



DELIVERING FOR BUSINESS

THE RECOVERY EDITION IS HERE



**THREE TALES OF
TRIUMPH WINNERS**

**HOW ONLINE SHOPPING
HABITS ARE EVOLVING**

THE RIGHT TIME TO SELL ON EBAY?

SOLUTIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESS
ISSUE
01
2021

**“SHE STOOD IN THE
STORM AND WHEN
THE WIND DID NOT
BLOW HER WAY, SHE
ADJUSTED HER SAILS.”**

ELIZABETH EDWARDS





THE JOURNEY FORWARD

This issue of *Delivering for Business* arrives as Canadian small businesses journey back cautiously during one of the most challenging periods of our nation's recent history.

No matter where you are on your business journey, we're here to support you with tools, guidance and insight.


In this special recovery issue, you'll be introduced to the three winners of our Tales of Triumph contest. Each business is a shining example of resilience in the face of adversity. Of embracing change. And of generously helping others during difficult times.

We hope you enjoy reading their Tales of Triumph as much as we did.

As always, thank you for trusting us with your business. It's a privilege we never take for granted.

Danielle Doiron

General Manager, Marketing
Canada Post



TALES OF TRIUMPH

Last year, Canada Post asked small businesses to share their stories of perseverance, grit and determination in the Tales of Triumph contest. We wanted to know how they revamped their business strategies, used innovative marketing techniques to stay afloat and helped their communities stay resilient and connected during COVID-19.

There were so many worthy entries and we're pleased to introduce you to three of our winners.

**TALES OF TRIUMPH
IS BACK FOR
ANOTHER YEAR.**

Learn more at
canadapost.ca/SMBmagazine

**GRAND PRIZE WINNER:
WEATHERED THE STORM**

STAYING STRONG



NORTH SHORE SPORTS MEDICINE

North Vancouver, British Columbia
nssm.ca

Canada's small businesses were hit especially hard by the seismic changes of the last year. In the initial weeks of the pandemic, North Shore Sports Medicine's (NSSM) revenue fell an alarming 95 per cent. At one point, the respected North Vancouver multidisciplinary healthcare clinic was left with only enough cash on hand to cover three months of operations.

“THE PANDEMIC FORCED US TO RECREATE OUR BUSINESS.”

The need to reinvent its business was not only urgent, it was critical. Challenge accepted.

The NSSM team recognized the threat of COVID-19 to its patients – and its business – immediately. “We projected that the lockdown and its attendant changes would be with us for the long term,” says founder and owner Paige Larson. “Based on increased remote working, and other changes caused by the lockdown, we reinvented ourselves as a telehealth business.”

Telehealth is the delivery of health and wellness care and information through digital communications technologies, including videoconferencing.

Raising funding, strengthening hope.

Quick access to funding from two financial partners enabled NSSM to retain virtually all of its staff and remain open remotely during the early stages of the pandemic.

Next was a major push to provide an expanded range of telehealth capabilities. NSSM spent almost all its revenue during the closure hiring a videographer to create instructional videos for patients. The videos helped both inform and reassure the NSSM patient base.

Physiotherapy practitioners were also trained to conduct telehealth visits, ensuring both clinicians and their patients were comfortable with the process.

Keeping patient-practitioner relationships strong.

To most small business owners, it may seem counter-intuitive to increase spending on social media and one's website during financial uncertainty, but that's precisely what NSSM did. In fact, NSSM quadrupled its investment in these two key digital channels.

THE GOAL WAS TO MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS WITH PATIENTS DURING THE TRANSFORMATION TO TELEHEALTH – AND BEYOND, WHEN PHYSICAL LOCATIONS REOPENED.

"When we eventually reopened, we were at 85 per cent capacity right away and we have continued to flourish, getting 100 per cent of pre-COVID revenues within two months," says Larson.

A phenomenal achievement by any measure.

"After we reopened at the first allowable moment, our revenue remained lower since we had fewer clinician areas due to social distancing; while our costs, such as for cleaning and PPE, increased," Larson explains. "Even so, we decided to add staff hours to maintain our past high level of connection with our patients even under social distancing and to change two patient-facing jobs for at-risk staff to remote positions, so they could continue to work."

Stepping up to help communities.

Social responsibility is a fundamental part of NSSM's business strategy and always has been. Every year, staff provide many free hours of service to dozens of teams, schools, healthcare initiatives and charities, as well as pro-bono and subsidized treatments for low-income patients.

This commitment to helping others continues in this time of uncertainty and anxiety. "We met with local, Provincial, and Federal politicians about what support we needed and what was working. Giving back to our community has always been integral to our business, so our telehealth program and communication with government at all levels was a natural fit."

North Shore Sports Medicine is a business led by an entrepreneur that has proven its resilience over the past 30-plus years through crises, competition and change. But no challenge has been quite as overwhelming as the one brought on by the pandemic. The fact that NSSM navigated its way back to health – while staying true to its values – should be an inspiration to every business regardless of size.

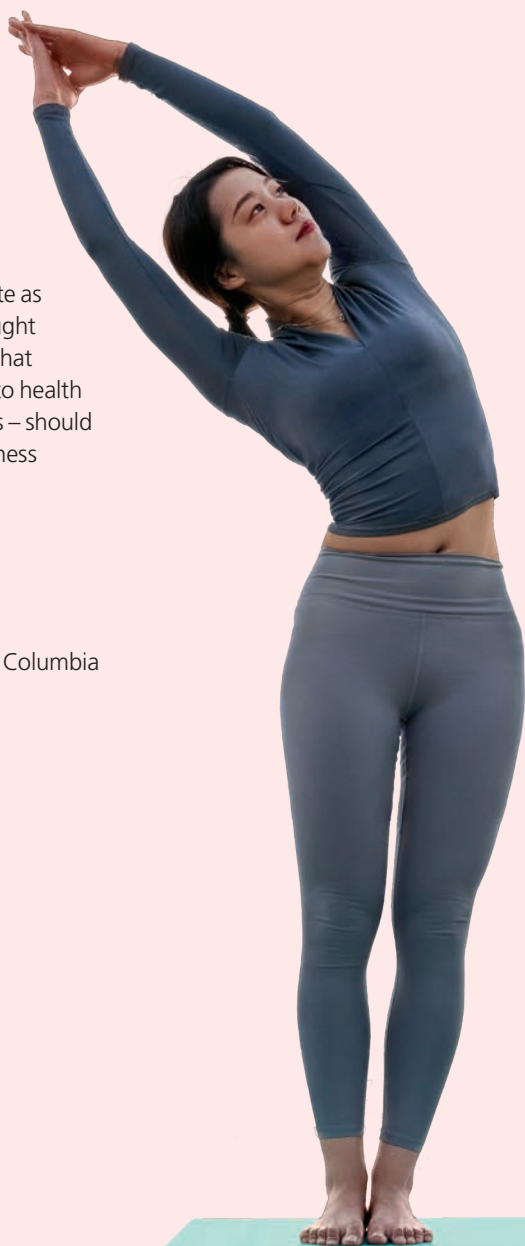
Our Runner Ups

The Local Space
Langley and Chilliwack, British Columbia
thelocalspace.ca

HockeyStickMan
Mississauga, Ontario
hockeystickman.com

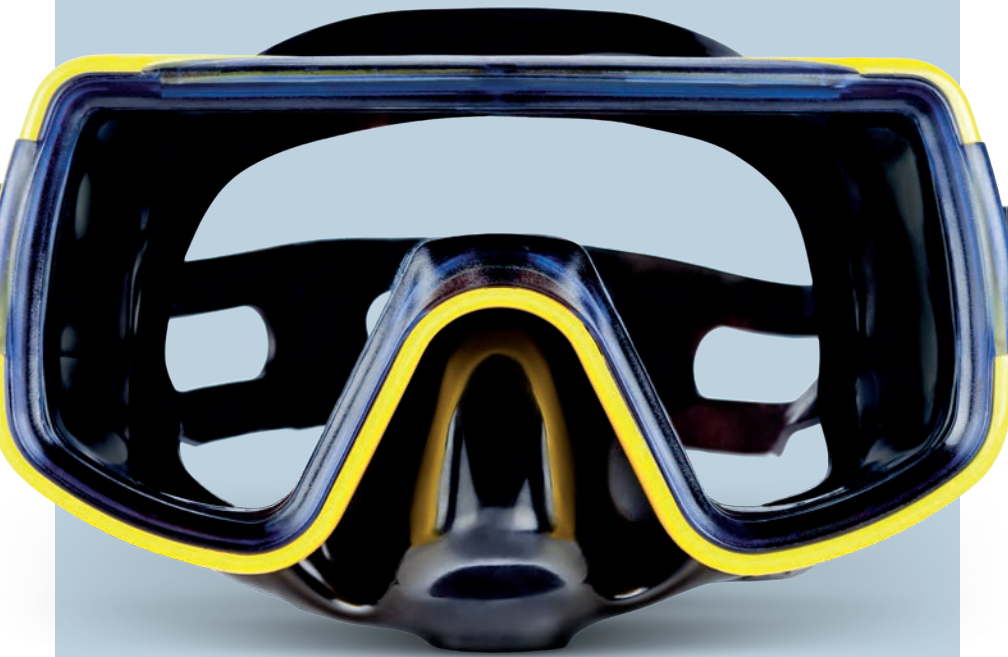
TALES OF TRIUMPH IS BACK IN 2021!

To learn more, visit
canadapost.ca/SMBmagazine



GRAND PRIZE WINNER: OFFLINE TO ONLINE

DIVING INTO THE DEEP END



**WE ASKED OWNER MEGAN PLEMEL
HOW THE PANDEMIC AND CHANGES IN
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ACCELERATED
OCEAN SPORTS' MOVE TO E-COMMERCE.**

OCEAN SPORTS

Edmonton, Alberta
oceansports.ca

“Twelve months ago, less than 5 per cent of our business was online. It’s grown to be nearly 50 per cent.”

Tell us a little about Ocean Sports and your history.

Ocean Sports is an Edmonton-based year-round watersports and scuba business. I’ve worked here since I was 16, first as an employee. My husband and I bought it from the previous owner a few years ago. Even our kids work with us so we’re truly a family business.

How was your business impacted by the pandemic?

COVID-19 literally took us out at the knees. We had to close our brick-and-mortar location in March of last year and lay off our tremendous staff. Everything stopped: our scuba training, our dive travel and our watersports sales at the start of our spring season. We were shocked and scared.

To make things worse, we had purchased a 4,000-square-foot booth at a very important trade show which got shut down within just four hours of opening due to coronavirus concerns. We lost many thousands of dollars in set-up costs and potential revenue.

How important did your online business become to you?

Oceansports.ca became our lifeline. We nurtured it like a baby, tweaking our messaging and products. We often spent 12 to 16 hours a day responding personally to new customer inquiries by phone, email, text and through social media. Delivering a white glove experience online was incredibly important.



How did you promote your online store?

At a time when we were evaluating every single dollar and expenditure, we made the tough decision to increase our ad spend on Google and Facebook ads. We immediately started seeing results. We were getting inquiries and orders from customers in B.C., Ontario, Québec and the Maritimes.

From March to July, over 90 per cent of customers online and in store were new. This was a revelation. Many days I would take 20 to 30 parcels to the post office for shipping. For our local customer base, we offered local delivery and curbside pickup.

Most gratifying, we became busy enough that we could recall some of our staff.

You mentioned shipping earlier.

Any words of advice?

Free shipping on most orders over \$99 was a major factor in getting so many online orders from across Canada. It definitely cut into our margins, but we knew that low or free shipping is important to many customers.

Any lessons you can share with businesses looking to transition to online?

For us, the secrets to success online were clear product detail, as close to 100 per cent inventory accuracy as possible and impeccable customer care. On that last point, concentrate on making the customer experience top notch. Promptly respond to every customer question or concern. It's an opportunity to win them over.

The pandemic has tested the Ocean Sports team's patience, courage and imagination, but the potential to reach new heights spurs them on. As Plemel explains, "We've worked harder than I thought possible to change our business model after 45 years. But we're seeing success – and we're excited about what the future holds."

Our Runner Ups

Bougeotte et Placotine
Montréal, Québec
bougeotteetplacotine.ca

COMMIS
St. Catharines, Ontario
commisculinaryworkspace.com



**TALES OF TRIUMPH
IS BACK IN 2021!**

To learn more, visit
canadapost.ca/SMBmagazine

SMALL BUSINESSES NEED TO BOOST THEIR DIGITAL GAME.

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, 18 per cent of small and medium businesses engaged in e-commerce pre-COVID. Since then, another 15 per cent have joined the ranks.

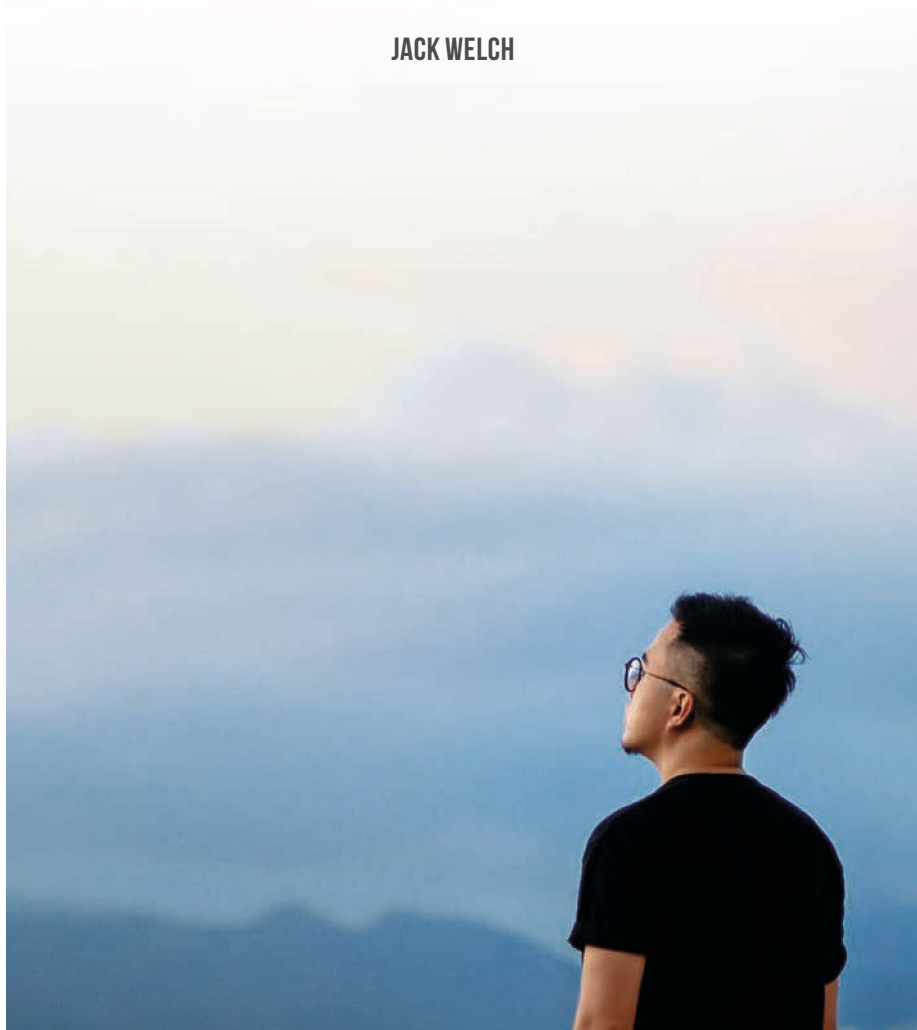
In this exclusive Globe and Mail article, industry experts discuss the considerations and steps that make for a successful transition to e-commerce.

Read the article at
canadapost.ca/BoostYourGame

**“CHANGE BEFORE YOU
HAVE TO.”**

—

JACK WELCH



ONLINE SHOPPING

CONSUMER INSIGHTS TO LEAD THE PACK.



Consumer behaviour has shifted significantly since the pandemic. To help businesses like yours plan ahead, Canada Post surveyed 2,500 Canadians to find out how their shopping habits are evolving and where they are headed next.

Take a look at the latest results that will help you set your business up for online success this year and beyond.

E-commerce will continue its growth in 2021

50% Since the start of the pandemic, nearly 50 per cent of Canadians report buying more online

93% of shoppers plan to maintain or increase their online shopping in the next 6 to 8 months

NEARLY 1 IN 3 CANADIANS are actively avoiding in-store shopping

THE TAKEAWAY There's never been a better time to elevate your online presence, make your business stand out and set yourself up for success online.

What consumers are looking for from online retailers

Need for less delivery speed

69% will shop more often with a retailer that provides fast shipping – however, this is 9 per cent less than last year

Keep customers informed

78% choose retailers that manage expectations throughout the experience

THE TAKEAWAY Free shipping, quick fulfillment and delivery updates are big considerations for consumers as they choose between online retailers.

Keeping customers coming back

42% say offering hard-to-find items will help keep them coming back

19% show their loyalty to retailers who showcase their values, community involvement and dedication to the environment

THE TAKEAWAY Find ways to differentiate your online business and stand out from the crowd – you'll help boost your bottom line and build long-lasting customer loyalty.



GRAND PRIZE WINNER: DOING GOOD

SAVOURING A DIFFERENT KIND OF SUCCESS



“WE HAD TO LAY OFF EMPLOYEES WHO’D BEEN WITH US FOR YEARS. IT WAS ONE OF THE HARDEST DECISIONS I’VE EVER HAD TO MAKE.”

CARIBBEAN FLAVAS RESTAURANT & CATERING

Fredericton, New Brunswick
caribbeanflavas.ca



When Naz Ali, co-owner and head chef of Caribbean Flavas Restaurant & Catering in Fredericton, is asked to describe the pandemic's impact on his business, he quickly responds with "game changing."

"We had to lay off employees who'd been with us for years," Naz explains. "It was one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make."

In spite of celebrating 16 years of success – and catering to prime ministers and celebs like Leonard Cohen, Snoop Dog and the Black Eyed Peas – Naz knew he had to rethink every aspect of his operations.

One of Caribbean Flavas Restaurant & Catering's guiding principles didn't change – it only got stronger: The commitment to assisting neighbours in need.

"When COVID-19 hit, we saw people had lost jobs. Children were at home, possibly missing out on their one and only daily meal at school. Essential workers were stretched to the max."

In response, Naz and his team launched BOGO. But unlike the popular promotion, this BOGO is all about stepping up to help others.

"It stands for "buy-one-give-one." When a customer buys a sandwich, we give one on their behalf to a person in need or to an essential worker."

Happy bellies = smiling faces

The buy-one-give-one initiative was proudly featured on caribbeanflavas.ca. “We had everyone simply click on the free meal per day and come pick it up – no questions asked.” In his estimation, Caribbean Flavas Restaurant & Catering has helped feed over 2,000 people so far.

Originally, the plan was to deliver meals once a week to those who needed them, but the demand was far greater than anticipated.

“We changed delivery frequency from one to two days a week...then to three days...then to four days a week. At one point, we were working seven days, with no rest!”

Naz and his team have also been partnering with the Fredericton chapter of the Second Harvest Food Bank to help distribute unused food.

A range of economical menu choices were introduced to help answer the needs of households struggling through lay-offs and pay cuts.

“The coronavirus changed the entire game.”

Naz explored every option in order to keep his business thriving. Embracing a more online business model was a natural decision.

“We basically re-launched our entire menu online to be able to do takeout and delivery. That was done pretty much overnight, so a very fast pivot.”

Food for thought

“Staying connected to the community one serves is key,” Naz explains. “We want to help our customers, our neighbours and all the people around us every day that don’t necessarily get recognized for their hard work and dedication. We’ve all heard, ‘It takes a village to raise a child.’ Well, it’s important to live that wisdom every day.”

Our Runner Ups

Jamie Gentry Designs
Sooke, British Columbia
jamiegentrydesigns.com

Patricia’s Cooking Classes
for Children
Regina, Saskatchewan
Kids Cook in Regina



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Source: CPC/Kantar, SMM Stats Update, CPC 18-216, 2018

*Canada Post, Connecting for Action, September 2016

MIX DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL MARKETING TO BUILD AN INTEGRATED PLAN



SMALL BUSINESSES CAN'T RELY ON JUST ONE FORM OF MEDIA OR CHANNEL

“Right now, any small business’ sole focus should be ‘How do I drive traffic?’” says Stephen Brown, chief executive officer at FUSE Create, a Toronto creative agency.

“The typical flow of people is gone,” he adds, “the typical commuter traffic is gone, and you cannot rely on these consumer patterns or models anymore.”

In the current environment, small business owners need to develop a plan that includes a combination of both digital and tangible marketing options. They simply cannot rely on a single channel.

“You have to think about who you’re trying to reach, what you’re trying to tell them and what are the most effective platforms for this message,” says Mr. Brown.

That depends partly on your product and market. A virtual business doesn’t need to limit a social media campaign, for instance, based on geography,

while a local shop might benefit from sending a physical mailing to their local community.

Many small businesses gravitate to social media marketing, such as Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn, because it's free or low cost and easy to set up.

While digital marketing tools can be successful, Marc Cooper, president of Toronto integrated advertising agency Junction 59, points to direct mail as another way to help reach an audience – especially with the home currently playing a central role in all of our lives.

“Direct mail can be a lot simpler than a lot of people think, and it can connect to your digital channels easily too,” he says. “Canada Post has a network of partners who offer services like data and printing to help put it all together for you.”

There's power in taking an integrated marketing approach, according to two market research firms:

- InfoTrends reports that combining web, email and mobile with print translates into a 45 per cent increase in response rates compared to a digital-only media mix.
- Forrester notes that 86 per cent of marketers say that melding online channels with offline marketing, as part of a synchronized campaign, is critical to long-term success.

Small business owners also need to be aware of the evolution happening in marketing.

“In a COVID-19 landscape,” says Mr. Cooper, “it's more important than ever to understand the customer's pain points and where your business can help solve them.”

“WHAT WORKED BEFORE MAY NOT WORK NOW, SO IT'S THE TIME TO ADAPT.”

That can be as simple as conveying messages about curbside pickup, or more products available online for delivery. Even including thank-you notes in deliveries can help.

There's no one-size-fits-all formula for success. The best way to find out is to test, learn, repeat and scale up quickly when you achieve success.

“Get out of your comfort zone,” Mr. Brown says. “What worked before may not work now, so it's the time to adapt.”

TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE

TIME TO CHANGE.



THE SWISS WATCH PARTS DISTRIBUTORS FINDS ITS IDEAL MATCH IN EBAY.

The Swiss Watch Parts Distributors (Swiss Watch Parts) of Vancouver has been a purveyor of quality watch materials, parts, tools and supplies since 1952.

If you're looking to find a new movement for your vintage Rolex, you're likely to find it at Swiss Watch Parts.

"We directly import products from Switzerland, Germany, France, England and other countries," says President Dorina Pasca, who was an employee of the company before purchasing it from the owner a decade ago.

THE SWISS WATCH PARTS DISTRIBUTORS

Vancouver, BC
watchpartsdistributors.com



The company's customer base includes professional watchmakers, watch-servicing companies and watch enthusiasts – a demanding group that counts on exceptional service from its suppliers. The pandemic forced the closure of many retail jewellery and repair shops – a critical segment of Swiss Watch Parts' target audience.

The tough get going.

As days of uncertainty turned into weeks of apprehension, Ms. Pasca knew she had to pivot. "I realized I had to do something to reach a broader and different market. This is where e-commerce came to mind."

Ms. Pasca started by researching available options, including the range of different e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces.

"I decided that eBay is the best option for us based on a few factors. We were able to instantly reach millions of customers worldwide. We simply couldn't have done that with our company website alone." eBay's user-friendly platform, range of payment and shipping options

and excellent customer service are also cited as important criteria in her decision-making.

"SINCE THE MOVE TO EBAY, 35 PER CENT OF OUR ONLINE SALES ARE INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMERS."

A timely move pays off.

"Pre-pandemic we had a handful of international customers. Since being on eBay, 35 per cent of our online sales are international customers."

When asked if she has any advice for small businesses considering the move to e-commerce, Ms. Pasca offers, "Spend the time to know your competition, and keep your prices aligned with your competitors.' Be prepared to work long hours and do the hard things in the beginning. Rest assured, it will get easier. I know!"

Most important of all? "Do not hesitate – start transitioning online as soon as you can."

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