

Case Study

SCOTLAND
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Mimi's Bakehouse: How we hardwired adaptability into our business

The logo for Mimi's Bakehouse, featuring the brand name in a stylized script font above the word 'BAKEHOUSE' in a smaller, sans-serif font, all contained within a light blue rectangular box.

"No training course in the land could have prepared anyone for Covid-19, but the training and skills we had built up in the business helped us face the challenges and adapt."

Ashley Harley

When crisis hit our family-owned bakery, we were quickly able to adapt the business and move 100% online. The three key ingredients? Investment in digital, social media, and company culture.

Mimi's is a family-owned bakery in Edinburgh, winner of Scottish Bakery Café of the Year in 2019 and many other awards. We first opened our doors in 2010, and have bakeries across the capital, from Leith to Corstorphine to the Royal Mile.

As a café bakery, around 90% of our business before 2020 was focused on our shops, but when the Covid-19 lockdown was announced in March 2020, we made major changes very quickly. The work we had previously put into the business helped with that.

The power of digital, social media and company ethos

Our response to lockdown was to move the business 100% online, delivering what we do in our shops to people's homes.

- We immediately used our website, Facebook and Instagram accounts to tell people about our **home delivery service**.

- We were able to do this so quickly because we had already invested in digital. Pre-Covid-19, our website was already set up for e-commerce using the **Shopify** platform – a good investment.
- Our social media presence was invaluable for communicating with customers. We have over 25,000 people following us on **Facebook** and over 30,000 on **Instagram**, and have long put time and effort into posting regularly and taking great photos.
- The **culture** and **skills** we had built in the business was also critical. The rate at which the lockdown deliveries snowballed effectively turned us from a café bakery into a logistics business. We were able to step up in terms of our systems, processes and how we organised ourselves.



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Our tips for building a 'can-do' and 'will-do' culture

Tip 1: family. The first element that makes us adaptable is that we're a family business. We have so much at stake that we won't sit back and let the business drift.

Tip 2: ethos. The family element alone doesn't make you successful – we have worked hard on good communication and our Mimi's ethos. During lockdown, when we asked colleagues to help with tasks they wouldn't usually do, they came good.

Tip 3: opportunities. We offer our staff opportunities to develop and progress, through both practical learning on the job and external training. We offer training courses including; Modern Apprenticeships and use virtual college and university courses.

The bigger picture

It's long been said that no business should ever stand still if it wants to succeed. We're proud of what we did in Covid-19, but it wasn't a one-off. In business, the world is always changing, and you have to build your ability to change with it. That's exactly what we have done.

How we train and develop our people

- Learning on the job and practical experience is important, and our management team spend a time with our people, using their experience to teach and mentor them.
- We have written our own Mimi's modules teaching people how to do things. Most recently we've written up our mentoring approach so we can use it across the business.
- We use a variety of training techniques and courses including Modern Apprenticeships, college and university courses delivered face to face and virtually.

www.mimisbakehouse.com