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CORONAVIRUS

# LOVE THEM, HATE THEM, CAN'T SURVIVE WITHOUT THEM



Amazon invested billions in the development of a vast delivery infrastructure. Then the Covid-19 pandemic hit and put that network to the test.

TONY LYSTRA | 16

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When the governor's stay-at-home order put the clamps on her bakery, Olga Sagan launched a website to take on food delivery apps. **MEGAN CAMPBELL, 10**

#### PPP loans won't reach pot shops

Cannabis retailers have been deemed essential businesses in Washington but are still considered illegal by the feds. That gets tricky when it comes to securing federal aid. **MEGAN CAMPBELL, 7**

#### Boeing supplier makes deep cuts

Hexcel, a major aerospace supplier with factories in Kent and Burlington, laid off hundreds of employees and abandoned a merger deal. **ANDREW MCINTOSH, 9**



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*Patti Payne's take on  
business beyond the headlines*

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### CORONAVIRUS

# People are rising up to help each other

**H**ow do we rise up in what may be the biggest challenge, physically, economically and emotionally, of our collective lifetime? How do we show our best side?

I love to shine a light on the positive, illustrating the goodness that emerges from tragedy and hardship, and possibly inspiring others to do more. Here are two that will touch your heart.

At Seattle-based Columbia Hospitality, so hard hit by the Covid-19 impact, some two-thirds of the workforce, or 2,200 people, were furloughed or took deep pay cuts.

Within four days of the shutdown of all its 47 properties across Washington, Arizona, Montana, Oregon, Idaho, California and Hawaii, from hotels and resorts to conference centers and eateries, a formal nonprofit was formed called Columbia Hospitality Cares Foundation. In less than two weeks, it has raised almost \$140,000, with that number growing daily.

Company founder **John Oppenheimer** said, "Our people are our single biggest strength so this is highly emotional for every one of us."

Most extraordinary is that the employees themselves are the ones who dug deep to fund this, with donations of \$5 and up from servers and housekeepers to senior leaders, including people who have been furloughed and have their own tremendous personal challenges.

Clients and vendors are also plumping up this fund, which serves as a bridge to state or federal aid that employees may have also applied for. CHCF dollars will help with basics like housing, medical costs, food and more.

"I love it that team members, no matter what their position, want to help other team members. We can't wait for the day when we all come back," said Oppenheimer, in tears. He promises the fund will live long



*Executive Chef Adam Stevenson works the kitchen at Cedarbrook Lodge, a Columbia Hospitality property which remains open for takeout, although most of the staff has been furloughed.*

beyond this crisis.

"We will keep this going forever," he said. "The silver lining is that it will last in perpetuity."

Another hard-hit business is 11-year-old national chain MOD Pizza. Co-founder **Ally Svenson** said, "Our pizza is a front for the greater purpose of using business for social impact and spreading MODness – the ripple effect of simply doing the right thing." It's in their DNA. Nothing new to this company that has packed more than a million meals to fight childhood hunger, poured mammoth work into suicide prevention and championed LGBTQ equality in the workplace.

Its 10,000 employees, or MOD

Squaders, as they are called, all practice random acts of MODness daily.

But last week MOD Pizza went all out in its almost 500 stores across the country, giving away 10,000 pizzas in its Operation Hunger – One Day of Love, with 20 pizzas given out by each store, feeding first responders, health care workers and those on the front lines, in addition to housebound seniors, the homeless, food banks, shelters, day care, elder centers and an orphanage in Chicago. Each store chose its own cause.

Everything was prepared and delivered within rigid regulations, with strict physical distancing, masks and gloves.

"We're fueling this ripple effect, knowing that little ripples become waves and the waves turn into tsunamis of goodness," said Svenson.

A tsunami of thanks, support and connection all flooded into MOD Pizza communications: "Us women at Seattle Union Gospel Mission Women's and Children's Shelter thank you so much," said one of hundreds of notes. "Almost made me cry to see people laughing and smiling in the break room," said another.

"We are all so desperate to find ways to connect, so this was one of the best ways to bolster our own teams nationwide," Svenson said.

Despite almost 30 percent of MOD's head office furloughed or laid off, and severely reduced hours for all team members companywide, how can MOD afford to do this kind of giveaway program?

"How can we afford not to do it? It's so ingrained in the business of MOD," said Svenson, who points out that the headquarters staff who were furloughed took it with tremendous grace, knowing it was necessary for the survival of the company.

"First and foremost comes the feeding of employees who have always gotten one free meal on shift. For many, that might be the best meal all day," she said.

Now, in response to the crisis, feeding employees has been expanded to include a free meal on days off as well, and also for their family members as needed.

Svenson says taking care of emotional health is as important as any part of their mission. "We need to feel good. If we can feed people and experience that emotional rush when you are doing something good, we all emerge stronger. This is enlightened capitalism. And professionally, this challenge is the privilege of our lifetime. MOD is determined to survive this. Our business has to survive!"