cape Fear Community College's Small Business Center works with hundreds of local entrepreneurs each year. One of them is Sara Baker, owner and cake designer of Snack Time Sweets in Wilmington. "I've been baking since I was 18," Baker said. "I'm 37 now, so this has been a long road." Originally from a small town near Roanoke, Virginia, Baker moved to Richmond and worked in a grocery store bakery before earning her Associate Degree in Pastry Arts. She spent years in kitchens across Richmond, eventually focusing on wedding cakes and learning to trust her creative instincts. In 2020, Baker and her husband decided to make a change. They moved to Wilmington, seeing an opportunity to build a wedding cake business of her own. That decision led to Snack Time Sweets, specializing in custom cakes and desserts for weddings and events.

As her business began to take shape, Baker started looking for guidance. "I started researching free resources in the area," she said. "That's how I found the Small Business Center at Cape Fear Community College." Through the Small Business Center, Baker connected with director Jerry Coleman, who helped her think through next steps and long-term planning.

"The Small Business Center was one of the first places I went when I was trying to figure out what I needed to get off the ground," she said. "It saved me time and some potential heartache."

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Earlier this year, Baker moved Snack Time Sweets into a dedicated kitchen space in **Wilmington's Cargo District**. The space isn't a storefront. It's a small, functional kitchen designed for efficiency and growth. "I wasn't interested in taking on debt with a big bakery," she said. "I'd rather start small and grow over time." Before settling in, Baker checked back in with the Small Business Center. "When I moved into this location, I went back to Jerry just to make sure I was doing everything correctly," she said. "He helped line me up with a bookkeeper and helped me get organized." For Baker, having a place to turn when questions come up has made a difference.

Baker's business continues to grow largely through word of mouth, Instagram, and strong relationships with local wedding planners. One of her biggest clients came from a connection she made with an event planner at an open house at the **Brooklyn Arts Center**. "That really shows you how important networking is," she said. Even as demand grows, Baker is intentional about how she works. "I would much rather do quality over quantity," she said. "I'm more interested in the artistry of cake design and the interaction with clients. I like to sit down with them and talk about what they like and don't like," she said.

"It's been a long road, but I feel like I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing right now. And it feels really good."

-Sara Baker, Owner



Read the full story at www.cfcc.edu/snack-time-sweets-finds-its-fooing-in-wilmington



INSTRUCTOR INSIGHT

“Small business owners juggle so many responsibilities, and marketing often feels like one of the most confusing pieces of the puzzle. What I've seen again and again is that when you bring clarity to the way you present your business - through your website and messaging - it becomes far more effective. When people instantly understand how you can help them, they're far more likely to take action - whether that's reaching out, purchasing, or becoming loyal customers. My hope is to give business owners practical, confidence-building tools that help their marketing do what it's meant to do: generate growth and real results.”

Sue A Rachunok

Owner of Design Interventions
Certified StoryBrand Guide since 2022

Meet Sue & Unlock Free Learning Through Her Upcoming Workshops

Plan Your Website Like a Pro (Online)

Wednesday, January 14th
from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

If You're a Business Owner, Learn How to Use StoryBrand to Talk About Your Business So People Buy (Online)

Friday, January 23rd
from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Register online at tinyurl.com/cfccsbcworkshops



SMALL BUSINESS CENTER Q&A

Where and how do I get the money to start my business?

Most new small businesses are capitalized by their owner's savings and salaries, loans from family and friends and loans using automobiles, homes, or other assets as collateral. Some entrepreneurs use credit cards to finance the early months of a start-up, but this alternative can be costly and risky. Banks are the traditional source of borrowed funds. Commercial finance companies, venture capital firms, trade credit, cash value of life insurance policies, equipment leasing, and selling stock are additional sources of financing for your venture. The Small Business Administration (SBA) offers a number of financing alternatives but is most well known for its 7A Guarantee Loan. Another great SBA loan product is the Community Express Loan. Lenders will want to know how you will use the loan; how much you want to borrow; and how you will repay the loan. A well-written business plan with projected financial statements can communicate your ideas and needs to potential lenders and investors.



Business Center (SBC)
Research Information

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From Idea to Growth: Start the Year With Support

January is the ideal time to revisit your goals, explore new ideas, or take the first step toward business ownership. Whether you're launching a new venture or strengthening an existing business, the Small Business Center offers free, confidential one-on-one counseling to help you move forward with confidence.

Register for counseling today:

Have questions or want to learn more?

Contact us today!

910-362-7216

www.cfcc.edu/small-business-center

