



The impact of small businesses in both the local and global economic development can never be understated. A small business is an enterprise operating on a small-scale with a small employee pool, low volume of sales and a small customer base. There are over 25 million small businesses in the United States that have not only offered quality products and services but have also served as employers to about half of the private sector workforce. Small businesses also have the ability and capability to become multinational enterprises which fuels global economic growth. For instance, Shake Shack, an American restaurant chain began operations as a food cart inside Madison Square Park in New York. However, inadequate capital, unhealthy competition and limited growth are some of the problems hindering the progress of most small businesses.

The viability of small businesses is also harshly diminished due partly to the occurrence of disasters but more so for the unpreparedness for disasters by these businesses. For instance, most businesses tend to ignore, the inevitable fact, that they are prone to disruptions such as natural, man-made or technological disasters. As a result, they do not prepare appropriately for catastrophic events which adversely affects businesses and decelerates the recovery process. Business recovery, continuity and sustainability are major problems for businesses, that suffer from disaster, especially those that operate on a small scale.

Small business recovery is highly pivotal but also very challenging. This is because without disaster preparations, business owners have to execute a fresh start to restore their business to its prior state which is quite demotivating especially without ideal support and encouragement. In addition, these businesses will require resources such as infrastructure, labor and capital to recover all they might have lost during the disaster. The lack of access to these resources will also have a negative impact on the recovery process. For instance, as indicated by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), about 40% of flooded businesses never recover. Unfortunately, up to 12,000 businesses were affected by the recent flooding in Baton Rouge and hence almost 5,000 might not reopen according to the statistics provided by NFIP. On the other hand, the Nisqually Earthquake that occurred in Washington State left up to 50% of small businesses irrecoverable. Hence, small businesses recovery after disaster is a problem and significantly affects the families who operate the businesses, the community and fiscally impacts the government due to reduction in sales tax revenues.



The ability of a business to efficiently continue its operations after a disruption is just as pivotal as its ability to recover from a disaster. Business continuity is also a major problem of small businesses due to the loss of customers during disasters. The ineptitude of small businesses to manage customer relationships prior, during and after a disaster also contributes to its customer loss. Hence, some small businesses that have the opportunity to reopen after a disaster, tend to close due to the lack of customers, competition from other businesses and the inability to generate adequate revenue. For instance, the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) indicated that over 90% of small businesses fail within two years after being struck by a disaster. Thus, the sustainability of small businesses, that are adversely affected by a disaster, becomes a major problem.

Preparation for unexpected events reduces the appall and impact of the event. Small businesses will benefit abundantly from the adequate preparation for disasters. Ideal preparation reduces the effect of a disaster and enhances rapid recovery after a disaster. Ideal preparation involves the attainment of adequate disaster insurance protection from a reliable insurance company, knowledge of the disaster trend of a particular location by the business owner and affiliation with non-governmental organizations and governmental organizations aimed at assisting small businesses. When businesses prepare well for disasters, they are able to experience speedy recovery due to the support from insurance companies and the contribution of the organizations.

Furthermore, the implementation of excellent customer relationship management by small businesses will contribute to business continuity. Customers play a pivotal role in the success of every business. Businesses that strives to provide quality customer service should also implement customer relationship management. The availability of a platform that will be available for customer interactions and will also be utilized to communicate with customers concerning, the possibility of the occurrence of a disaster, the chance of a temporary close of the business, the temporary location for the business and any important updates, will be highly salient. Customer retention is definitely better and cheaper than customer attainment. However, customer retention rates for small businesses, affected by a disaster, is rapidly dropping. This is because small businesses have failed to manage customer relationship adequately. When small



businesses begin to manage customer relationships, they will be able to retain their customers which will ensure business continuity and sustainability.

The post-disaster problems, faced by small businesses, can effectively and efficiently be solved with an innovative and creative technology platform. ReviveMyBiz is a convenient website that connects small businesses with resources, opportunities and information to prepare appropriately for disasters and ensure speedy business recovery and continuity upon the occurrence of a disaster. In fact, our solution provides useful properties that encourages user retention before the occurrence of a disaster, during the recovery process and after the recovery process. Our major target audience can be divided into two categories; primary benefactors which are the small businesses and secondary users which includes individuals and corporations. The focus of our technology platform was ascertained through need assessments conducted among owners of small businesses who suffered from several forms of disasters including Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Isaac and Nisqually Earthquake, and intense brainstorming by our team. Our unique selling proposition involves values beneficial to the end users which includes customer relationship management, disaster preparedness and faster business recovery and continuity after the occurrence of a disaster.

Customer relationship management is a unique feature of ReviveMyBiz. Our understanding of the need for small businesses to find an incentive to use our platform before the occurrence of a disaster coupled with our creative provisions, to foster a better relationship between small businesses and their customers, reveals the relevance of this concept. Every small business can set up a profile on our platform which will include information of their businesses and current customers. This will enable the businesses reduce the cost of maintaining a website and gives them access to a broad base of potential customers. To help small businesses attain more customers, we will provide the opportunity for all our secondary users to easily find the businesses by their profiles on our website. In addition, we will provide adequate customer relationship management for small businesses by storing information about customers and implementing effective communication with customers. Furthermore, to ensure continuous improvement and development of the businesses, we will help gather feedback from customers and provide businesses with an analyzed report on possible areas of improvement.



Disaster preparedness is also essential and reduces the negative effect of disasters on small businesses. Through the use of ReviveMyBiz, small businesses will be equipped with information to prepare adequately for disasters. This platform will provide up-to-date information about possible disasters based on certain locations and the historic trends via a possible partnership with National Weather Service. In addition, the significance of disaster protection of small businesses can never be overemphasized because of the continuous hazardous effects of climate change. In fact, the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report indicated that 70% of the small businesses do not have flood insurance. Hence, we will make sure all the businesses utilizing ReviveMyBiz are adequately insured through partnerships with several insurance companies that will also utilize our platform as a means of advertising their insurance packages. For instance, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) exist to provide affordable insurance but also ensures floodplain regulation. The ability of small businesses to attain information from the NFIP or purchase flood insurance protection from a reliable organization can be considered pivotal.

In addition, ReviveMyBiz will help connect small businesses with disaster assistance centers and also provide information concerning alternative facilities prior to the occurrence of a disaster. Our platform will showcase outstanding non-governmental and governmental organizations focused on aiding small business prior to a disaster. US Small Business Administration, US Aid, ICNA Relief USA, Insurance Institute for Home & Business Safety, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will all be showcased on our website. This affiliation prior to a disaster will yield more support in times of disaster. Also, each organization will have the opportunity to educate the small businesses through our platform of their major functions and the contact information to reach them on. This vital information will only be provided to small businesses who have registered on our platform.

Business recovery and sustainability has been signified as a major problem of small businesses and hence, needs the creative solution that ReviveMyBiz offers. We will assure faster recovery of businesses that have been affected from disasters through support from individuals and corporations. We will also display businesses that have suffered from any form of disaster on our front page and encourage our secondary users; organizations and individuals, to donate,



volunteer or patronize. Our donation request is open to both cash donation and in kind support to the small business they have selected to assist. Donations will be done to a specific small business through a 501C 3 organization which will then encourage businesses to donate because of the tax deductions applicable. In addition, organizations also earn a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) certificate from ReviveMyBiz. On the other hand, individuals also earn an Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) certificates for donation, earn bragging rights and are encouraged to share their certificates on social media platforms to encourage their network to also donate and help recover a small business. Our secondary users have the option to choose the small businesses they are interested in supporting by sorting or filtering the list based on several categories and can then view the needs of the business and can choose how they will support.

Labor has been identified as a pivotal factor of production especially in rebuilding or renovating of businesses. ReviveMyBiz will also provide our secondary users with the option to volunteer. Volunteers can choose the business they want to work with based on distance, purpose and responsibilities required. ReviveMyBiz will work with several universities that encourage students to attain community service hours and our typical secondary users who are willing to support such causes. Also, we will partner with volunteering organizations like Volunteers of America and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOID) that will introduce our platform to many volunteers. The impact of this support will enhance speedy recovery of small businesses. In addition, volunteers are provided with an incentive for working which will include a certificate from ReviveMyBiz and other personalized perks by the small businesses. For instance, a business can choose to give some samples of its product as a means of appreciating the current volunteers and attracting more volunteers.

Furthermore, another innovative strategy to aid rapid recovery of small businesses is an option for our secondary users to patronize the small businesses. Patronizing small businesses, in the disaster recovery process, involves purchasing a prepaid card that will be redeemable at a time specified by the business. This option gives customers the opportunity to support small businesses in the recovery process and also provides small businesses with an indirect loan that can be used to ensure faster recovery of the business. In addition, this also enables small businesses to earn new customers who will prefer to patronize. This strategy was attained



through a research that revealed that certain individuals will rather patronize than donate. Thus, small businesses will be able to attain some funds to aid recovery ahead of time and they can provide the products or services in the future when they are fully recovered.

ReviveMyBiz has a cogent impact on small businesses, non-profit organizations, government sectors and for-profit organizations. The small businesses are our primary benefactors and attain all the benefits of the website for a little cost that might be implemented in the future to ensure the sustainability of ReviveMyBiz. In addition, non-profit organizations focused on assisting small businesses will be connected with the small businesses on our platform and through the donation option, nonprofit organizations will be able to attain their goal of assisting the businesses while also serving as a middle person in the transactions to ensure tax benefits for corporate sponsors. In addition, for-profit companies such as insurance companies and construction companies will pay to advertise on our platform which will help ReviveMyBiz generate money. The small businesses will also benefit through donations, patronizations and volunteering services. In addition, through grants provided by government for small businesses, we hope to earn revenue from the government while also yielding revenue for the government through sales taxes.

In conclusion, ReviveMyBiz is the ideal solution to the problem of business recovery, continuity and sustainability of small businesses after any form of disaster. Our technology platform focuses on enhancing businesses in three major areas which includes customer relationship management through adequate customer communications and the introduction of new customers, disaster preparedness through the provision of information about ideal insurance packages and connection with organizations, and faster recovery and assured sustainability through crowd funding, volunteering and patronizing by customers. Hence, ReviveMyBiz is extremely ideal because it enhances rapid business recovery and also ensures business sustainability. In fact, it is essential for every small business prior to the occurrence of a disaster and is functional with a lot of benefits including the priceless information it provides and the financial, resourceful and collective support that can be earned by small businesses through this platform.