Not all doom and gloom: Pandemic helped expand and create gardening businesses

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The sudden rise in the number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that started in June, July, and the first week of August has been applauded as a significant improvement to the UK economy, as the wave continues into October. According to Company House records, on average, the number of SMEs registered in the UK is 50,000 a month or 600,000 a year.

It is noteworthy that many of the SMEs are springing up as a result of the job losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gardening businesses that responded to the lockdown with proactive changes, as restrictions eased, found new paths to staying afloat. And the self-employed in some sectors took a change in business direction entirely, into new jobs, and created a new life.

Many businesses shut down with no recourse while many found a way to flourish. For the gardening trade, it certainly was not all doom and gloom beyond the outbreak as June approached and as business for gardeners entered into October.

A Food Bank Inspired By Gardeners

During the lockdown, various local food growing enterprises have emerged and improved, amid the clamour for an increase in the number of supermarkets to help supply vulnerable people with healthy food and alleviate the effects of the pandemic.

Ginnie O'Farrell, a school tutor in Northumberland, spoke to The Guardian on how he couldn't secure any job as a result of the cancellation of public exams. The development prompted him to launch Hexham Fresh Food Bank, which is a network of volunteer growers managed through a Facebook group. And since August, the business has flourished and continues to bring the much needed services into October.

This initiative was inspired by gardeners in a neighbouring village cultivating additional crops sold at a shop that is also managed by a volunteer while reinvesting the same funds in the community.

Demand for Compost Erupts From More Active Homeowner Gardening

A report by The Greener Gardener reveals that The Greener Gardening Company has witnessed remarkable growth following unusual nationwide demand for compost. The success was spurred by the successful increase in production to meet growing demand from retailers who have been scurrying to obtain stocks.

No sooner had lockdown eased than demand for compost shot up, prompting the company to announce a 17% increase in its budget by the end of June, with sales rising by 41% compared to June 2019. Likewise, there was a sharp rise in consumers' appetite for quality growing garden vegetables in July, leading to sales that rose by 98% of the budget.

The Greener Gardening Company has increased its production with 24-hour operations throughout summer into autumn, stepping up from single shifts that it used to operate after peak season in normal years.

The strategy is achieving its desired outcome in growing robust levels of stock that will guarantee consistent supply and prepare for any future occurrence during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will make all garden centre stock available by Christmas and ready for 2021.

The Greener Gardening Company has been working hard to increase production to meet the unprecedented rise in demand.

New Gardening Business Saves a Sales Specialist from Loss of Income

In the UK, the lockdown has witnessed an upswing in new companies being launched. Many headed for a career path change and lots more set up new businesses while 'COVID-19', 'pandemic', and lockdown featured repeatedly in the news.

Some freelancers have set up new businesses and stepped to one side from their usual duties and created a new income. This quick decision helped to side step financial ruin and avoid loss of income for many.

As an example, Angelo Mazzeo, a Business Development Sales Specialist with twenty years of new business and account development sales experience found himself out of work in June when lockdown hit the nation. Speaking to My Job Quote about the action taken, he said:

“I’d just committed to buying a new car, and out of the blue, my neighbour asked me to do some gardening and I thought while doing it that I can do this for more people?”

Angelo placed gardening services ads on the popular community site Next Door for local businesses under a fresh business titled Organic Biodynamics in the Totnes and Darlington areas. A change in direction swiftly saved 52 year old Angelo Mazzeo from Totnes experiencing financial hardship.

“I got six weeks of work, and during that time, gained more clients.”

Due to the pandemic, he turned to gardening services to maintain and supplement his income, and still continues to build the new business. When Totnes locals look for gardeners with phrases like ‘gardeners near me’, they find his services and prices.

And in line with pandemic rules, he kept out of client homes and restricted contact respecting the need for continued social distancing. He arrives at the customer's home, stays at a 2m distance while greeted, and heads to the client garden to start the work.

“I have now gained 20 to 25 new customers with several of those now repeat customers.”

The lockdown has led to a significant change not only in consumer habits but also in other human behaviours. Though this development has had negative effects on many businesses, it has helped other businesses to prosper.

Gardening has long been celebrated for its cathartic effects on individuals, so it was no surprise that the moment garden centres opened, green-fingered customers stormed the doors to buy bonsai trees, bird boxes, begonias, and other items that could add beauty to the green spaces which were valued as sanctuaries more than ever.

Expectedly, garden centres got new customers rushing in to get their hands on everything from cress boxes to sunflower seeds, with the determination to acquire some kind of greenery to light up their days.

While it appears as if there is no near end in sight to the pandemic, the future of these types of businesses is yet unclear. Nevertheless, their relative success in such tough moments and trying times cast a gleam of hope on the broader economy.

Company Contact:

My Job Quote

T. 0333 335 6868
E. steve.davies40@gmail.com
W. https://www.myjobquote.co.uk/

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