



MY MAIN STREET & DIGITAL MAIN STREET BUSINESS SPOTLIGHTS

Presented By The City of St.
Catharines Economic Development
and Tourism Services

PREPARED FOR:

**Economic Developers
Association of Canada**
Marketing Canada Awards

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INTRO

The City of St. Catharines Economic Development and Tourism Services strives to ensure St. Catharines is a centre for innovation, culture and academics. It is our business to help make all St. Catharines businesses successful.



BACKGROUND

The City of St. Catharines Economic Development and Tourism Services Department were able to offer the Digital Main Street Digital Service Squad and My Main Street Local Business Accelerator Programs to businesses in two core communities over the period of 2022-2023. A series of testimonial videos were created focusing on grant recipients from each program, and their specific stories of the work done to overcome adversity faced.

The central premise for this series was to promote the diverse collection of businesses and business owners, while providing these business owners the opportunity to take centre stage and tell their experiences with post pandemic recovery via existing grant programs. Through these videos, St. Catharines' business owners have championed these programs efforts to ensure equitable access to opportunities especially in cases where they have faced systemic barriers.

OUR GRANT RECIPIENTS



The grant recipients chosen for this series comprised a diverse collection of demographics and experiences. Through our selection of recipients chosen, we were able to have a variety of stories told that a broad audience of their peers can relate to.

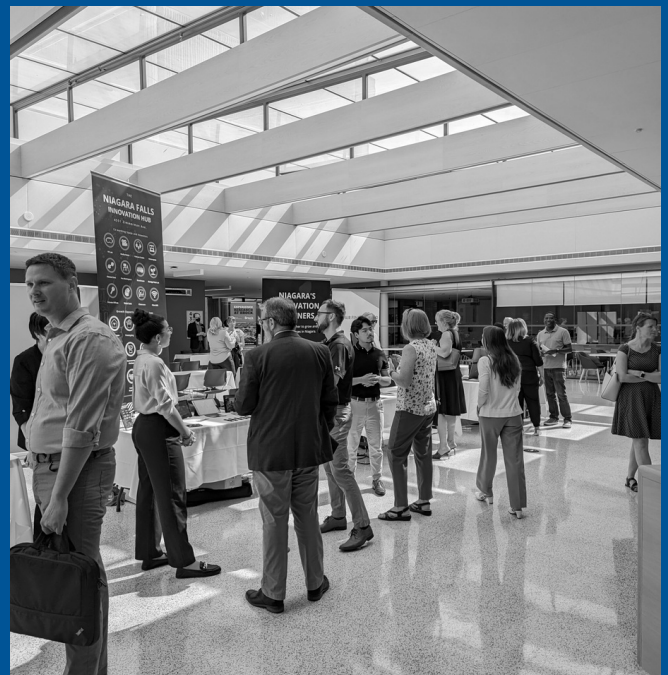
The intent of this series was to allow for our selection of grant recipients to effectively tell their stories, so that business owners here in St. Catharines can not only more directly relate with the series, but also so that through their words we could more effectively spread awareness of each program and the benefits offered through them. With this guiding intent, selections were made to ensure the most impactful stories could be told, with a focus on those which will be the most emotionally stimulating.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This series was designed to reach specific groups of our community. From those selected to appear in the campaign, to the stories they told, and where the InvestInSTC team has chosen to make use of the respective testimonial clips; each decision has been intentional to ensure our message is received by those whom we are seeking.

The intention behind this campaign was to reach these specific groups:

- St. Catharines based business owners, specifically in the downtown and Merritton business areas
- Program partners
- Industry partners



CHALLENGES

St. Catharines Economic Development and Tourism Services have recognized there exists traditionally underserved communities across our Downtown, Merritton, and Queenston business communities, which needed to be amended.



While strategizing the core areas of focus for our My Main Street Local Business Accelerator program as well as our Digital Main Street Digital Service Squad, it was recognized that the Downtown, Merritton, and Queenston business communities have traditionally been underserved. With that knowledge, these communities became a large focus of the associated grant programs. In order to promote our efforts, and to share knowledge of what these programs offered for small business owners, it was decided to provide grant recipients the opportunity to champion these programs. Through these efforts, a greater impact can be achieved, and thus a greater return on investment across our core target communities.

SPECIFICS



The City of St. Catharines worked with a local marketing agency to handle production of each video in this series, with City of St. Catharines Economic Development and Tourism Services employees handling coordination and dissemination once the testimonial videos have been made.

This campaign allowed for the usage of a hub-and-spoke strategy that allowed for promotion of each program across a number of platforms with a central landing page for each program that viewers were directed back too. From here, users were able to easily apply for these programs, and get in touch with the direct staff coordinating these programs in order to easily access supports.

Over the course of this campaign, there have been a total of 985 organic views of the associated videos for this campaign as well as a total of 110 page views on our InvestInSTC blog post featuring specifically the My Main Street Local Business Accelerator testimonials.

CONTACT US

City of St. Catharines

50 Church St., St. Catharines, ON | L2R7C2

www.investinstc.ca

edceconomic@stcatharines.ca | [@investinstc](https://www.instagram.com/investinstc)