



The Sweet Smell of Success

A beauty boutique that specializes in custom fragrances blooms with customized services from AT&T.

Some people like to pepper tried-and-true recipes with their own spicy additions. Others alter their clothing to better reflect their personalities. Joy Appleby does the same thing with fragrances and has turned it into a business. "I've always taken lotions and bath salts and added oils and other scents to make them just the way I want them," Appleby says. "Now I'm doing it for lots of other people, not just me."

In October 2007, Appleby opened Harmony Beauty Boutique in Berkeley, California's Elmwood shopping district, a high-income, eclectic neighborhood featuring funky stores and restaurants. The shop occupies 1,500 square feet; behind it, in a 1,000-square-foot space, is Appleby's other business, Harmony Yoga Pilates studio. "The demographics of the neighborhood showed that the shop and the studio were perfect for this area," she says.

Appleby had an advantage when it came to choosing a communications vendor. She had spent most of the previous decade in the telecommunications industry, and the experience, she says, opened her eyes to the importance of dependable phone and Internet service. She'd seen firsthand how leading-edge technologies made it easier for entrepreneurs to manage their businesses. Today all of Appleby's telecommunications services for the boutique and the studio are with AT&T, including voice, data, wireless and messaging services.

In addition, Appleby uses two of AT&T's most popular products to make managing her businesses easier, especially when she is away from her office. AT&T Unified Messaging enables her to check voicemail, faxes and email from a single source, be it her wireless phone, office phone or any Internet connection using her computer. And AT&T Remote Monitor allows her to turn on the lights, monitor point-of-sale locations and check customer traffic via cameras mounted in the shop—all from her home office computer. "I live about seven minutes away from the shop," she explains, "but it's still so great to keep on top of things from my home office. The convenience is just amazing."

Indirect Route

Though Appleby always knew she'd eventually open a business of her own, she took a bit of a detour along the way. Her original vision for Harmony coupled the boutique with a day spa, but that plan changed because of complications with the local zoning board. "I had the space, and we were in contract," she explains, "but I just couldn't get the zoning permit to operate a spa in that location." After a bit of scrambling—and a fresh demographic study—Appleby figured the yoga studio could be a great alternative to a spa.

Her boutique stocks the sort of skin care, bath and home fragrance products not typically available in local department stores. "I have organic products, a line for expectant mothers

Harmony Beauty Boutique and Harmony Yoga Pilates Facts

- **Industry Focus**

A Berkeley, California boutique stocking skin care, bath and home fragrance products, with a studio for yoga and Pilates classes

- **Size**

Four full-time employees; 13 independent contractors who teach classes at the studio

- **Business Needs**

Reliable communications service with a simple way to manage all incoming orders plus the ability to remotely monitor the business and control utilities

- **Communications Solutions**

Two business voice lines, wireless service and AT&T High Speed Internet Business Edition, as well as AT&T Remote Monitor and AT&T Unified Messaging to combine and access all messages in one mailbox



and other special items you won't find everywhere," Appleby says. And then there are the products that Appleby herself creates. In fact, she says, the original impetus for Harmony was a bath salt she had concocted as a party favor for a friend. "After the party I kept hearing that I should sell it," she says with a smile. The shop, she adds, is "like a beta test. It lets me see which products work and which don't."

While Appleby finds running the boutique easy and fun, she admits the learning curve with yoga and Pilates has been a bit steeper. "Marketing for the studio is more touchy-feely," she says. "The classes are like therapy for some clients." Both the shop and the studio are open seven days a week, with the last yoga or Pilates class ending as late as 8:30 p.m. Appleby has four full-time employees and 13 independent contractors who teach in the studio.

Peace of Mind

With such an intense schedule, Appleby appreciates the freedom afforded her by reliable phone and Internet service and solutions like AT&T Remote Monitor and AT&T Unified Messaging. "We do class scheduling online, so I need an Internet connection that's fast and dependable," she explains. The ability to work at home and still keep an eye on the store through AT&T Remote Monitor conveys additional peace of mind, she says.

Appleby has also started using AT&T Unified Messaging to keep track of faxes, voicemail and email. "I can check everything via my email and that's a huge time-saver," she says. As the company develops, Appleby anticipates a growing e-commerce

business for Harmony and is confident that Unified Messaging will become an even more important business tool. "As orders get called or faxed in, I'm going to want to access everything from one mailbox," she says, "and I know I'll use Unified Messaging even more than I do today."

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– Joy Appleby, Owner, Harmony Beauty Boutique and Harmony Yoga Pilates

Over the next several years, Appleby envisions opening Harmony Beauty Boutiques in a number of U.S. cities. She also wants to arrange wholesale distribution of her customized products so that other retailers can offer them. Whether yoga and Pilates will be included in her expansion plan remains to be seen. "I would love to have both concepts together in new locations, but it depends on each space and on where we choose to go," she says.

For now, Appleby takes delight in creating new items for her shop and watching the reaction of customers when they discover something they love. "We have a huge chandelier in the store and lots of great touches to make it look special," she says. "I'm really big on creating that wow factor for customers when they walk through the front door."

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