

How a Small Business Owner is Serving Up Energy Efficiency at Her Cupcake Shop

In 2006, before there was a cupcake shop on every corner, Hailey Kwon decided she wanted to bring happiness and joy to her community. Now she has two cupcake shops and a cafe in Pasadena, Calif., with annual revenues of more than a million dollars and her cupcakes are baked fresh daily using 100% pure ingredients and organic fruit preserves. Through Dennis Huang at the Asian Business Association, Hailey was connected with [Energy Upgrade California](#), the statewide initiative inspiring residents to use energy better, to share how she saves energy as a small business owner:

Tell us a bit about your business

We started out as a humble cupcake shop built to bring happiness and joy to our friends in Pasadena. Now, the dream has been realized to bring a cafe filled with love and fresh food for all to enjoy.

Why did you start this business?

My father passed prematurely, and through that grief, I became more driven to seize the day and fulfill my dreams and ambitions. I've had a lifelong passion for desserts and settled on cupcakes—they can be individually wrapped and make perfect gifts. This was back in 2006, before the craze really hit.

Have you always been energy conscious? Why is it important?

I've always valued doing things the "right" way, and through the process of buying my buildings and developing my shops, I've learned how difficult that can be at times. I've leaned heavily on mentors like Mr. Huang while developing my business, and stay involved with multiple organizations that are invaluable resources to aspiring entrepreneurs such as the Asian Business Association and Energy Upgrade California. I try to minimize waste in all aspects of operation, and in this context, energy is like any other resource. Beyond being pragmatic from a business standpoint, it's important to be a responsible member of the communities we live and work in. It's



encouraging and validating to see Californians making this effort to be more energy conscious.

How are you saving energy at your place of business? What are some of the small things you do?

The design of Dots Café was inspired by the older farmhouse aesthetic—I wanted lots of natural light, which helps save energy, and accomplished that with floor to ceiling windows. The building I selected hadn't been renovated since 1970 and the entire electrical system had to be replaced. Letting contractors know what sort of appliances and demand we'd need have allowed them to optimize with modern equipment to be the most efficient while also saving energy and money. Beyond that, we use LED and motion lights, and shut everything down when we close up for the day. I also try to shop and source locally whenever possible.

Any advice for other small biz owners?

Perseverance. I can't tell you how many times I heard "no" or was presented with a seemingly insurmountable obstacle only to overcome them by showing up every day to do the work and see it through.

At night as we go to bed, our energy use decreases just as California's clean energy produced from the wind farms becomes available.

What does this mean for residents across the Golden State? When residents use cleaner energy, they help to combat climate change and preserve and protect the environment. They also contribute to cleaner air/less air pollution, improved public health, jobs and other economic benefits.

Californians can do their part to keep California golden by shifting to use cleaner energy when it is available and using efficiently when it is not. This doesn't mean turning your schedule upside down. Just remember that when you use energy matters as much as how much you use.

Learn more about using cleaner energy and how to join the Keep It Golden movement at <https://www.energyupgradeca.org/time-of-use/>.

