



Paintertainment

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A TIME TO PIVOT

by Gretchen Fleener

In April I began brainstorming various creative ways to market my face painting in the face of a pandemic. I promoted belly painting, and mini paint kits to keep stir crazy, quarantined kids busy. I started packing orders with Magic Noodles instead of packing peanuts as a way to offer extra fun and entertainment to my customers' kids. I had larger ideas, in the event that face painting wouldn't return for a long time, but optimistically, had set those on the back burner for the time being. But at some point in May I decided that, just to be safe, it was time to utilize this lockdown time to pivot. My pivot of choice: window painting! I am also working on two other avenues to pivot my business, which are still in the works, but for the sake of this article I'll talk about my new window ventures.

To pivot, in its simplest definition means to change directions. When a business makes the decision to pivot, it is typically because either the original business plan is not working, or the product they provide is not meeting the needs of their market. The former is what is currently happening to the face & body art market, though through no fault of our own...or of our customers' either, for that matter. The lockdowns and restrictions that have come along with this pandemic have rendered the event industry virtually nonexistent for at least the near future.

Inc.com says that businesses who successfully pivot ask themselves two questions:

- 1) *What do we do that is distinctly valuable and defensible and might be extended to other customer needs?*
- 2) *How can our customer interactions be made more lasting and valuable? Are there recurring revenue services and products that can extend beyond the initial sale?*

These are great questions to get you started in thinking about in what direction you might pivot. Question 2 is important as well, as keeping our current clients engaged is the key to being able to tap into them once we pivot.

In an article online, The Founder Institute suggests the following steps to pivoting effectively:

1. Do it as soon as you can. This avoids wasting time, effort and money! When I finally made the decision to offer window painting, within 72 hours I researched the practice on Facebook and YouTube, scrounged together what left-over house paint I had from old projects, grabbed my brushes and painted my own front window. I took a photo, and from that one picture of my first window I added on a section to my website for window painting, created ads to get the word out, and had my first paid window booked!

2. Pick new goals that align with your new vision. My face painting business' goal or vision, in its most simple form, is to bring joy to others by helping them celebrate life's big occasions ~~through live, artistic entertainment~~. Okay live events may be gone, but even if I cross that last part off, there is still a need there. There has never been a greater need for creative ways to celebrate life's big moments or to bring joy to our family and friends than there is now! So while my goals themselves didn't necessarily change, I broadened my view of my business, and the ways in which it can meet this same goal.


3. Don't scrap the work you've already done. Identify what parts of your business can be salvaged and redirected into your new direction. Keeping the same vision enabled me to still build off of the existing foundation of my branding, client base, and reputation as an artist. I can utilize the paint splat part of my logo for window painting, keeping brand consistency. I can use my current website, adding window painting as another offering. I can get the word out to my current clients of this new way to celebrate their big occasions!

4. Listen to your customers. Make sure this is something they'll need and are willing to pay for. I'd also add, *listen to your own gut*. I considered getting into balloon sculpture delivery and decor, but decided against it because there are already people in my area who do this way better than I ever could, and because it would require a substantial investment in supplies, with money I didn't have. The thought of it stressed

me out, and that was not my goal. The thought of creating artwork with skills and supplies I already had (mostly), on a non-moving canvas that would last even in the rain, made my heart happy! I went with my gut.

5. Make sure your pivot presents opportunities for growth. Don't just consider what direction you're turning, but how far you can go in that direction in the future as well. Be sure to make sure your new market isn't too small and doesn't have too much competition. Again, balloons didn't make sense in my market. They might in yours! There are not a lot of window painters in my area, and with a grad season fast approaching and businesses about to open with poorly made impromptu signage announcing their curbside pickup procedures, a flood of potential clients was there. The residential side had the potential to remain regular as life's events continue, and businesses with changing promotions and seasons. And both residential and business clients could one day find the need for my face painting services again someday, allowing my pivot to feed back into my original offerings one day.

I'd like to add one more step: Respect yourself. Respect your expertise, your business sense, your ability to be resilient, and to remain a professional. Don't discount your new work out of desperation. You are not starting completely over from scratch...you are a skilled professional, expanding your services to meet your clients' needs. You may feel new & vulnerable, but don't let that show! Fake it 'till you make it! I literally started advertising my new service with one photo of my first ever attempt at a window painting on my own house. I ran to Facebook groups and YouTube with SO many newbie questions. But my clients don't need to know that! I know how to ensure I'm doing things professionally, and how to treat my customers, and that's what matters.

If you are considering pivoting your business, have thoroughly researched and thought through your ideas, and have one you think will work...*go for it!* Don't waste time. You may never again have this combination of both *time* and *a reason* to try something new...or at least, let's not hope you don't! ;-) 



What's News?



BEACH BALL



Bling-to-Go

Glitter Glamper is now offering "Bling-to-Go," our answer to no-contact body bling! Check out the blog for more info!



Now Shipping MORE FUN!

We're replacing our packing peanuts with Magic Noodles, while supplies last, to help keep your kiddos entertained!



1/4" flat brush



Wet Paint Magazine

Our summer issue is now shipping! Check out wetpaintmagazine.com to order, and sign up to receive email alerts when we are looking for submissions!

May Coupon Code!

10% off

All regular priced products! Use coupon code **PIVOT** at checkout. May not be combined with any other offers.

Offer expires 6/30/20