



BUILDING A BETTER BAKE SALE

Small business owner Kelly Delaney talks about her experience being coached by HSN CEO Mindy Grossman on television's *Bloomberg The Mentor*



Tuesdays at 9 p.m.
on Bloomberg TV

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Tell us about your business, Cakes for Occasions.

We do custom-designed cakes for all occasions—everything from first birthdays to graduation cakes to wedding cakes. We're located in Danvers, Mass., and I have 30 employees.

Why did you enter the Ink from Chase casting call to be on *Bloomberg The Mentor*?

I entered the casting call primarily because I want to expand my store, to take it from 2,400 square feet to 4,000. I wasn't sure if that was smart, or if I should instead take the money and open a second location. Down the road, I want to be nationwide. What's the smart way for me to get there?

Even though I've been in business for 15 years, everyone can use someone removed from their world to bounce ideas off of and help them make hard decisions. I felt like I knew the right decision, but you're suddenly playing with a lot of money. My mentor, [HSN CEO] Mindy Grossman, gave us a fresh set of eyes. She picked up on things that in the back of my head I was aware I had to address—but I'm so busy that I never seemed to have the time. Mindy lit a fire under me.



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What were her specific recommendations?

Mindy gave me five "assignments." One was pulling the company brand from the outside in. I was cramming too much into the store. My philosophy had been, "What the customer can't see won't sell." Another was to redo my display windows every two months, not every six. She also said we needed staff uniforms. As with the windows, that's something I knew but had put off.

The two big takeaways: Yes, I should consider expanding. We do 11,000 cakes a year, and there's potential to do more. Plus, this is going to be our flagship store, and it needs to become turnkey. The other thing was that I need a partner. I'm doing it all myself. So I needed to write up a job description for a partner.

Have you acted upon those recommendations?

I already have my uniforms in place. I redid my windows. I simplified the store and brought our brand much more into it. I have my architect's plans in hand, and signed on with a contractor. I have a job description done, and I'm eager to get someone in soon to start helping me out. That's all within two weeks of Mindy's visit. ●



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