



Case Study

# Better than Bakery

## CHALLENGE

In 1984, Debbie Batur, a dedicated mom, started Better than Bakery as a creative outlet and source of additional income. Her unique baguette bread with infused butters quickly became very popular. Customers love how the bread, which is sold frozen, comes alive with flavor when reheated.

When Debbie's daughter and son-in-law, Kristen and Steve Hronec took over the Company in 2005, business was great, and they had a vision to grow it exponentially. Based on the foundation of quality and incredible taste that Debbie had built, Kristen and Steve hoped for a big expansion by purchasing their own production facility.

At that time, a wise uncle and President of the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts recommended that Kristen and Steve talk to the Vann Group about their vision.

## SOLUTION

When Kevin and Michael Vann first toured Better than Bakery, they had to admit that they had not heard of it. However, they recognized the bread's packaging immediately, which illustrated the Company's key challenge: people loved the bread but didn't know its name or where to buy it.

"They completely changed our minds in about an hour," recounts Steve. "We thought the key to growth was to purchase a large production facility. The Vanns pointed out there are other ways to expand capacity and grow without taking on such a risk. By taking another route, we'd have greater resources for distribution."

After that initial meeting, the Vanns crafted a comprehensive business plan for Better than Bakery that won the confidence of the necessary lenders. The Vanns have since guided Kristen and Steve through the process of securing production, distribution and marketing partners.

## RESULT

Better than Bakery now has a foundation that will be built on for years to come, with multiple phases of growth and expansion. "Kevin and Mike have tremendous knowledge and instincts for business, and they know so many people in the business community that they were able to connect us with everyone we needed to grow the business. We are fortunate to be working with the Vann Group, and we are excited about growing mom's creative outlet exponentially with complete dedication to the unique and delicious quality of her breads."

“The Vann Group provides the bridge from vision to strategy, from execution to reality.”

*-Kristen Hronec*