



CASE STUDY
**EQUIPPING SMBs
FOR SUCCESS**

INDUSTRY

Telecommunications and
information technology

CHALLENGE

Secure Cox Business' position as a
trusted resource for small- to medium-sized
businesses on post-pandemic trends
and challenges

SOLUTION

Conduct survey research on small- to medium-
sized business trends and utilize the results to
secure earned media coverage

EXPERTISE

Creative services | Public relations | Research



The Spring of 2020 was a monumental moment as almost every element of our daily lives adapted to our 'new normal' caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. And, though the pressure has eased, it's impact on Main Street lingers.

Many small business and consumers continue to face significant challenges brought on by the global pandemic, which is now compounded by issues such as supply chain disruption, regional crises and sheer economic uncertainty.

Cox Business recognized its customers on Main Street need more than technology alone to succeed. To help small businesses better serve local shoppers amidst these challenges, Cox Business partnered with Arketi Group to conduct its annual Consumer Pulse on Small Business with an emphasis on what is (or isn't) motivating consumers to shop small.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS



20
one-of-a-kind
research findings



13
media placements



3M+
total audience

UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO CHANGE

Cox Business provides SMBs across America with services ranging from business internet and TV all the way to security systems and cloud services. It understands the unique role small business plays in our communities and the need for accessible, local goods and services.

During the height of the pandemic, change was all around us. Cox wanted to know how those changes were impacting shopping habits and behaviours towards small business. It would then use those insights to engage its audience and help them overcome pandemic-related challenges.

Were consumers returning to in-store shopping, for example? How did the pandemic impact their perspective? Did they have new expectations? How could stores meet them? Inquiring minds needed to know.

RESEARCH AND REVIEW

We first developed a research premise outlining program, including campaign goals, key questions, target audience, research approach and theme.

Our next step was a literature review of similar research, plus emerging trends for SMBs post-pandemic. We used this knowledge to develop a 20-question survey covering unique, interesting topics for SMBs – which we knew would engage media.

CAPTURING AND ANALYZING INSIGHTS

Arketi surveyed more than 1,000 consumers. And while the research was conducted nationally, we also targeted specific regional markets where Cox has a strong presence to generate localized findings.

Responses in hand, Arketi scrutinized the data and selected 20 interesting data points to feature in a news release and infographic – with multiple versions for national reporters covering small business and local media. Some highlights included:

- 7/10** consumers felt SMBs should promote causes they believe in.
- 3/4** shoppers encourage their friends to shop local.
- 50%** said contactless payments enhance in-store shopping.

We also developed bite-sized graphics based on our infographic for Cox to use on social media.

Tasked with securing 10 earned media placements for Cox's research findings, Arketi set out to get this knowledge into the hands of America's small business owners.

“The global pandemic set many small businesses back with a slew of pressures and challenges, making it harder to understand shopping behaviors that were rapidly changing. With the help of Arketi, we were able to get a better understanding of consumers' expectations and give small businesses valuable insight to meet their shoppers where they are.”

TODD SMITH

Assistant Vice President, Public Relations
Cox Communications

REACHING AN AUDIENCE OF 3 MILLION

Our ensuing media relations campaign helped Cox shout out its survey results and research, which were featured in 13 target publications – three more than our goal.

Further, the results were crafted into several bylined articles from Cox executives published in national outlets such as *Compliance Today* and *Small Biz Daily*, as well as local and regional publications such as the *Phoenix Business Journal*, *Inside Tucson Business* and *Biz Tucson*.

Ultimately, our research alongside Cox Business reached an audience of more than 3 million and positioned the company as a thought leader on SMB trends post-pandemic. The research also equipped Cox Business' regional teams with much-needed, hyper-localized data for sales and marketing efforts.