

Welcoming New Customers by Mail allows for Sustainability, says Business Owner



WECT News | Wilmington, NC (Sept 2020) – The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted businesses for more than 6 months now. Some have struggled, but have been able to keep their doors open, while others have had to close for good. In an effort to stay afloat, business owners are trying new things to gain new customers. WECT News met with Chris Levesque of **Whiskey Trail Sports Pub** and Bassam Safi of **Our Town America** to discuss a marketing method they strongly believe business owners should consider when looking to bring in new customers.

The **Our Town America New Mover Marketing** program, while it's been around for 49 years, has proved to deliver new customers to businesses during these uncertain economic times by way of one-time housewarming deals to area businesses. Levesque, Whiskey Trail owner, has been on board with Our Town America for 4 years now offering a \$20 gift certificate to new movers in his area. "It familiarizes people that are new to the area with the businesses right around them," says Levesque.

The idea is that as long as new customers have a good experience at the business,

they'll become repeat customers.

"Welcoming people is a hidden way of advertising, but it's actually a way to build a relationship," says Safi – the local Our Town America franchise owner. "It's a soft approach to say, 'Come in! We welcome you. Here's my gift to you.' You can get to know them and call them by name. That's huge," he says.

Levesque says that Our Town America is working for his restaurant and he can tell as he sees the same faces ordering food. "That's what's getting us through these times right now. People keep coming back, getting to-go food, or dining outside – doing whatever they feel comfortable doing. But they keep coming back – that's the whole goal of this thing. And, right now, that's extremely crucial," the restaurant owner says.

Levesque and business owners across the nation are welcoming every bit of help in these uncertain economic times. Safi suggests the tips below to help businesses make it through. Full WECT News interview below for more information.

- Buy a gift card or start a tab. Buy gift cards now that you can use later. Pay \$100 upfront for future purchases and ask the restaurant to withdraw from your tab when you eat there.
- Holiday shop now. Some local shops may not make it to the holidays without our help. Buy your holiday gifts now to give them a boost!
- Tip well. Many servers, baristas, and delivery people have been out of work at some point this year. If you can afford it, leave a big tip and make someone's day.
- Schedule and pay for future services. Some salons and massage parlors will allow you to pay for services in advance. Pay for haircuts for the rest of the year now and have the salon withdraw from your account as you go.
- Leave a positive review online. Many people are looking for safe places to eat and shop right now. Leave a positive review of your favorite restaurants and local shops to tell your community how they're keeping customers safe and healthy during the pandemic. Mentioning outdoor seating is a plus!
- Redeem your New Mover Gift Certificates. If you're a new mover who recently received your Our Town America Welcome Package, be sure to redeem your **Gift Certificates** from your local businesses. The businesses included in our Welcome Packages reach out to new movers each month as

they want to welcome residents, like yourself, to your new neighborhood! Return the favor by patronizing these businesses – whether in-store, curbside or delivery.

Remember: For every dollar spent at a small business, approximately 67 cents stays in the local community.

Both Our Town America of Wilmington and the Our Town America franchise system as a whole want consumers and business owners nationwide to know that we're here to support you during this time by offering various methods to relay business offerings to locals. Both local business owners and consumers will benefit from banding together to strengthen local economies.

Our Town America supports small businesses across the nation 365 days of the year. If you're a local business in North Carolina looking for a way to reach new or current customers, reach out to Bassam Safi at 910-352-5776 or bsafi@ourtown.net.

If your business is located elsewhere in the U.S., you can reach Our Town America corporate at 1-800-497-8360 to get connected with your local representative.

