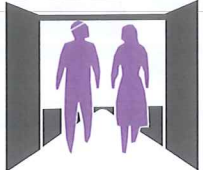


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## Becky General: Making Clean Carpets a Business

By L.M. VanEvery



"I'm a cleaner," says Becky General, 31. "I'm a neat freak, a very clean person. I like things very organized." Becky took this personality trait and parlayed it into a successful business. Becky's business, Sparkle Carpet Care, a residential, commercial, auto and upholstery cleaning business, is based from 1729 3rd line where she has a garage for auto detailing.

Equipped with a strong work ethic, Becky has grown her business in just three years. Becky entered the working world as an eleven year old when she worked picking strawberries and as a dishwasher in a local restaurant. Over the years, she's worked various jobs as a convenience store clerk and yes, a cleaner. For five years, Becky worked at a local residential cleaning business owned by a friend.

After graduating from high school and college, Becky continued to work various jobs within the community. A few years ago, she decided she wanted to work for herself and set her own hours. A member of Becky's family started their own business with the help of **GREAT** so Becky decided to visit **GREAT** and see what assistance was available. Becky enrolled in the Small Business Management program offered by **GREAT** in September 2010. She learned how to write a business plan, market her business, develop a web page and do the required business administration. She also enrolled in **GREAT's** Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) program that nurtures business owners for the first two years of their business. The SEA program assists a business owner financially and administratively while they are in the early stages of business ownership. When she started her business, Becky was the only employee. Now, Sparkle Carpet Care has three employees. "I'm getting really busy now," says Becky. She credits referrals for being a large part of her business growth.

Becky just landed the Six Nations Housing contract where she cleans rental properties for the new tenants. Sparkle Carpet Care's motto is "Big or small, we do it all!" You can call them to clean your living room carpet or your commercial factory. One of the challenges Becky finds in running her own business is hiring employees who share the same business values as herself. Customer satisfaction and customer service are priorities at Sparkle Carpet Care and all employees must subscribe to these business principles. Becky has started to make business contacts and market her business more in the past year by attending trade shows and networking with cleaning suppliers.

She still struggles with the administrative part of her business. "I'm not organized in that part. It takes a lot of time," she says. Through the SEA program, Becky works with the staff at **GREAT** on a monthly basis to make sure she's addressing this challenge. "I find it helpful that **GREAT** is monitoring me. It keeps me on top of it," she says. Becky credits **GREAT** with helping her with different aspects of her business. "They helped me in a big way," she says.

For anyone wanting to start their own business like Becky did, she has this advice for them. "Keep focused on what you want and if you want it bad enough, you'll be able to do it. Just ask for help." For more information about the Small Business Management Program and the Self-Employment Assistance Program, contact **GREAT** today.

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