



SCEDC Testimonial

SWITCHGEAR BREWING COMPANY
ELKHART LAKE, WISCONSIN

- Financing Strategies
- Site Assistance
- Business Plan Support
- Marketing Plan Development



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Local Entrepreneurs Switch Things Up

A brewing company that opened in the spring of 2017 was conceived over the years by a group of coworkers at Masters Gallery Foods.

The skilled and passionate team of Nick Kullmann, Ryan Feldmann and Mark Grasse brought the combined expertise of electrician, maintenance and business/accounting to create SwitchGear, a craft brewery located in Elkhart Lake.

When the group of homebrewers and wine aficionados conversations eventually began to develop into concrete plans, they reached out to the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) and Jim Schuessler, its Business Development Manager. Schuessler brought in Chuck Brys, Business Consultant for the Small Business Development Center at UW-Green Bay (SBDC) and they collaborated to form a business plan to project benchmarks for the start-up and develop a marketing plan.

Finding the right location for the brewery was a time-consuming, complicated issue. Developing a solid business start-up strategy was also key.

"I'm very familiar with business and accounting, so I was able to create a basic business plan, but Chuck really forced us to look at the numbers, and Jim helped put the finishing touches on it, which took our plan to another level. When it came time to present to bankers, they were definitely impressed," said Grasse. He added that Schuessler's assistance in site location and facilitating meetings with lenders was also tremendously helpful.

The brewery, located in the historic feed mill building in Elkhart Lake, is enjoying incredible success.

"Business is doing great and we've been extremely successful in building the brand and getting our name out there, with our beer currently being

served at about 10 different locations," Grasse said. "We're looking at hiring additional employees and ways to increase our production."

Schuessler noted "the six founders have done a tremendous job executing their business plan, which is the key to their success. It begins with a quality product, and they have executed social media outreach better than most. Product extension, with cheese, apparel, and soap has helped as well. It is reasonable to expect this business to continue to grow. I'm proud of those folks."



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Nick Kullmann, Ryan Feldmann & Mark Grasse
Owners SwitchGear Brewing Company



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