



Go Tribe

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Fitness Entrepreneur Opens Second Location and Ready for the Third

The SBDC helped this entrepreneur grow by obtaining capital, expanding into a new location and increasing sales by 20 percent.

Go Tribe is more than a gym - created by personal trainer Chris Hodges, Go Tribe provides an affordable personal fitness relationship and accountability for those trying to get into shape.

Challenges

Hodges left the corporate Fitness Training world because he was convinced he could provide a better fitness experience for clients, so he created Go Tribe in May 2015. He started with three clients and expanded rapidly, but realized he would need more working capital to expand and accommodate his growing clientele. One of Hodges' friends in the fitness industry had discovered the SBDC hosted by Pasadena City College and recommended their services, thus began his relationship with the SBDC.

Best Advice

SBDC Business Advisor Larry Johnson worked closely with Hodges, helping him create a business plan, identify and pitch to investors, and complete his paperwork to obtain debt funding.

INDUSTRY

Fitness

CHALLENGES

- Financing
- Business Planning
- Marketing

SOLUTIONS

- Loan Packaging
- Investor Network Connections and Pitch Development
- Development of Business and Expansion Plan

CLIENT IMPACT

- Increased sales by 20%
- Created a live streaming app
- Opened second location



"I can't believe it's free. I can't believe that I didn't have to pay for the services I got. I'm extremely grateful that these services exist, so that my business can exist!"

Chris Hodges, Founder, Go Tribe



The Accidental Fitness Trainer

Chris Hodges was getting along in his hometown of Fort Worth, Texas, until he was hired by 24 Hour Fitness as a personal trainer in 2008 despite his lack of experience. The gym soon became one of the busiest and most profitable in the area. After promoting him to Assistant Fitness Manager, they transferred Hodges to California as a Club Manager in 2013. He managed several 24 Hour Fitness clubs, but then realized the fitness world had a problem. "The gyms charged 60 to 100 dollars per month, but there was no accountability. The clients wouldn't see results and they'd quit. I knew I could do better." Hodges created Go Tribe in 2015 and within 10 months went from three to 127 members.

Paperwork Training

Hodges' business grew so quickly he knew he needed to expand into new locations fast, but didn't have enough capital, a plan, or the experience to prepare his loan documents. SBDC business advisor Larry Johnson helped Hodges navigate the difficult process. "Go Tribe is a solid business," says Johnson. "It's attractive to millennials and baby boomers alike. Chris Hodges has a great story. I worked with him to focus his strategy and identify financial institutions to pitch. He is driven and innovative, and he's going to revolutionize fitness."

The Heart of the Matter

Johnson loved Hodges' idea of developing an app that connects and monitors the heart rates of his clients. This would provide accountability and ensure that his online clients were getting a proper workout. Through Johnson's guidance, Hodges used the app idea to convince a bank to provide the loan which he used to move into his first location in North Hollywood. Since then he's developed the application and can now read his clients' heart rates across the world. "It's the first of its kind app," says Hodges. "This streams live to the cloud and allows fitness trainers to see their clients' efforts in real time." Go Tribe provides 3 affordable fitness products that all provide the one-on-one attention that clients crave: Standard, Small Group, and Online Personal Training via video conference. He places heavy emphasis on creating a great working relationship with his clients, so before they even get to the gym, he gives them a love language test to figure out the best way to communicate with them. "Our clients don't just want to go to a gym where they don't know anybody. They want to establish a relationship with their personal trainer. We provide that relationship and accountability, which in turn provides retention and results."

CLIENT IMPACT

Since working with the SBDC in October 2015, Hodges has expanded his business to include two locations, one in North Hollywood and one in Palmdale. He is also planning to expand into a third location in Pasadena. He has developed the Go Tribe Fitness App which monitors clients' heart rates through an area of his website called "The Pulse of the Tribe." He has a very specific goal in mind for Go Tribe. "My plan is to take over the fitness world. We're creating a global phenomenon."