Pollinate Announces Winners of Small Business Filmmaker Competition in Collaboration with Mastercard Showcasing Small Business Ingenuity Spurred by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wednesday 1 September, 2021

London, UK: 1 September 2021 – Pollinate, the global fintech that partners with banks to help business customers succeed and grow, announces the winners of "Ingenious," an annual filmmaker competition aimed at spotlighting small business ingenuity, in collaboration with Mastercard.

Launched across 31 countries including Australia, Canada, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States, the Ingenious competition celebrates the ingenuity of small business owners around the globe through stories of how they have used technology to reimagine their businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The past 18 months have been especially challenging for small businesses – the waves of COVID disruption, economic slowdown and community crises have disproportionately impacted them. Yet many have responded with great agility, transforming from a local shop to a local delivery service, making masks rather than mugs or producing sanitiser instead of sangria. They've connected with the needs of their community in new ways and reimagined what it means to succeed as a small business.

"Our collaboration with Mastercard has created a powerful alliance that is committed to empowering every small business, and we're excited to shine a spotlight on some of the amazing ways small businesses have been using technology to drive their venture forward during the COVID-19 pandemic," says Alastair Lukies CBE, CEO and Founder, Pollinate.

"The Ingenious competition spotlights small business heroes who take on the unexpected and thrive, seeing opportunity in every day to reimagine, refresh and reinvent," says Andrea Gilman, Global SME Segment Lead, Mastercard. "We're inspired by the international filmmakers and small businesses who found the silver linings and are charging ahead with digital-first solutions and optimism about the future of their business and the broader economy."

THE WINNERS

Filmmakers had the chance to win one of six global prizes for the best films, ranging from $1,000 to $10,000 USD.

- **1st place**: Anorak Films and Baobab, a children's bookstore in Spain, won the biggest prize of $10,000 and a feature on **Priceless.com**. The film showcased their use of technology to re-engage with their local community, setting up an online store to drive sales of personalised children's boxes.

- **2nd place**: Happenstance Films and Brighton Gin, a hand-crafted gin distillery in England, won a prize of $7,000 which saw them switch from solely making gin to helping fight the pandemic using hand sanitizer. The business also used an e-cargo bike and Brighton's much loved Drag Queens to hand delivering purchases direct to homes.

- **3rd place**: Filmmaker Nicola Crivellari along with Italian businesses La Bottega Sfusa, a package free organic grocery store and La Volpe Volante, a children's bookstore, won $5,000. The film showed how both businesses embraced online channels to serve their customers during the pandemic, with the two businesses sharing a small green space in the city.

- **4th place**: LUMA video and Realthings, an Italian business that looks to create happier communities by connecting people with nature, won $3,000. Realthings used the pandemic as a catalyst for growth, opening an online store to generate sales, while using work management tools and finance tools to keep their business running smoothly.

Media:



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- **5th place**: Filmmaker Chad Weber and A Florae, a florist in the United States won $2,000 by showcasing the way the business pivoted during the pandemic to drive online sales, before transforming yet again to instore purchases with additional spin off ventures.

- **6th place**: Itchy Feet Digital and Cheese on Wheels, a cheesemonger in Australia won $1,000. With a large proportion of its sales coming from market stall events, Cheese on Wheels developed an online market place for local businesses to sell and deliver their produce under one platform during the lockdown period.

The competition also had winners across four themes of Get Paid, Get Capital, Get Digital and Loyal to Local. Winning filmmakers will receive $3,000.

- **Get Paid**: Darling Street Pictures and Love Street Vintage, a local community vintage clothing retailer based in the United States who closed her storefront and took her business online during the pandemic. Now with a storefront back open, it uses technology to manage POS and inventory, as well as social media to connect with its community.

- **Get Capital**: Viral Hub and Bookshop.org, a start-up business founded in the United States during the pandemic to help indie bookshops create virtual storefronts, raised $15 million which has been dispersed across the 1,200 affiliates on the platform, helping keep bookstores around the world afloat.

- **Get Digital**: Drishti Videography PYT and HUSTL, a basic concept gym studio in Australia that looked to take its gym experiences online, started a new online fitness venture that would connect with its audience all around the world regardless of location.

Loyal to Local: Isaac O'Farrell and UFLORA PLANT HOUSE, a floral retailer in the United States specialising in house plants and botanical home décor. During the pandemic the business used social media to drive online interest in their products and offer home delivery. It also created the "living room market" a physical space that provided relevant local vendors with the opportunity to sell their products face to face with customers using mobile card readers.

All small businesses featured in the submitted films will receive free access to tools, education and insights through the Mastercard Digital Acceleration Program to empower them to thrive beyond the pandemic.

To view all entries and find out more, visit https://www.ingenious.global/.

End

***Notes to editors:**

The competition was sponsored by Pollinate International Ltd. and took place between 25 June 8:00 BST – 6 August 2021 23:59 BST.

The competition launched across 31 countries around the world: UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

There were two sets of prizes: for filmmakers and for small businesses, subjects of the film.

Filmmakers entered to win one of the six global prizes for the best films, ranging from $1,000 USD to $10,000 USD, and four $3,000 USD prizes for the films that best showcase the themes of Get Paid, Get Capital, Get Digital, Loyal to Local.

Get Paid: SMEs have been trending toward digital banking and payments, with COVID-19 accelerating this shift. Digitalization can streamline payments and ensure proper billing. The pandemic is also driving the use of contactless payments as consumers seek ways to shop with minimal contact.

Get Capital: Cash flow issues have impacted 75% of SMEs, with 71% agreeing that the pandemic prevented them from growing. These challenges can be overcome through new solutions that allow SMEs to access their earnings and micro-credit faster.

Get Digital: The rate of adoption and use of the latest digital technologies has been faster than we could've imagined. SMEs now use mobile banking apps to manage their financial affairs and SMEs are finding digital solutions that enable them to open a digital storefront.

Loyal to Local: Consumers are looking to back local now more than ever. Research showed over half of consumers (53%) across the UK, US, Australia and Brazil believe it is more important now to shop locally than it was before the pandemic. The principal drivers behind this support include reinvesting in local economies (45%), keeping money in the community (44%), and driving job growth in the community (43%).

About Pollinate:

Founded in 2017, Pollinate is a global business headquartered in London. It works with leading banks around the world, including NatWest Group (powering Tyl by NatWest) and National Australia Bank, offering a modern, cloud-based toolkit for SMEs. Agnostic to underlying infrastructure, the platform takes data feeds from any bank and third-party systems. It gives merchants a single place to understand, manage and grow their business, and is built with bank-grade privacy and security at its heart.

For media enquiries:

comms@pollinate.co.uk

Company Contact:

Pollinate International Ltd.

E. james.bridgman@pollinate.co.uk
W. https://www.pollinate.co.uk/

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Additional Assets:
short compilation video of the winning films

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