



By Kirk Jabara,
Preston Feather
Building Centers

Thinking like a 105-year old start-up company

Preston Feather has survived the 1918 Spanish flu, wars, national financial crises, big box stores, and many other events beyond our control. Now we must re-start our business after a government shut-down of the construction industry, stay-at-home orders still in place, and the world waiting for a vaccine. What do we see for the future? **Opportunity!**

With four locations, 107 employees, a 90% reduction in sales and uncertainty about when construction activities could resume in Michigan, we had plenty to worry about.

How do we find that hope? How do we all reconfigure our businesses to be safe and make money doing it?

Preston Feather finds answers by embracing change and challenging our own business model – like a start-up company. Every day. Opportunities are emerging in ways we never thought possible. Our amazing team has been resilient and creative. What was fear is now confidence.

Let me share some examples.

Curb-side Pickup. Curb-side pick-up has been a big hit. A big time saver. It's here to stay.

Other Safety Benefits. COVID-19 demanded new safety protocols. We developed our plan and shared it with customers and suppliers. The result? Safer work spaces, safer job-sites, better planning, and more coordination.

Remote Work Options. Social distancing pushed us to “de-bug” working remotely. I joke that “even Grandma knows how to use Zoom now.” We use virtual tools to improve communication internally and within our supply chain. Endless email strings (and unproductive time) have been replaced with face-to-face real time decision making.

We now “Design from a Distance,” using virtual meetings and showroom tours, samples shipped directly to homeowners, digital design renderings and detailed

installation packets to design, order and install cabinetry, countertops, closets and storage systems. Customers miles away from their Northern Michigan resort home work with our designers to complete beautiful projects.

Digital Documents. To reduce contact points, we moved to 100% electronic statements, reducing delivery time by 2-3 days. Our builders can now bill faster and increase cash flow. This reduced our overhead costs, too. More of our customers now use our online account management tools.

New Delivery Methods. Delivery is more important than ever – so we doubled down. Smaller, more efficient

vehicles are now being used to make smaller, faster deliveries and save fuel costs. Mobile phones take photos for proof-of-delivery receipts,

“**WHAT WAS FEAR IS NOW CONFIDENCE.**”

eliminating signatures (a COVID-19 concern) and improving the process.

Virtual Learning. We've piloted distance learning technology, getting more bang for the buck and improving teamwork across multiple locations and departments. It's cost effective, flexible, and allows more training at a faster pace.

Exciting stuff! You can see why we see opportunities.

We face many obstacles to get our businesses operating at full throttle again. We have all been “disrupted” by COVID-19. We're blasted by negative news. Not all of it is true. We see opportunities ahead. We hope others do, too.

Preston
Feather

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