

South Quesnel Business Association

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Marketing      Back in Your Pocket

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South Quesnel businesses are putting money back in the pockets of shoppers to encourage shopping in the district area and to thank customers for choosing South Quesnel.

The South Quesnel Business Association has been operating since 2003. The organization represents 65 businesses. The project started in the spring of 2019 to encourage shopping in the business district. This project meets a number of goals for the organizations strategic plan. We are engaging with all of our business members by making a dedicated effort to visit each of them at minimum once through the campaign timeline. This opens up the dialogue on what the association does for businesses and gives businesses a visible initiative that has benefited their business. In addition to association member engagement the project engages with consumers and encourages them to shop in the business area increasing traffic in all stores and creating media spin through wins sharing and posting about their experience. This project was designed to encourage more shopping in the business district. At the time of the project start there were 55 businesses operating and the intent was to randomly select a business, date and time and pay for purchases being made in South Quesnel. Setting a goal of engaging with all businesses was manageable over the course of the entire timeline (24 weeks) and we had a set budget pre-determined for each business. The outcome was more 500-community winners, many of whom took to social media to say thank you and talk about South Quesnel.

Our main audience was community members/local residents. At the start of the program a major employer had announced its closure in the summer impacting hundreds of residents. We wanted to encourage shopping and also help put money back in the pockets of shoppers.

We developed a marketing plan and budget. Based on the budget we determined how much we would spend at each individual business. Two of marketing team members then created a week-by-week strategy of attending businesses and randomly selecting a winner. The project was meant to help “spin” itself as we felt that the winning individuals would want to talk about their win in South Quesnel. We provided each winner with a postcard that explained the program and gave them hashtags to post online. We then got their permission to their photos (not always successful) and then shared their win on our social media channels. By sharing the posts we uplifted views of our social media leading to additional followers and more views weekly on our pages (100’s-1000’s). This also led to a significantly higher volume of shares on our page and overall growth of our online footprint. Challenges we hadn’t anticipated were having shoppers say no and assume that it might be a scam. As we attended each business we made sure that the owner/staff knew we were in the store and what the campaign was about before we selected anyone. This way we had the store managers/staff confirming that we were legitimate. Despite this we still encountered shoppers who refused to accept money. Our challenge was timing, we had numerous occasions where we attended a business but there was no shopper and so we had to make many trips to the same business in order to get a winner.

Smiling faces, cash in hands, business and community engagement; “Back in your Pocket” was a successful community minded project that encouraged customers to shop in South Quesnel.

The project also created stronger partnerships between the association and its membership by providing each of our businesses with a tangible project that gave something back to their business and to their customer.