

Brenda Palmer - Owner, Mrs. Palmer's Pantry Inc.

Brenda Palmer, a gourmet food manufacturer in Cranbrook, started out selling jarred products such as antipasto, peppered jellies, and wild B.C. huckleberry jam at craft fairs and farmers' markets. Over the years more products like apple chutney, marinated feta and spicy apricot-ginger sauce were added to her line. On top of creating specialized gift baskets, Palmer has continued to develop new treats; most recently, pita chips became part of Palmer's products. "They have just taken off like a house on fire because they are a healthier snack choice than regular chips."

Her products are available at Safeway, Save-On Foods, and Nutters Bulk and Natural Foods. That might seem big for an entrepreneur from a small town, but Palmer isn't ready to stop there. "We're on the verge, we're going to start exporting," Palmer said, "We've got some distributors who are building the market in Europe and Taiwan and Dubai"



Small stores in the Cranbrook area and then Vancouver locations took her products, which opened the door for expansion into supermarkets. In January of this year the business moved from a small kitchen to their own 3,000 square foot facility complete with shipping and receiving.

Palmer knows that growing a business isn't easy; you have to be tough and shake off rejection. She understands that each blocked path opens up new avenues to explore. Her determination got her products as regular fare on Air Canada flights and they are now served world-wide. Another key to her success? She listens to her customers and expands her product line according to their wants and desires.

Her advice to women entrepreneurs is simple "You need to be really creative when it comes to financing. Look under every rock and explore all your options." Sound advice from Mrs. Palmer's Pantry.

Women's Enterprise Centre serves women across the province from its offices in Kelowna, Vancouver and Victoria. For more information call 1-800-643-7014 or visit www.womensenterprise.ca.