

CRAFTING CHANGE: CRYSTALYN KAE'S JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

ABOUT CRYSTALYN KAE. Crystalyn Kae has been a trailblazer for nearly two decades, manufacturing original, handcrafted bags and accessories from ethically-sourced and reclaimed materials in the USA. Founded in Seattle in 2001 by Crystalyn Kae Brennan, the brand emerged as a response to the homogeneity of mass-produced fashion. Crystalyn Kae Bags and Accessories is one of the few companies globally that integrates upcycling into its design process, catering to the socially conscious and those passionate about creating unique stories.

THE CHALLENGE. After being introduced by the Seattle Good Business Network in 2021, Impact Washington, part of the MEP National Network™, collaborated with Crystalyn Kae to address critical growth challenges. Recognizing the need for support, Impact Washington's account executive focused on working with small and rural businesses, Miguel Moreno, initiated a comprehensive business self-assessment review. Miguel laid out a roadmap of training and consulting opportunities against Crystalyn's business goals and identified focus areas for improvement.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Embarking on a strategic planning journey guided by Impact Washington's expertise, Crystalyn envisioned and crafted a three-year plan with short-term goals, providing a clear direction for her organization. Capitalizing on Washington's Job Skills Program, a consortium effort with a fellow manufacturer enabled Crystalyn Kae to access funds for essential training. The collaboration with Seattle Colleges produced a 4-month, tailored training plan focused on strategic planning, lean manufacturing tools, supply chain training, and e-commerce/SEO training. Participation in Lean 101, an eight-hour seminar with live simulation, equipped Crystalyn with lean principles, tools, and techniques and aligned her with an expert in continuous improvement adept at working intricately with small manufacturers like herself. In the Kaizen supply chain training, Crystalyn delved into enhancing the supply chain using lean principles. The emphasis on standardization, measurable metrics, and growth strategies was complemented by collaboration with Impact Washington's expert in this field, ensuring resilience and optimization without incurring significant cost increases. The Lean & Toyota Kata training provided a deeper understanding of Toyota Kata principles, leveraging lean manufacturing tools. A specialized e-commerce and SEO training module empowered Crystalyn to optimize online visibility and provided her with tailored insights from a seasoned marketing expert.

"Working with Impact Washington has been a game-changer for my business. Their tailored training, strategic guidance, and unwavering support to small manufacturers such as myself led to increased sales and guided me on areas where I could improve my efficiencies. Grateful for the impactful partnership that transformed our business."

-Crystalyn Kae Brennan, Founder

RESULTS



2 retained jobs



\$25,000 in new or retained sales



\$10,000 in cost savings



Invested \$6,000 into new products, new equipment, and systems

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