



### **Article:**

### **Background:**

I started Casa Mojo Bees in 2020 as I've always had a deep interest in nature, and I consider myself a bit of an alchemist. I began keeping bees, and it started as a hobby, eventually, I realized I could turn this into something bigger. I saw an opportunity to teach people about sustainability, pollinators, and the environment while also running an apiary and offering bee-related products.

As a beekeeper, you sort of start backward: you begin with the bees and then realize, "Oh, I can make this a business." That's how it evolved for me. It's been such a rewarding experience—both personally and professionally—to share what I've learned about bees, environmental sustainability, and the benefits of honey and other natural products.

### **Solution:**

Honestly, the services from the Florida SBDC at FIU under the Business Growth and Acceleration Program (BizGap) have been transformed for me. When I first started, I had all these pieces but no way to put them together. I saw your courses on Instagram and inspired me to follow through with this. The BizGap project in FL-27 is funded by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is focused

on providing hyperlocal consulting, training and outreach to small businesses in targeted communities and commercial corridors

Startup Business Consultant Gabriel Prosper, was amazing as he allowed me to voice my fears and helped me take everything I had and organize it into something cohesive. In addition, it empowered me with tasks like getting my EIN, registering with Miami-Dade, completing certifications, and so much more. It was overwhelming at first, but Gabriel's guidance gave me the confidence to push through.

Because of his effort help, I now feel legitimate and accountable. I've been able to improve my marketing, learn to use tools like Verizon Small Business Digital Ready Program business resources, and start applying for loans and grants with confidence. The classes, like the ones business consultant Adriana Madrinan taught, were easy to follow and incredibly helpful. A value-added resource from the Florida SBDC at FIU which partnered with The Verizon Small Business Digital Ready Program to give small businesses the tools and resources they need to thrive in today's digital economy and ultimately benefit their local communities

Now, while I'm not yet making a ton of money, I feel like I have all my ducks in a row. My paperwork is complete, my marketing is stronger, and I have the tools to grow my business sustainably. This program helped me turn my passion into a viable business, and I'm so grateful for that.

**From the Owner:**

Fear is real—it's almost paralyzing at times—but you can't let it stop you. Believe in yourself and never stop learning. Entrepreneurship is hard, and there will be times when you feel like giving up. But if you're passionate, resilient, and willing to grow, you can overcome almost any challenge.

Seek out resources and mentorships. You can't do everything alone, and you don't have to. Programs like this one are invaluable, and reaching out to other professionals in your field can also make a huge difference. I've connected with other beekeepers, and their support has been so helpful.

Lastly, stay true to your values. Don't compromise what you believe in just to follow someone else's path. Build a strong foundation that resonates with people—it'll make your business sustainable in the long run. Remember, tough times are the best learning experiences, and they'll lead to immeasurable rewards if you stick with it.

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