

# SUCCESS STORY

## GRAND FORKS 2023



### ASR BRANDS

**GRAND FORKS** - Paul Carlson, founder of ASR Brands, had always admired individuals who turned their ideas into thriving businesses. With a passion for creating something out of nothing, Paul embarked on his entrepreneurial journey to design and sell aftermarket roofs and sound systems for Polaris Rangers and golf carts. The idea began brewing in his mind years before, and after seven years of planning, he officially launched ASR Brands in the spring of 2020.

As a business owner, Paul cherished the interaction with customers, particularly hearing

their enthusiastic feedback about his products. However, he faced numerous challenges at the beginning. There was substantial investment of time and money required to bring his vision to life and there were times that the temptation to give up was strong. Despite these obstacles, Paul remained determined to keep going.

Over time, ASR Brands experienced remarkable growth. Starting with roofs and sound systems products, Paul then expanded his offerings to include installation. He had some initial uncertainty when expanding into

the golf cart market. Nevertheless, he persevered and ultimately achieved excellent results, discovering the vast potential of that market segment. Demand for his products constantly exceeded supply, and word-of-mouth recommendations contributed significantly to his success.

Throughout his entrepreneurial journey, Paul found invaluable support from the community. Even with limited advertising efforts, he received substantial recognition and sales, indicating the community's strong backing for his business.

Paul first learned about the North Dakota Small Business Development Centers (ND







SBDC) through the Center for Innovation. Recognizing the wealth of information, guidance, and connections they provided, he decided to take advantage of their resources. Paul sought advising sessions with the ND SBDC, hoping to receive validation and ensure he was on the right track with his business. They proved to be instrumental in helping him avoid critical mistakes that could have hindered his progress.

Thanks to the ND SBDC Grand Forks Center Director, Nicole Evans' assistance, Paul discovered new opportunities for growth. The advising session served as

a crucial checkpoint, confirming that he was heading in the right direction. His advisor not only provided valuable insights but also helped him forge connections and broaden his network.

Reflecting on his experience, Paul wholeheartedly recommends the ND SBDC services to other small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. "It's a place you have to start at. They have so much information, guidance, and connections," Paul said.

When asked to offer advice to fellow entrepreneurs, Paul emphasized the importance of

pursuing a venture driven by passion. "It has to be something you are passionate about, if you are just doing it for the money, it might not be that much fun and it might be better to work for someone else and just get paid."

ASR Brands stands as a testament to Paul Carlson's unwavering dedication and the crucial support he received from the ND SBDC. Through his passion and perseverance, plus guidance from the ND SBDC, Paul transformed his vision into a thriving business, making ASR Brands a prominent name in the aftermarket industry for Polaris Rangers and golf carts.



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