

The Added Touch

Seven years ago, Alice Van Allen, a seamstress in Camden, decided to start her own alterations store in Sumter, where she lived and where she already had several clients. Alice had done her small business research; now she needed to make sure her own small business would be a success.

On a day off from her job, she met with SCORE counselor Irwin Praeger, retired Chief Executive Officer for Drapery Contracting Corp. of Sumter. Irwin is one of three counselors in the Sumter branch of the Midlands SCORE chapter.

Alice and Irwin were a good match because of their shared background in textiles. Not only was Irwin able to help Alice with her business plan and with setting up her business, he was also able to help her with selecting the best machinery and tools because of his own experience with textiles. Irwin said that the Sumter Chamber of Commerce, where the Sumter SCORE branch is based, was also very helpful.

Now Alice recommends SCORE counseling to anyone interested in starting their own small businesses. She even recommended SCORE to her daughter when she decided to start her own photography business.

Irwin continues to discuss business with Alice even now that her alterations shop, the Added Touch, is well-established.

“As soon as I saw things taking shape, I did not lose sight of Alice,” Irwin says. “We work together and discuss machinery and textiles to improve her business.

“I will continue to be in touch with Alice to help her continue her work.”