

HAWAI'I SBDC SUCCESS STORY



Spirit of Kaua'i

El Herington's tour company, Spirit of Kaua'i, is grounded in El's 30 years of experience with spiritual healing. "Kaua'i is very much a perfect place to deepen your connection with your spiritual nature."

Tours were originally informal and free. "People were asking to go along with me to some of the magical places around the island. Then they were referring visitors and friends." El decided to put together a simple website to see if there was more interest. In the first year El gave about 10 tours. After a while she developed the flow of the 3 main tours now offered and began to add retreats and custom tours. "It was a natural progression of sharing what I love with people who may not have the possibility of finding these places on their own and learning about the spiritual nature and unique history and significance of the healing island."

The business continues to grow with prospects for additional growth. In 2011, the 10 tours offered generated an income of \$4500 with approximately 90% of that being profit. In 2013 she gave 25 tours with income of over \$15,000 plus \$5,000 more from workshops, retreats and weddings. She is now being contacted by other tour-related providers about arranging tours for their clients and is looking at the possibility of expanding to other islands.

In terms of the Hawaii SBDC Network (SBDC), El originally approached John Latkiewicz of the Kaua'i SBDC Office regarding her website. John assisted with bringing her website and marketing materials to a more professional level. "John's help with pouring over hundreds of photos was really helpful to hone the image of Spirit of Kaua'i." From there, on-going discussions have focused on many aspects of her business from logos to taxes to pricing to insurance to forming partnerships to hiring employees. As she moves forward, she sees the SBDC as a major resource. "John is great as a sounding board and guide. It's so helpful to have guidance with priorities and common sense business practice."