

FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF WILLOW@ACREFL.COM

From the Orlando Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/orlando/news/2021/03/09/orlando-retail-acre-commercial-florida.html>

## Why Orlando's Acre Commercial tapped into Instagram and email blasts to grow other small businesses during Covid

Mar 9, 2021, 11:50am EST Updated: Mar 9, 2021, 12:04pm EST

Sandi Bargfrede knew her Orlando retail real estate brokerage firm needed to change its business strategy when the pandemic shuttered restaurants and shops across Central Florida.

"Our company really thrives on cold calling, but you couldn't cold call businesses while they're trying to survive themselves," said Bargfrede, managing partner of Acre Commercial.

So Acre Commercial decided to run a campaign to help small businesses. It reached out to every client and potential client it knew and asked if these businesses were running specials or what information was important to promote to their customers as Covid-19 upended the economy. Acre Commercial then pushed out that information through its Instagram and Facebook pages and over email.



JIM CARCHIDI

Acre Commercial Real Estate  
Managing Partners Willow Ferrelli  
(left) and Sandi Bargfrede

The result: It helped small businesses and kept Acre Commercial's name in mind.

The social media and email campaign was among many changes Acre Commercial made during the pandemic in order to survive. Read on to hear more from Bargfrede looking back on the past year and what's next for the real estate firm:

**Why is retail real estate in Florida relatively healthy compared to the rest of the U.S. despite the pandemic?** There are several reasons. There are a lot of people moving to Florida from New York and California, and the state of Florida has allowed businesses to remain open. Plus, our clients that secured grant money and PPP loans didn't miss a beat on paying rent.

**How did the pandemic challenge your business?** We thought 2020 was going to be our best year ever, but we lost a lot of deals when Covid hit. Companies stop expanding and lots of things were put on hold.

**How did you overcome those challenges?** We looked at every dime we were spending, what programs we were using and what programs we needed to pivot and grow. We started doing virtual showings, which I believe will be more mainstream moving forward. It's something that sticks around because it's much more efficient. I can send a client a link and walk through the space with them over the phone.

**How did you keep your employees motivated during the pandemic?** Fortunately, we maintained all of our employees, gave out raises and added a position. We played games and did virtual happy hours.

**How has business been recently?** We were busier in the fourth quarter than we ever had been. I attribute that to vaccines and companies starting to look to grow again. Plus, more concepts and people are moving to Florida. I believe that once we get to herd immunity, possibly this summer, people are going to be a lot more confident. The more people who get this vaccine, the better it will be.

**What retail concepts are best positioned for success and what concepts face challenges in the years ahead?** I wish I had a crystal

ball. Group exercise where people are close together may be challenged because people may be afraid of that environment. Some other retailers will continue to shrink their footprints. We'll still see lots of restaurants growing, but they'll do it differently with outdoor space. As long as we continue to be safe, restaurants will continue to thrive, especially with takeout.

## **Acre Commercial**

Description: Boutique firm offering full commercial real estate services throughout Florida

Managing partners: [Sandi Bargfrede](#) and [Willow Ferrelli](#)

Headquarters: Orlando

Other office: Tampa

Total employees: Five

Founded: 2015

---

***[Sign up here for our free morning and afternoon daily newsletters.](#) And be sure to follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).***

---

### **Jack Witthaus**

Staff Writer

*Orlando Business Journal*

