

BizFed Bounce Back



BizFed members share stories of resilience.

Issue 1 - April 2, 2020

In the face of COVID19, BizFed members bounce back with perseverance, creativity and resourcefulness.

PROVIDENCE CONSULTING WEATHERS THE STORM

15 years ago, Tracy Leach took the vast knowledge and skills she'd acquired over an extensive career in politics and founded Providence Strategic Consulting.

Based in Bakersfield, Providence now employs 12 staff members and six contractors to serve clients across a broad swath of industries: agriculture, water, oil, healthcare as well as Goodwill Industries in three counties.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, Providence--one of the newest members of BizFed Central Valley--was experiencing its best year on record.

"The economy was doing so well," Leach said. "That wasn't just a DC talking point—we were living it. There was nothing but excitement for the future."

Uncertainty Strikes

And then the world changed--for Leach, for everyone. As a small business owner, she's weathered many storms, including the 2007-08 financial crisis, and is confident Providence will survive COVID-19.

Providence is doing what it's helped many of its clients do: Pivot, focusing on COVID-19 messaging to adapt to a very strange, new reality.

Leach said she is fortunate to not have had to let people go, but she has had to furlough some employees, which "has been hard."

Best Advice Received

Seeking advice from her national network of fellow public affairs pros, Leach said the best advice she's received in the past two weeks as been to manage her business by the numbers.

"Look at your expenses, look at your income," she said. "You have to make some decisions and you have to make them quickly to save your business."

"I cherish my employees," she said. "But if there's no business for them to come back to, I haven't done them any favors."

Biggest Challenge

Prior to the social distancing that's shuttered many businesses and drastically altered the operations of others, Leach would have said one of the biggest challenges facing her industry was AB-5, the state law effectively banning many independent contractors.

And now, in the middle of a public health crisis, with a global financial



Tracy Leach - President, Providence Strategic Consulting

crisis on the horizon, she sees AB-5 as just a big of a problem as ever. Without it, many businesses would be able to afford giving more employees work if they still had the contractor option.

Strategy for COVID-19

Leach is working with her clients to engage the public in a way that meets the moment. She is helping them come up with creative ways to be of service to the communities they serve.

"Your character will shine through," Leach said.



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For more information, please contact:
Clint Olivier, Executive Director
(559) 313-6065 | clint.olivier@bizfed.org