

THE ATLAS° HOTEL

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RESILIENCE IN CRISIS: RYAN URZADA AND THE ATLAS° HOTEL

Ryan Urzada, Chief Experience Officer of The Atlas° Hotel, said the first few days of the COVID-19 crisis quickly became a stark realization of what the future held. "About \$1 Million worth of bookings evaporated almost instantly," said Urzada. The crisis was a sad twist of fate for one of Regina's newest hotels. Officially opening in November of 2019, The Atlas° was dedicated to guest-experiences and a corporate culture of caring. As their website puts it, "a team of people who have 'hospitality' flowing in their veins."

THE HUMAN COST OF THE CRISIS

Arguably one of the hardest-hit sectors by the pandemic, global hospitality companies have had to reduce staff and nearly shut down operations. "Within one to two days we realized we had to make layoffs," said Urzada, "this was tough, you have to earn people's trust, it's not something we took for granted." The Atlas° Hotel had to lay off 87% of its staff to deal with the sudden loss of bookings.

RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

In a familiar crisis-story, Urzada says his remaining staff didn't sleep, adapted, and covered anywhere they could. "We weren't trying to build loyalty, we were drawing off the loyalty we had already created." The team flexed to keep up with the phones, security, and maintenance. "We actually turned part of our focus to the small tasks we had always wanted to do, but never had the time," said Urzada, "we tried to use the downtime to our advantage."

MAINTAINING A CULTURE OF CARING

Speaking to Urzada, it is obvious The Atlas° team is a family. Although 87% of the staff was laid off, the family didn't disband. Chefs volunteered to come in, cooking the entirety of food on hand, and bottled the remaining kegs. "We had a drive-through at the hotel where our staff came and picked up all the food and beer to take home," said Urzada, "it was pretty amazing." For The Atlas° Hotel, their company culture reflects their brand. The Predictive Index System®, delivered by Certified Elite Partner Predictive Success, is the #1 tool the hotel uses and has become foundational to the development of their teams, managers, and culture.

CHANGING STRATEGY AND THE PATH FORWARD

Urzada admits his strategy is "incomplete." He and his team have refocused to ask themselves a question every business should be pondering "how do we adapt our business model to work in the brave new world?" For The Atlas°, that means adapting their hotel to offer a safe space for families to take a quick getaway over the 2020 summer. Proximity to Regina, and the SOAKED! Water Park inside the hotel means families can get away for a fun vacation without leaving the city. "This will eventually end," says Urzada, "I'm looking forward to the day when we can go back to giving our guests great experiences." Resilience and culture create elite action.

90%

**OF STAFF AGREED THE
ATLAS° HOTEL SHOULD BE
AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE.**

"Looking back on this time, managers should be asking themselves 'what am I going to be regret that I didn't do while I had the chance?'"



- Ryan Urzada
Chief Experience Officer
The Atlas° Hotel

