



## Ask SCORE for Business Advice

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“Ask SCORE” Column

Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

### Column Title: Tailgating Spurs Business

When Michael Koenig met with SCORE counselor Jill Rodrian, she liked his idea so much that she placed an order from his concept drawing. Koenig, a fan of tailgating parties, had been frustrated by the process of gathering all the items needed for a party. In response, he developed a tailgating kit and was visiting SCORE for advice in launching his business.

“I’ve been tailgating for over 20 years and had always taken charge of the little stuff that is needed for parties,” Koenig recalled. “Originally, we had everything thrown haphazardly in a plastic tote box. After becoming frustrated by not being able to find things or not realizing I’d run out of certain items, I purchased a tackle box which more or less fit my needs.” The new kit takes this to the next level. Available in a variety of team colors, Rodrian liked his idea of having everything in one convenient kit.

She noted, “I thought his idea was very creative and that it would make a great gift. This was the first time that I counseled and felt so strongly about the potential for success.”

The enthusiasm from Rodrian provided encouragement for Koenig. “SCORE was very helpful in making me feel confident in my idea as well as my vision of starting my business,” he explained. It also gave him the tools necessary to write a business plan and minimize some of the surprises. One of tasks he had was to refine his concept and find suppliers to produce the kit at a good price point.

“One of the hardest parts was communicating and doing business internationally, as the company who manufactures the cases is located in China. The time difference and language barrier was very difficult to manage. Locating and doing business with all the different supplies for the 40+ different items I needed was also a trying task,” stated Koenig.

He now has his suppliers, and has developed a website, [www.officialtailgatekit.com](http://www.officialtailgatekit.com). He has started marketing, and is getting input from customers. The process has been scary and exciting. Koenig noted, “The costs have been a little higher than anticipated, because there are way too many factors involved to hit the nail on the head. Little things add up quickly. Investing a lot of time and money is a bit scary because even with the best idea,

success is never guaranteed. But that's also the exciting part – taking a chance to do something for me, something that I love and that I can claim as my own.”

As Koenig gains input in order to improve his product, he also thinks about future expansion. But before that happens, he needs more fans like Rodrian.

“I really think Mike will do well with the kit,” she said. “He’ll draw from football, baseball, NASCAR, and really any fan that likes to tailgate prior to an event. I also think it would make an excellent picnic kit. He has everything in it except the cook.”

If you have a business idea, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit [www.greenbayscore.org](http://www.greenbayscore.org) or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt is co-owner of DB Commercial Real Estate in Green Bay and Assistant District Director for SCORE, Wisconsin.