

Entry 1 - South Granville Business Improvement Association

Market

July 24, 2021-Aug 28, 2021

Special Events

Fairview in Vancouver, BC, where the South Granville BIA (SGBIA) operates, had not seen an event in over 16 years due to being along a major arterial and Provincial Highway. Road closures were prohibited but it was evident that the neighbourhood needed something safe, outdoors, and interesting to shake up this boutique district and bring people back. During the pandemic people had spent so much time at home, they were afraid to venture back into the public, we needed to encourage a return to regular life in a low barrier way. Businesses in the neighbourhood were reporting approximately 25% of sales. Farmers markets were allowed to continue under food security mandates but craft/artisan markets were considered non-essential and prohibited. According to meetings with Portobello West and Got Craft, artists and stay-at-home mothers who were often the creatives behind the booths relied on these markets to support their families were truly struggling. The SGBIA saw this as an opportunity to meet the community's needs in a safe way, while taking the opportunity to set itself up as being a district where things are happening especially while other districts were still dormant.

The main objective of Market was reducing the barriers/hangups/fears for returning to shopping and dining in South Granville. First, we gave people incentive to leave their home by peaking their interest, then encouraged them to discover the experience to be safe and enjoyable. Sales of our businesses were at about 25% and we were hoping to see a measured jump from this event.

South Granville is known to most as a commuter corridor one passes through between the Airport to the Downtown, or a sleepy place where mothers and grandmothers shop for high end housewares. While it's true South Granville is a mecca for galleries, housewares, and furniture, we sought to attract a young, female, millennial audience in the "accumulation" phase of life by encouraging hobbies, interests and aesthetics that appeal to that specific demographic. Bring the tastemakers, and the others will follow. Millennials were most likely to lead a return to normal life and most likely to have the disposable income to participate in shopping and dining activities relevant to our boutique businesses. The majority of our retail mix caters to affluent women with an interest in lifestyle. Fortunately, South Granville's core resident demographic was female between the ages of 30-40, however they were spending their limited free time in adjacent, much hipper neighbourhoods. South Granville was boring! There was a connected community but these young adults were leaving the area to shop and dine. The city was in a depressed lull after months of being told to stay home socially and for work. People were desperate for a sense of normalcy.

We worked with the City of Vancouver to secure a special events permit in advance of the official "public health reopening of the economy" so that when we could resume outdoor events we could mobilize quickly. We contacted the artist collectives who were delighted to have an opportunity to re-engage their members and held them in queue until we received word we could proceed. Once the announcement was made, we booked the dates and announced the events publicly. Our members were invited to do an activation within the first 2 feet of their business and many chose to do so, offering tastings and demonstrations of what was inside. One business offered a "braid bar" which was very on trend for the demographic we were aiming to reach. We preorganized everything months in advance and it was ready to go. All vendors were curated in advance to ensure none would compete with our member businesses. The branding had a beautiful, calming aesthetic. We were able to produce this with one full time marketing manager overseeing communications and one part time marketing intern funded by the Canada Summer Jobs Grant to oversee operations. This project was funded from the SGBIA Marketing budget. It was not a lot of money as the street use and special events permit fee was waived, and the organizers provided the programming for free to the BIA. The craft fair hosts charged fees to the vendors to host a table at the markets. The BIA spent \$2000 to cover branding, signage, and promotion. Our largest challenge was overcoming the safety issues

related to hosting an event as a BIA that had not hosted an event yet. The Vancouver Public Health Authority were concerned about proximity of vendors and visitors sparking a super spreader event and all food service was very carefully regulated by Health Canada. The Fire department was concerned about side streets being occupied by vendors, and the main arterial being occupied by vehicles. Would this impede their access and service in an emergency? We were forced to half our capacity to leave a huge opening down the middle of the street to allow for fire truck access, should there be a fire - which there wasn't. Market was along one bike arterial and there were concerns that the cyclists would be angered or would hurt the pedestrians. There was no issue and the cyclists appreciated it as something to see long their journey. We made the best out of the situation and after spacing everyone out and ensuring we had compliance - managed to have 40 vendors which was a good critical mass for an enjoyable market.

For a mere \$2,000 investment for branding and supportive print collateral, we stimulated an influx of ~\$190,000 at South Granville businesses! Pedestrian counts were 37% higher than pre-pandemic levels on Market days. Retailers exclaimed it was the "Best Business Day since the Pandemic!" and we could see it. All the stores were packed to capacity for the first time in a year. Every seat on every patio was occupied. Business rose at the Pop-up Food Truck pod at the park (TGIFood trucks) by 200%. Public spaces were bustling. Our survey revealed that 75% of the visitors for the craft fair spent up to \$100 during their visit, 25% spent up to \$500 at South Granville Businesses. It was a very strong business day and it delighted our members. Additionally, we were able to increase awareness of South Granville as a neighbourhood where things happen because we hosted a youthful, on brand event. 24% of the visitors had never been to South

To jumpstart a return to normal life and to connect with its desired audience, the South Granville BIA invited local well known craft market collectives to host their artisan markets in the neighbourhood in the Summer of 2022. Neighbourhood businesses set up market stands or demo stations in front of their stores and offered special Market day promotions. For a mere investment of \$2,000 for branding and marketing, market tapped into partner communications to infuse an estimated \$190,000 into South Granville businesses! Market days flooded the stores and patios with new visitors as 80% had not been to the neighbourhood in over a month and one in four were visiting for the first time. Retailers exclaimed "It was the best business day since the pandemic."