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Starting up: New business gets going with help from a 'village'

Did you ever wonder how many people it takes to start a business?

Many have said, "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, starting a business is much like giving birth to a child.

Three years ago, we received a phone call from a man in California who was originally from Italy. He called our office because he had a proposition for us. He had a business model that would work nicely with our current business, Charge 2 Card Corp., an independent sales organization for merchant services and ATMs.

He flew to Boise to meet with us about a new idea for Americans wanting to easily and automatically rent movies. My husband and I did research on the Internet and discovered McDonald's Corp. was making the same investment into this type of equipment and naming it Redbox. For us, it developed into a business called Show 2 Go.

The birth of the name and eventually the store began with an idea and a trip to Italy to educate ourselves on the technical issues about the equipment. We spent two weeks in Italy to attend a school by the equipment's manufacturer. The manufacturer had been in business for more than 20 years and sold equipment worldwide. We were able to get through the school with the help of an interpreter. The stage was set for the return to America and our new venture.

The store was created by soliciting the help of five full-time people, including our grandson, who textured, built and painted.

The store took three full-time people and was a year in the making.

We ordered, designed and programmed all of the equipment, from the electronic locks on the entry door right up to the movie machine and the espresso equipment.

Talk about stretching yourself beyond limits of what you think you are capable of learning and doing! Whew!

Fortunately, the store opened and the learning curve started to subside. The long nights of reading manuals and checking items on the Internet were over.

Now we have a wonderful new store in Meridian that is brick-and-mortar but also linked to the Internet and controlled from our office located in Boise.

We first placed DVD movie rental boxes in the Boise area, and as the distributor for the Show 2 Go movie vending machines, we also had the capacity to set up and operate a fully automated movie rental store. Clients can enter the locked store with a credit card or a membership card.

Once inside, kids can play arcade games or buy Italian candy or popcorn from a vending machine. Parents can enjoy an espresso, cappuccino or a cold drink while they select their favorite new-release DVD movie or a video game for the kids.

The great thing about the store is that it is open 24 hours a day for the convenience of the family. Movies can be reserved online from one's home or office. We are a brand-new business in the Treasure Valley, just opening our store Nov. 15 at 2498 E. Fairview Ave. We do have an attendant on duty in the evenings to sign up people with free memberships.

After that, memberships can be acquired over the Internet for free.

Eventually the store will run itself with a little help from our online cameras. We hope other Show 2 Go stores will pop up soon too.

Thank you, Kimberly Fuller, for all your help!

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Starting Up is a series published on Thursdays. The columns grew from discussions between the Statesman and local tech and entrepreneurial leaders and are coordinated by Julie Howard, a marketing specialist for the Idaho Department of Commerce. Reach her at julie.howard@commerce.idaho.gov.