

Tiffany's Tint and Sheridan: Future is looking bright for Oakville company



Tiffany King in front of 40" plotter

Tiffany King is a perfectionist. The owner of Tiffany's Tint has to be if she wants each custom tint job for cars to be absolutely flawless.

A good tint job has three factors – using high-quality tint film, a quality installation and ensuring the pattern is fitted with exact measurements. Tiffany excelled at the first two points, but not the last.

When she tints a vehicle she “computer cuts” her patterns. If she is going to tint any selected model, she will select that vehicle's year and model and enter it into a software program she purchased that lists various model specs. She will then use a machine (plotter) to cut the patterns. Those specs should fit perfectly, but often they don't.

She frequently finds the patterns are not wide enough or long enough, leaving a small gap between the tint film and the original window – a miscalculation that results in wasted time, material and money.

To ensure a perfect fit, she pre-measures the windows herself and then compares her measurements to those in her software program. She makes the necessary adjustments, but this process is time consuming and frustrating.

She toyed with the idea of making a database of her own patterns, but how would she transfer them to a computer? She found a ‘perfect fit’ working with Sheridan College and FedDev Ontario's (Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario) Applied Research and Commercialization (ARC) Extension initiative.

"It was effortless to work with Sheridan's students. They were very respectful of the fact that I still had to run a business."

Tiffany King, Owner, Tiffany's Tint

"You can't do that type of learning in the classroom."

Kevin Forest, Sheridan Professor

The ARC initiative matches small- to medium-sized companies with Sheridan faculty and students to conduct applied research, development and innovation activities that help companies become more productive, competitive and, ultimately, create jobs. (Funding of up to \$100,000 is matched by a 50% cash or in-kind contribution by the participating company.)

She worked with two students from Sheridan's Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology (FAST) program who she described as "truly passionate about making my program happen." She was impressed with their programming skills, particularly with how they developed a technique to scan images of her hand-cut patterns and calculate exact measurements digitally.

Together, they methodically went through some trial and error to develop a user-friendly program that will provide her with a database of patterns and measurements that she knows will be a perfect fit.

"As far as the students were concerned, this was one of the best applied research projects I've worked on," said Sheridan FAST professor Kevin Forest who managed the partnership.

Each time the students thought they had found a solution, they encountered a problem – a problem they then studied, analyzed and eventually overcame. "You can't do that type of learning in a classroom," said Forest.

"The students also kept in mind that things will change as new cars will come out," said Tiffany. "They made sure this program has the flexibility to accommodate future models."

Tiffany is now compiling her patterns and building her database. Once she feels she has a solid library, she can stop paying fees for outside programs, save time and tint material.

"I know that it's my pattern and I know it's going to fit properly the first time," she said.



Tiffany King installing film

For further information, please contact research@sheridaninstitute.ca