



# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SPECIALIST PROGRAM



*Providing Digital Solutions to Local Businesses  
During Economic Crisis*

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## **Impetus**

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) believes in assisting businesses in identifying the resources they need to thrive. This is important, now more than ever, in the ever-evolving landscape of the global economy. One of the most important ways to provide some of those resources in a post-COVID-19 world includes increasing digital literacy and online presence for small businesses. To tackle this goal, WSB partnered with Microsoft, the City of El Paso, El Paso County, and TWC to launch the Digital Transformation Specialist (DTS) Program. We have since assisted over 200 businesses with technology upgrades and trainings to help these entrepreneurs expand their operations. The program has an overall goal of guiding businesses in rethinking their business models and adapting to a “new normal.”

## **Program Goals and Funding Sources**

At Workforce Solutions Borderplex, we are dedicated to contributing towards the economic development of the region. The public and private partnerships for the DTS program allowed us to pursue that goal by assisting local businesses as they upskill their employees and their business practices to incorporate digital solutions. This has helped us better provide consulting, resources, training opportunities, and other resources to assist local businesses and strengthen the overall local economy in times of uncertainty. Initially, Phase I funding for this effort comes from partners at Microsoft, the City of El Paso, El Paso County, and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

For Phase II, WSB continued to partner with El Paso County to leverage \$1 million from their FASTER Program, which was designed to boost the local economy by assisting businesses. In May 2021, WSB also received \$75,000 from TWC as part of the IKEA Helping Offices Manage Electronically (HOME) Grant. Now, the DTS program is expected to run through September 2021. Overall, we aim to continue aligning our resources to pursue specific goals that will not only advance our mission and vision, but also result in economic development and prosperity for the region.

## **Program Challenges**

The challenges that businesses often face include digital literacy and investing in new technology. COVID-19 further exasperated these challenges and increased the need for technological advancement. WSB created the DTS Program to help entrepreneurs with these issues. Initially, we found it challenging to inform the public about these opportunities in the new virtual world of communication. However, once the public was aware of our services, we were able to help businesses all over the region. Our clients have since been able to increase traffic both digitally and physically to their locations, rehire staff, and expand their workforce to create jobs.

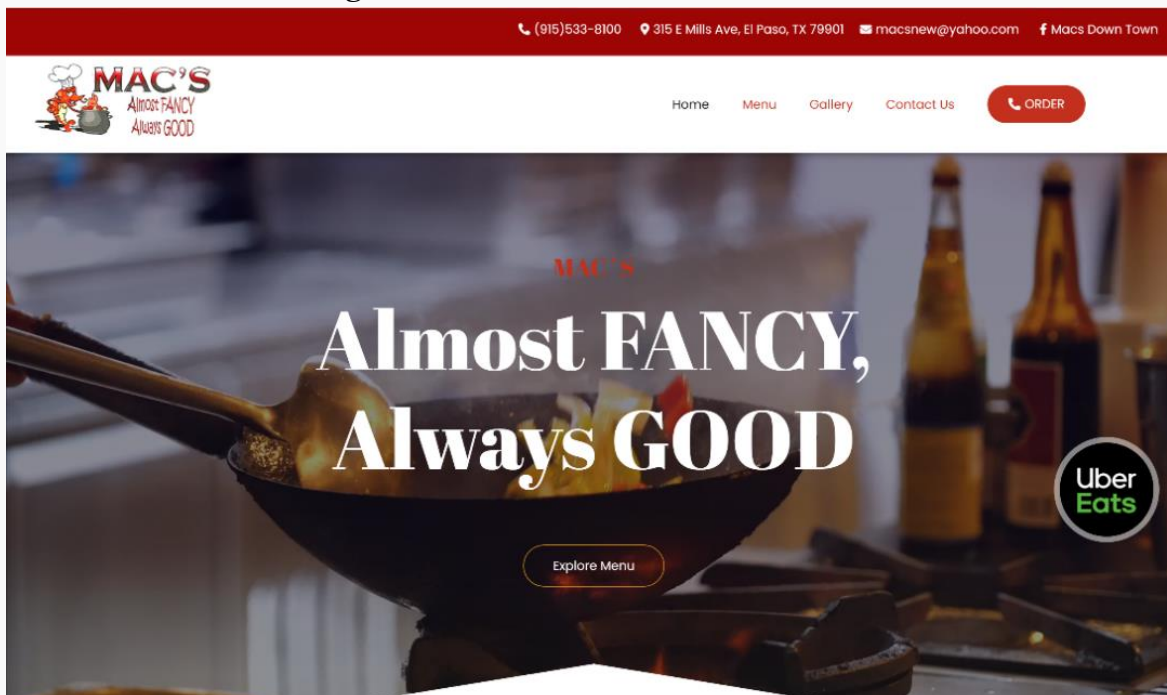
## Outcomes and Successes

Our Digital Transformation Specialist Program has assisted over 200 local businesses in the region. By collaborating with several organizations, we have provided digital tools, consulting services, and hardware to many businesses in need. We have also assisted businesses in evaluating their digital assets and social media accounts, to provide recommendations for improvements moving forward. We have included the following case studies and success stories from local businesses that have benefited from the WSB DTS Program.

### Mac's Restaurant

In 2020, restaurants especially experience the brunt relating to the negative economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For Mac's Restaurant, WSB provided digital solutions and consulting opportunities to redevelop the restaurant's website for optimal user experience. Our tools ultimately helped them overcome various challenges related to the COVID-19 restrictions. After Mac's participated in the DTS Program, the owner was also able to learn how to manage a brand-new website and social media presence that resulted in better discovery and user engagement.

**Figure 1: Mac's Restaurant New Website**



(Source: Mac's 2021)

The DTS Program also helped the restaurant create a QR Code Menu that would align with best practices for COVID-19 sanitary precautions. With the QR Code Menu, customers could simply scan the code and view the menu on their cell phones—resulting in fewer printing expenses related to creating dozens of disposable paper copies of the menu. As a result of each of these digital solutions,

Mac's Restaurant was able to hire new staff and improve their social media engagement (increased reach, followers, impressions, engagements, etc).

"We've seen a great boost in new customers since receiving help from Workforce Solutions. We are still implementing the new skills we learned all the time. It really did get us through the roughest times."  
-Gregory Wayne, Co-Owner

**Figure 2: Mac's QR Code Menu**



(Source: Mac's 2021)

## **El Paso Legends Baseball**

El Paso Legends Baseball (EPLB) is a baseball cage and learning facility that was facing potential closure due to the economic impact of COVID-19. Teams and schools in the region were no longer able to use these facilities to train their athletes due to the restrictions related to the pandemic. We then helped the business by providing equipment (Point of Sale technology) and marketing opportunities Monster Link. This helped EPLB tremendously as they saw an increase in traffic on social media as well as the actual facility. We also provided LinkedIn Learning training opportunities which helped the team at EPLB learn how to manage their crew and management Skills.

"El Paso Legends Baseball Academy was born to support and develop the baseball and softball community in El Paso. We opened right before COVID-19 hit and had to close. Opening [our business] up again has been challenging, but thanks to the team at Workforce Solutions and their connection to LinkedIn learning and Monster Link marketing, we have rebounded well. Taking those digital classes on marketing has been phenomenal and the help with advertising and marketing has truly gotten our name out there. Special thanks to Edwin Dominguez who has set this all up for us. Thank you!" - Christopher Brough, Owner



### Video 1: El Paso Legends Success Story



(Source: El Paso County 2021)

### **Jinny Riddle Makeup Studio**

Jinny Riddle Makeup Studio primarily provided services for weddings, quinceañeras and/or other events. However, since the pandemic impacted the ability to gather for social events, the business was impacted. Many events were cancelled, including the need for makeup services. WSB then provided consulting and training opportunities regarding social media and teambuilding. WSB also provided equipment for the business to thrive. Through the DTS Program, the owner was able to gain new skills and better transition their business operations into a post-COVID-19 world.

### Video 2: Jinny Riddle Makeup Studio Success Story



(Source: El Paso County 2021)

## Excela Solar

Excela Solar is a small solar company that started with very few clients and needed support. Their business model had mainly relied on door-to-door marketing prior to COVID-19. Through our DTS Program, we have since provided LinkedIn Learning training opportunities to help these business owners learn about business and social media management. We also set the business up with a CRM software to manage their clients and Monster Link to help them manage their social media outlets. Their business has since grown substantially, allowing them to connect with customers online and expand outside of the El Paso area to create more jobs.

“Everything is great! We are expanding to Dallas and McAllen, Texas, you guys did not help us a little... you helped us a lot!” - *Eric Hernandez, Owner*

### Video 3: Excela Solar Studio Success Story



(Source: El Paso County 2021)

## Kids Paradise

Kids Paradise is a daycare facility that also benefited from the DTS Program. Through their participation, WSB was able to offer several services such as training and photoshoot opportunities, as well as equipment (including laptops for developmental learning).

“Workforce Solutions Borderplex helped my business to grow and attract more clients. Training through LinkedIn Learning and its courses informed me how to do more effective marketing, like how to arrange my Facebook and Instagram pages to attract more attention. They also gave us equipment so that we could teach to the children. I still use LinkedIn Learning if I need to see videos on how to improve certain aspects of the daycare. Edwin and the Digital Solutions program helped us to be able to have a more successful business. This Program is very good for people who have their own business and struggled through the pandemic. It really helps and the best part is that it's free, no strings attached. I recommend anyone take advantage of its benefits because it really helped us to improve as a business with a more professional appearance.” - *Yared Montes, Co-Owner*

## **Alameda Thrift Pharmacy**

Alameda Thrift Pharmacy (ATP) is a locally owned pharmacy, ran by Pharmacist Laura Quijas. This pharmacy has been passed down through Laura's family for generations. Now, through the DTS program, ATF is taking on the task of turning their operations digital. Laura and her staff have always enjoyed the opportunity to introduce digital resources into their business model. When the DTS program came in, we were happy to see that Laura and her staff were regularly creating diverse and engaging digital content through Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. We helped these efforts by training and purchasing services to enhance the professional feel of the business' digital content. We then took it a step further by giving the pharmacy Popl scanners for every register, making it easy to refer every customer to their social pages and website with a single touchless swipe.

Laura also requested assistance with a specific COVID-19-related issue. She was thrilled to learn that the ATP had been approved to administer COVID-19 vaccines but had no way to digitally offer sign-up opportunities to customers. We then assisted in creating a HIPPA compliant web form for customers to easily register for the vaccine via website. Laura is excited to continue these efforts with our DTS program into the future.

## **ASA Therapeutics**

ASA Therapeutics is a woman-and-minority-owned natural skincare company in El Paso. Before the DTS program, ASA Therapeutics sales had hit an all-time low. Their primary source of income was from local outdoor market selling that was shut down due to COVID-19. The owner felt her website, marketing, and overall brand needed some updates. The DTS program was able to help them purchase a digital bookkeeping and payroll processing system (Quickbooks). We trained the owner and upgraded her hardware to ensure she was able to fully utilize this new software and run her business more efficiently. We were also able to redesign her logo and product labeling, giving it a modern feel while implementing QR code technology in the labels to help customers interact digitally with the brand. This same QR technology was utilized in a banner and business cards to encourage digital interaction at her tabling events, along with Popl stickers.

The social media accounts for the business were also enhanced, providing the owner with better direction for social marketing that reflects her branding. We also provided training on how to best carry out these social media efforts moving forward. The TikTok app was also newly incorporated into the brand, aimed at creating an increase in brand exposure in the new digital market. These digital resources are all referred to customers by the QR codes and Popl devices. A Square digital register system was also purchased for the business, improving the in-person selling process. This system has been set up to directly tie to an email marketing system, Hubspot, which allows the owner to digitally save customer information and send out digital advertisements to increase sales. Finally, the business has an ongoing contract with MonsterLink Marketing to carry out desired website upgrades and paid digital marketing efforts.

## **American Packing and Supply Co.**

American Packing and Supply Co. (APSC) is the only female/locally owned packaging company in El Paso, Texas. Their wholesale method is carried out B2B and direct to consumer. However, the company was still depending on paper for their business practices. After an accident struck their office, destroying all paper files, APSC knew they had to change their business practices. APSC began digitizing their entire operation, after learning the hard way about the importance of this sort of transition. This made the company eager to further their digital efforts, which is where DTS came in to help. We were then able to create an e-commerce website to help APSC take convert their sales into a digital platform. We also put into place an email marketing and CRM management software to help improve their Google business listing.

## **Veterans Non-Profit Organization**

### *New Hardware/Upgraded Hardware:*

The Veterans Non-Profit was operating on severely outdated hardware. Veterans were often left to work on their job applications on a faulty device. The front office hardware was outdated for administration work as well. After our Digital Transformation Specialists evaluated the business and its digital resources, several recommendations were made to improve their digital tools. For example, a new desktop was implemented, allowing for the front office computer to be used as the dedicated device for Veteran job applications. The tablet can also be used for this function. However, the tablet will now be repurposed for a digital intake form process with applicants. This entire process is allowing the organization to transition from paper files to digital ones with a new document management system. The scanner further facilitates turning old applications and documents into digital ones, to create further compatibility with the new software.

### *Document Management Software*

The new software will allow Veteran members/applicants information to be stored digitally and securely. Paper files can now be easily transitioned into digital ones. OCR (Optical Character Recognition) is now going to be utilized to make any field searchable by the director. This has assisted the organization to function more efficiently, since various processes now take a tenth of the time they used to complete. The software choice was made with ease of use in mind. It also comes with extensive hands-on training and assistance to ease in transition. Thanks to the Digital Transformation Specialist Program, Workforce Solutions Borderplex was able to better assist this organization as it transitioned into digital solutions. Now, this organization will even begin the process in hiring a new administrative position, creating further workforce opportunities for the region.



## **Solutions for the Future**

WSB has further developed the Digital Transformation Specialist Program through Phase I and Phase II by assisting various local businesses. As an economic development partner in the region, WSB continues to focus on innovative and proactive engagement. WSB has been able to do this by successfully leveraging funds towards public and private partnerships that have furthered these goals in times of economic crisis. Our goals moving forward include continuing these conversations and relationships with the business community to identify short-term digital solutions to respond to the pandemic, and long-term solutions that will allow WSB to continue as a key economic developer of the region. WSB hopes to continue to offer these services to businesses beyond Phase II of the project and develop the program as a model for other workforce boards. Overall, these partnerships are the first step towards our efforts to assist employers and employees to improve their skills and remain competitive in the ever-changing digital landscape of the workforce.

## **About Workforce Solutions Borderplex**

Workforce Solutions Borderplex (WSB) is the public workforce system in the six-county Borderplex region that assists employers in finding quality employees, and training individuals with the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace. We administer a broad range of programs and services to effectively address local workforce issues. Workforce Solutions also establishes partnerships with various stakeholders within the region to improve education, employment, and economic development. Our organization aims to provide skilled workers for employers by advancing education, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development opportunities in support of global competitiveness and regional prosperity. Ultimately, we are interested in empowering the most dynamic workforce to achieve global competitiveness and regional prosperity.