

WEBBEAMS BECOMES NATIONWIDE WIFI LEADER WITH HELP FROM SCORE

When Brian Van Lieshout and Chris Olson started WEBbeams, a WiFi hotspot service provider, they struggled to determine a good target market. They got help with focus and much more when they turned to SCORE counselor Larry Pelka. Pelka volunteers for SCORE, a non-profit association of successful business executives who provide free one-on-one counseling, teach low-cost workshops and supply other resources to entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Olson and Van Lieshout met Pelka after attending a marketing workshop at SCORE in 2002. The two wanted to build a wireless hotspot service business to apply their technological and sales backgrounds in the emerging wireless industry. They set up a meeting with their counselor that would launch WEBbeams, now a nationwide industry leader in their niche.

Initially, the entrepreneurs went to Pelka for advice on target marketing. After that meeting, Van Lieshout said, "I really liked it, and I thought, 'Wow, this is the advice I need.'" Counselors helped WEBbeams narrow their niche primarily to coffee shops. "The advice of being focused and finding a niche has really helped us as more competitors have entered the market," said Olson. "They made us focus and learn our customers' business so we could stand above competitors as experts in coffee shop business." "We're getting more and more coffee shops and staying on top of the wave," said Van Lieshout. "SCORE really helped us to stay on top and that's how we've grown. It was basically them helping us to do that." Over the course of their meetings, Pelka introduced the men to other SCORE counselors with specialized expertise to develop different aspects of their business. "It's a great group of people to get information and advice from," Van Lieshout said. "I'm so happy that SCORE exists. They're always there to say it's going to work and this is how you can do it." Pelka credits WEBbeams' success to Olson and Van Lieshout's work ethic and teamwork. "They are focused on success," he said. "Chris is the technology guy and Brian is the sales guy. They work well together as a team and they work really hard."

While the two have recently moved WEBbeams to Milwaukee, they continue to meet with Pelka on a monthly basis for ongoing support and advice. "He has a positive attitude and a wealth of experience and wisdom," said Olson. "He's been around for a while and he knows how businesses work. We can tap that wisdom and get advice.

"The WEBbeam's team says they will return to SCORE for counseling and input as the business grows. " It is a great relationship. We can always email or call him, and he's always willing to meet us," said Van Lieshout. "Without Larry and the others at SCORE, we wouldn't be here today. We more than likely would have failed a long time ago." You can learn more about WEBbeams at www.webbeams.com. Contact WEBbeams at 888-WEBbeams (888-932-2326) or sales@webbeams.com.