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| Email |
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| Title of Entry |
| Start It Up Langley |
| Category of Entry |
| Economic & Business Development |
| Project Timeframe |
| February to September 2018 |
| Brief Summary (please limit to two sentences) |
| How do you get an entire province to stand up and pay attention to the opening of a small retail shop in your local area? How about giving away over \$100,000 of business start-up support and running a contest that lets the public choose which new business will win this amazing prize! |
| Opportunity/Need |
| <p>Over the past 10 years retailers have seen consistent declines in foot traffic, causing many local stores and shopping districts to go out of business, or forcing retailers to significantly change their sales model to stay afloat. As such, we are seeing fewer and fewer people choosing to start a retail business. As representatives of the Downtown Langley business area, we are tasked with attracting new business owners just as much as we work to build public awareness amongst shoppers. So, for the 2018 marketing season, we chose to work on finding ways to attract new business owners while also engaging the public about Downtown Langley.</p> <p>After research on innovative ways to attract new businesses we found an exciting contest that had been concluded in 2017 called "Built in Kamloops." The contest offered entrepreneurs a chance to win \$10,000 cash, free office space, business mentorship and community support to launch a new technology business. The prize was meant to encourage budding "techy" entrepreneurs to start a new business, reducing some of the barriers to getting started. We called the contest organizers and learned that it had received widespread media and public attention as well as a long list of startup applicants. Not only that, but the public was highly engaged throughout and after the contest. Seeing that such a contest could be a viable way to engage potential business owners as well as the wider community, we developed our own version - Start It Up Langley.</p> |
| Goal/Objectives |
| <p>Our overarching goal for this campaign was to attract new entrepreneurs. In addition, our goal was to gain community support for the contest through donated support (non-financial) and public votes.</p> <p>1) Gain at least \$50,000 of business start-up support to be used as our campaign prize. Over \$100,000 in in-kind support collected before the contest start date of February 19, 2018.</p> <p>2) Secure at least four (4) earned media mentions during the life of the campaign. Far exceeded our goal of at least four (4) earned media mentions during the life of the campaign.</p> |

- 3) Increase public awareness of the contest and engagement with support for the final contestants. The number of visits to our campaign landing page during the life of the contest. The number of public votes submitted for Start-It-Up-Langley contestants (at least 5,000 votes per contestant) as well as local business-reported foot traffic during the contest.
- 4) See a spike in engagement across our owned and earned media channels. An increase in DLBA social media likes, comments, and shares.

Audience

The primary audience for our Start-It-Up-Langley campaign was budding entrepreneurs looking for support in launching a new business idea. We were looking to gain the awareness of entrepreneurs across Greater Vancouver and British Columbia who were interested in launching their own retail store. The business was required to have a retail component, as that is the zoning priority set for the local area. With this in mind, we developed the following demographic profile for our primary audience:

- Prior knowledge/experience: Some prior experience or knowledge of their chosen business area, and a desire to do it full time. Help with business planning and marketing would be needed.
- Education level: Some secondary education in business may have been completed, but this was not noted as necessary for business success. Support with construction would be needed.
- Geography: Entrepreneurs anywhere in BC were invited to participate, provided they were willing to relocate to operate their own business full-time.
- Motivations: An entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to do something on their own. Someone who wants to be responsible for their own success in life. May not know how to get started, but knows that they would give it a shot if the right opportunity came their way.
- Opinions: Has a strong sense of self and a determination to do things right.
- Issues: May not be comfortable in a corporate world or position. Is comfortable receiving support to get started but can direct what they are looking for from their business venture.
- Kinds of business: Must have some retail element to the store.

Our secondary audiences were residents of Langley, tourists visiting Langley, and residents of our neighbouring communities of Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Implementation

Recognizing the success of the contest in Kamloops, we wanted to see what could be done with similar help from our very supportive small business community. A 12-month plan was developed that saw the first four months spent preparing for the contest itself and gaining community support and identifying sponsors as we did not have the budget to provide the prizes ourselves. In no time at all, the Start-It-Up-Langley team had gathered over \$100,000 in sponsored prizes that directly reflected key areas identified as expensive costs for opening a new business:

- 6-months free rent
- Interior renovation contracting
- Exterior signage
- Interior merchandising
- A business bank account with \$500 in cash
- Free promotional car wrap
- Professional business coaching
- Full brand asset development
- Website development
- 6-months marketing support
- Print media advertising
- Full security system setup and monitoring
- Waving of up to \$5,000 in City fees
- New business set up legal fees
- New business set up accounting fees
- Grand opening reception event costs
- Secured promotional space in local papers

All prizes were donated from local businesses who, in turn, benefited from the increased media

exposure and attention. Of special note, our show-stopper prize - 6-months free rent - was the most difficult to procure, given that there wasn't a retail space readily available for lease and we were not planning on fronting the cost ourselves. Luckily, a long-time local business owner announced that they would be moving to a larger location down the street in the spring of 2018. So, our Executive Director approached the building owner and secured a deal on one of the most sought-after locations in Langley with just a few weeks to spare before the contest launched. While securing the prizes, we also worked on our plan for how the public and contestants would learn about the contest, as well as take part. We chose to use a mix of Owned, Earned, and Paid marketing channels in order to maximize our reach. This included:

Owned

- Regular social media posts
- Development of an informational campaign website
- Sharing of our campaign commercial online
- Posters throughout the downtown core
- Vehicle decals promoting the contest on the DLBA SUV

Earned

- PR outreach to major local media outlets and digital influencers
- Outreach to provincial business schools and business incubators

Paid

- Paid video and image advertisements on social media

Having had success with video promotion via social media in the past, we chose to produce a fun commercial that highlighted the contest. The video ad was distributed on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, garnering hundreds of thousands of views throughout the campaign. Potential contestants were asked to produce a short video explaining why their business would make a strong addition to the Downtown Langley business community as well as provide a draft business plan for us to review. Submissions would then be evaluated by our judging committee and a group of finalists would be chosen based on adherence to contest rules and the potential viability of the business plan. Contest finalists would then be promoted on our social media channels and through a second round of PR outreach to media outlets. Finally, to engage a broader audience, the public would be invited to vote for their favourite contestant over a period of 4 weeks. The two contestants with the most votes would proceed to a final round of judging by the committee and one would be awarded the grand prize.

Results

- 1) Almost \$120,000 in sponsored prizes were secured before the public launch of the campaign in February. After the campaign was launched, several more potential sponsors reached out and also wanted to be added to the list of prizes.
- 2) Fourteen (14) earned media hits were secured throughout the contest period (links included below).
- 3) Visits to the website spiked heavily throughout the campaign period with 180,916 page visits and 92,540 unique sessions. A total of 71,346 votes were cast during the final four weeks of the campaign with the winning entry gaining 18,993 individual votes from public voters.
- 4) During the campaign, we saw 1,480 new social media follows; 44,712 daily engaged users, a daily average increase of 198%; an increase in average weekly reach during the campaign of 558.81%; and 255,915 campaign video views between March & June.

Victory Statement

The Start It Up Langley contest allowed us to reach out to entrepreneurs and provided us with a great list of potential businesses that we are encouraging to open up in Langley City. The winners, PinkAvo Cafe & Boutique, are a very welcome addition to our business community, and the entire contest brought our little City a great deal of positive attention

Please Upload minimum 5 photos and your logo

- [2018 DLBA Best in the West Submission Supplemental Materials2.pdf](#)

- [Terrain2.jpg](#)
- [Store-Front2.jpg](#)
- [Sign2.jpg](#)
- [Open-House2.jpg](#)
- [full-colour-logo-only2.jpg](#)

Please upload a PDF file of your submission: (must be 2mb or less in size, please reduce graphics file size if necessary)

- [2019-DLBA-Best-in-the-West-Submission-Economic-Business-Development.pdf](#)