

Perfecting the Pivot

By Michelle Lefebvre, Central States Media

For those of us in the medical community, 2020 has created an environment in which “business as usual” is no longer usual.

Aaron Rossi, MD, serves as CEO for **PAL Health Technologies** and **Reditus Laboratories** in Pekin, Illinois. These corporations are successfully navigating the uncharted waters of conducting business in the coronavirus era.



The leadership teams at PAL Health Technologies and Reditus Laboratories have focused on the following two goals:

1) Maintaining the infrastructure of these businesses, so they will still be viable and ready to serve the existing client bases when things return to some semblance of normal.

PAL and Reditus are successfully navigating the uncharted waters of conducting business in the coronavirus era.

2) Addressing the immediate and evolving needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic by adapting equipment, strategies and staffing.

Here’s how these two companies pivoted to meet short-term needs, created 120 new jobs and remained nimble enough to return to a modified version of their previous business models.

PPE from PAL Health Technologies

As families began to quarantine and fewer patients were visiting their podiatrist, PAL Health Technologies saw their regular business drop by 85%. Founded in 1976, PAL has long been recognized as a national leader in the fabrication of custom prescription orthoses, custom diabetic foot orthoses and custom ankle foot orthoses. In addition to orthoses, the company developed Xtremity 3D, a comprehensive software program offering enhanced tools for patient education, diagnostics, treatment and prevention using an iPad.

Even as numbers started to drop, Dr. Rossi quickly realized that the dip in business was an opportunity to help serve our nation by producing PPE (personal protective

equipment), while also supporting central Illinois with the addition of 75 new jobs. Before long, they had done the research and implemented the steps needed to begin producing clear plastic face shields.

The staff at PAL handled all of the engineering internally, designed the patterns and manufactured the shields onsite. As of late August, they had already produced and delivered more than half a million pieces.

Although PAL Health Technologies was able to ramp up production relatively quickly to address PPE shortages, it wasn’t without challenges. While consumers were facing shortages of toilet paper and cleaning wipes, manufacturers were fighting similar battles trying to acquire the materials needed to make face shields.

In addition to shifting from producing foot care products to making face shields using their existing equipment, they also had to find ways to source plastic in the amounts needed to fulfill the large volume of orders.



PAL employees making face shields to ease the burden of personal protective equipment shortages.

Dealing with supply chain issues was the bigger hurdle, but they found a way to make it work.

Now that the supply chain and manufacturing processes have fallen into place and podiatrists are once again placing orders for their patients’ orthoses, the team at PAL has enough bandwidth to manage requests for both their original orthotic products as well as the face shields that are protecting people throughout our country.

Rapid Results from Reditus

Similar to the pivot PAL Health Technologies made, Reditus Laboratories increased its offerings to accom-

Pivot (continued)

moderate COVID-19 testing as some of their typical pathology business started to drop off a bit.

But it wasn't just about the reduction in pathology processing. Dr. Rossi and team felt compelled to put Reditus to work in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. Since this virus has proven itself to be frequently asymptomatic and easily spread—and knowing that testing is critical to mitigating large outbreaks—they were happy to be able to do their part.



A Reditus employee processing tests for the disease caused by coronavirus.

This helps to identify those who are carrying the COVID-19 virus, so they can be isolated to reduce the spread—even if they never notice any symptoms. This method typically involves an initial test of the entire group when preparing to return to campus, with ongoing periodic testing of a specified percentage of the student population.

In addition to working with universities of varying sizes, Reditus Labs has also been providing testing services to local municipalities,

state government, federally-funded testing sites and other groups that have high-volume needs.

Reditus is currently able to deliver 10,000 test results each day and has the capacity to evaluate up to 17,000 tests per day. The COVID-19 PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test is performed with a PCR amplification monitored by florescent light and takes four hours.

On top of the large groups of COVID tests being conducted, Reditus is available to support hospital partners by providing test results for patients being evaluated before elective surgeries. Dr. Rossi said that they are well-equipped and well-staffed (with 75 new employees) to handle the normal pathology services alongside the COVID testing.

Flexibility Pays Off

Savvy executives have always known the importance of remaining nimble enough to shift directions. But today, that ability to strategically create new opportunities and re-

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Rising to the occasion, the Reditus Labs team ramped up their capacity to serve a wide range of testing sites throughout the Midwest. At various points in the early stages of the pandemic, many labs experienced delays and supply shortages. The path to faster results was to increase capacity at labs that conduct quality testing and Reditus was able to do this.

Not only is a quick response important to the patient—who is often nervous about their results—but a faster turn-around facilitates more effective contact tracing, which can help slow the spread of COVID-19. This is especially critical in places where large numbers of people congregate for an extended period of time such as colleges, professional sports, hospitals, food processing plants and other large groups.

At the time this profile was written, students were beginning to return to universities from coast to coast. By late August, just a few weeks into the new term, hotspots were already starting to emerge on campuses. And while many of those clusters of cases didn't necessarily occur on the campus itself, when students arrived after spending time with family and friends, they potentially brought the virus with them.

One of the ways Reditus is helping colleges is by providing them with test results in 24-48 hours for both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. Many colleges are using surveillance testing, which is an approach that performs tests on people who don't have symptoms.

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purpose resources needs to happen faster than ever before.

Dr. Rossi and the leadership team have demonstrated the ability to do what's right for their businesses...while also doing what's right for the greater good.

To learn more about PAL Health Technologies, please visit <https://xtremity3d.com/>, call (800)-223-2957, or click here. Get to know Reditus Laboratories at <https://www.redituslabs.com/>, call (469) 498-0222, or click here.