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## SUCCESS STORY #714:

# MANUFACTURER POWERS UP FOR GROWTH

**Small Business Development Center  
hosted by Economic Development Collaborative**  
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### **BEFORE:**

Founder Robert Bushman started SRS in 1996 with a mission: to take unusable silicon and process it into usable feedstock for solar applications. The company has grown every year since its inception and is now the world leader in silicon feedstock processing for the solar industry. By late 2010, SRS was outgrowing its Camarillo location, so Vice President of Finance and Marketing Brendon Cussio visited the Small Business Development Center at EDC for assistance financing a new facility in Ventura.

### **BEST ADVICE:**

SBDC Business Advisors Mary Anne Rooney and Dean Dela Cruz helped Cussio explore financing options, obtain necessary permits, reduce energy use in the new facility and institute lean manufacturing techniques.

### **LESSONS LEARNED:**

- ***It's who you know.*** "Our process uses high-intensity acids [that] we have to dispose of," Cussio explains. "In Camarillo, we would have exceeded the permitted wastewater limits and would have been significantly penalized." Rooney worked with the City of Ventura to expedite permitting before SRS purchased the building. "[The SBDC was] very diligent and put us in touch with the right people," says Cussio.
- ***Plan to succeed.*** Dela Cruz's expertise in lean manufacturing helped SRS set up the new building. "He showed us how to lay out structures for [the best] process flow," Cussio explains. SRS also received advice on energy efficiency.
- ***Simplify matters with a one-stop shop.*** Cussio appreciated the diverse expertise he found at the SBDC. "They've given us a lot of options and have been useful to us in different areas — manufacturing, importing, exporting. It made it easier for us to work with one group, instead of finding individuals [in each area]."

### **AFTER:**

SRS's sales grew so rapidly that the company didn't need financing to acquire the building after all. They have grown from 40 employees in early 2010 to 75 today, and expect to hire 25 more when the move to Ventura is complete in August 2011. Cussio is working with the SBDC to obtain training for the new workers, and also plans to take advantage of the SBDC's eight-week accelerated international trade program.

The new facility will enable SRS to create a purer product and break material into a smaller form factor, making its product even more desirable to customers. Long-term plans include opening facilities closer to customers in the Pacific Northwest and Midwest. With \$25 million in sales for the first half of 2011 — already surpassing 2010 sales — SRS is well positioned to achieve those goals.