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PROFILE

## Vision Fulfilled

BY NATALIE BAUER

Barbara Hensley, whose two sisters both died of breast cancer, had an inspiration to start a business that would benefit breast cancer research. Having worked in corporate America for 25 years at a \$1 billion company, Hensley knew a sound business decision often takes patience and careful research.

When Hensley first met with her Wells Fargo business banking team early last year, the founder and owner of Wayzata, Minn.-based Hope Chest for Breast Cancer ([www.hopechestforbreastcancer.com](http://www.hopechestforbreastcancer.com)) knew banking with Wells Fargo could help her take her business where she wanted it to go.

"From that minute on, I have had the most magnificent support," Hensley says. "People were just doing everything

they could to find what were the smartest ways to make this happen."

The Hope Chest, which opened the day after Thanksgiving 2002, is an upscale retail store that sells donated furniture, clothing and household

business plan. "We have a myriad of products that can help a small business," says Wells Fargo business banker, Bill Dufault. "But more importantly, we were very interested in what she had to say and what her vision was and is."

She aims to open 50 stores within five years and donate \$10 million annually to breast cancer-related causes.

accessories to benefit breast cancer research. Hensley has worked closely with her banking team to secure a \$760,000 U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loan to purchase the 8,000-square-foot building that now houses the sales floor, administrative offices and storage areas. She also maintains separate accounts for her personal finances, a breast cancer foundation and the store, including merchant service accounts.

Similarly, the decision for the Wells Fargo team to sign on with Hensley required little hesitation once they saw her

Dufault and the Wells Fargo team keep in regular contact with Hensley to make sure all her banking needs are met. "There's a lot of follow-up, a lot of making sure that things are done properly," he says. "It's something that you want to see work and succeed because you're really pulling for [Hensley]."

By all accounts, Hensley is meeting—and beating—those well wishes. When she started, Hensley had 10 potential donors in her database. Today she has nearly 900 names. After the first 30 days of business, the store's sales surpassed what Hensley anticipated would be its first four months of revenue.

With her sights set on the future, she aims to open 50 stores within five years and donate \$10 million annually to breast cancer-related causes. Hensley is thoroughly satisfied with what has passed so far. "We have exceeded our plans way beyond expectations," she says. ■



Left to right: Bill Dufault and Barbara Hensley