

Calgary Progressive Lifestyles Foundation



Up until 2019, Calgary Progressive Lifestyles Foundation operated two social enterprises, Cookies on the Go and Lifestyles Bistro. Both of these enterprises were created as employment opportunities for people with different abilities while promoting self-esteem, financial freedom, social networking, job skill improvement and community involvement. Lifestyles Bistro was established as a possible solution to the financial challenges, program shortcomings and limited product offerings of Cookies on the Go. In 2019 CPLF decided to focus solely on the bistro. Residents who are employed with CPLF currently work as promoters (who go around the local area with flyers), dishwashers, bussers, food packagers, sales representatives and cleaners.

FAST FACTS

Location: Calgary, AB

Founded: 1989

Sector: foodservices

Annual Revenue (2018): \$25M

Parent Org: none

Website: www.cplf.ca

FINDINGS

- While originally CPLF did not require marketing to maintain its operations, the establishment of social enterprises in the retail sector meant that it needed to begin focusing on relationship building and reputation.
- Transitions over the years have required new hires and retooling existing staff into new roles.
- CPLF believes heavily in marketing their social value - they believe the story behind their products can help set them apart in a competitive marketplace.
- Engaging the local community is critical - CPLF's primary customer base is within a 3 km radius of the bistro.
- This case demonstrates the balancing act in running a social enterprise. While a for-profit business would quickly terminate a program that is not profitable, social enterprises include other considerations such as the program value for participants and the benefits of advocacy and awareness.

Selling Social: Experiences of Social Enterprises with Social Procurement and Social Purchasing presents the findings of a three-year (2017-2020), pan-Canadian research project detailing experiences with social procurement and social purchasing from the perspective of social enterprises, as well as their organizational purchasers. These 19 profiles highlight the cases presented in the book and illustrate unique features that make them of interest to practitioners, scholars and students of the social economy.

This research is supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

For further information:

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