

Company History

FlashingBlinkyLights.com (FBL) began, like most great companies, by accident. Before FBL, founders Chris and Laura Camarella were at a trade show promoting their previous company, and they noticed the show was pretty dead, except for one booth filled with flashing LED clip-on pins. Everyone was flocking to that booth like seagulls to bread crumbs. By the end of that show, it dawned on them there was something special about these LEDs that would light up their future. They bought a case of LEDs to sell on the side, and once they saw customers lining up to get their lights, they knew they were onto something big.

Chris and Laura traversed the Southern California landscape, going from local festivals to carnivals and state fairs in a lone SUV filled to the brim with boxes of LED clips, a tent, and many homemade displays. LED lights were the perfect party item for night time at these festivals: bright, available in different colors, a big attention-grabber and conversation starter. Everyone wanted a piece of the action. But more than merely generating money, blinky lights made people smile, and that has always been the mission of FBL.

During the day, Chris and Laura couldn't even give the LED lights away. After all "blinkies," as customers affectionately dubbed them, don't show up in daylight. They would spend their hours in the sun just waiting for nightfall, changing out batteries of the blinkies they used the night before. Their festival neighbors pitied them. But come 30 minutes before sunset, they'd turn on their displays and decorate their hair, clothing, hats and bodies with countless clip-on lights. By the time the sun completely set, their booth would be jam packed with customers 4 layers deep. The price was quite magical: one for \$6, two for \$10, and yes, almost everyone bought two. Their neighbors' pity then turned to fascination. Little did Chris and Laura know, soon their festival neighbors would be their customers.

By the time their legendary successful weekend at the L.A. County Fair came to a close, they were importing their own clips instead of buying locally. This new supply source also meant diversification into a wide scope of LED novelties like jewelry, toys and more. After dipping their toes in the waters of wholesale, it was time to step up their game and focus on what is now the backbone of FBL: their website. Fairs and festivals were increasingly being serviced by their wholesale customers. Next, Chris taught himself how to build a one page website displaying animated .gif's of blinky lights he filmed himself with a borrowed camcorder. They were stunned to get their first order within a few hours of going live. Even though the simple website had no shopping cart or fancy features, customers never hesitated to call in their orders and thus, FlashingBlinkyLights.com was born!

Throughout all of this, FBL experienced the gifts and curses of growth. On one hand, it was amazing to hire their first full-time customer service rep, who's still working at FBL today, and also to work out of the garage Laura's father converted for them. On the other hand, before they knew it, they had to get a bigger space. After moving to a 1,500 sq. ft. office, they thought that would be it...until they outgrew that space and had to triple it... and then outgrew that as well. Good problems to have, right? Of course they are, but the question remained: could any warehouse contain the juggernaut that is FBL? We would soon find out.

As the company flourished, an awesome team of diverse personalities and talents came together, including a full team of customer service, sales and warehouse people. As requests for custom-printed blinkies and other LEDs grew, so did FBL's propensity for exploring new territory. Up until this point, all custom orders were imported, meaning it took too long for delivery and the quantities had to be very large. The purchase of their first pad-printing machine, as well as hiring their first printing department manager, meant a step in a brand new and exciting direction.

After a talented design team was established, it was time to triple the space they had already tripled, and move into a warehouse that could actually contain them. And it worked! Well, for 6 years, that is...

You see, FlashingBlinkyLights.com was never good at staying small and contained, which as a business is something you may not want to be good at anyway. For FBL, growth means success, success means customer happiness, and customer happiness is what they're all about.

Today FBL is housed in a 60,000 square foot warehouse, again triple the size of their last, a symbol of how far the company has come. From a garage to a warehouse big enough to house a jumbo jet, this new home is the culmination of everything Chris and Laura strived for since the beginning; to build something everlasting, bigger than they could have imagined.