All or Nothing Brewhouse

An important member of the business community in Oshawa, Ontario, All or Nothing Brewhouse retooled their distilling equipment to meet the anticipated local demand for hand sanitizer as a result of COVID-19.

Headquarters	439 Ritson Road South, Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 5J8
Year Established	2014
NAICS	312120 - Breweries
Employees	14
Major Expansions	2016, 2019
Exports	N/A
Parent Company	N/A
Other Locations	N/A

In the Spring of 2020 hundreds of Ontario companies pivoted, reorienting to focus on the production of essential goods in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the first to do so was Oshawa's All or Nothing Brewhouse. Owned and operated by brothers Eric and Jeff Dornan, the craft brewery retooled their distilling equipment to meet the anticipated demand for hand sanitizer from local customers. In the process, they made operational changes – including contactless delivery – to ensure the safety of their staff and customers. Their ability to respond to the need for hand sanitizer within the community during the pandemic is testament to the leading role that All or Nothing plays within their community and Ontario's rapidly growing craft brewing industry.

Founded as a contract brewer in 2014, it soon became evident that a bricks and mortar location would be necessary to keep up with demand and control the production process in order to ensure consistency and quality. In July 2016, All or Nothing acquired Trafalgar Ales and Meads and its related assets. Among these assets was a 15,000 square brewery and distillery located in Oakville. In addition to solving their production capacity and quality needs, this acquisition allowed All or Nothing to diversify and produce distilled products. The availability of distilling equipment and knowledge of the distilling process certainly helped when the brewery began producing sanitizer during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Co-owner Jeff Dornan notes that while the Oakville facility was a great place to develop the business, the plan was always to relocate the brewery to Oshawa. This plan came to fruition in June 2019, when All or Nothing opened its current brewery on Ritson Road. Located in a former Beer Store, the new facility provides more space for production, packaging, retailing, and events. All or Nothing has quickly become

part of Oshawa's business community and revitalization efforts, which is something that the Dornans, natives of Durham region, are fiercely proud of. Jeff notes that the availability of the building was critical to their decision to relocate. Making a big splash on Day 1, he notes, is important, but having a well-conceived plan and modern operations is even more important given that he and Eric plan to operate the brewery over the long term. To this point Jeff adds that he would advise anyone looking to open up a brewery to avoid the pitfalls of thinking big, and to start small, learn, improve, and grow over time.

As part of the process of relocating to Oshawa All or Nothing made significant investments in upgrading their brewing, distilling, and packaging equipment. Many of these investments were supported by government programs, most notably the Growing Forward program, which was a provincial-federal initiative (administered in Ontario by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs). While Jeff notes that All or Nothing made good use of this program, and that these investments have accelerated the brewery's modernization efforts, he admits that he could have probably made even better use if he had more experience with such programs.

In addition to Eric and Jeff, who play an active role in the brewery's day-to-day operations, All or Nothing employs twelve people (seven full-time and five part-time). The brewery's employees have a diverse range of skills and experiences, including those with engineering, marketing, and business administration backgrounds. According to Eric, one of the most important characteristics that they look for in candidates is an open mind and innovative thinking. The brewery has partnered with educational institutions, such as Durham College's Centre for Food (CFF), where they have worked with students on marketing and laboratory testing projects, and even brewed beer using produce grown on campus and served in the CFF's Bistro '67 pub. They also speak with students at Sheridan College and Seneca College (Eric's alma mater), to familiarize students with brewery operations.

While All or Nothing has built a successful business, they face many of the same challenges as the over 300 craft breweries operating in Ontario. All aspects of Ontario's brewing industry are highly regulated. While All or Nothing benefits from tax breaks for small breweries, they also face challenges related to distribution through The Beer Store, which is controlled by a consortium of internationally-owned companies, and through the multi-layered LCBO. These challenges tend to result in very modest profit margins, which can make further investment and growth difficult. To help address these challenges for their benefit and the benefit of other craft brewers All or Nothing is an active member of the Ontario Craft Brewers (OCB). The OCB is a trade association made up of independent Ontario-based breweries, and Jeff has served as the Chair since 2017.

> As Ontario emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic the Dornans see both challenges and opportunities ahead.

Craft brewers operate at a unique intersection of manufacturing, agri-food, wholesaling, retailing, hospitality, and tourism. As such, changes to (or restrictions on) any of those activities – and especially distribution through The Beer Store and the LCBO – could impact the overall business. At the same time, smaller brewers may be better able to pivot between these activities in order to meet consumer demand. For example, Jeff notes that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have created pent-up demand for weddings, which could present the brewery – with its ample indoor and outdoor event space – with new opportunities

for revenue. In any case, their ability to pivot in support of their community during the COVID-19 pandemic solidifies the important role that All or Nothing plays within Oshawa and within Ontario's growing network of craft brewers.