



TAB Helps Pioneering Entrepreneur
COPE WITH FAST-GROWTH ISSUES

IN 2011, GRETA ANDERSON, PH.D., AND HER BUSINESS partner founded BreatheWear, a creator and distributor of soft goods-based products that help clinicians and individuals manage sleep-related problems. With her extensive background as an educator, research professional and business leader, “Dr. Greta” (as she’s known) makes certain that the products sold by BreatheWear meet or exceed all standards at both the clinical and patient/consumer level.

THIS IS THE RESULT OF INPUT FROM SLEEP

technicians, physicians and patients, as well as extensive prototype testing in sleep lab clinical trials—long before the company's products are introduced to the public. Among these products are the Halo Chin Strap, a reusable accessory worn by sleep apnea patients that serves to keep the mouth closed.

EVERYONE NEEDS SLEEP

"Things in the sleep management industry have changed dramatically since we founded the company," Dr. Greta notes. Back then, people weren't really familiar with Obstructive Sleep Apnea. Now, the problem is far more common, and the industry has been growing at a rate of more than 10 percent a year.

"As Western lifestyle habits spread across the globe, the frequency of sleep disorders has concurrently expanded to every continent," she says. "Since everyone needs to sleep, it's no exaggeration to say this is a worldwide problem."

BreatheWear's target audiences include sleep labs, hospitals and clinics that diagnose and manage sleep-related issues. It also serves consumers who actively manage their own sleep-related issues, such as apnea, snoring, etc.

COPING WITH FAST GROWTH

The company's rapid growth has triggered challenges faced by many small business owners.

"As time goes on, many business owners get so immersed in the daily activities needed to keep things running that they can lose sight of the bigger picture," Dr. Greta notes. "Long-term goals, strategies for achieving these goals and planning an exit strategy are incredibly important issues to consider. But there's only so much time in the day!"

About three years ago, she decided she was in need of valid, objective feedback on her company and her overall business strategies.

"I began to reach out more and build relationships with others walking in my shoes," Dr. Greta recalls. "That's how I found my way to my first TAB Board."

Since joining TAB, she's tackled some key issues with the help of her Board and Facilitator.

"One specific area has been determining and assessing how I'd like to shape the business so it remains compatible with the changing world of health care (and its costs) *and* my own life goals. When you're a founder and work tirelessly for years to grow the business, it's strange to realize that your original end-goal has changed. You need to reconcile that change and learn to reshape your future vision."

After Dr. Greta became a TAB Member, BreatheWear's profitability quickly improved. With the continued attention of her facilitator and the accountability to which fellow Board members help each other, revenues continue to improve.

"I think the ongoing emphasis on strategy and staying focused on being a strong company leader have had—both directly and indirectly—a positive impact on our company's financials."

What's Dr. Greta's advice to others thinking of joining TAB?

"You may already be at a place where you know additional support could help you move to your next desired level," she says. "Make the investment and take the time to explore this opportunity. If you utilize TAB for the great resource it is, you'll reap big rewards from both a business and a personal perspective."