



Delana Refour Success Story, Beautymark by Lanakaye

By Lorrie DeFrank

They say people come into others' lives for a reason. Delana Refour's first encounter with Annie Grogan was a stroke of serendipity that ultimately catapulted Refour's business to unimagined successes. Refour, a Navy veteran, and Grogan, who served in the Army, were chatting at a military conference in San Antonio, Texas, in early 2023 and discovered they both lived in Jacksonville. In 2019 Refour had started a skin care business and Grogan asked if she sought help from the Jacksonville Women's Business Center. In a further coincidence, Grogan would later become director of JWBC, her current position. Refour had not heard of it and admitted that she was stumbling through on a wing and a prayer. She took her new friend's advice and checked out JWBC when she got home.

Refour has since completed JWBC's Entrepreneur Certificate Program and has seen her Beautymark by Lanakaye's revenue increase 27% as a result of changes she made after taking the classes. She participated in Venture Leadership, Customer Development, Financial Matters and Marketing Matters, and is scheduled for Legal Matters in January.

"That was a game changer for me. I had been in business three years, yet it taught me so much that I had to go back and fix," Refour said. "I tell everyone I know about it. You don't know what you don't know."

After 10 years of active duty, Refour worked as a respiratory therapist for 12 years before becoming burned out by the 12-hour shifts and wanting a change. Her husband Brian encouraged her to turn her interest in skin therapy into a moneymaker by starting her own business—a scary idea at the time. When the family, which includes four children ages 6 to 15, moved back to Jacksonville in 2017, Refour decided to go for it. Resourceful from her military training, she searched online for mentors and other assistance. She went to school to become an esthetician and attended numerous seminars.

"My passion is to build the confidence of women of color, one person at a time," she said of her business that specializes in corrective skin care, customized treatments, eyelash extensions, facials, intimate waxing services and chemical peels.

By the time she met Grogan, she wondered if she was making a profit or just covering her expenses. Through the JWBC classes she learned how many clients she needed to see to be profitable, what to charge for services, and much more. "I got something out of every single class," she said. "The JWBC connected me with so many different people and organizations."

For example, Customer Development sent her back to the drawing board to define who her customers truly were. She was trying to see everybody when her services targeted Black, Hispanic, Asian and other women of color who suffered from skin issues such as rosacea. Financial Matters looked at what her customers were making, and if they could afford her services.

Before Marketing Matters, she was relying on word of mouth and Facebook ads to build her customer base. "They brought in people who actually did social media work from agencies that would have cost me so much money just to get a consultation. I felt like it was free," said Refour, marveling at the

affordability of JWBC programs. “I hired someone to help with Google ads and social media management. That freed me up to be in the treatment room.”

Once she implemented the lessons she learned and became more familiar with her numbers, she increased some prices and removed some services that were not lucrative. She recently doubled her space in her Orange Park location, was able to hire her first employee this year, and has a goal of hiring another esthetician.

“I think she has tons of potential to grow her business,” said Grogan.

“JWBC is an asset to our community, especially for female entrepreneurs,” Refour said. “I would say in class all the time, ‘Dang! I wish I would have learned this two years ago.’ Now I am able to pay myself. That is the value. They teach you the customer discovery, the finances and to know your numbers.”

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