



Small Business Q&A

With the Package Coalition

Name: Tim Shirey

Business Name: Hive & Honeybee

Location: Crozet, VA



Tell us about your small business.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted how beekeepers and others that make really great, handcrafted products to engage with their customers. We launched [Hive & Honeybee](#) to answer two questions. How do we continue to support and service customers that traditionally came to markets? And how do we help other beekeepers and small businesses that make really fantastic products honeybee inspired products? Hive & Honeybee is our direct-to-customer, ecommerce, independent virtual store. It's been just one wild ride since we launched in January, and now we've grown our reach to include customers all over the U.S.

How did the COVID-19 pandemic impact your small business?

The pandemic pushed us to solve problems that hadn't been thought of before like how to reach customers where they're at, how do we connect with customers in their home. We had been a local market-based organization, and the pandemic pushed us to take time and solve for this.

How does your business use the U.S. Postal Service?

We use the U.S. Postal Service every day. We leverage third party shipping and logistics integrators like Shippo and Pirate Ship to discounted retail shipping rates. We just print out labels and drop off packages with the Postal Service. We use the Postal Service because it gives us an opportunity to bring products to customers that are hard to reach through other commercial carriers. With our small business having pre-defined margins and higher general costs over an established business, the Postal Service provides an opportunity to reach our customers throughout the nation in 3-4 days typically. This is provided at a slightly better rate compared to other commercial carriers.

How would you compare the U.S. Postal Service with other delivery options?

Currently the Postal Service is more affordable, so we use them to satisfy around 90-95% of our orders. For our business right now, price point is the biggest factor. Right now, we generally see that USPS is about 30 cents less per shipment over other commercial carriers.

How would you be impacted if USPS stopped 6-day-per-week delivery?

That would put us further behind large retailers that have their own national logistics networks like Walmart and Amazon or some of the other retailers that can offer free, 2-day shipping. If the Postal Service was limited to delivery Monday through Friday, that means delivery might take 5 or 6 days depending on which day the package was sent out. We know that customers will settle for an inferior substitute if they can get it in 2 days.