

When Jill Litwin applied to La Cocina, she had abundant vision but needed help with what she calls her “road map.” Ms. Litwin is the owner of Peas of Mind, a line of frozen organic toddler food that she developed in Vermont.

At first, she was only capable of making 12 mini-casseroles at a time. The staff brought in a food scientist to help Ms. Litwin recalibrate her recipes so that each batch would turn out 400.

“They are helping people produce products that are high quality and of great integrity,” said Justin Jackson, executive coordinator for purchasing at Whole Foods in Northern California. “If it wasn’t well thought through and executed properly, our interest wouldn’t be what it is.”

Peas of Mind is now in 80 stores in California, 20 of them Whole Foods Markets, which is discussing plans to take her product national. Ms. Litwin says she has doubled her 2006 sales in the first quarter of this year.

“If you are an entrepreneur, you are in your own world and you never know if you’re on the right track,” Ms. Litwin said. “This is definitely a community you can bounce ideas off of. And if they don’t know the answer, they’ll find somebody who does.”