



**SMALL BUSINESS:** GREEN COURAGE

## Eco-Entrepreneur

Former real estate agent Kate Dayton was renovating a two-family investment property in Beacon, New York, when she kept running up against the same wall: Where could she get environmental building products made from sustainable materials that don't off-gas unhealthy chemicals and that have little chance of ending up in a landfill before her toddler graduated from middle school? The question became particularly challenging when she tried to replace some kitchen cabinets. "One of the architects I worked with told me cabinetry is saturated with urea formaldehyde," she says. "They were making formaldehyde-free cabinets in California, but I couldn't find them here on the East Coast." Then came her ah-ha moment: "This could be my business," she thought. So she cashed in on that investment property and launched Green Courage ([greencourage.com](http://greencourage.com)), a small company that helps consumers and interior designers source eco-friendly products. Her New Paltz, New York, showroom offers everything from those aforementioned kitchen cabinets, Forest Stewardship Council-certified hardwood floors, and countertops made from compressed paper to recycled glass tiles, organic mattresses, and paints that don't off-gas volatile organic compounds, or VOCs. The store also provides design services to help clients with their renovation projects. Being a first-time small-business owner is "not easy," says Dayton. "It's hard, hard work. But it's satisfying. I feel like I'm making a difference for people, for my kids, for my future."