

A SMOOTHER FUTURE WITH HELP FROM CIRAS

ABOUT SIMPLY SOOTHING. Simply Soothing is a small, woman-owned business in rural Columbus Junction, Iowa that produces natural products with emphasis on high quality at a reasonable price. They have 12 full-time employees and 15 part-time employees.

THE CHALLENGE. The owner's first effort at using plants to battle pests involved crushed corn cobs soaked in a peppermint infusion. She was running a Columbus Junction shop that added scents to lotions and candles. One day, the insurance salesman next door to her complained that he was tired of battling mice. She had something to help him and it worked well. And a new product called Mice Be Gone was born. A year later, major flooding came to southeast Iowa. Simply Soothing's owner mixed up a spray using plant-based extractions and offered it to her sister, who lived near a river, for help keeping mosquitos and gnats away. She called it Bug Soother, and it quickly became popular with government crews who checked water levels near her sister's home - so much that their bosses ultimately bought out her entire stock. As the company experienced exponential growth, they required outside help to streamline business practices and explore new markets.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. CIRAS (part of the MEP National Network™) partnered with Simply Soothing to develop a strategic transformation plan to organize and prioritize opportunities. CIRAS coached the company throughout the process, which included participating in the Internet Marketing Boot Camp and working with CIRAS' Procurement Technical Assistance Program.

"Now we work smarter, not harder. Working with CIRAS is one of the best things that's ever happened to us."

-Freda Sojka, Owner

RESULTS



8 new jobs



Increased sales of \$1.6M



\$100,000 investment in plant equipment

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