

# Local intimate apparel retailer adapts business during lockdown

Inner Secrets Lingerie was established in 2005 by mother and son team Penny and Dimitri Parolis, who over the years have carved a retail presence in the local market by selling global heritage brands of lingerie, shapewear and swimwear.



Credit: Inner Secrets Lingerie

With intimate apparel deemed non-essential during the strict Level 5 lockdown, Inner Secrets says the lingerie business took a significant knock. Here's how the SME has adapted its business during the pandemic.

## E-commerce

"We have had to look at ways of reinventing ourselves. We shifted a lot of our focus to our online store in terms of stock refreshment and general functionalities to make the user experience more pleasurable, and as a result we have managed to see significant growth in this sector of our business," says Dimitri Parolis, co-founder of Inner Secrets Lingerie.

"Many existing and new clients started using our online portal and we are pleased with the growth in online sales and continuity of their custom, especially in these trying times."

However, this progress is not enough to sustain the entire business, which also consists of three brick-and-mortar stores and an outlet store in Cape Town. Dimitri says the challenge now is to regain the client's confidence to shop in-store again. Whilst Inner Secrets Lingerie has taken all measures to be compliant with recommended Covid-19 hygiene and sanitation protocols, he says it will be a slow process to regain customers' trust for in-store shopping, especially something as intimate in nature as lingerie.



#WomensMonth: Uplifting women with Inner Secrets matriarch Penny Parolis

Lauren Hartzenberg 12 Aug 2019



## Virtual services

“We have certainly had to look at our processes, streamline our retail channel and offer new experiential online encounters for our customers such as online fittings. What we have realised is that women love the one on one attention, the nurturing and the sharing of information that comes with a professional fitting conducted in our store. There is real relevance in what we do, so we have had to adapt and offer this service as best we can in a virtual format,” says Dimitri.

Inner Secrets Lingerie has introduced a virtual shopping experience whereby the staff will engage with customers via video call and walk them through the store to view products, showcase what is new and allow purchases via EFT with a 48-hour dispatch timeline. “Only our core essential garments and best-sellers are online at the moment, which is why this virtual shopping experience is so important,” says Penny Parolis.



### Apollo Brands revamps Under Armour retail offering during lockdown

26 May 2020



## Social distancing and sanitation

To adhere to social distancing rules and regulations, the Inner Secrets Lingerie in-store experience has been adapted in the following ways: screening of staff daily, supplying staff with masks, visors and gloves and disposing of gloves after each use when conducting a personalised fitting.

All garments that are fitted are steamed and rested for 48 hours before being placed back on the shelves. Fitting rooms are sanitised after each fitting and each store will be sanitised at regular intervals throughout the day - including floors, rails, countertops and all equipment. All customers are also requested to wear masks and should they not have one on hand, a complimentary mask will be provided.

## Responsible marketing

According to the company, finding relevance in customers' lives is now as important as ever. Understanding the customer's mental space is essential and structuring positive messages on social media that resonate with them in these times is valuable.

“We continue to strive in offering an uplifting experience both for the soul and psyche of women in South Africa, both online and offline. We cannot predict the future nor begin to realise the full repercussions of Covid-19 on our business and the intimate apparel industry in general but we will continue to take each day one step at a time as we adjust to our new normal,” says Penny.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>