



Success Story

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: July 12, 2006
Release Number: PR AL 06-20

Contact: Susan Baxter (205) 290-7101 ext 228
Internet Address: <http://www.sba.gov/al/>

TROY UNIVERSITY LENDS AN EAR TO COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY *Communications & Ear Protection, Inc.* *Ben Mozo*

BIRMINGHAM – Communications & Ear Protection, Inc. (CEP) was first conceived in 1996. After 25 years of civil service, Ben Mozo had developed a communication device that he and his wife, Barbara, believed in completely. This device is placed in the pilot's helmet or headset and is designed to enable vocal messages to be easily understood even in the highest noise environments of an Army helicopter. The communications earplug (CEP) was tested with aviation units, and it fully demonstrated its capabilities in actual operational environments found in all helicopters used in Army aviation.

However, an interested manufacturer couldn't be found for the project, so the Mozos decided to take on the manufacturing task themselves. Although Ben Mozo had excellent technical expertise, neither of the Mozos had formal training in business management, business plans, finances, or completion of forms that the government needs from small businesses.

Since the Mozos knew they would need help in their new venture, they went to the U. S. Small Business Administration-backed Small Business Development Center at Troy University (TROY-SBDC). According to Mrs. Mozo, "the TROY-SBDC personnel provided many "how to" booklets, sources of information and experts that they could contact for information. They were wonderful with the level of support and willingness to provide us an abundance of information. They were extremely helpful in assisting us in reaching the best business decision without making our decisions for us." They currently provide CEP with access to the *EDI Network* which helps us to identify requests made by government units for our product."

Today, CEP, Inc. employs twelve and has increased its sales each year and; in 2001, moved into a much needed 5600 square foot building in Enterprise. As the company continues to grow, it is extending its field from aeronautical to other areas such as law enforcement. They have been evaluating the use of a single side CEP adapted for use with the typical shoulder mounted speaker/microphone of the police officer. Policemen have been using hard plastic insert communications that are very annoying. They have welcomed the foam tipped CEP unit which improves their comfort and communications capabilities dramatically. CEP, Inc next plans to market the stereo receiver CEP in the commercial market. This device was developed a few years ago for internal use when performing noisy tasks. This "lawnmower CEP" as it is

called, provides a high quality sound for the user - whether it is for commercial or home use.

In January 2005 CEP, Inc. held an open house to celebrate their move into a 10,800 sq. ft. manufacturing facility in Enterprise, Alabama.

Their mission statement is: "CEP, Inc. will, as its first priority, provide a product that is of the highest quality while minimizing the final cost to the user." This mission statement is taken very seriously by each of their employees – which results in a quality product and very high level of customer satisfaction. It has to be very gratifying to be told by a pilot, "I won't fly without my CEP."

#

For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.