

THE IMPACT OF PRO BONO

Supporting BIPOC-Owned Small Businesses – Ideal Commercial Interiors

THE CASE FOR PRO BONO

2020 brought unprecedented challenges into our lives in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, the civil uprising following the murder of George Floyd, and the subsequent increased awareness around the systemic vulnerabilities of the Black community. At HandsOn Twin Cities, we recognize that there are structural barriers that Black and other communities of color face and that we all have a role in addressing these injustices. Historically, BIPOC individuals have not had equal access to the benefits of business ownership compared to their white counterparts, including capital and capacity-building resources. This inequity was heightened over the course of the pandemic which led to our focus on providing support to BIPOC-owned small businesses with pro bono projects that build and strengthen the structures, skills, and power of these businesses and the community at large.

In July 2020, HandsOn Twin Cities partnered with Target and developed a robust, sustainable, high-impact pro bono program giving their employees opportunities to support BIPOC-owned small businesses and nonprofits in the Twin Cities. After supporting over 35 businesses, that partnership continues into 2021, scaling the program to support small businesses in cities across the country.

THE CHALLENGE

[Ideal Commercial Interiors](#) is a Black-owned, full-service commercial furniture and interior design company in Minneapolis, MN that has been operating since 2012. Ideal Commercial Interiors (ICI) is not unlike many businesses that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and knew they needed to pivot to continue to thrive. They saw opportunity to move into different target markets but to reach that next stage of growth, they needed to hire on a strong sales & marketing role.



ICI supplied custom furniture at Minnehaha Academy Upper Campus completed in July 2019

THE PROCESS

After identifying their need, ICI applied for Target's Pro Bono for Small Business program in search of a team of HR experts who could help them draft a strong job description for the new role. After a thorough assessment, matching, and training process, a team of three Target human resources employees became ICI's pro bono consultant team and worked with them over the course of 12 weeks.



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THE IMPACT OF PRO BONO - A CASE STUDY

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THE PROCESS CONT.

Through the scoping process at the beginning of the project, the pro bono consultants brought their expertise in HR, Recruitment, and Strategy & Operations, and were able to uncover ICI's holistic HR needs and, ultimately, developed a set of deliverables to set the business up for success. The pro bono consultants provided Ideal Commercial Interiors not only with a job description, but also an interview guide, a recruitment plan, application evaluation guidelines, and a market analysis report.

SCOPE

KICKOFF

DISCOVERY

DRAFT

DELIVER

EVALUATE

“ IT WAS FUN AND STRETCHED OUR PERSPECTIVE USING OUR SKILLSETS IN A DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENT. I'M REALLY PROUD OF WHAT WE BROUGHT TO THE CLIENT. IT WASN'T JUST ABOUT CREATING THAT END RESULT – I GOT A LOT OF VALUE OUT OF THIS EXPERIENCE MYSELF.

- Target Pro Bono Consultant ”

THE IMPACT

Rick Harris, Owner & President of Ideal Commercial Interiors, stated several times that pro bono project far exceeded his expectations. As a growing small business, researching new markets and figuring out how they will adapt their business would have been a tough endeavor to assess on their own, or an expensive one had they decided to hire out to a consultancy. Alternatively, Target's pro bono efforts have given ICI the tools – and confidence – to help them attract, engage, and hire a sales & marketing leader who can take them to the next level of growth. These deliverables will provide ICI with the ability to adapt to the changing landscape in the commercial furniture and interior design industry and have the tools to pick the right people to help their business grow well into the future. ICI can continue to provide jobs to those in the community as well.

“ THE PRO BONO CONSULTANTS REALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT WE WERE TRYING TO DO. THEY WERE UNPRETENTIOUSLY SMART, WE FELT LIKE THEY WERE REALLY INVESTED IN US, AND WE ULTIMATELY GOT A LOT MORE THAN I BARGAINED FOR!”

- Rick Harris, ICI Owner ”

With more than 100 years of experience, [HandsOn Twin Cities](#) is the leader in connecting nonprofits, volunteers, and companies to provide impact in our community. HOTC's [Pro Bono Advisory Program](#) supports nonprofits and small businesses through high-impact, capacity-building pro bono projects by leveraging corporate sector talent.