

Local Business Owners Say Doing Good is Good For Business

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November 7, 2017

In a competitive economy -- where many small businesses are struggling to survive-- local business owners Lisa Beecroft, owner of Gabi & Jules Bakery, and Paul Slaymaker, owner of Runners' Den, talk about how doing good is their business' competitive advantage.

Beecroft's bakery opened in November 2016, and like many other small businesses, the bakery was trying to hire talent during a labour shortage. The other challenge Beecroft faced as a small business, was that there were many specialized skill sets needed, such as a delivery driver, or a pie box builder, but on a part-time basis.

Beecroft found that by opening up her pool of candidates to include people with disabilities, an otherwise untapped labour market, she could create opportunities for employment and meet her business' needs. In other words, doing good was good for her business. Part of how she achieved this was by job-carving - a process where she "carved out" existing responsibilities from other positions to create a new role, thereby improving the efficiencies in her business. Job-carving allowed Gabi & Jules to hire for specific skill sets, and have roles that as a small business, they need on a part-time basis. Instead of hiring one person as a dishwasher/baking assistant/driver – they were able to hire separately for these roles and match duties to skill sets-- reducing turn over, increasing job satisfaction, and improving efficiencies on these tasks.

Fast forward to the bakery's one year anniversary, 7 of their 15 employees have declared having a disability. Beecroft credits her diverse hiring strategy as the reason she has been able to find talent during an otherwise challenging time in the market.

As the owner of the Runners' Den, a big part of Slaymaker's mandate is to help the local community get and stay active. One of the ways Slaymaker does this is by sponsoring and participating in local community events that encourage an active lifestyle, such as the Ugly Sweater Run, supporting local charities. Slaymaker opens the Runners' Den doors for registrants to sign up and pick up their packages – which in addition to being extremely helpful to the charity and the run coordinators, allows more community residents to have an opportunity to come into the store. Another contribution that Slaymaker makes is donating shoes to local kids in need, particularly for new refugees who may come to BC with very few personal belongings. Slaymaker knows that by being present in the local community, it grows recognition of the Runners' Den brand. He also knows that by increasing the number of people who are active in Port Moody, there is a higher chance that those individuals will come to the Runners' Den for some of their active gear needs. By doing good in his local community, and helping people become and stay active, the Runners' Den is recognized as a strong community partner – which is ultimately good for business.

Beecroft and Slaymaker are part of a local Port Moody organization, Shop Local, which aims to encourage people to strengthen the local economy by shopping at local retailers. Shop Local is

hosting “Port Moody Biz Talks” on November 16th at 6:30pm at Ilnet Theatre. The focus of the event will be business owners learning from other business owners about how their commitment to doing good, has been good for business. The event features a keynote from Cupcakes & Better with Ice Cream founder Lori Joyce. The event will also feature Beecroft and Slaymaker as panelists, as well as: Deep Purewal – Vancity, Lora Covinha - Phoenix Truck and Crane, Desiree Dupuis - Ruben’s Shoes, Westwood Honda - Jonathan Wilson, and Amy Hoey - RYU Apparel Inc.

For more information on this event, visit shoplocalportmoody.ca. For more information on Gabi & Jules or hiring people with disabilities for your business, visit accessibleemployers.ca