



# Commercial Communications Council

## GOLD Case Study

**Agency Name:** Ikon Communications  
**Advertiser Name:** 2degrees  
**Beacon Awards Category:** Best Use of Insight

*This is a story of how a human insight shaped a campaign that changed deeply embedded brand perceptions. Instead of using our media to advertise 2degrees, we gave it to small businesses who needed it more. For SMEs, a lack of potential customers inhibited their growth and threatened the survival of local communities.*

*In collaboration with local media, politicians, businesses and communities, 2degrees created **Shop Local**; A media idea using our media budget to support local businesses and local media. In advocating for the importance of small businesses to local economies, we found a way to support both local media and local SMEs. By investing 2degrees media budget into local economies we generated editorial, news coverage, interviews and **influenced everyone from the government down to local communities.***

### INSIGHT

97% of New Zealand businesses are small businesses (SMEs)\*. For 2degrees, building a profile amongst SMEs has proved a challenge, struggling with a **lack of credibility** in the business space and low awareness up against established players; Spark and Vodafone.

In 2019 2degrees challenged us to raise its profile amongst Kiwi SMEs and address the credibility issue they had in the business market.

Our specific goals were; Improve 2degrees business brand perceptions and grow Q4 Business connections. To be seen as a credible player in the business market requires gaining trust, and for a small business there is nothing more unrelatable than a corporate telco.

Research uncovered that whether a business was based in the city or in the regions, SME owners hopes, fears and concerns were broadly similar with one common theme; **Lack of potential customers.**

For SMEs after the initial high of setting up a business, the main issue they had to deal with was a feeling of isolation with 70% employing nobody but the owner. These are the local family businesses; hardware stores, bookshops, pharmacies, clothing retailers. **This feeling of isolation grew out of a lack of expertise and guidance in business planning, and struggles with customer attraction and retention.**

This was exacerbated by the emerging digital presence of online shopping putting even more pressure on SMEs who are now **running out of potential customers.**

Studies suggest that 68 cents to every dollar spent at a local level found its way back into the local economy. **For a local business to survive the local economy/region needs to be healthy.**

**Insight: This feeling of isolation and the evolving consumer is inhibiting local business growth.**

### STRATEGY

## **Our strategy: Fight for what matters to everyday small businesses**

We saw our opportunity in the regions. It was where the impact of isolation and the evolving consumer was having the greatest effect on local SMEs. The regions suffering the most from lack of potential customers were Northland, Nelson/Tasman, Waikato and North Canterbury.

Research revealed local media as deeply embedded in these regional communities. In particular local papers have a close affinity with SMEs and their audience. However with the rapidly emerging digital and social presence of online news, **local papers were also suffering with closures across the regions.**

What if we could somehow find a way to support local media as well as local SMEs? Local SMEs and local papers were suffering the same plight. SMEs need advertising to drive customers. Local papers need SMEs to be customers.

**Our media idea: Instead of using our media to advertise 2degrees, we gave it to small businesses who needed it to combat their biggest challenge: Encouraging people to shop local.**

In order for this to work, we needed a few things to come together.

- We had to convince 2degrees to turn over their media spend to local businesses.
- The support of Regional Councils, to advocate for our idea.
- Businesses and local media to get on board, without their support we did not have a campaign.

But ultimately what mattered most was getting consumers on board; choosing to shop local.

## **EXECUTION**

For **Shop Local** to come to life, we needed support from multiple parties across different regions throughout New Zealand.

### **Encouraging Shopping Locally**

- Firstly, we convinced Stuff to get on board with our idea. With their help we approached the local papers and editors who saw the enormous benefit of **Shop Local** to their local community.
- On the strength of the idea local papers made **Shop Local** the main focus over November and December, with editorial coverage, interviews and profiles of local businesses and consumers.
- We launched **Shop Local** with front page editorial in each local region.
- The stories featured local politicians and the CBO of 2degrees highlighting the importance of shopping locally to the survival of towns in regional New Zealand.
- Shane Jones - Minister of Regional Development endorsed our idea and ran opinion pieces about the benefits of shopping local.
- We supported this through an online social campaign through Neighbourly, encouraging people to support their community.

### **Getting Local Businesses to Act**

- With audiences primed we ran a campaign across local papers and Neighbourly asking businesses to apply for the chance to win a \$20,000 media package and editorial content, to help them generate customers in the lead up to Christmas via online entry created with the help of local papers.
- After 4 weeks we chose a winning business from each region.

### **Attracting Local Customers**

Winning a \$20,000 media package is amazing, but with no expertise in marketing our business owners didn't know where to start.

To give you context, we will tell you the story of how **Shop Local** changed Emma Gillard's North Canterbury business over the busiest time of the year.

- With the \$20,000 Emma briefed our agency on her goals for Emma at Oxford's; a local book shop.
- We responded with a bespoke media plan, creative and messaging suitable to her objectives.
- With Emma's approval, we negotiated, booked and ran her campaign in local print, radio and her business Facebook page.

- As additional support, an editorial profile on Emma at Oxford's ran in the Northern Outlook and Neighbourly.

*"Thank you really just doesn't seem enough for what has been hands down THE biggest opportunity for exposure for my business that I have ever had."* **For Emma Shop Local delivered customers from as far away as Ashburton, an hour and half drive away.**

### **Celebrating Together**

After the campaigns for our winners wrapped, the Local Papers ran a series of editorial stories detailing how Shop Local fed money back into the local economy and helped grow local businesses.

We then shared the success of **Shop Local** nationally through Stuff, Local Print and Neighbourly, profiling 2degrees.

## **RESULTS**

This is a story of how a human insight shaped a campaign that changed deeply embedded brand perceptions.

Our insight led approach helped us forge a genuine connection with Kiwi SMEs, raised 2degrees' profile in the regions and helped address their credibility issue.

By advocating for the importance of small businesses to local economies, we found a way to support both local media and local SMEs; **investing 2degrees media budget** into local economies **we generated editorial, news coverage, interviews and influenced everyone from the government down to local communities.**

The feedback from the regional businesses was that they saw a **significant increase in customers over the campaign period.**

For 2degrees specifically we smashed all key brand perception targets. But, ultimately this campaign achieved new business sign ups, significantly exceeding Q4 targets; setting new benchmarks for the business.