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Amplifier- Focus on communication, changing operations and workforce retention



Amsterdam, July 6th, 2020 -While many industries are struggling to keep their heads above water, the cycling industry is one of the few industries that is booming right now. So as the era of Corona carries on and 2020's paradigm-shifting pandemic remains a theme of nearly every conversation, the team here at Twotone decided to make a concerted effort to really understand how our clients have been affected by Covid-19. Has it actually been a blessing in disguise for our clients and the industry at large? What adversity has been overcome and how did they do it? We asked five of our clients one question: "What are the top 3 changes you've made to run your business to accommodate corona conditions?". We hope these insights will help you understand what has been going on in the cycling industry, learn about what has worked for our clients, and identify what could potentially help your business, even if you're in a different industry.

The Estonian e-bike manufacturer Ampler, creates lightweight and clean-looking electric bikes to help solve commuting problems. With their own assembly factory and headquarters in Tallinn, flagship store in Berlin and over 40 test ride locations throughout Europe, they're striving to create the best e-bikes in the world. Ott Ilves, head of marketing and sales, explains the way they used to work, the changes they had to make and their new way of working.

- 1. Despite remote experience, focus on communication was required** – Before the crisis the company was already distributed over different locations. They have employees working from the headquarters in Tallinn, a factory located in Estonia, multiple locations in Germany, and some regularly traveling. The changes of working remotely weren't completely new to the team. They were already used to using programs such as Notion, Slack, and Zoom to make communication more efficient and effective. What changed is the way they had to improve documentation and the amount of communication. The biggest learning has been to be better at communicating, not everything should be a (zoom) call. Some things can even be a slack message, a notion document or an email. If you have to ask yourself if this should be a call or in writing, it should always be in writing. While this is a bigger problem on a larger scale, not just for Ampler, a lot of people have been feeling isolated. To help prevent isolation, getting too stressed or even depressed the marketing team came up with a more human exchange solution: the watercooler sessions. These quick 20 minute check-in sessions take place three times a week, where everybody turns on their camera and talks about anything but work. Addressing isolation and creating an environment where people can openly discuss their feelings, has been another great learning for the company. While the office currently has a remote-first principle, they're aware of the fact that some employees could not work from home thus isolated spaces at the office had to be created. As well as setting up a calendar system where spots have to be booked before going to the office. This has been beneficial in keeping the number of contacts as low and as isolated as possible. Looking forward, they will even be more flexible in the future. Before the pandemic employees could work from home two days a week if they wanted to, but they will probably continue the remote first principle and offering even more flexible options in the future.
- 2. Operations came to a halt**– The operations changed in every sense. All test rides had to stop for a while in Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Switzerland and The Netherlands. While they had to close down the showroom, they also had to think about ways they would have to adjust when opening up again. The manufacturing and servicing process had to be introduced to very careful hygiene operations and regulations to reduce the risks as much as possible. The cycling season as a whole and also for Ampler shifted a bit as everything had shut down. The test ride program, media work and shops had to close down which all affected the sales a bit. However, Ampler was in a fortunate position to be direct-to-consumer. With enough bikes in stock and minimal downtime to continue production, they were able to preserve the 7 - 14 day delivery to all customers. Compared to other companies in the cycling industry who were in a less fortunate position, Ampler was simply fortunate.

3. Workforce Retention– One of the company wide decisions was to make sure that everyone would keep their jobs. Since all events and bike fairs got cancelled until the end of august, a large part of the events team got reassigned to other positions in the company. Such as starting in customer support, taking care of the Berlin Warehouse and working in the showroom. Ultimately, what globally has largely been a negative situation, has, for Ampler, been relatively fortunate saleswise.

Ultimately, Ampler’s empathetic company culture combined with their remote work experience, the strategic choice of having bike production in Europe coupled with their investment round last year meant bikes in stock for sale and a direct-to-consumer model that still got bikes to customers with a workforce that felt heard and possessed a confidence that their job would remain despite any uncertainty the world was experiencing.

Interested in reading about Twotone's conclusion and knowing more about the common themes that emerged in all interviews? Check it out [here!](#)



<https://www.instagram.com/amplerbikes/>



Light Electric Bikes for Urban Commuters

ABOUT TWOTONE AMSTERDAM

We are an Amsterdam based sales and PR consulting agency. We pride ourselves on being flexible enough to adapt to any situation and tough enough to ensure things get moving. We love to drink good coffee, hear your story and learn how we can help you and your brand.

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