

## Made in Brampton: Thriving Businesses

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Through a backdrop of economic turbulence and sobering daily press conferences, some glimmers of hope still manage to shine through. Enter Brampton entrepreneur and manufacturer Inti Ali of Premier Gaskets Inc. Ali speaks proudly of his family's business which is run by his father, his mother and himself. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the manufacturer of non-metallic gaskets was serving 12 different industries. However, since the onset of COVID-19, the company has had to consolidate its focus to a few different clients. This has not been done out of a scarcity of business, but rather from an extraordinary volume of demand from a few clients since the beginning of the pandemic.

"On March 10, they came knocking and it all changed," Ali says of the day when one of his clients - a medical company for which he usually supplies foam pads for medical equipment – had a new request. The client needed Premier Gaskets' assistance with the supply of speciality foam pads for face shields that their existing supplier could not fulfil. Originally, the client needed assistance with the redesign of their face shield. They then placed a significant order for 100,000 of the foam pads. To accommodate this request, Premier Gaskets had to pivot and change some of their machinery and operations. This, however, was not a difficult task considering Ali's father had originally built the company's machines himself. After some retooling work, Premier Gaskets was able to begin production on the requested foam pads. That order was supposed to take the company some time to fulfil, but within a week, the client had returned, and this time the request was for half a million foam pads. Unfortunately, Ali couldn't take on the second order as it was much too large for the size of his operation.

Other orders also starting coming in and Ali had to quickly expand his operation, doubling his staff. He had so much business coming in that he could have hired additional help, but unfortunately it wasn't possible to accommodate more staff in his facility. Although Premier Gaskets was exempt from the provincial order for businesses to shut down, Ali has made sure that all physical distancing measures are maintained in his workplace. Each employee is allocated personal protective equipment, and a staffing plan ensures all safety precautions are met. Business has expanded so much for Ali that he is considering running a second overnight shift to meet the increased demand.

Ali recognizes that, had his facility not pivoted to manufacturing for the medical industry, he likely would have had to shut down, as many other businesses have. It is a sobering reminder for him of the challenges that other businesses are going through at the moment. Ali channels his mindful awareness towards spiritual and social gratitude for the position he is in. He tries to pay it forward by taking extra care of his employees and bringing them food at least once a week, and the employees appreciate it - so much so that when Ali needed to hire additional help recently, all the new recruits came from recommendations from his current employees.

Ali's advice for other businesses is to remain resilient and look for opportunities, even in this difficult time. "Try to work with someone even if you don't think there is an immediate benefit in it for you." He explains how he passed on an order that he recently could not fulfil to a competitor, and that deal led to another lead that proved beneficial for him. When asked how the contribution he is making makes him feel, he enthusiastically responded: "I'm incredibly lucky to be part of the [Covid-19] response. Everyone can help in some way, shape, or form.

My sister is a nurse and when I speak to her, she sees the tremendous benefit the face shields we help make bring to healthcare workers. Sometimes you don't realize how big your contribution is.”

In the past, Ali connected with the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre (BEC) to develop his knowledge and make connections in Brampton’s business community. He found immense value in attending the BEC’s numerous seminars on topics such as optimizing platforms like LinkedIn, website design, and networking. As Premier Gaskets looks to the future, they will be using this knowledge to maintain the relationships they’ve acquired during this time. Thankfully, their flexibility as a smaller company combined with forward thinking leadership will yield nothing but excellent results in the days ahead.

To find out more about Premier Gaskets [click here to visit their website](#)  
or give them a call at 905-454-6600