

REACT – RECOVERY – RESILIENCE

SBDC IOWA CLIENTS SHARE THEIR COVID- 19 JOURNEY

ANYTIME TEES

How did you come up with the idea for Anytime Tees?

I started the business 10 years ago, as a way to be involved in high school athletics and the



Council Bluffs community. At the time I was a high school basketball and softball coach, which I did for a total of about 10 years. I knew there was a need to outfit teams, and since then it has evolved into clothing small business owners, start-ups, and even large organizations as well. Schools and sports are still the largest part of our business, and we enjoy being a part of lasting memories and important times in people’s lives.

How did the SBDC help you with your business?

When I first started the business and even when I was playing around with the idea I reached out to the small business development center office located here in Council Bluffs. I partnered with Rex Hardie, who took the time to sit down with me and talk about a business plan, options of how to structure the business, and generally walked me through questions and concerns I had at the time. Rex was a great sounding board, and gave me an experienced perspective, brought up things to think about that I never would have. He also helped direct me to other resources that might be available, into people with in the community that would help me along the way. In the 10 years past, Rex has continued to periodically reach out to me whether it be via email, or as simple as a Facebook comment to let me know he is keeping an eye on the business, and proud of the growth we’ve had.

How has COVID-19 impacted your business? Have you pivoted your operations? How are you helping others through this time?

COVID-19 has affected us, like many businesses, in a major way. The cancellation of spring sports, and many events was a big blow to a time we consider our “busy season”. I would estimate about 80% of our business in March, April, and May is revolving around sports and events. After making some tough decisions about staffing, and keeping our overhead low. We started to get creative about how we can not only continue to have money coming in for us, but how we could help in the community. We came up with a couple of ideas that have worked well for us, the biggest one being our In This Together community campaign.

For the campaign we launched and hosted an online store where we worked with businesses in the Council Bluffs community to design and sell shirts for people that wanted to support their

business. At no charge or risk to the business we sold shirts, for each shirt sold, the business received \$10. Through the campaign, which about 25 businesses joined, we raised approximately \$5000. The campaign was very well received, and got some local media attention, and we are happy to be printing and shipping shirts this week, along with sending out fundraising checks! The campaign not only helped the businesses involved with shirts on the site, but it also helped us keep our presses spinning.

We have also had success with creating some fun keepsake items for 2020 graduates. There won't be traditional graduation parties, so many people are decorating their yards with graduation signs and banners. We've been busy printing around 500 yard signs, and 50 banners to make sure graduates know their accomplishments are not overlooked.

Lastly, we are working to provide mask options for individuals and companies in our community. The demand for masks is great, and we've got several options available. We think it's important for community members and businesses to have access to masks for the foreseeable future.

The three pivots I mentioned, are all opportunities that we would not have had in a normal spring season. Though it has been a tough couple of months, it has also been a reminder of the hustle and hard work it takes to run a business. You have to be ready to change when needed, and continue to follow your mission statement even when times are tough. For us, that means continuing to be community focused, and giving back whenever possible. We truly believe that if we support our community they will continue to support us.

Find Anytime Tees at www.anytimetees.com/



America's SBDC Iowa has professionally certified consultants that are available to provide confidential, no-cost consulting to help affected businesses understand available disaster assistance and relief programs, determine eligibility, prepare loan applications, as well as navigate other challenges. Request counseling at: www.iowasbdc.org.