#12

COMPLETE

Collector:	Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started:	Tuesday, September 01, 2020 8:11:47 PM
Last Modified:	Tuesday, September 01, 2020 8:19:56 PM
Time Spent:	00:08:08
IP Address:	207.6.194.239

Page 1

Q1

BIA Name:

Downtown Langley Business Association

Q2

Contact:

Teri James

Q3

Email:

info@downtownlangley.com

Q4

Project Title:

Strengthening Community Through Crisis

Q5

Category:

Events,

Marketing,

Partnerships & Advocacy

Q6

Project Description:

In spite of this dark moment in our history, we as a BIA were looking to step up and support our local businesses, as well as our community as a whole. During this period, we noticed that there were amazing stories of resilience from our local businesses and we wanted to be there to recognize and inspire these businesses during this challenging time period. In order to outline all of our efforts, we have emailed a full pdf document clearly outlining the contents of the submission and all supplemental materials to Lori Baxter, Executive Director of BIABC.

Q7

Audience:

The primary audience for our “Strengthening Community through Crisis” campaign were the citizens of Langley City and the Business owners of our Downtown Langley Business Association. We were looking to draw the attention to the importance of supporting local businesses, especially during a global pandemic. Our secondary audiences were the tourists visiting Langley, and the residents of our neighbouring communities of Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Q8

Implementation:

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Downtown Langley Business Association has worked tirelessly to advocate for local businesses with all three levels of government. Not only did we communicate pertinent information for various levels of government to our local businesses, but we also introduced moral boosting campaigns to alleviate anxieties.

To start, we asked various levels of government to not charge late filing penalties and installment interest on balances owing to government from March 20th, 2020 until COVID-19 was under control. This includes, Employer Health Tax, PST and WCB premiums. We asked our local government to remove the requirement for BC municipalities to charge 10 percent on late payment of property taxes. We also asked the Business Development Bank of Canada to provide access to interest-free loans among others cost saving initiatives for our local businesses.

We immediately wrote and mailed out a letter to all 286 property owners asking for rent relief for their tenants. We spoke to approximately 65 property owners and 175 business owners to help them navigate these difficult waters. The comment most often made by the businesses was, “thank you for sending this out. I had no idea how to even start this conversation with my landlord”. At last count we heard from 87 business owners who believe they were successful in negotiating rent reduction/relief as a result of their property owner having received our letter. (letter included)

On March 31st, 2020 we donated $3,000 to the Langley Memorial Hospital to support hospital staff with hot meals during their shifts. The only stipulation was that food had to be ordered from any of our Business Improvement Area restaurants. As many frontline healthcare professionals were working longer hours, often without breaks or food we wanted to have a way to thank the health care professionals who had been working around the clock. We put together a team of 16 local restaurants who all agreed to provide a special $10 designed meal for them. With the donation of $3000, we were able to buy hospital workers with approximately 300 meals. https://www.langleyadvancetimes.com/business/downtown-langley-eateries-pull-together-to-feed-hospital-staff/

In the beginning of April 2020, we started a heart themed “Community Strong” Campaign. This was a campaign where a local artist was hired to paint business windows in our BIA. We covered the cost of one window and if additional windows were desired, this service was made available to them at the reduced cost of $50. This undertaking helped boost moral considerably throughout our business community, knowing that we were all “in this together”. When everyone unities to spread positivity, that’s when we see our community strength come together. https://www.langleyadvancetimes.com/news/video-painting-hearts-to-raise-spirits-in-langley-city/

In April 2020, we also created a sharable graphic to show how small businesses could be supported. This was accompanied by a strong social media campaign focussed entirely on the importance of “supporting local”. (graphic included)

We created daily Instagram videos (over 60 in total), to provide hope, encouragement and to spread the word that we were all in this together. We have since been told by numerous businesses and community members that they tuned in every single day, just to hear what we had to say and for the familiarity of a caring face and message. If you would like to watch the videos that we had posted, please review our Instagram page @discoverdowntownlangley.

We also created a “phone tree” in partnership with members of the Langley City Economic Recovery Task Group (of which I am the Chair) – and not only checked in with businesses to see how they were doing, but made the public aware of which local businesses were open and what services they had to offer. This included all restaurant, retail and service businesses. This was an ongoing undertaking, and we continuously updated our businesses and the community with this relevant information. https://www.langleyadvancetimes.com/news/some-struggle-some-thrive-during-pandemic-langley-city-business-survey-finds/

To help our local businesses we partnered with several online app companies including:

- “GetintheLoop”, which is a mobile media marketing company that assists Langley businesses at no cost with promoting their available products and services during these unprecedented times https://getintheloop.ca/deals/langley
- “I Love This Chit!”, which is a local company that promotes the purchase of a coupon or gift certificate to be used once

businesses started to re-open https://ilovethischit.ca/product-category/downtown-langley-bia/
- LOCO BC's #buylocal campaign, which is another, further reaching gift card campaign supported by numerous BIA's, Chambers and organizations across the region https://www.locobc.ca/cpages/bc-buy-local

These partnerships allowed our local businesses to receive free advertising, continue to earn income and they also gained some valuable insight regarding what digital marketing is all about. All of these services were offered at no cost to our membership, and we worked closely with them to assist with signing up and launching their listings.

In a prominent location in our downtown there is a City owned building slated for demolition in the future, and we have historically partnered with the City to create window cling graphics that advertise our annual events. (These clings also act as extremely important "window coverings to keep the undesirables out of the building"). Realizing that the usual clings were not going to work due to event cancellations, we quickly reached out to a local muralist. She created an amazing mural that simply says "The Downtown Langley Business Association is very proud of our small businesses. Thank you to our amazing community for your ongoing support." (photo included)

We created, printed and distributed 1,000 "Thank You" postcards to all businesses that were open or starting to reopen, to distribute to their customers in bags or have on their counters. The sole purpose of this was to provide our businesses with a way to thank their customers without having to create them or bearing the expense themselves in these uncertain times (postcard included)

Throughout this entire time, we kept up a strong social media presence through our Downtown Dollar contests, partnering with businesses, bloggers and influencers. We also hosted a $3,500 Instagram Giveaway which consisted of various items donated from supportive businesses prior to COVID, intended for a $5 K Instagram Followers Giveaway in March 2020. We realized the timing wasn't right, held off until mid-June and launched it as the Downtown Langley Dream Giveaway. Our instincts proved correct as people were genuinely waiting for something positive and the success of this promotion is evidenced by the following Instagram statistics: Gained followers 1,453/total likes 2,053/total comments 11,109/total shares 875
Our annual budget for Downtown Dollars* is approximately $10,000. With Board approval we increased this budget to $20,000, and between April and August we gave away through online contests, a total of $8,560. In addition to our own on-line contests, we also offered businesses their own $100 Downtown Dollars to host give-aways in conjunction with their own, resulting in over 40 collaborative and in-house giveaways. The support and increased social media followers that each business received as a result of this was much appreciated, as has been evidenced by their ongoing and positive feedback.
* Downtown Dollars (started in 2012) are the same as cash and accepted as such in the 90+ participating businesses. Businesses pay a one-time registration fee of $25 and when they turn their collected Downtown Dollars in to the office, they are reimbursed 100%. We have a proven return rate of 97% on these dollars and use them so much that people recognize them and oftentimes purchase them as gifts etc.
Our Social Media Manager created very strong relationships with other social media experts over the past few months. These influencers appreciated what we were doing, so much so that she was able to put out a call for "Downtown Langley Brand Ambassadors", with a list of criteria for the months of July and August. Although expecting only a few, she received over 100 responses from some very high-profile influencers of all types and had to make the difficult choice of selecting five. The influencers selected have a combined following of over 43,000 people, and this program proved so successful, that many of the applicants continue to want to work with us, so we have selected five more for September and October.
We created a heartfelt video to say "Thank You" from our businesses to our local community for all their love and support. This video was placed on our home page and shared on all social media platforms. This video raised awareness once again about the importance of supporting local and was shared over 450 times. (video included)
We realized that as businesses were starting to open back up, we needed something to stimulate the economic recovery and thus created two new events: "Pick Up Picnics" for the restaurants and "Ain't It Grand" for the retail and service businesses. We started working on these projects in early June and launched them at the beginning of July. This took four weeks from concept to launch included graphics, business registration and informing the public. These two events will be described in more detail in the following paragraphs. (posters and business registrations included)
The DLBA created a Pick Up Picnic Project (www.pickuppicnics.ca) that ran Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 12 – 4 from July 3rd to August 16th. At no cost to them, restaurants were asked to register for this to accomplish the following:

The goal was to run a restaurant program that encouraged customers to choose a participating DLBA restaurant to safely purchase a

takeout order and then visit one of the many beautiful parks in Langley City to enjoy their Pick Up Picnic.

How Did the Downtown Langley Picnic Project Work?

- Thirteen participating restaurants offered a Pick Up Picnic special to customers 12pm – 4pm on Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays from July 3rd to August 16th
- Individual restaurants decided what they would offer for their Pick Up Picnic special and what they would charge
- Customers placed and paid for orders with restaurants directly, just as they would for a standard takeout order
- When customers picked up their takeout order, their food was provided to them in a DLBA reusable shopping bag with the DLBA Picnic Package inside the bag (there was no cost to the restaurants for these additional items)

DLBA Picnic Package included:

- Branded DLBA reusable shopping bag
- 1 oz. DLBA branded bottle of hand sanitizer
- Map of the parks and places to picnic in Langley City - highlighting the perfect places to enjoy their Pick Up Picnic (map included)
- 1 green waste and 1 garbage bag
- Thank You postcard

All the restaurants had to do was provide the takeout order and any napkins or utensils, and once they registered for the program, the DLBA brought them 30 pre-stuffed DLBA bags for their use in the program, and were able to ask for more as required.

To continue to build moral we held a strong social media campaign (including using bloggers and influencers) supporting this program in addition to the following:

- Weekly giveaways of $100 downtown dollars and a branded DLBA picnic blanket throughout the duration of the program
- A grand prize of $1,000 downtown dollars for one lucky winner was announced at the end of the promotion

535 Pick Up Picnics bags (PUP) over the six-weekend promotion were used and we repurposed the remaining pre-stuffed PUP bags to Langley City (115) to be handed out by their Ambassadors in City parks throughout the remainder of the summer.
Lastly, we created the “Ain’t It Grand?” (www.aintitgrand.ca) campaign which ran from July 3rd until August 28th. This campaign allowed anyone who shopped in Downtown Langley at participating stores the chance to win 1 of 2 $1000 Downtown Dollars Prizes. This campaigned brought continued awareness to our local businesses and was a fun contest for shoppers. Thirty-two businesses took part and with over 22,000 receipts collected (estimated at a very conservative $30/receipt), we know that over $660,000 was spent in our participating stores over the eight-week span of the contest.

Throughout all of this, we did not shut our doors. We stayed in continuous contact with our local businesses and our community and were there to answer any question they had, by phone, email or in person. We believe that as a direct result of our efforts and the tenacity of our small business owners, and by keeping the businesses feeling less defeated and constantly instilling hope, this has resulted in no business closures due to the pandemic.

As with all other BIA’s, we dealt with the cancellation of events and programs, tried to manage the deposit losses, repurpose them and find a balance while understanding that our event and program promoters, organizers and performers were all in the same situation. For us and all of our fellow BIA colleagues, it was about being able to support, stay strong and ultimately survive.

Q9

Results:

- Increased awareness of what the DLBA is and its importance (testimonials included)
- Increased support of buying local and why it is so important
- Two prominent businesses opened up since August 15th (@theplantjunkie and https://www.thehayloftvintagemall.com/)
- Increase to social media followers between March and September: Instagram start 4,236/finish 8,547 for an increase in 4,311 new followers. Facebook start 4,112/finish 5,650 for an increase in 1,538 new followers.
- Zero loss of businesses and zero vacancy rate in the immediate downtown core
- No increase to vacancy rates anywhere else in the BIA (as reported out by Langley City)
- Renewed interest in DLBA events such as our Christmas promotion (Shop Your Heart Out www.syho.ca)
- Excitement generated for what the DLBA will introduce in 2021

Q10

Cost:

For all Programs and Events: $37,700