

2007 Existing Business of the Year



SENSEI
SALON LLC

Name of Business	Sensei Salon LLC
Owner	Marlina and Gary Poff
Nature of Business	Full Service Salon
City	Emporia
County	Lyon
Phone	620 - 342 -7292
E-mail	Sensei_salon@yahoo.com
Business Structure	Limited Liability Company
Business Began	2002 and 2005
Employees at Start Up	9
Employees in 2007	9
KSBDC Counselor	Lisa Brumbaugh

“The skills I learned by working with the KSBDC on my first venture have helped me repeatedly as I built and expanded this business. It has been like having my own team with me as I have taken my business to the next level. It initially gave me a strong foundation and then helped me grow from there. The KSBDC’s services are invaluable.”

Marlina Poff, Owner

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Sensei Salon, LLC offers spa services without the spa price. Owner, Marlina Poff, has been a cosmetologist for 25 years, and has managed various salons, including establishments in Oklahoma and Hawaii. Following her vision, Marlina and a partner opened Emporia’s first day spa and salon in 2002. With Marlina’s marketing and management skills, the business grew into the successful business it is today. In 2005, Marlina and her husband and business partner, Sgt. Gary Poff, opened Sensei Salon.

The first location for Sensei was in a high-traffic area which, along with a good reputation and good marketing efforts, worked well for the business. In 2007, Sensei Salon moved to its current location at 3171 West Highway 50 in Emporia. The new location provides ample parking and easy access. The salon offers hairstyling, manicures, pedicures, skin treatments, makeup, electrolysis, and massage therapy. In both business endeavors, Emporia State University KSBDC assisted Marlina with her business plans and financial projections.

“I feel the secret to success for us is having a passion for what we do. It is something no one can take from you. You establish your vision and goals for the future out of that passion and it is what makes you look forward to going to work every day.”

Marlina and her staff recognize the importance of making their clients feel special. They hope that their clients feel valued and special during the first visit and all future visits. One client commented: “No matter if I’m the first client or the last client for the day, it’s just as if I’m the *only* client for the *whole* day.” Marlina and her staff value the support of the local and outlying communities. That support is given back through the salon’s generosity to the schools and churches, and its involvement in community organizations and events. Marlina also appreciates the support her clients and community organizations have shown while Gary has been deployed to Iraq with the 35th MP Company, Kansas National Guard. “It is also important for other business owners whose spouses or partners are deployed, to realize that great things can still be accomplished while they are away, and to stay focused not on the doubts and fears of the war, but on the opportunities before them.”