

# Small Businesses and The viral Apocalypse

Charles Dickens once wrote “It was the best of times, It was the worst of times...”<sup>1</sup>

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are under plenty of pressure, even in the best of times. But this is, well, somewhat closer to the other thing Dickens mentioned. The phenomena which I’ve dubbed the “Viral Apocalypse” has turned all our lives inside out; and our small businesses are hurting.

Small companies are run by regular humans, and staffed by regular humans; they don’t have the power of a global corporate entity behind them. They don’t have access to the data that a large company might have or to the benefits this data might provide. And that’s the beauty of these companies. The people who run them and work for them are your neighbors, your friends, maybe even your family members or your dad. Small businesses are part of your community; which means they know the local scene, the local people, the local environment, the local economy. (Heck, they *are* the local scene, the local people, the local environment, the local economy)! They know the needs of the community and its’ people. And because they aren’t constrained by one-size-fits all rules handed down from a corporate head quarters across the country (or the world), they have the flexibility to respond to their communitys’ changing needs.

But the beauty of small business’s is also what causes the COVID pandemic to impact them more. Its precisely because they don’t have the power of a giant congloomo behind them that their struggling these days—they don’t have billions in the bank to tide them over a dry-spell. They often run at a slimmer profit margin anyway, even at the best of times, so they just don’t have the financial wiggle room to stay afloat through big financial setbacks. Small businesses are 30% more likely to go under during a financial downturn and are 50% more likely to lay off workers.

Your local small businesses employ people who live and work in your community. Your cousin, your nephew, your neighbors, maybe even your mom. These companies often have a tiny staff of people working in a small shop or office, in close quarters together, which makes COVID hard for them: If one person gets exposed or gets ill, then everyone’s been exposed, so the entire staff might have to quarantine. Also, the temporary loss of even one staff member to illness or quarantine will often render a small company shorthanded, causing production to slowdown or ground to a halt.

(xtra space)

When your local businesses have to send someone home to quarantine these companies rarely have the financial wherewithal to pay that person to stay home or to loan them any money to get them over the hump as much as they might want to. Now, I don’t need to tell anyone that the loss of those paychecks hits the employee and his/her family very hard. However, the affects go way beyond that household: Now that employee isn’t spending money out in the community, which in turn takes revenue away from other local businesses, which causes them to start cutting back, and furloughing people...well, you get the picture.

Small businesses, then, are the lifeblood of our communities. We want them to prosper: because when small businesses thrive, our communities thrive, and when our communities thrive, we all thrive. And COViD is making life for our small businesses...well, challenging to say the least.

So, how can we help support them? Well, as an employee of a small business myself, I’d like to submit the following ideas,

-So many people are struggling financially these days and not everyone has much money to spend. But if you *are* still working and have an income, keep your business local whenever you do by something. As much as you can, try to give your money to the mom and pop shops and your local small entrepreneurs. Make them your first go too, before you buy from big National chains.

-Not all small artisans and entrepreneurs have a storefront. Some of them perhaps use to have one, but they’ve had to reduce their operating hours or even close up temporarily. Seek out ways you can still buy from them: maybe they now

offer online shopping, or maybe you can connect with them through social media to buy their products. Or, just try giving them a call (old-fashioned, I know!) and asking if you can place an order for pickup.

-Order delivery or takeout from a locally-owned restaurant, and give the delivery person or counter staff an extra-juicy tip. Their job has just gotten a lot more risky, than it used to be. Show them some love!

-If you know of a local small business, a talented artisan, or an entrepreneur in your community, tell your friends! Wear and use their products and services openly, and talk them up-by name. When someone complements you on that handmade necklace your wearing don't just thank her, tell her the name of whoever created it. Brag to your co-workers about the local accountant who did your taxes this year and saved you a bundle, and hand out the person's business cards.

-Make use of social Media to give your local businesses some free advertising. Post a selfie on your facebook page showing off your cool new haircut; and mention the name of the barber who did it. Got yummiie take out food at a local restaurant, or excellent service on your car from a local mechanic? Go on Yelp and post a glowing review.

-Some times being supportive doesn't even directly involve money. Many of your local small business' have been forced to put new COVID procedures in place: Their shop or office might be too small to allow for social distancing, so maybe you have to sit in your car for curbside service. They might have to take fewer appointments to allow for sufficient time to disenfect in between clients, so you might have to wait longer. And yes, it's a pain. But please be understanding, arguing and complaining with merchants about procedures that are beyond they're control just makes everyone's day a little bit worse -yours' included.

Your local small businesses entrepreneurs, and artisans are: what gives your community its flare, its' personality. Their what sets your city apart from other cities—Without them, all our towns and neighborhoods would look and feel the same, and how boorish would that be? The products and services created by individual artisans and business-people in your community are one of a kind, unlike anything else you can get anywhere, at any price. And that's pretty amazing, if you think about it.

So, to recap, here's why we love our local small businesses.

- They're your own friends and neighbors
- They know the community
- Unique, one-of-a-kind goods and services
- They're agile in responding to local trends.
- Feeding money in to your local economy
- They provided pay checks to people in your town
- They're what sets your town apart from everyone else's'

COVID—19 is making everyone's life harder these days, small businesses are some of the hardest hit by that. I promise you, we'll be alright: We will get through the dumpster fire that is the year 2020, and we can come out of it stronger than ever if we remember to look out for each other, to be a source of encouragement and positivity for each other. And let's spread some of that love to our small businesses, too. They support our communities everyday; let's support them.

Finally, there's one more thing you can do to improve life for small businesses, and that is...THANK THEM for what they do! Tell them how much you love their products, their service, how grateful you are that they are stepping up to the plate in these dangerous times in order to be there for you. Smile at them, and tell them they rock! Because they do.

Note

<sup>1</sup>Dickins, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*. London, United Kingdom: Chapman & Hall. 1859. (Originally published in installments in the periodical *All the Year Round*".

## Small Businesses and the Viral Apocalypse

Charles Dickens once wrote, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."<sup>1</sup>

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are under plenty of pressure, even in the best of times. But we are now, well, somewhat closer to the worst of times. This phenomenon, which I've dubbed the "Viral Apocalypse", has turned our lives inside out, hurting our small businesses.

Small companies are run and staffed by individuals; they don't have the power of a global corporate entity behind them. They don't have access to the data that a large company might have or reap the benefits this data might provide. And that's the beauty of small businesses. The people who run them and work for them are your neighbors, friends, and maybe even your family members. They are part of your community, which means they know the local scene, its people, and the local economy. Heck, they are the local scene, the local people, the local environment, the local economy! They know the needs of the community and its people. And because they aren't constrained by one-size-fits-all rules handed down from national or global corporate headquarters, they have the flexibility to respond to their communities' changing needs.

But the advantages of small businesses, are also what causes the COVID pandemic to impact them more. It's precisely because they don't have the power of a giant conglomerate behind them that they are struggling these days. They don't have billions in the bank to tide them over a dry spell. They often run at a slimmer profit margin, even at the best of times, so they don't have the financial wiggle room to stay afloat through significant financial setbacks. As a result, small businesses are 30% more likely to go under during an economic downturn and 50% more likely to lay off workers.

Your local small businesses employ people who live and work in your community. Your cousin, your nephew, your neighbors, maybe even your mom. These companies often have a small team working in a small shop or office, and they were hit especially hard by

Deleted: and

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: The

Formatted: Line spacing: 1.5 lines

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: viral

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: [REDACTED]

Formatted: Justified, Line spacing: 1.5 lines

Deleted: "...t was the best of times, It ...t was the worst of times...."<sup>[1]</sup>

Deleted: this is

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: other thing...orst of times Dickens mentioned... The ...<sup>[2]</sup>

Deleted: phenomena...which I'veI've...dubbed the "'...iral Apocalypse"'... has turned all ...ur lives inside out, hurting our small businesses; and our small businesses are hurting<sup>[3]</sup>

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: by regular humans, ...nd staffed by regular humans...<sup>[4]</sup>

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: don't...have the power of a global corporate entity behind them. They don'tdon't...have access to the data that a large company might have or reap to ...he benefits this data might provide. And that'sthat's...the beauty of these companies<sup>[5]</sup>

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: your ...riends,...and maybe even your family members or your dad... Small busine<sup>[6]</sup>

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: ;...which means they know the local scene, the local...<sup>[7]</sup>

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: ;...the local environment, ...nd the local the local ...conomy. (...eck, they are the local scene, the local people, the local environment, the local economy!)!...They know the needs of the community and itsits'...people. And because they aren'taren't...constrained by one-size-fits-allone-size-fits all...rules handed down from<sup>[8]</sup>

Deleted: beauty

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: business's...areis...also what causes<sup>[9]</sup>

Deleted: ...our nephew, your neighbors, ma<sup>[10]</sup>

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: of people ...orking in a small shop<sup>[11]</sup>

COVID. If one person on staff gets exposed or falls ill, then everyone's been potentially exposed, and the entire staff might have to quarantine. On top of that, the temporary absence of even one staff member due to illness or quarantine will often render a small company shorthanded, causing production to slow down or ground to a halt.

When your local businesses have to send someone home to quarantine, these companies rarely have the financial wherewithal to pay that person sick leave or loan him/her money to get by, even if they wanted to. I don't need to tell anyone that the loss of those paychecks hits the employee and his/her family very hard and has repercussions way beyond that household. Because now, that employee isn't spending money in the community, which takes revenue away from other local businesses, forcing small companies to start cutting back and furloughing people. You get the picture.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities. We want them to prosper. When small businesses thrive, our communities thrive, and when our communities thrive, we all succeed. And COVID is making life for our small businesses challenging, to say the least.

So, how can we help support them? As an employee of a small business myself, I'd like to propose the following ideas:

- Many people are struggling financially these days, and not everyone has a lot of money to spend. But if you are still working and have an income, keep your business local whenever you buy something. Try to spend your money at the mom and pop shops and your local small businesses as much as possible. Make them your first choice, before you buy from big national chains.

- Not all small artisans and entrepreneurs have a storefront. Some may have had one, but they've had to reduce their operating hours or even close shop temporarily. So, seek out other ways to buy from them. Maybe they offer online shopping, and you can connect with them through social media to purchase their products. Or, just give them a call (old-fashioned, I know!) and ask whether you can place an order for pickup.

- Deleted: together, which makes COVID ha (... [12])
- Formatted (... [13])
- Deleted: gets (... [13])
- Formatted (... [14])
- Deleted: everyone's (... [14])
- Formatted (... [15])
- Deleted: , so the entire staff (... [15])
- Formatted (... [16])
- Deleted: Also...n top of that, , ...he temporar (... [17])
- Formatted (... [18])
- Deleted: slowdown (... [18])
- Deleted: (xtra space)¶ (... [19])
- Formatted (... [20])
- Deleted: to ...oan them (... [21])
- Deleted: any ...oney to get them over the (... [23])
- Formatted (... [22])
- Formatted (... [24])
- Deleted: :...Now t (... [25])
- Formatted (... [26])
- Deleted: isn't...spending money out ...n the (... [27])
- Formatted (... [28])
- Deleted: ,...and furloughing people. ...well, ... (... [29])
- Deleted: , then, ...re the lifeblood of our (... [30])
- Formatted (... [31])
- Deleted: Well, ...a... an employee of a small (... [32])
- Formatted (... [33])
- Deleted: , (... [33])
- Formatted (... [34])
- Deleted: -So many (... [35])
- Formatted (... [35])
- Deleted: much (... [36])
- Formatted (... [36])
- Deleted: do by ...uy something. TryAs mu (... [37])
- Formatted (... [38])
- Deleted: to (... [38])
- Formatted (... [39])
- Deleted: entrepreneurs (... [40])
- Formatted (... [40])
- Deleted: go to...hoiceo... before you buy fr (... [41])
- Formatted (... [42])
- Formatted (... [43])
- Deleted: - (... [43])
- Formatted (... [44])
- Deleted: Some (... [45])
- Formatted (... [45])
- Deleted: of them ...ay perhaps us...ave ha (... [46])
- Formatted (... [47])
- Deleted: you can still (... [48])
- Formatted (... [48])
- Deleted: :...maybe (... [49])
- Formatted (... [49])
- Formatted (... [50])
- Deleted: now ...ffer online shopping, and , (... [51])
- Formatted (... [52])
- Deleted: try giving...them a call (old- (... [53])
- Formatted (... [54])
- Formatted (... [55])

- Order delivery or take-out from a locally-owned restaurant and give the delivery person or counter staff an extra-juicy tip. Their job has just gotten a lot riskier, than it used to be. Show them some love!

- Tell your friends if you know of a local small business, a talented artisan, or an entrepreneur in your community! Wear their products, use their services openly, and share their name. When someone compliments you on that handmade necklace you are wearing, don't just thank them; give them the artist's name. Brag to your co-workers about the local accountant who did your taxes and saved you a bundle; then hand out the person's business card.

- Use social media to provide your local businesses with some free advertising. For example, post a selfie on your Facebook page showing your cool new haircut, and mention the hairstylist's name.

- Have you eaten delicious take-out food from a local restaurant, or received excellent service on your car from a local mechanic? Then post a glowing review on Yelp!

- Sometimes, being supportive doesn't have to involve money. Many local small businesses have been forced to enact new COVID procedures. Their shop or office might be too small to allow social distancing, so you may have to stay in your car for curbside service. They might schedule fewer appointments to allow sufficient time to disinfect between clients, so you might have to wait longer. And yes, it is a pain. But please be understanding. Arguing and complaining with merchants about procedures beyond their control ruins everyone's day.

Your local small entrepreneurs and artisans are what gives your community its flare, its personality. They are what sets your city apart from others. Without them, all neighborhoods would look and feel the same, and how boring would that be? The products and services created by individual artisans and entrepreneurs in your community are unique. And that's pretty amazing, come to think of it.

Deleted: -	
Formatted	[56]
Deleted: takeout...from a locally-owned	[57]
Formatted	[58]
Deleted: -	
Formatted	[59]
Deleted: If...you know of a local small busi	[60]
Formatted	[61]
Deleted: ,...and talk them...hare their up-	[62]
Formatted	[63]
Deleted: complements...you on that handr	[64]
Formatted	[65]
Deleted: name of whoever created it... Bra	[66]
Formatted	[67]
Deleted: s	
Formatted	[68]
Deleted: -	
Formatted	[69]
Deleted: Make use of...social mediaMedia...	[70]
Formatted	[71]
Deleted: Post...a selfie on your	[72]
Formatted	[73]
Deleted: name of the barber who did it	
Formatted	[74]
Formatted	[75]
Deleted: Got...yummie	[76]
Formatted	[77]
Deleted: take ...ake-out...food at	[78]
Formatted	[79]
Deleted: ,...or received excellent...cellent s	[80]
Formatted	[81]
Deleted: -Some times	
Formatted	[82]
Deleted: doesn't...even directly	[83]
Formatted	[84]
Deleted: of your ...ocal small	[85]
Formatted	[86]
Deleted: COVID	
Formatted	[87]
Deleted: in place...:...Their shop or office	[88]
Formatted	[89]
Deleted: have to take	
Formatted	[90]
Deleted: for ...ufficient time to	[91]
Formatted	[92]
Deleted: everyone's...day a little bit worse	[93]
Formatted	[94]
Formatted	[95]
Formatted	[96]
Deleted: businesses	[97]
Formatted	[98]
Deleted: that's...pretty amazing,...if you	[99]
Formatted	[100]
Deleted: about	
Formatted	[101]

So, to recap, here's why we love our local small businesses:

- They're your friends and neighbors
- They know the community
- They are unique and offer one-of-a-kind goods and services
- They're agile in responding to local trends,
- They inject money into your local economy
- They provide paychecks to people in your town
- They're the reason that sets your town apart from others

COVID-19 is making everyone's life harder these days. Unfortunately, small businesses are some of the hardest hit. But we'll be alright. We will get through the dumpster fire that is 2020. We will emerge stronger than before as long as we remember to look out for each other, and become a source of encouragement and positivity for one another. Let's spread some of that love to our small businesses. They support our communities every day. So, let's give them our support as well.

Finally, you can do one more thing to improve life for small businesses: THANK THEM for what they do! Tell them how much you love their products, their services, and how grateful you are that they are stepping up to the plate during these challenging times and being there for you. Smile at them, and tell them they rock! Because they do.

Note

<sup>1</sup>Dickins, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*. London, United Kingdom: Chapman & Hall. 1859. (Originally published in installments in the periodical *All the Year Round*).

Deleted: here's

Deleted: .

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Formatted: Justified, Line spacing: 1.5 lines

Deleted: -

Formatted: List Paragraph, Justified, Line spacing: 1.5 lines, Bulleted + Level: 1 + Aligned at: 0.25" + Indent at: 0.5"

Deleted: They're...your own [102]

Deleted: -

Deleted: "...U...ique and offer , [103]

Deleted: "...hey'reThey're...agile in responding to local trends. [104]

Deleted: -Feed...njecting...money into [105]

Deleted: "...hey provided...paycheckspay [106]

Deleted: "...hey'reThey're...the reason [107]

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Formatted: Justified, Line spacing: 1.5 lines

Deleted: "...9 is making [108]

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: we'll...be alright:...We will get thro [109]

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: come out of

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: it ...tronger then...han ever [110]

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: if

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: lookout...for each other, to [111]

Formatted [112]

Deleted: positivity...ositivity for each [113]

Formatted [114]

Deleted: And let's

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: , too... They support our communi [115]

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: them

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: there's one more thing you can do [116]

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: dangerous

Formatted: Font: Verdana

Deleted: in order to...beingbe...there for yo [117]

Formatted: Line spacing: 1.5 lines

Formatted [118]

Deleted: "... [119]