

A professional portrait of Lukasz Smolinski, a middle-aged man with short brown hair, wearing a blue blazer over a light-colored button-down shirt. He is standing against a dark background, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

INTERVIEW WITH LUKASZ SMOLINSKI
OWNER @ DESEO, POLAND

**FINDING SOLUTIONS &
COMING OUT
STRONGER THAN
BEFORE!**

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Lukasz Smoliński is a chef and business owner of Deseo, boutique pastry shops specialized in modern French-style and classical pastry that serves coffee and ice cream located around Warsaw. Deseo was launched in 2015. Of the four shops, only 1 located in a shopping mall is closed. Other shops operate normally with shortened opening hours.

Since March 13th, turnover fell by 50% As a company they reacted very quickly to the new situation, as Lukasz states : "The very beginnings of DESEO were very difficult - business became profitable for us only at the beginning of 2019. We fought then for the trust of our guests and were building a company to which they would like to come back. These difficult beginnings have now helped us to react appropriately."

**"AT THE BEGINNING OF THE
PANDEMIC, OUR PRIORITY WAS TO
PROTECT OUR EMPLOYEES"**

THE SECOND PHASE WAS TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR EMPLOYEES GET FULLY PAID. LEVEL 2 HAS BEEN ACHIEVED!

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Lukasz didn't want to have a situation where he would be forced to reduce the team, nor pay them less. This he archived, and two people even got pay raise and whole team involved in the period before Easter bonuses!

How? New measure where put in place: daily financial reporting to control costs and revenue and respond quickly to any changes. The cost revenue structure of the company also changed, one shop closed, and no high margin tea or coffee was being sold.

The reaction was to increase turnover on cakes and pastry, but this in turn increased cost of the workshop.

"Historically, Easter was never much of a turnover for us in comparison with Christmas, so we had to find other ways to generate revenue. The implemented solutions were a success, allowing us to end March with a profit - only slightly less than the profit planned at the beginning of the year"



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CHALLENGES CHANGE OVER TIME, WE ARE NOW ENSURING THAT EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN BUILT DURING THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES AND WE MAKE THE MOST OF THIS NEW POTENTIAL!

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In April, they launch online sales, a response to a long-standing inquiry from customers to deliver products outside Warsaw. This solution also gave them a chance to adapt the duties of our staff and transfer some of them to work from offline to online, working on social media. The new campaigns generated huge traffic on their social channels and to service all requests, the whole team was mobilized to help. They also had to rent the right cars - refrigerators, hire drivers, etc. The whole undertaking required a lot of organizational work, but it was worth it because it turned out to be commercially viable.

The online store was launched about a year ago, but the turnover there was almost negligible until recently. 'The pandemic has mobilized us to a greater emphasis on e-commerce and average sales have now increased several times. The situation showed us the potential of the Internet and we are at the stage of improving our site and "learning" how to become specialists in this channel.'

Deseo Facebook has several thousand fans, with whom they deal with orders, logistic issues, answer a large number of questions, moderate discussions. Obviously, the scale of communication has increased, which also means bigger workload, but it has had a direct impact on the business.

"I USED THE WHOLE SITUATION AS A WAY TO ACCELERATE THE DIGITIZATION OF OUR WORK."

IN APRIL WE WILL BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE RESULTS PLANNED BEFORE THE PANDEMIC. THIS CLEARLY SHOWS ME THAT THE COMPANY DID NOT USE ITS FULL POTENTIAL BEFORE ALL THE PANDEMIC TURMOIL. THE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE IS PRICELESS.

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Another very interesting activity that they did was joining forces with local, prosperous gastronomy brands and create joint promotion on social media. Restaurants that are not strong in desserts support Deseo in sales, and Deseo by using their in social media reach, support them. "Creating a unit of strong brands which supports each other is also a new solution that works in terms of both promotion and profit".

Work process have been digitalized; for B2B sales activities LifeSpace solution has been implemented moving the entire database of the business clients digital, In relation to B2C, they have introduced a work registration system and structure for optimizing document circulation and accounting. "In my opinion, optimization of employees' working time is the opportunity to generate huge savings and more productive use of the potential of our employees."

"THE LOSER FINDS A PROBLEM IN EVERY SOLUTION, AND THE WINNER FINDS A SOLUTION IN EVERY PROBLEM - THIS IS MY LIFE MOTTO, IT IS THE CLUE OF OUR APPROACH TO THE CURRENT SITUATION AND I WISH EVERYONE THE SAME OUTLOOK ON THINGS"



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