

Wisconsin Businesses and their Impact During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wisconsin businesses have long been looking out for their communities and the people who reside in them. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in early 2020, countless Wisconsin businesses did not hesitate to take action to help their communities. I've seen people devastated by loss in my own community as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, but with help from Wisconsin businesses, people have been able to get the healthcare supplies, food, and sanitizing products that they need during this time. By shifting their production and donating to local causes, it's been incredible to see businesses in our area combatting the pandemic as we navigate through this as a community, as a state, and as a country.

When the first stay-at-home order was issued in Wisconsin in late March of 2020, there was widespread panic. The situation felt unfamiliar and no one knew what to expect after the order was lifted. Things like toilet paper and hand sanitizer were flying off the shelves as people prepared to spend more time in their homes than ever before. Schools were shut down and students were required to log into online classes and complete homework assignments via Google Classroom and the like. Luckily, Wisconsin businesses were there and willing to step in to ease our worries.

In March of 2020, several Wisconsin breweries including the La Crosse Distilling Co. stopped production of their normal alcoholic beverages and began producing hand sanitizer as it was becoming increasingly scarce in our grocery stores. To add to their generosity, they even distributed this hand sanitizer at no charge to the people and businesses that needed it most (Herken). I remember seeing this story on my local news station last year and being so inspired by their creativity and generosity. It's stories like these that demonstrate how incredible it can be when a local business decides to see a need and meet it.

With schools closed down and many people without jobs, hunger became an even bigger issue facing the United States amid the coronavirus pandemic. To aid in the hunger-fighting effort, Angelic Bakehouse of Cudahy, Wisconsin decided to match any donations that their customers made using their “Donate a Loaf” product on their website (Bragstad). For every loaf of bread purchased to be donated to Feeding America by their customers, Angelic Bakehouse also donated a loaf of bread. So many aspects of our lives have been affected this year, so it’s very encouraging to see companies helping out in ways that fit the resources of their business.

Finally, bobbleheads would be the last industry that you’d expect to play a role in COVID-19 relief. However, the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin stepped up with a plan to sell bobbleheads of Dr. Anthony Fauci, a healthcare hero who has been instrumental in advising the United States’ fight against the coronavirus (Bragstad). All of the profits from the sales of the Dr. Fauci bobbleheads were donated to support the purchase of masks for healthcare workers.

Throughout the past year, I’ve been truly encouraged by the amount of support from area businesses in their communities as we all work to end this pandemic. This past fall, I began sewing and selling masks within my church and community and donating the proceeds to FeedOne, an organization dedicated to fighting childhood hunger. Wisconsin businesses have demonstrated what it means to be a force for good in fighting the pandemic and supporting those in our community who need it the most. I feel very fortunate to live in this state where there are so many wonderful opportunities for service and people willing to help wherever possible.

Works Cited

Bragstad, Todd. "Milwaukee-area newsmakers: How companies are giving back amid the coronavirus crisis." *Bizjournals.com*, 2020, www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/news/2020/03/27/milwaukee-area-newsmakers-how-companies-are-giving.html.

Herken, Olivia. "La Crosse Distilling Co. to Produce, Distribute Free Hand Sanitizer." *La Crosse Tribune*, 20 Mar. 2020, lacrossetribune.com/news/local/la-crosse-distilling-co-to-produce-distribute-free-hand-sanitizer/article_b45822ae-efbd-56cb-bf4b-83a0b345489b.html.