

Breakout 1 Notes

How have you turned your store around during the pandemic?

- Very rental-focused and retail locations were rental hubs. Encouraged managers to have a strong social media presence. Setting a 90% customer capture. Change dialogue of how we are closing sell. You bought this so you need this. Revamping teacher and making them all employees.
- No online store at first, but created an online store, it has been successful.
- Took the opportunity to put emphasis on website and online rentals.
- School music. Lessons rooms are used for storage.
- Zeroed in on dot.com - launched new warehouse & stocked up on common items. Kept store going.
- Closed 2 months - expanded online presence. Started new projects, invested in new machinery. Negotiated new leases. Explored new product lines. Hired new digital marketing expert. Trying new things - self analysis. Closed underperforming location.
- Curbside pickup really helped customers -virtual lessons, enhanced marketing
- Found ways to continue to do what they do well & do it even better. 3 major tropical storms hit during pandemic - created unique challenges - bought additional property during this time to expand business. Repair business way up. Maintained all 33 employees. Maintained regular contact with customers. Implemented curbside pickup. Not a huge online presence - new POS system. Recognized the online needs to be available at flip of a switch. Face to face customer interaction is what they do best. Reinventing how things are done daily to make sure they stay valid & engaged.
- Customers finally understand what "Shop Local" means and took it to heart.
- Remodeled lesson studios for in-person lesson. Many lessons are still in-person; not just online
- First 6 weeks of pandemic, only one person at the store. Restrictions currently allow only 10% of capacity.
- Had just set-up a repair desk before COVID; having it ready provided much needed revenue when store was closed.
- Focused on school music rentals - pivoted to online recruiting
- Accommodated in-person lessons along with virtual. Looking to maintain both options moving forward - some people will now only do virtual; some will only do in-person.
- Had already set up eCommerce - ramped it up. Owners work the 'store' and lesson programs during the day. After dinner, one owner goes back to the store to work the "night shift" handling the online sales.
- Working with local schools for their music programs. Were hired by one district to provide their after-school music program as the school couldn't do it because of COVID restrictions.

Breakout 2 Notes

How have you continued to engage your customers during the pandemic?

- “Wow moments.” Relearning how to connect with customers. Email, calling, finding out where there is a breakdown in communication.
- Converted teachers to online. Offered them a service called Teacher Zone. Provided additional resource to teachers.
- Got involved with Podium and helped with text messaging. Direct call out with customers, inviting people in.
- Increased Social Media by doing facebook live events.
- Group of small businesses close by that all worked together to share posts, shop local - made a network. Not allowed to do curbside at one point only at restaurants - so restaurants did curbside pickup for neighboring businesses. Holding each other up. So many beginners - people wanting to start playing an instrument. Entry level instrument sales increased.
- Stepped up delivery - “shop local” has been a huge theme. Supportive business environment.
- Meeting consumer wherever they are & however they wish to communicate - Facebook messages, curbside, delivery, reverb - flexibility was key.
- Pivoted to selling online and providing curbside pickup. Always someone at the store to welcome drop-by’s while maintaining protocols.
- Benefited from staying available while other area stores were shuttered.
- Guitar repair business was a big boost for revenue.
- Marketing thru local magazines (delivered by mail); coupons; Instagram and Facebook; newsletter
- Very limited access to in-store visitors due to area restrictions. Turned in-store displays around to face windows and set up selected merchandise outside and/or brought merchandise outside when people needed it.
- Maintained connection with teachers (50+) via a chat tool.