Cheesemaking is a special craft that has been in the Manwaring family for over 100 years. They opened their first American factory in 1955, and subsequently moved it to Idaho. But, after decades of cheesemaking and due to some unforeseen challenges, the original family company was shut down.

Blake Manwaring however, retained his love for cheese and the art of cheesemaking. In 2009, he found himself unemployed wondering what to do next. He decided to start his own cheesemaking business and resurrected the family craft. With some key financial help from relatives, the Regional Development Alliance (RDA) and an ISU student-led feasibility study, coordinated by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Blake launched Manwaring Cheese in 2010. Today, Blake Manwaring is one of the few people still practicing the centuries-old craft of “open vat cheesemaking.”

“35 to 40 years ago if you had a job and a cash box you could make your business work. Nowadays, you can’t, you need expert help. I feel that’s what I received from the SBDC.”