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## BUSINESSwise

News and Information for the Arizona Business Woman

# FOR WOMEN

### Making the Big Decision to Get Bigger

While many businesses are sitting tight and trying to weather the current economy, others are making the potentially scary decision to expand. That decision is paying off for Ann Siner, as getting bigger looks like it will lead to even better days for [Eco-Chic Consignments](#).

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Double-digit growth. National bragging rights. Not many companies can claim that during a recession, but Phoenix-based Eco-Chic Consignments, Inc. can.

"We are the largest designer consignment store in the country with over 44,000 square feet," says CEO and co-founder Ann Siner. "For the past two or three years we've had consistent growth of 15-20 percent."

While some headlines in January 2010 read 'Fears of Double-Dip Recession,' the company opened its newest - and biggest - store in Scottsdale. My Sister's Closet at Scottsdale and Lincoln Roads features more than 12,500 square feet of prime space showcasing high-end designer women's clothing and accessories with everything priced 60-90 percent below retail.

Siner and her partner (her sister, Jennifer) made the decision to expand their resale operations a year earlier after learning about a remodeling project at the center.

"It was a tough decision," Ann Siner recalls. "We crunched the numbers and re did floor plans. We were nervous about taking so much extra square footage and filling it all with inventory."

But they also looked back and recalled how they weathered the economic downturn following September 11, 2001.

"The last couple of years we kind of call the perfect storm," says Siner. "More people are saying 'Maybe I should at least check this store out.'"

Eco-Chic Consignments includes four locations for My Sister's Closet, four locations for My Sister's Attic which features high-end furniture and accessories and two locations for Well Suited which specializes in men's resale apparel.

Deciding to grow your business now might seem odd, but Siner says think again: "Sometimes you have to fly in the face of adversity and go in the opposite direction of the crowd." She says landlords are willing to make deals on empty commercial space and there's no shortage of qualified job seekers.

"Our staffing is much easier," she says. "I've found the best way to manage growth is to find people smarter than me and let them manage the stores."

As the economy rebounds, Eco-Chic Consignments will get even better – and possibly bigger. Siner says 2011 will bring a stronger web presence for customers to browse and buy. And, she says they're considering expanding the family-owned business outside Arizona.