



Liza Spiridon
Cali Strong Candles
Central Coast, California
www.CaliStrongCandles.com

Candles with A Purpose

“Start Something That Matters.” Sometimes, the simplest message can lead to unexpected success.

During California’s recent wildfires, Registered Vet Technician Liza Spiridon was living on the Central Coast but knew people in the communities impacted. She decided that she needed to use her skills to help, so she got involved by donating her time helping animals to safety and assisting the people who had lost their homes and businesses.

Fast-forward three years, to when Liza found herself recovering from shoulder surgery. She used her “down time” to reflect on her life’s work and plan her next steps. One day, her husband asked when she was going to make her collection of wine bottles in the garage into candles, as she’d been planning. She had never made candles, but her creativity and curiosity made her want to give it a try. Through a series of inspired ideas and serendipitous events, Liza decided to start a business based on her desire to give assistance to the communities that she had made such a connection with after the fires. Liza taught herself how to make the candles, mix the scents, cut and sand bottles, and started outlining a plan for a company that centered around its core purpose: giving back.

She always knew she wanted to start a business that involved giving back to her community, and the candles gave her the perfect opportunity to do that. Liza took the Start, Run, Grow Your Business class through MCSC’s Women’s Business Center in the Spring of 2019 **and** learned the steps she needed to take to make her dream a reality.

“My instructor, Lorelei Sibet, was amazing. She gave me the knowledge, tools, and inspiration to look at my operation realistically, and set my plans into motion. My business took off so quickly; I am grateful to the Women’s Business Center for guiding me!”

Local breweries, distilleries and restaurants donate empty bottles to Cali Strong Candles, and Liza cuts, fills, and tags the candles. The original labels stay on the bottles, so they can be sold at the local tasting rooms. The response to these up-cycled, repurposed candles has been incredible.

Liza’s business gives 10% of profits to two charities that are important to her: The ASPCA and The Cal Fire Foundation. At her “Sip & Wick” classes, she lets the host or venue select a charity from a list on her website and donates 15% to that organization.

In only eight months, Liza has gone from an inspired idea, to producing candles for 14 winery accounts and one distillery. She has held over a dozen “Sip & Wick” classes, hosted parties and showers, and partnered with over 22 charities.

Liza’s advice to budding entrepreneurs is, “Remember your ‘why’! Create a clear vision of your purpose and stay open to pivoting.”