

APRIL 28, 2020

## Canadian Businesses Pivot Strategies To Provide Support For Frontline Workers

**C** OVID-19 has impacted individuals on a global scale. News reports have been filled with statistics, predictions, government briefings and the terrible effects that this virus has had across the world. In a time where we have been asked to remain apart to stop the spread, many companies and organizations have come together in unique ways to assist frontline workers and Canadians as a whole!

### PPE PRODUCTION

In the initial days of the global pandemic, countries watched in fear as Italy and Spain, most notably, struggled to provide adequate PPE and ventilators. Canada was one of those countries as we looked to our own supplies, and placed great importance on flattening the curve as not to overwhelm our healthcare system. Due to the widespread need for masks and visors with only a few companies creating the appropriate PPE, Canada was forced to rely on trade to get supplies. Canadian companies have stepped up, however, to help produce the necessary medical equipment to help frontline workers and those who contract the virus.

Bauer Hockey, known for its production of hockey and sporting equipment, was one of the first Canadian companies to pivot their production efforts and focus on creating visors for frontline workers. Bauer's manufacturing of healthcare PPE has gained the attention of police, firefighters, a senior's residence, and healthcare workers in provinces across the country. To assist other companies in creating similar products to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Bauer published the designs, instructions and supplies used, as well.

Ventilators, also in short supply, became the focus of a trio of companies who ramped up production of the much-needed equipment. The Canadian government announced the need for a substantial increase in ventilators and that they would be working closely with Thornhill Medical in Toronto, CAE in Montreal, and Starfish Medical in Victoria. These three facilities make up what is known as the Ventilators for Canadians consortium, and have been integral in making ventilators accessible to those who need it most. Thornhill Medical alone is working around the clock with Guelph-based company, Linamar, to provide 500 ventilators a month; a ten-fold increase over their typical output.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Scotiabank Arena, known for hosting sporting events and concerts for the entertainment of thousands of Ontarians, has been transformed into the largest kitchen in the country to serve frontline workers and those in need. This initiative has been called the “community meal program,” and features the efforts of “Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Ltd. (MLSE), Scotiabank, Tangerine Bank, Bell Canada, and Rogers Communications.” This couldn’t have been possible without the donations of companies such as “Sobeys, Sysco, Maple Lodge Farms, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Maple Leaf Foods, McCain Foods, Unico/Primo, Mars Wrigley, Coca-Cola, Weston Foods, and Pinnacle Caterers.”

The meals that are being made will be delivered to those who need it most and will help to alleviate some of the pressures that COVID-19 has caused.

In addition to businesses and venue’s pivoting their production efforts and finding ways to help the province, the Ontario Together portal has provided a place for individuals and businesses across the province to provide further support where needed. Ontario Together gives people the option to supply products, solve problems, submit ideas, and to volunteer. Thousands of submissions have been made, allowing innovative solutions to be presented and implemented as we all work together to reduce the impact of COVID-19.

As of April 27th, 2020 Doug Ford stated that Ontario will work to open up the marketplace in a safe and controlled manner. While many businesses are wondering when they will be able to reopen their doors, companies are finding new ways to supply Ontarians with the products and services they need to reduce COVID-19 and further support each other. It’s been inspiring to see businesses across our province and the country, work together.


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