

Small Business Development Center Spotlight

Linh Tran '05, left, and Deep Patel '06 flank a Go Green Solar Sun Pole, which attaches to streetlights and utility poles and generates energy that contributes to the electric grid. When he started GoGreenSolar.com, Patel received valuable business advice from the Small Business Development Center Network.



Alumnus Deep Patel '06 Builds A Blog into a Booming Business

GoGreenSolar.com wasn't even through this year's first quarter, but the green-energy products company had more revenue in 2011 than all of last year. With this stunning increase in sales, it's fair to say company founder Deep Patel recognized an eager market for energy-saving products.

"Our customers run the spectrum from one person needing a light bulb to contractors who are building entire facilities powered by solar energy," says Patel, who earned an entrepreneurship degree from Cal State Fullerton in 2006. His venture began when he attended the Solar Power International conference while earning his MBA at Boston University. "I knew this was a really cool industry," he says. "But how could I get started without any money?" The answer: A blog.

"I posted something new every day," says Patel, who with focused research and networking established himself as a legitimate authority. The response was astounding, and people started asking if they could also buy from him. "So, I set up relationships with manufacturers, and now it's a big challenge to keep up with demand."

When he started GoGreenSolar.com, he took the advice of Steven Mednick, a TriTech consultant – part of the Small Business Development Center Network – and focused on growing his customer base instead of searching for a start-up funder. "Steve advised me to view my customers as my first investors and to keep going after more business," says Patel.

"It was critical advice. I've reinvested all the profits of the business into accomplishing our vision: to change the world with green energy."

Patel has also attracted talented employees to join his enterprise, including fellow Mihaylo alumnus Linh Tran '05, who earned his degree in business finance, and now handles day-to-day operations for GoGreenSolar.com. Says Tran: "We are always looking for sharp students interested in a great opportunity in the renewable energy field." ■