

Sumo Cookies looking to make more dough with new products

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Sheryl Jean

Sumo Cookies is still looking for its sweet spot.

The 7-year-old business ended a rough 2009 by adding products at lower prices to help move it away from the gift market into everyday sales.

Last month, Sumo Cookies, which makes jumbo chocolate-covered fortune cookies, introduced mallows (three marshmallows on a stick covered in chocolate with toppings) and flattie cookies (flat fortune cookies covered in chocolate and other toppings). Online sales start later this month.

A flattie costs as little as \$2.50, compared with the jumbo fortune cookies that cost up to \$34.

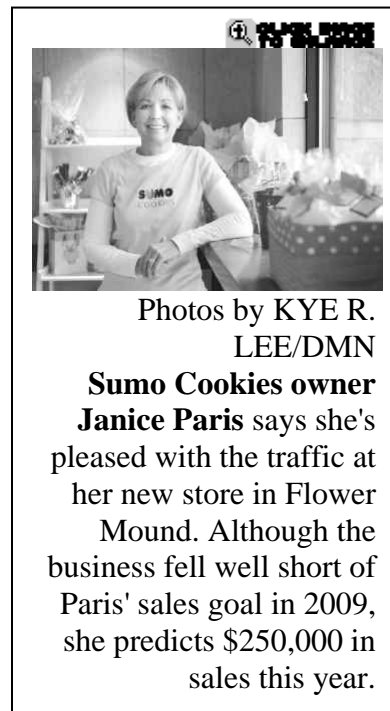
Owner Janice Paris said the new items are selling well, especially the flatties because "there's nothing out there in the market like that."

This month, Sumo Cookies hopes to add traditional cookies, such as chocolate chip and double chocolate chunk, in its new Flower Mound store only.

Paris developed the treats during nearly six months with virtually no sales outlet. She closed her Lewisville shop in May in preparation for a move and stopped online sales in June for a Web site redesign, but plans were delayed.

Paris opened the new shop on Nov. 27 and relaunched the Web site a week later. She's happy with the increased traffic at the Robertson's Creek Shopping Center.

"In one day, we had more traffic than in a week in Lewisville," Paris said. She thinks her December sales would have doubled if a sign had gone up sooner at the back of the store, which faces Dick's Sporting Goods and Hobby Lobby.



Photos by KYE R.
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Sumo Cookies owner Janice Paris says she's pleased with the traffic at her new store in Flower Mound. Although the business fell well short of Paris' sales goal in 2009, she predicts \$250,000 in sales this year.

Still, the dough fell far below Paris' goal of \$250,000 as part of "Make Mine a Million," a yearlong race among women entrepreneurs nationwide to increase revenue beyond \$1 million and create jobs. Sumo Cookies' 2009 revenue of about \$65,000 beat \$50,000 in 2008, she said.

There are more than 1,500 competitors in Make Mine a Million, including 22 women in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The race sponsor, Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence in New York, will name the winners and release year-end results next month.

Paris predicts \$250,000 in sales this year. Long term, she'd like to open more stores or franchise the concept.

"We need to get one store profitable first," Paris said. This year, "I really want to get into it and build the business."

Sheryl Jean