

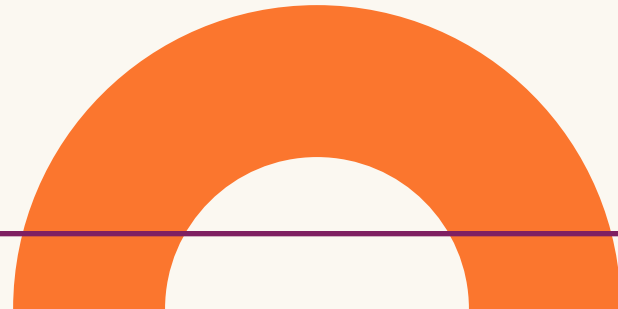


Shifting Gears: Stories from Small Business Owners



We asked small business owners, what's changed?

It's clear life and business as we know it has fundamentally changed — but what does that look like for the local florist shop, neighborhood dentist, or the two-person design agency working out of their homes? We collected stories from dozens of small business owners in a wide variety of industries about the changes they've made, the lessons they've learned, and what has been their biggest win despite all the challenges.





“We have pivoted to telephonic and online services in a manner that has allowed business to continue, and even increase. We will continue rethinking how we approach servicing our clients, with particular emphasis on virtual and cloud-based systems to meet our clients where they are.”

Laura Jane Eckstein

LAURA ECKSTEIN LAW, LLC



“Already being a paperless office organization has certainly been a great thing with remote functioning capabilities ensured there was no gap in service or production.”

Pete Wilking

A1A SOLAR CONTRACTING, INC.

“We are a dog training business. We have had to suspend large group lessons. We are doing some training consults using Zoom, and others in-office, allowing only one client appointment at a time. Our class sizes have always been small and that will continue after this time.

We’ve also had to be more flexible about how we offer various services and we’ll likely follow on those practices once we’re completely open. If we demonstrate concern and care for our clients, they do notice and appreciate us.”

Barbara Davis

BADDOGS, INC.



“As a business owner, learning I need time to think and plan rather than react! Many of the things I have implemented lately would have helped us years ago if I had taken time to think about it.

We have added safety and sanitation procedures since we work with older adults. We are adding another service besides relocation services to bring in more business. We have had time to refine our procedures add new processes to help us automate more of our business. We’ve also been getting additional education.”

Christine Smart

DESIGNING MOVES

“The belief in the human desire to do good, to change the world, and at the very worst time in history (at least for my generation) there is a way to use your tools, resources, and company to do good. We are so excited about having the skill set and ability to negotiate and find vendors who will give free luggage to those traveling for humanitarian work.

Also, we win when we become educators to teach the traveling public how to search out and do good and random acts of kindness abroad and in our own country.”

Carolyn Sandgren Kempf

ELITE TRAVEL, INC.





“Think outside the box. COVID is forcing us to be creative. Our business has actually grown during this lockdown. Now with Ruby, we are more efficient, and our clients are happy.”

Seinya H. Samforay

THE FORAY FIRM



“I made major revisions to my workflows in order to be more paperless and location independent. [I] use more features in Clio and Microsoft 365 re: cloud storage of documents. [I] leverage my VoIP phone to be able to answer calls at home. [I] use MS Teams meetings for video conferences with clients and potential clients. I can serve more clients over a broader geographic area through virtual meetings and make more money.”

Steven J. Richardson Esq.

LAW OFFICES OF STEVEN J. RICHARDSON, PC

"Don't Panic. Think. Be ready to act decisively. We're a law firm that takes care of small businesses and we've gone to a completely remote and virtual format for our operations.

As for our clients, we're helping them find ways to reorganize their businesses so that they can continue to prosper in this new, contactless society."

Freya Shoffner

SHOFFNER & ASSOCIATES



“Not everyone is able to transition to working at home. Some people miss the social connection that work at affords. From a management perspective, though, I was uncertain as to whether a remote office would work — I am now a convert. Having a virtual office means that we can hire qualified people from anywhere.

As positions open, we can cast a broader net to attract those most qualified. There may be some challenges with onboarding, though I’m confident that the right person would adjust well.”

Gary Bess

GARY BESS ASSOCIATES

“The current world crisis doesn’t change [our] work. We have a small office building and therefore it is easier for clients to be more comfortable. We do not spend any time discussing the fear and speculation, but rather we speak hope and help directly one on one.

That is the main reminder...people still need our help.”

Deborah Usher

USHER LAW FIRM, P.A.





“Since most of my business is Internet based anyway, the only things I have needed to do where update the website to let current and potential clients know I was still open and set up and improve my video mediation skills.

Family law clients who are attracted to a non-adversarial approach to resolving disputes are hungry for a non-court option.”

Thomas Johnson

DIVORCE SHOPPE



“We're a small law firm that works with small healthcare practices and professionals, so we've had to adapt every detail of our practice! We've moved to an entirely remote practice structure, which has helped us empathize well with our clients' transitions to telemedicine.

We'll definitely allow more flexible work-from-home policies! Our team has been very productive, and we'll defer more to them regarding where they work. We'll probably also move into an office with more delineations of personal space, so we're already planning for the number of doggy doors we'll need installed to allow everybody equal access to the firm's most popular member, Crosby.”

Erin Jackson

JACKSON LLP HEALTHCARE LAWYERS

“The biggest win we will take away from this experience is the importance of running an operation with reduced overhead, therefore you are able to sustain operations even with a 35% reduction in productivity. I also learned to always be prepared to pivot when the conventional way of conducting business no longer works.”

Kwane Mitchell Watson

KARE MOBILE INC





"I'm working from home most of the time and doing a lot of phone and video meetings. The pace has definitely slowed down and made me become more intentional about what kind of clients I choose to work with. I realize that busier is not always better.

As a lawyer, it's easy to fall into the misconception that you need to be really stressed and busy to make a living. I don't plan to get back on the hamster wheel once things are back to "normal." Normal felt like a heart attack all the time. I am liking the new work-life balance."

Heather R. Straub

LAW OFFICES OF HEATHER R. STRAUB, PLLC

“Video conferencing has become so mainstream that it will forever replace many other types of client interaction. Remote signing and notarization of estate planning documents will become commonplace.”

Neil W. Tyra

THE TYRA LAW FIRM, LLC





“We have implemented new regulations such as stay in your car until we have you come in, wear masks, taking temperature and asking health questions.

We are huggers at the salon. It’s hard to not do that. We are a very clean salon; however, we have changed up our cleaning products and how we clean.”

Robin DeTrude

ELAINE’S SALON



“Stay focused. Do not procrastinate. Stay on top of your virtual office set-up. I was set up virtually before COVID-19. However, adapting my clients to virtual meetings and assuring them that the job will get done has been one of the challenges.”

Beatriz Zyne

BEATRIZ ZYNE P.A.



Business Unusual

OUR EXPERT SERIES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES, NOW

Register for weekly emails at ruby.com/smb





Connect with Ruby.

866-611-ruby (7829)

[www](http://www.ruby.com) ● [ruby](http://ruby.com) ● com

ruby

