

March 2016:

Susan Bella Linski, Owner Susan Bella Jewelry & Board Member, Small Business Council

As I dive into my 8th year of owning and operating Susan Bella Jewelry, LLC, I find myself reflecting on how much my business has flourished. Growing up in the industry has taught me the foundation of owning a successful business I can be proud of, general operations, buying, managing, and of course, jewelry, but actually owning my own company was an eye-opener. As I quickly learned, there are many facets to being a proprietor, many of which were new to me. I remember thinking, if only I had colleagues that I could relate to and go to for advice.

Since the inception of Susan Bella Jewelry, I knew I wanted to be very involved in the community, participating in fundraisers to 'give back' and networking to both get the Susan Bella name and ideals out there to grow my business as quickly and effectively as I could. It was recommended that I join the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. Wanting to keep my 'unnecessary' expenses to a minimum, I was hesitant to join at first. Once I learned the valuable tools being a Chamber member presented, I felt it *was* a necessary expense and would be money well spent, as long as I took advantage of their many offerings: networking, educational programs and seminars, the ability to meet and build relationships with like-minded people who actually *want* to help each other.

I took that advice and became a Chamber member just a few short months after opening. I attended the afore mentioned events, utilized the tools offered to me, and got as involved with as many different Chamber programs as time permitted. With so many to choose from that I could identify with, it was easy to find the ones that were best suited for me as a business owner, and for the growth of Susan Bella Jewelry.

The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce is one of the largest Chambers in the country, yet membership still feels very personal. Its employees and volunteers all work very hard to make sure of that. I am not just member #123; they value all their members, get to know and recognize them. I am proud to say in 2015, I was honored with the Chamber's Excellence In Business Award and was invited to be on the Small Business Chamber (SBC) Board.