zensar

Florist Boosts
Revenue by 50 Percent
Defying the Pandemic
Threats to Survival

▶ **Case Study**

Overview
Overcoming existential threats to the business

South Africa's largest online gift and fresh flower delivery service with a global presence, was handling 700,000+ orders a year before the pandemic hit. But just a day before the COVID lockdown, orders dropped to a mere 10 percent of its regular volume.

The business had to reinvent itself to survive. It decided to utilize its large fleet and same-day delivery service to bridge the gap between homebound customers and essentials needs. But offering essential items for sale meant a steady flux of orders instead of the predictable, holiday-driven surge for flowers and specialty gifts, and a critical change in the delivery system, as the person ordering was also the recipient.

Zensar's brief:

Design and deploy a practical and dependable solution, from order to delivery, by revamping

- front-end assets (such as the website),
- back-end processes,
- application management,
- supply chain management, and
- customer experience.

Beyond the brief:

Understanding the urgency with which retailers had to respond to survive the dramatic change in customer priorities and buying behavior, we enabled the business to

- transform itself as an essential business at record speed and
- increase its revenue by 50 percent.

Challenges
Pressure to adapt with urgency

The client's IT department had to overcome the disorganized, cumbersome connection between the business and its community of partners. Additionally, with unprecedented urgency, it had to overhaul the outdated and unreliable communications system to enable a modern customer experience.
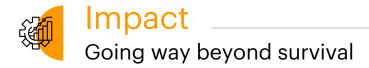
Solution
Transforming the business model

From the announcement of the impending lockdown to the lockdown's actual start, we accomplished all of the following, in roughly three days:

- **Create a new framework** for the application landscape; and use it to efficiently catalog vendor products, price items, and update inventory on the new website.

- **Reengineer the application landscape** and develop reliable API integrations to sync inventory data from vendors with payment systems, so that customers can receive notifications and automatic refunds if items ordered were suddenly out of stock.
- **Modify the payment process** to revise delivery charges from per-item to per-delivery for better alignment with the new pattern of orders.
- **Implement an agile and effective email support system** to bridge the gap caused by the lack of a functioning call center.
- **Support and optimize** operations with continued momentum even after the launch, focusing on the quality of experience rather than the quantity of orders.

Impact
Going way beyond survival

- Launched a new business model in three days (with both client and Zensar teams working from home).
- Accepted the first grocery order within thirty-six hours of the lockdown.
- Regained 50-60 percent of the pre-lockdown order volume in four days.

Business outcomes:

The swift response to meet essential customer needs, under extraordinary circumstances, resulted in 50 percent increase in revenue and greater customer loyalty.

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