How to Supercharge your Downtown in a Post-COVID Economy

Jason Duff, Founder/CEO of Small Nation
Downtown Bellefontaine
46.14 acres
614 parking spots
13,166 people (citywide)
$43,000 median income
In 7 years, the Small Nation team has transitioned a small town on life support into a vibrant, bustling, state-wide draw.

Investing in SMALL works for everyone. The results speak for themselves.
HOW WE DID IT
THE HUSTLE HARD APPROACH
Six Hundred Downtown

Award Winning Pizza Restaurant

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $140,000
Renovation Costs: $250,000
Monthly Rent: $4,500
Jobs Created: 38

KEY PLAYER

Brittany Saxton
Six Hundred Downtown: Before and After
AWARD WINNER: THE MONTANA PIZZA

GARLIC KNOTS

DETROIT STYLE CRUST

Six Hundred Downtown: The Food
Six Hundred Downtown: Bella Vino Events & Wine Room
Six Hundred Downtown: Opportunity Zone Projects
Brewfontaine
Award Winning Craft Brew Bar

HOW IT WORKED
Purchase Price: $27,000
Renovation Costs: $295,000
Monthly Rent: $3,300
Jobs Created: 34

KEY PLAYERS
Adam Rammel,
Jeramy Fitzpatrick and Brian Wall
Native Coffee
Block Anchor Coffee Shop

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $17,000
Renovation Costs: $94,000
Monthly Rent: $900
Jobs Created: 3

KEY PLAYER
Brayden Campbell
Native Coffee: Before and After
Lofts110
Downtown Living

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $140,000
Renovation Costs: $1,100,000
Monthly Rent: $6,800
Rental Units: 6

KEY PLAYERS
Small Nation
Anytime Fitness
LoCo Depot
Gym / Health

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $20,000
Renovation Costs: $1,650,000
Monthly Rent: $11,700
Jobs Created: 12

KEY PLAYERS
Lyle Endsley and Drew Melton
LOCO DEPOT TRAINING STATION

Bellefontaine, Ohio

Anytime Fitness/LoCo Depot: Before and After
Build Cowork + Space
Small Town Coworking

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $160,000
Renovation Costs: $1,200,000
Monthly Rent: Operated by SN
Jobs Created: Dynamic
Anchored by the Flying Pepper
BUILD Cowork + Space: Before and After
Coworking

• Having a collaborative workspace with fast reliable internet is especially important in a post-COVID, remote-work world.
• Coworking spaces bring traffic to Main Street.
• By coming together, small businesses can be stronger.
Coworking Statistics

• 45% of full-time US workers are **still working from home** either all or part of the time, signaling a permanent trend.
• The number of people working remote has **grown by 44%** in the last five years.
• The number of coworking spaces is set to **double by 2024**.
• **43% of millennials** are considering leaving cities for suburbs and rural towns.
The Flying Pepper Cantina
Taco and Tequila Bar

HOW IT WORKED
Began as a local food truck. Anchor Restaurant for BUILD. Authentic Mexican food with all locally sourced ingredients.

KEY PLAYERS
Humberto Nieto and Laura Haverkos
The Flying Pepper: Interior Design
The Flying Pepper: Authentic Cuisine
Main Street Marketplace
Small Town Mall

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $50,000
Renovation Costs: $250,000
Monthly Rent: $16,700
Jobs Created: 24
Innovation in Restaurants

• Small-town restaurants are overcoming the pandemic through learning from our big city counterparts and innovating.
• Flying Pepper Cantina dedicated carry-out entrance allows for quick and easy sales.
• Captain Krakens - ghost kitchen model brings in sales when host business is closed.
• City Sweets & Creamery Drive Thru.
City Sweets & Creamery
Local Bakery and Sweets Shop

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $35,000
Renovation Costs: $160,000*
Monthly Rent: $1,950
Jobs Created: 12

*Includes second floor loft

KEY PLAYER
Angie Hall
City Sweets & Creamery: Before and After
Nest 1896
Antique Mall & Retail

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $24,500
Renovation Costs: $150,000
Monthly Rent: $2,500
Jobs Created: 4

KEY PLAYERS
Kathleen & Darin Robinaugh
Nest 1896: Interior Booth Setup
The Poppy Seed
Salon & Boutique

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $1
Renovation Costs: $140,000*
Monthly Rent: $1,850
Jobs Created: 3

*Includes second floor loft

KEY PLAYER
Breanne Comer
The Poppy Seed: Before and After
The Poppy Seed: Boutique and Salon
Axe Ventura
Premier Axe Throwing Lounge

HOW IT WORKED
Third business location. Complete 4,000 sq ft remodel. 6 premier axe throwing bays.

KEY PLAYERS
Anthony Taylor and Shannon Kozyra
Axe Ventura: Before and After
Axe Ventura: Patio Rendering
The Olive Tree
Year-Round Indoor Farmer’s Market

HOW IT WORKED
Indoor Farmer’s Market. Spot for local food vendors to sell year round. Community art and craft classes.

KEY PLAYER
Tyler Berry
The Olive Tree: Community Classes
First Fridays

Unique Events to Discover Downtown

HOW IT WORKED

Managed by the Downtown Bellefontaine Partnership. First Friday of every month. Brings thousands downtown.
First Fridays: Brew Fest & Pumpkin Walk
Destination Branding

- Go to place in the community for information and events.
- Branding campaign creates sense of pride and belonging for community members.
- Unique branding (ex. pineapple) draws interest.
Instagrammable Spots
AFFORDABILITY = OPPORTUNITY
Affordability of Small Towns

• Housing costs are the most common reason why people move out of cities.
• The average rural home price in December 2017 was $102 per square foot, less than half the cost of a city home.
• The average rental price was $0.79 per square foot per month, about 56% of the cost in the city.
• Big city amenities and job opportunities can attract those leaving cities.
Hometown Opportunity

• A hyper-local jobs and career board licensed by local communities to connect schools, job seekers, and companies in one place.
• Local jobs posted on HTO are filled two weeks faster than national platforms.
• 70% of jobs posted have been filled within thirty days.
POST-COVID TRAVEL
Regional and In-State Travel

• Trips of 250 miles or less in July and August 2021 increased by over 20% compared with the same time in 2019.
• Vrbo and Airbnb rentals have only fewer than 30% availability for this holiday season currently.
• People are traveling closer to home now and looking for destinations to go to.
• Focus on local attractions and “instagrammable” locations gets people talking and draws interest to the town.
The Loft Above

Luxury Airbnb

HOW IT WORKED

Purchase Price: $17,000
Renovation Costs: $40,000
Monthly Rent: $950
Jobs Created: 4

*Includes second floor loft

KEY PLAYERS

Jesse and Chelsea Lear
Epicurean Properties
We worked to tell the story of struggles and economic hardship in rural Ohio.
LIVE SMART STAY SAFE.

SMART is innovation.

Local business is opening up. Let’s all be SMART about it.

WORK SMART STAY STEADY.

Smart choices keep people safe and business steady.
SEE FOR YOURSELF
Visit Bellefontaine
Take the tour.
Hear from business owners.
Rip and duplicate.
Supercharge your Downtown.

Hustle Hard Tour information available following this presentation.
Small Nation Services

- Parklet Engineering and Design
- Modernized Storefront Architectural Renderings
- Custom Hometown Opportunity Platform
- Downtown Branding/Messaging Destination Downtown Website

And more!