

# What Six Dogs Distillery learnt as a small business during Covid-19

By [Glenn Bryant](#)

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The Six Dogs gin brand has been built on the back of the support from customers and partners in the industry and through the hard work and passion of our own staff.



Glenn Bryant, founder and director of Six Dogs Distillery

If anything, the lockdown – with its health and safety concerns and our inability to derive any income at all in view of the total ban on alcohol sales – has served to confirm and re-enforce our brand values.

Here are some of the things we've learnt and are continuing to learn, as a small business, during the lockdown.

## 1. We have got a lot to learn in this ever-changing world

Everything can change overnight and we need to be as nimble, creative, innovative and proactive as possible if we are to survive and prosper in this fast-changing environment.

We've decided to use this time in lockdown to come up with new ideas, find ways of communicating with customers, pin down strategies for the new post lockdown world and support each other as much as possible. We are also improving our website with the addition of an online store to meet the shifting buying behaviours of our customers.

## 2. We want to do more for our staff

We are committed to supporting our employees and their livelihoods to the very best of our ability and ensuring efficient and open internal communication at all times, in the sure knowledge that they hold the key to our future.

Our own members of staff have always been considered brand ambassadors rather than salespeople.

### **3. We want to try harder for our customers**

The strength of our brand both now and in the future depends entirely upon the loyalty of all the people who support us, whether as members of staff, members of the industry or the consumers of our products. It is only that loyalty – and the passion that comes with it – that will ensure our future survival and prosperity.

Our philosophy has always been to build the brand rather than to chase sales. We have endeavoured wherever possible to engage with our customers directly through our social media platforms or at festivals and events where we have participated.

Since lockdown began, we have doubled our attempts at staying in touch with all of our customers, so many of whom are suffering the effects of both the virus itself and the consequences of the lockdown. While we don't have the luxury of engaging with them in person, we're communicating via social media with messages of understanding, kindness and positivity. We don't always get it right, but we're trying.

Rather than simply acquire as many trade customers as possible, we have always tried to build good relations with the owners and staff at the retail outlets who stock our products and amongst the owners, waiters and barmen at the hotels, restaurants and bars where our products are served. Keeping these relationships alive is crucial now more than ever and we're making a conscious effort to pick up the phone or send a thoughtful email to see how they're doing and find out how we can collaborate now or in the near future.

### **4. We want to get more involved in our community**

On the trade front, we are very conscious that very large numbers within the hospitality area and those who work in the liquor trade will be facing a very uncertain economic future. And yet, despite all of this, we are humbled by the sense of camaraderie and the attempts on the part of the industry to come together to fight the ban on alcohol and the negative sentiments now surrounding the liquor industry.

We continue to offer whatever assistance that we can – from easing the pressure faced by so many of our debtors to mounting a campaign to help one particularly influential member of the craft gin fraternity who is now facing financial ruin.

In addition to doing our part to spread the important messages around social distancing we were also able to make available, at no charge, a quantity of hand sanitiser products to the most vulnerable in our society and those at the frontline of fighting the spread of the disease.

We are but a very small part of a much wider whole – a player in a very broad community – but with determination and energy, we can make a positive contribution and a significant impact on the world that we inhabit.

In that spirit, we commit not only to squaring up to the enormous and largely unknown challenges that lie ahead but to redoubling our efforts to grow our brand and to continue on the magnificent adventure that has been Six Dogs to date.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Glenn Bryant, founder and director of Six Dogs Distillery

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