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Baking Center Helps Cook Up New Entrepreneurs

By Tara Lynn Wagner



A baking facility in Queens had teamed up with a local community college to teach local entrepreneurs how to cook up the next big thing. NY1's Money Matters reporter Tara Lynn Wagner filed the following report.

Baker Debra Sadowsky of Mostly Myrtle's has cooked up a new concept.

"I bake a twice-baked cookie that looks like biscotti, and I like to say that they're better than biscotti. And we call them 'biskookys,'" says Sadowsky.

However turning that idea, or any idea, into a fully-baked business is an expensive proposition.

"The thought of spending probably close to \$100,000 on new equipment and not knowing even if your product is a viable product or your business is viable, it's not something that anybody really could or should do," says Sadowsky.

Rather than spend the \$100,000, she rents a fully stocked workspace through the Artisan Baking Center's Kitchen Innovations Incubator.

For less than \$200 a night, the center provides bakers with all the equipment they need to turn their delicious dream into an edible reality. As part of the Consortium for Worker Education, there's also a pool of potential employees ready to be hired as the orders rise.

With all those resources at his fingertips, Simo Kuusisto says he can churn out 1,500 to 2,000 loaves of Finnish bread during each eight-hour shift at the center.

Coordinator Kathrine Gregory says that is far more than a baker could produce running an illegal business out of a home kitchen.

"If the rent is divided over 10 dozen or if the rent is now divided over 100 dozen, that's big difference on your pricing," says Kathrine Gregory of the Artisans Baking Center. "And your pricing is primary. If you don't price accurately, you're not in business."

However, being able to bake a good cookie is only half the battle. When it comes to growing a successful business, there are a lot of other ingredients that go into the mix.

To that end, the Artisan Baking Center has teamed up with LaGuardia Community College to offer a nine-week class for entrepreneurs, teaching them everything they need to know to run a business.

"How to prepare your bookkeeping and how to be able to work with your accountant, how to be able to collect bills from your clients, how to be able to market your product and locate your target clientele," says Brian Gurski of the LaGuardia Small Business Development Center.

Perhaps one day the bakers will be as famous as Amos, but in the meantime, they are content to test the waters and tinker with their product.

"You know, if it works, it's wonderful and then you increase your production. If it doesn't work, you haven't lost the 100,000 or whatever it is that you put into it," says Sadowsky.

So the bakers toil on until they hopefully discover the recipe for success.