



CASE STUDY SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Small local businesses share their challenges and the steps they took to ensure their business remains relevant and successful in an ever-changing environment.

OVERVIEW

Arrow Martial Arts is a small local business that teaches ju jitsu, self-defence, kickboxing, meditation and yoga. Catering to both adults and kids of all ages and levels, the business was forced to undergo a major transformation in 2020 to keep their business afloat and maintain connections with their clients.

CHALLENGE

As a business that relies on its clients to attend in person training sessions, the prospect of lockdowns was particularly grim for the Arrow Martial Arts team.

Robin immediately started to look at ways to protect the business during this uncertain time. The key goals were:



To stay relevant and continue to offer classes



To lead against adversity



To demonstrate that business success (and any success) requires adaptability

“We had to innovate and do it quickly otherwise we risked losing the business. Our commitment to live a Black Belt attitude kicked in and we set to work to pivot our business model online and incorporate a new way of thinking, doing and implementing business self-defence,” explains Robin.



Pictured: Robin Dsoruth, Founder - Arrow Martial Arts.

ABOUT

Founded by qualified Ju Jitsu Black Belts and accredited trainers, Robin and Corinne Dsoruth in 2011, the pair currently operate Arrow Martial Arts at their training studio (dojo) in Marsfield, NSW.

Through their teachings, they have helped enhance the lives of hundreds of students and help steer them onto the path of respect, discipline and self-confidence to tackle life's challenges. When the pandemic struck in 2020, Robin and Corinne had to tap into their training and overcome the challenges of lockdowns. They quickly learnt new skills to develop their online, COVID-safe business, teaching martial arts digitally to ensure their students could continue to train, while also maintaining their income and client base.



PROCESS

Lockdowns were tough for many small businesses across the state, so to remain relevant Robin set about moving their business into an online learning forum.

"We had to learn to teach online to keep the majority of our students training and on the books."

SOLUTION

In 2020 they started recording and uploading training sessions to YouTube, then sending the links via a weekly email to their clients. When lockdowns hit again in 2021, they took the training a step further and commenced live-streaming via Zoom in partnership with another dojo, Quantum Martial Arts, which teaches the same ju jitsu style.

This was a great partnership and ultimately took some of the pressure off both businesses to produce regular training content, particularly when they switched to a live-stream format. During this time, clients were actively encouraged to train with either dojo.

RESULTS

"We stayed open!"

Robin says that they achieved what they intended to do and remained true to their martial arts teachings.

It took courage, perseverance plus a desire and ability to adapt to new environmental factors, but they now sport a modern website, have increased their digital skillset and demonstrated remarkable adaptability – it just goes to show that change is possible if you have the right mindset.

"We earned the respect of our loyal customer base and that of new customers who now look at us and our commitment to longevity as something they want to be a part of."

“ Amazing innovation does not always come from established, big name businesses. Sometimes smaller ones [businesses] need to demonstrate even greater innovation and flexibility... ”

Robin is also quick to point out that some of the results like the strengthening of the great friendship that developed further between Arrow and fellow business, Quantum Martial Arts is a great example of fostering bonds and relationships with complementary and like-minded businesses, especially during tough times.

Despite all the doom and gloom, customer loyalty and support was also an unexpected outcome that really showed Robin and Corinne the true meaning of community.

"We are forever grateful to our customers for sticking by us during this time. A few even insisted we didn't suspend our fees in order to show support towards struggling local businesses."

The good news is that student numbers have since returned to almost pre-pandemic levels with more and more people keen to embrace a healthy lifestyle and a sport that embodies resilience.

FUTURE PLAN

Although Robin and Corinne hope that lockdowns are a thing of the past, they are grateful for the opportunity to have been innovative to survive and come out the other side with an improved online presence, digital fluency and the mentality that they (and their small business) can overcome just about any hardships that life may throw at them.

"Amazing innovation does not always come from established, big name businesses. Sometimes, smaller ones need to demonstrate even greater innovation and flexibility, and with even less operating capital."



MEET THE FOUNDER

Scan the QR code to hear from the business founder of this case study – Robin Dosoruth, Arrow Martial Arts.