

## **VISA Small Biz Success Stories**

*Lessons learned from new entrepreneurs*

# **Credit card boosts pet business**

*By Entrepreneurship Expert Roger Pierce*



It's no secret: Cats and dogs are big business.

It seems today's pet owners will spare no expense when it comes to their beloved furry creatures. "My dog is like my child and I want the best for him," agrees small business owner Roxanne Pettipas.

Pettipas owns a company called Class Art Productions Inc., makers of a custom-fitted leather dog harness called the 'Buddy Belt' ([www.buddy-belts.com](http://www.buddy-belts.com)). It hugs a dog comfortably around its body, offering dog owners a safe and humane alternative to neck leashes.

"While the harness was originally created to improve the quality of life for my own dog, Buddy, I realized my timing for the product was great because the pet industry in Canada is worth \$3 Billion annually," explains Pettipas. Not surprisingly, her company sales have doubled each year since she opened in 2001.

To help manage her business growth, Pettipas obtained a TD Venture Line of Credit VISA Card in 2003. Since that time, she's discovered several ways to use her card to build her business.

Many small business owners muddy their books by using just one credit card for all of their purchases. "I use the card to clearly separate my business and personal expenses," says Pettipas. "Because it's used strictly for business purposes, my VISA Business Card statement makes it easier for my accountant to enter my expenses and generate accurate financial statements and tax returns."

Pettipas also uses her VISA Business Card to open new supplier accounts. "Whenever I order raw materials from a new supplier, I use my card to pay them immediately," she says. "It helps me to establish a good credit rating with suppliers."

That good credit rating will eventually help her to purchase her own commercial building – a goal Pettipas aims to achieve within the next three years.

Meanwhile, her biggest challenge is keeping up with the demands of a growing business that now includes four employees, new workspace in downtown Toronto and customers as far away as Norway and Japan. "Small business owners need to embrace every advantage they can," reflects Pettipas. "It would've been very difficult to get my business to this point without my VISA Business Card."

[Photo Caption]

Roxanne Pettipas uses her VISA Business Card to build her pet products business.