

CASE STUDY

# How Factor One Marketing Helped AQ Outdoors Increase Sales by 45% During the COVID-19 Pandemic



“Factor One has years of experience with Google Ads and really knows its stuff. I’ve always trusted them to have our best interests at heart.”

**Simon Coward**  
Owner, AQ Outdoors

## Factor One Provided

- Online retail expertise to turn in-store visits into online sales
- Analytics-driven recommendations to optimize online sales
- A strong partnership, even during the most trying times

# The Client

## AQ Outdoors



**INDUSTRY**  
Retail



**LOCATION**  
Alberta, Canada

AQ Outdoors provides equipment to paddle sports enthusiasts across Canada. From its retail locations in Calgary and Edmonton (branded Aquabatics) and its online store, the company sells paddle boards, kayaks, roof racks, splitboards and accessories. AQ Outdoors is also instrumental in fostering a community of outdoor adventurers through lessons, guided tours and rentals of paddle equipment.

# The Challenge

## Retail locations forced to close due to COVID-19

COVID-19 couldn't have come at a worse time for AQ Outdoors. Having recently opened a new retail location in Edmonton, the company was stretched financially.

Thus, when authorities ordered Albertan retailers to close due to the pandemic, Simon Coward, owner of AQ Outdoors, foresaw the impact to his revenue.

He reluctantly laid off staff and reached out to vendors to discontinue service until further notice in an attempt to stem expenditures until stores could reopen and the company's financial outlook was more certain.

One partner Simon contacted was Factor One Marketing, a Google Partner Agency. They'd been managing his Google Ads and Google Marketing for years, and he loved working with them—but he was gearing up to make a difficult break-up call.

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“Having to close our doors and lay off staff was frightening. We started to prepare ourselves for the nuclear scenario—where we would have to shutter stores permanently because we have no sales.”

## The Solution

### A rapid shift from in-store to online sales

To Simon's surprise, Factor One refused to abandon AQ Outdoors. Instead, they asked him what he needed. Together, they came up with a solution that would allow Factor One to continue providing marketing and advertising to AQ Outdoors until business improved.

Simon was floored. Factor One did everything they could to make the deal fair and equitable to both parties. He'd never worked with a third-party partner that cared about his success as much as he did.



Factor One pivoted quickly. They moved away from promoting in-store visits to promoting online shopping, curbside pickup, and contact-free deliveries.

They used Shopify metrics to see what categories of products were selling best. When they found that smaller items, such as life jackets and safety gear, were moving better than canoes and kayaks, they factored that information into its Google Shopping campaigns.

When certain products sold out and couldn't immediately be restocked due to COVID-19, Factor One used a combination of Google Shopping and Shopify metrics to promote the items that were in-stock products, particularly those with high profit margins.

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“I told Factor One we were going to have to cut things off, but they refused to sever our relationship. Instead, they continued to support us until we could get back on our feet. They were in our corner the whole time, which was pretty remarkable.”



# The Result

## 45% increase in sales

Using data from Google Shopping, Google Search, and Google Display campaigns, Factor One helped AQ Outdoors optimize its online marketing campaigns. They tweaked campaigns based on Google Trends analysis and before long their hard work paid off.

In just two months, AQ Outdoors online sales shot up by a huge 45%—and that number continues to grow.



But what Simon loves most about working with Factor One isn't the maximized online profits (though he loves those too)—it's the strong partnership. COVID-19 was a trial by fire, and Factor One has proven that they'll do anything to help through good times and bad.

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“When you go through a bonkers situation like this one, it puts a magnifying glass on your relationships with vendors and partners. Factor One showed us that our trust in them as a partner is warranted. And with their support, we're on track to have our best year ever.”

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