

Case Study: Town Tees



Shelburne, Ontario | www.towntees.ca

Town Tees is a custom apparel decoration and print company specializing in vinyl & digital transfer, embroidery, sublimation, design & fulfilment. Founder Andrew James is also a co-founder of an arts-centred, youth-focused charity called Streams Community Hub, also based in Shelburne, Ontario. As a diverse-owned business, Town Tees would like to move its current business model into a social enterprise framework. Their vision is to be completely youth-run and managed, with profits being invested back into youth arts programming via Streams Community Hub.

Goal

Town Tees is seeking to secure social procurement contracts and would like to position itself as a social enterprise. They are also interested in exploring ways to share their impact with potential clients. The social enterprise concept and infrastructure are already in place but not yet formalized within the organization.

Currently, their impact can be summed up in one of three ways:

1. *Youth employment & development*; helping those facing barriers to entering the labour market get the skills and professional training they need to build their future careers, and helping youth find their place in society and the workforce;
2. *Providing a revenue stream* that directly supports arts-based education for youth via Streams Community Hub; and
3. *Providing a platform* for non-profit groups and/or councils to raise money through wholesale purchasing as well as providing an e-commerce platform to generate funds for local causes through apparel sales (ex: parent councils and raising awareness for scoliosis).

Team & Responsibilities

Town Tees

Complete takeaway tasks, draft any key documents, negotiate, fulfill contract responsibilities.

Project Consultants

Set up meetings, share resources, correspondence, manage work plan, liaise between client and mentors.

Project Mentors / Coaches

Provide resources, share templates, review draft contracts/agreements, work with the client to build capacity.

Requested Support

Town Tees is hoping for support and mentorship to assist them in formalizing their business as a social enterprise and position themselves for social procurement contracts within this framework and as a diverse supplier.

Town Tees was identified as an ideal candidate to respond to the Request for Quote (RFQ) shared by Georgian College seeking suppliers for their 2021 Fall 'swag' order (approx. \$50k). They seek support in this process, being their first RFQ with an institution.

Andrew James, Owner

Elly Green (EG), Lead
Ashleigh Addison (AA), Support

Shaun Loney (SL), Encompass Co-op
Lucas Stewart (LS), Encompass Co-op

Implementation Plan

Date	Activity	Contributor(s)
<i>7-Jun-21</i>	Georgian College Students' Association (GCSA) Request for Quote (RFQ) reviewed by Town Tees	AJ
<i>7-Jun-21</i>	Call with consultant re: session and RFQ	AJ, EG
<i>9-Jun-21</i>	Coaching call with Project Mentors	AJ, SL, LS, EG, AA
<i>By 14-Jun-21</i>	Draft content for RFQ; Create a cover letter and mission statement, send to consultants for review	AJ
<i>By 16-Jun-21</i>	Consultants and mentors review RFQ	SL, LS, EG, AA
<i>18-Jun-21</i>	Submit RFQ response by June 18th deadline	AJ
<i>By 27-Jul-21</i>	Connect with Brandon Day from Community Builders re: transitioning from a for-profit to a non-profit structure	AJ
<i>27-Jul-21</i>	Second coaching call with Project Mentors; RFQ lessons learning, transition to non-profit structure, review of draft mission statement	AJ, SL, LS, EG, AA
<i>10-Aug-21</i>	Mentorship follow-up; Update on RFQ process, updated mission statement, update on transition to non-profit structure	AJ, SL, LS, EG, AA (with cohort)
<i>Summer to Fall 2021</i>	Work with an accountant to review what works best for Town Tees re: funding, taxes and assets within structures; How to keep assets within the corporation and maybe create another non-profit that works with James Inc. and Streams. Explore several business structures/entities.	AJ
<i>Aug-21</i>	Research funding for Black-owned businesses	AJ
<i>Sept-21</i>	Received BDC Business Loan; supports employment and equipment for Town Tees	AJ
<i>28-Oct-21</i>	Follow-up call with consultant	AJ, AA

Outcomes

Throughout the course of the coaching received through the Community Benefit Purchasing Project, Town Tees explored moving into a non-profit structure and applying for Buy Social Canada social enterprise certification to communicate their value proposition when responding to RFQs or bids. Town Tees also engaged in the opportunity to bid on an RFQ posted by the Georgian College Students' Association (GCSA), and through coaching with project mentors and consultants, they successfully submitted their first RFQ response.

Although unsuccessful in the award for the RFQ, this process served as a great learning opportunity to discover ways to be competitive in social procurement bids. After the August mentorship session and through exploration of additional resources and engagement with experts, Town Tees decided that it was best to keep a for-profit structure at this time in order to remain a family-run business and to access specific black-owned funding such as the BDC Business Loan, for which Town Tees was awarded in early September 2021. Town Tees plans to use this funding to scale their business by investing in equipment, staffing, and renting a location.

By remaining a for-profit business Town Tees is no longer eligible for Buy Social Canada Certification or any philanthropic exemptions in social procurement award. However, Town Tees will still benefit from their partnerships with Streams charity and will work to better communicate that relationship moving forward in all of Town Tees marketing and communications:

- Town Tees will be featured in the upcoming press release announcing the launch of Streams as a supporter and their commitment to donating the majority of their profits to the charity;
- Town Tees will mention the above impacts on purchase cards to their customers; and
- Town Tees will rent space from Streams (landlord) starting early 2022.

As a diverse-owned, youth-focused business, and through their affiliation with Streams Community Hub, Town Tees now feel they have the right tools to move forward in social procurement and future bidding opportunities as well as an understanding of their impact as a social enterprise.