

## Southeast ISBDC Client Highlight

July 7, 2014

### Client Highlight - The Flatrock Flatbread Company

Ben Fogt owns The Flatrock Flatbread Company ([website](#)) ([Facebook page](#)), which sells pizzas, breads, and desserts at farm markets, festivals and private functions

around Columbus, Indiana. The Flatrock Flatbread Company is a mobile pizza caterer. Their trailer-mounted brick oven cooks pizzas and other delicious food as high as 900°F using wood for a distinct flavor and texture.



They use the most local ingredients available to them.

Before becoming an entrepreneur, Ben enjoyed owning a couple other businesses. He started his first business in 2000 and worked with other individuals wanting to start their own businesses. One of his businesses involved working as a business technology consultant. He also owned The Geocoin Club, which he founded, where he made and sold custom coins. Ben sold his businesses and became a stay at home dad to his now four and six year old boys.

The idea of catering with a mobile oven came while living in Fort Wayne, Indiana. For several years, the Fogts bought shares in a CSA program which built a wood-fired oven in the middle of the barnyard. On Friday nights, the family would travel to North Manchester to pick up the weekly harvest and get some pizza. When they moved to Columbus in 2011, he found a way to make that experience mobile with The Flatrock Flatbread Company.

Ben's  
mission for  
his business  
is to spread  
light and



fun to the community through his gourmet pizza experience. Ben claims that people don't expect much from pizza and are surprised when they try his delicious

treats. He wants to continue providing a gourmet experience within a normal budget.

Ben enjoys so much about his business, but his favorite part is the community of supporters that has built up. The Flatrock Flatbread Company has a lot of followers that stop by every Saturday at the farmers market. Ben is appreciative of the quick feedback he gets from customers. In addition, it warms his hear when customers walk around telling others that they have to try Flatrock Flatbread's pizza! Some customers love the business so much that they have started helping and being part time employees.

When asked what Ben likes the least about his business, he replied with: the offseason. Flatrock Flatbread Company's off season is from mid December until mid March. Ben enjoys his business's busy season, but does find fun things to do in the off season. He holds bread classes during the off season and participates in fundraising/charity events.

Like many businesses, Ben faced some challenges when first starting out. Around the time Ben moved to Columbus, residents had been talking about food trucks in the town and that they didn't feel that the downtown area would be a good home for food trucks because of competition and parking. Although Ben's business isn't a food truck, it is similar, and he was worried how the town would react to his new business. However, once people got to know Ben and his business, they welcomed him and The Flatrock Flatbread Company with open arms.

Starting in August 2011, Ben began the planning and funding processes for his business. He placed the order for his oven in March 2012 and received it in July 2012. He actually started selling breads and other treats at farmers markets in June 2012 and started making pizza in July when the pizza oven came in.

The Flatrock Flatbread Company has experienced tremendous growth since opening in July 2012. Ben has had a five times multiplier in catering. In addition, he has doubled catering and vending sales just since last year.



Ben enjoys being involved and contributing to the community. He holds free-of-charge classes in the plaza for the library, which shows people how The Flatrock Flatbread Company makes their pizza. Ben has also cooked his delicious pizza for a teacher appreciation lunch. Ben has donated to the Arts Counsel and put things in their auction. Ben has also cooked 100 pounds of bread to contribute to a fundraiser for local food banks.

Ben, who has been a client of the Southeast ISBDC since September 2011, works with Business Advisor Laura DeDomenic. Ben says working with the ISBDC and Laura has been really great. He finds it to be extremely helpful when he receives advice on who to get in contact with and how to make his next step for his business. He is thankful that Laura notices small details and focuses on his business in a way that he couldn't have done on his own.

Laura DeDomenic says of Ben and his business, "Ben Fogt is a creative Foodpreneur providing delicious pizza and Belgium waffles. He uses his creative talent and knowledge to provide a fabulous product cooked in a mobile wood burning oven which he brings to the local Farmers Market. He has a loyal following every Saturday morning with long lines of people waiting to enjoy his culinary delights."