



With the Right Team, Anything's Possible

Local business thrives through dedication and innovation of every employee

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I joined Image Options on February 10, 2020, just before a once-in-a-century pandemic turned the company's core business upside down, and it was one of the best decisions I've ever made!

One of the qualities that was most appealing to me from the beginning was the composition of the partnership group. Four partners, each profoundly unique and each with different talents and skill sets, combined and complimented one another into a company that might be the most well-balanced senior leadership dynamic that I have ever seen. This unique quality was evident throughout the organization.

From day one, I have never had such a warm welcome into a company. I joked with the team that I felt so welcomed, it was almost uncomfortable! Everything was off to a great start. I dug in, got to

know the team, mapped out the players, and the upside opportunities, and did what I normally do when assessing the business landscape and determining initial focus points.

In February, there were the rumblings of Coronavirus, yet it seemed a bit remote. In March, everything virus related started to pick up momentum rather quickly. Then BAM!! COVID-19 SHUTDOWN hits us on March 16th.

As a result of the Shelter-in-Place order, Image Options, like nearly all other businesses, was required to send all employees home immediately; nearly 200 employees between two locations. As a business in which our core clientele is Retail graphics, Event and Exhibit

graphics, and Experiential office graphics, we were shut down entirely and indefinitely.

Even with all of the positive indicators that I had observed at Image Options in my first month of employment, I was concerned that any company could successfully manage through this. It was an unprecedented time.

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On March 17th, the day after the California Shelter-in-Place order, it became clear again what makes this team so incredible. We immediately began to strategize on how we can utilize our employee skill set

and talent to provide essential services to our local community. With a depth of fabrication expertise, we talked about building pop-up shelters and dividers

for hospitals. One of our engineers left that meeting and had a conversation with his daughter who works at a local hospital. She told him that they desperately needed face shields. We had access to the necessary raw materials and quickly reverse-engineered a face shield and created the mechanical drawings.

Shortly after that, we began production and produced 100,000 face shields for that local hospital. This swiftly grew into a nationwide fulfillment of nearly 2,000,000 face shields.

Not only were we able to bring all of our employees back to work, but we had over 40 temporary employees working to help produce the volume of orders on hand. The team at Image Options had rallied together in a way that I have never seen before in my career. The word pivot has been overused in the past six months, but there truly is no other way to describe this incredible feat.



Face shields evolved to eye shields as well as another critical PPE and we continued on. At every turn and shift in external dynamics the Image Options team was one step ahead. From daily morning update meetings to 3 times a week sales and marketing meetings, the team was sharing current events, customer feedback, and trends actively and with across the board high-level engagement.

As a result of this, we were able to get ahead of what would normally be competition and shift to other critical and urgent market needs.

We started producing custom acrylic shields for cashiers at grocery stores, then dental offices, this moved quickly to fast food and other restaurants, then to general retail. We began advising businesses on social distancing guidance and demarcation. We combined this with extending cubicles with shields to protect office workers and making the return to work safer and more comfortable. We started to help businesses and restaurants that were forced to conduct business outdoors to create environments that were inviting and worthy of consumer traffic.

This has now quickly moved to helping schools prepare to re-open safely. From administration office shields, to teacher and student desk shields, we have continued to help our community-at-large function in a new world, while keeping our employees working.

Interestingly as we were helping with COVID related support materials,

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we started to see some of our core business in retail and experiential graphic design return and increase in demand.

I’ve seen my share of different businesses and cultures. I have seen the full spectrum, good, not so great, and pretty good. However, what I have witnessed at Image Options, I have never seen before. This team is truly great! They rallied together like a professional sports team.

Each member providing his or her expertise while respecting each other. Rather than “sink or swim”, the culture at Image Options is “no person left behind”. Yes, we must move fast and expect a great deal from each other, but this is a team and the team is strengthened through cohesiveness—this is our ethos. Always encouraging any creative idea, no matter how off the wall.

We have never lowered our expectations of the business or each other and together we have accomplished what would certainly have seemed impossible six months ago. As of September, this country is far from out of the woods economically, and still very much under a certain level of business restrictions.

However, consistently we have managed to drive revenue to near pre-COVID levels. We still have our work cut out for us and we will surely reinvent ourselves a few more times before we return to “normal”. Yet, I have absolutely no doubt that Image Options will continue to capture new trends and business needs and continue to create positive momentum throughout this time. I am proud to be part of the Image Options team.