

2020 Annual Report

Covid Supports -

When Covid hit, our focus was on getting information out to all local businesses.

- Developed and maintained a Covid Resources page and provided updates to the business community as regulations and support programs changed. And changed. And changed.
- We sent frequent newsletters and updated our Covid Resources page multiple times a day
- We tried to ensure all local businesses were aware of all of the supports available to them

- Created 'Open For Business' toolkits containing locally-available PPE such as hand sanitizer, "open" poster, masks, cleaners, and more - delivered kits to local businesses
 - As we delivered the kits, we took photos of the key people at the business, and posted on a dedicated page on our website and social media
 - The posts focussed on the people running the business and reminded consumers that - "When you #ThinkLocal you support our community, our neighbours, and our friends, like:
 - Along with that we launched a Promotional campaign letting consumers know which businesses were open

Branding/Social Media

- Updated our logo and tagline
 - Building up our community by helping local businesses thrive
- Social media
 - Worked on increasing our presence on various social media channels
 - Instagram – 625 followers
 - Facebook – 1,200 followers
 - Twitter – 1,500 followers

Biz Hub

- Social Enterprise project - Opened for business February 2020
- Closed due to Covid March 15th
- We found that as many people were no longer working at their corporate offices in the GTA, they were struggling with Internet issues and/or space and privacy issues working from home. And sometimes just a need of a change of scenery.

- The Biz Hub was able to provide a solution for many people, and although we were closed for much of the year due to various lockdowns, when we were open in 2020 we had over 60 bookings for meeting rooms, co-working desks, and private offices , and had several offices booked on longer term rentals

Events

- In person event:
 - New Year's Levee - January
 - Approximately 60 people attended for a breakfast meeting and Discussion with MP Kyle Seeback and several local mayors
- Virtual events:
 - Coffee Chats
 - Ask the Expert
 - 2020 AGM
- Hybrid event:
 - 2020 BEAs – Awards under the Stars
 - Held during Small Business week in Dufferin – October 21, 2020
 - Drive in movie style event held at Rotary Park in Orangeville
 - Premier of the Dufferin Trivia show hosted by Wayne Townsend
 - Evening dedicated to celebrating local small business

Committees

- Dufferin Women in Business
 - In the summer of 2019 the Dufferin Women in Business committee started off with a planned list of networking events for 2020 not knowing what the future would hold. During 2020 they were able to host two in-person events and quickly transitioned themselves to the virtual world. The committee organized 5 virtual events, on various topics and hosted a recognition awards night in November. Some of the most popular event topics were, Analyzing Your Skill Set, Virtual Bingo, Virtual Chat, and the always popular Cocktails and Connect. There was a mixture of lunch time and evening events as the average number of attendees at the events was 28 people.
 - Policy & Advocacy Committee (PAC)
 - Lent support for Time Amendment Act - move to permanent daylight time
 - polled our members and received 95 responses - 86% are in favour of the Bill.
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- Sent letter to Premier calling on officials to make evidence-based decisions that thoroughly balance businesses' need for survival with the need for public safety
- Business Issues Survey –
 - Worked with team of Seneca students to revise survey and add in Covid impact questions
 - 68 responses
 - Major areas of focus businesses said would be their top priorities in 2021 were: strategic planning, reducing operational costs, and marketing and advertising