

## *Alumni Advisory Board Featured Interview*

Deborah I. Sumner: A Decade of Quality

Deborah I. Sumner (BS Biology, 1985), President and founder of Quality Systems and Compliance ([www.qualitysystemsandcompliance.com](http://www.qualitysystemsandcompliance.com)), has been providing compliance and quality assurance services to clinical laboratories since 2001 at QSC. A founding member of the Alumni Advisory Board of the Center for Entrepreneurial Activities, Deb is committed to Salem State University and its students, especially those who are considering taking charge of the own career success.



Q	How did you go from a BS in biology to owning your own business?
Deb	Evolution! When I graduated from college and I was looking for a job as a medical technologist, which was my concentration at Salem State. For folks that don't know what a medical technologist does...we perform clinical diagnostic laboratory tests on patients, which helps the provider diagnose and treat their patients based on these results. After years of working in many different types of laboratories, I took a job with a small consulting company, which focused on market research, clinical trials, biotech and clinical diagnostics, but had been in business for only a few years. It was great being part of a start-up company, because you got to wear so many different hats...it was exciting and I had an opportunity to learn many new things. Every day was different! After seven years and becoming Vice President, I felt like I was missing out on something and took a sales position with a large office supply company, which turned out not to be a good fit for me. As I tried to figure out my next move, I decided to start my own business offering my knowledge of the clinical diagnostic laboratory, regulatory and compliance to physician offices, clinics, home health agencies and various independent laboratories and I have just completed my eleventh year!
Q	What is the most satisfying part of being a business owner?
Deb	I think for me, it's that sense of accomplishment! It is a great feeling when you start with nothing and in a couple of months a new lab is born. The providers or owners are so excited about offering lab services to their patients and everyone feels good that the lab is of the highest quality, compliant and profitable.
Q	How much training did you have in business before launching QSC?

Deb	Absolutely none!
Q	What knowledge would have made starting your business easier for you?
Deb	I had to spend a lot of time figuring out how to set my business up; sole proprietor, corporation or LLC, taxes, payroll, etc. I had to find a good lawyer and an even better CPA. After all, I'm a Biology major...what do I know about taxes!
Q	Please share some advice with our students, especially our science students, about career options.
Deb	The opportunities are truly endless! Not only have I started this consulting business, but then invented a protective lid that covers biohazard containers and recently set up a third business, which finds and helps market unique clinical diagnostic products. The key is to be open to ideas and opportunities, do your homework and research the market. Last but not least...love what you do!