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MTL DNA

Line of business:

- Retail

Products used:

- Moneris Online





Summary

MTL DNA is an online store based out of Montreal, QC, that sells premium and dry-aged meat in the area. Founded by four partners with a passion for steak and obsession with quality, MTL DNA has relied on their web store and online payment processing from Moneris® to bring Montrealers the seamless and high-touch experience customers demand during COVID-19 lockdowns and beyond.



All of us also hold full-time jobs, and this is our baby. We're the staff, the delivery guys, the ones cutting the meat. For us, time management is key, and Moneris helps us cut time through automation and overcome accounting process hurdles. By shaving time on the backend, Moneris has helped us improve customer experience, allowing us to reach out to customers in half the time (from 48 to 24 hours) to confirm orders.



-Saba Tariq, Partner, MTL DNA Inc.

Background

People who love their meats have a special relationship with their local butchers. They want to walk in and pick out the choicest cut. They rely on the experts to carve up the best quality. For many, buying their meats unseen just won't cut it.

Still, four dry-aged meat lovers from Montreal, QC, have turned that idea on its head, offering the high-touch experience and product that their fellow steak aficionados expect from bricks-and-mortar businesses — but online.

"It was a back of the napkin idea," says Saba Tariq, partner and co-founder of MTL DNA. "We all have entrepreneurial spirits, so we are constantly thinking of how to do things differently and better."

"We came together to understand the uniqueness of dry-aged meats. We all had to travel constantly to try different meats, so we said, 'Why not do something local and provide a dry-aged meat experience to people within our community?'"





The result was the creation of MTL DNA. Founded in March 2021, amidst the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, MTL DNA is an online store offering premium and dry-aged meats for delivery or pick-up at a competitive price. Dry aging is a process in which beef is aged in special temperature-controlled fridges that intensify flavour while also rendering the meat particularly tender.

Tariq, a project manager in the aviation industry, and her three partners – all with engineering backgrounds – left no detail unresolved when developing the storefront and product. They focused on using automation to reduce costs, sourcing from sustainable local farmers, and creating the exceptional customer experiences necessary to win customers away from their local butchers and grocers.

Purpose

While COVID-19 public health measures and lockdowns were, of course, a challenge for the freshly minted company, they also proved a boon for business. The partners secured lower rent and hydro rates for their facility, which was expected due to recent closures. What they didn't expect was the popular response they'd get for their offering.

"We weren't anticipating we'd see such a shift to an online platform for buying meat. People want to go and look at the meat they buy. So, when we started the business, we thought, 'It may take some time.' Then the shift to online shopping took over, and more and more people were trusting us with their initial orders," Tariq says.

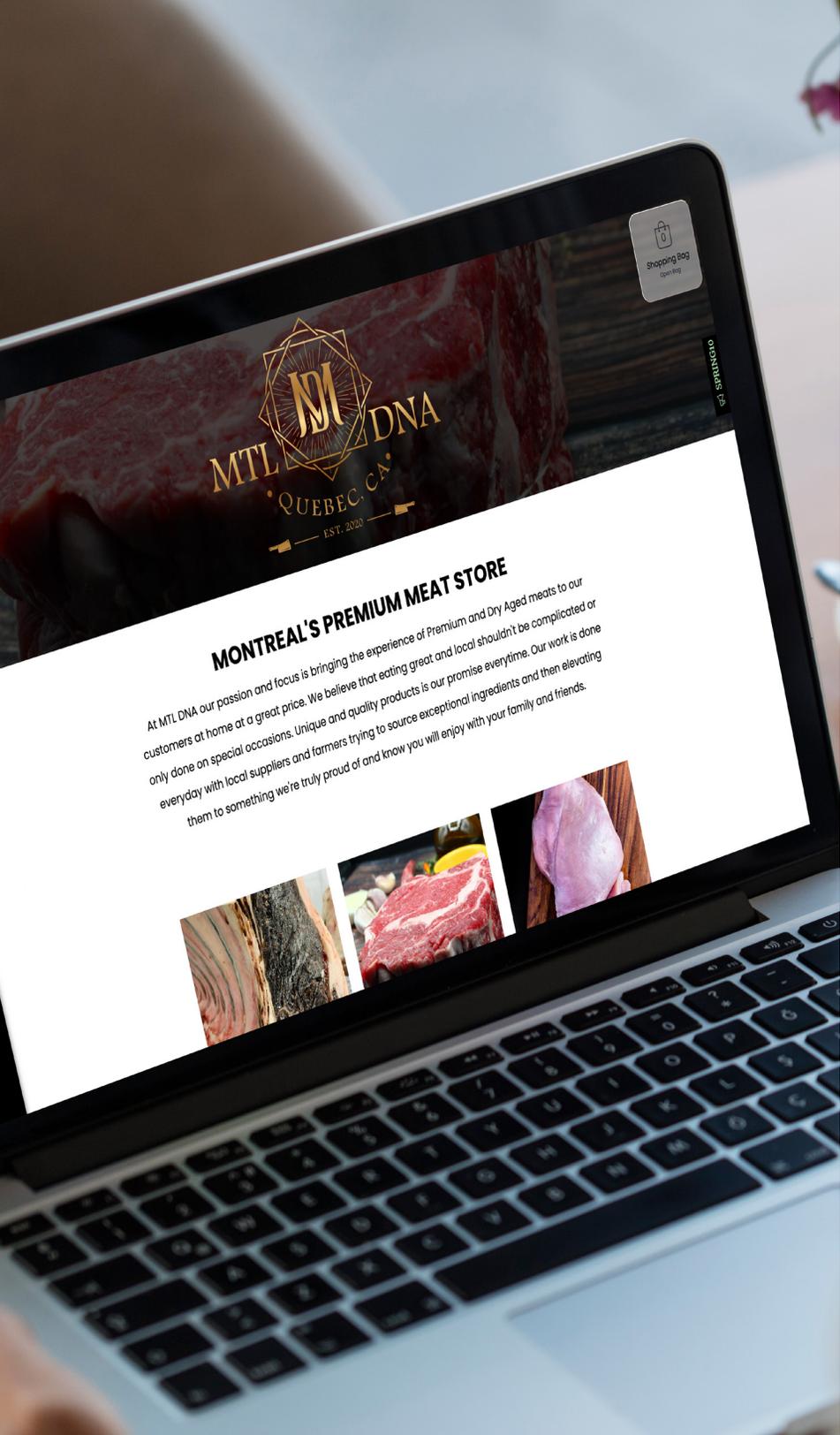
That first order is crucial since it requires the most yet-unproven trust. After that, one can be assured of exceptional customer service.

"We go above and beyond," she adds. Once the order is placed, within a day the customer is contacted to confirm the order and discuss any customization or special requirements for the cut. The partners even provide cooking and barbecuing advice when needed — all to make sure the customer is happy once their sizzling product hits a plate. With such passionate handholding, customer retention has been 100 percent, and the loyalty earned continued even post-lockdowns.

Quality is another key ingredient in creating a loyal customer base, and, naturally, the engineering partners rigorously test for quality assurance, ensure strict hygiene and even bring their detail-oriented backgrounds to determining the cut of steaks. It all works out well for the four partners, whose taste buds operate as testing equipment.

"We are constantly testing our products to make sure what's going on a plate has been vigorously tested and has that stamp of approval from us."





Why Moneris?

Creating an exceptional experience is a cornerstone of MTL DNA's success, so their website and transactions had to be seamless and simple to use. At the same time, as a start-up with significant capital expenditures, the cost had to be considered.

Initially, the company started to develop its website on an alternative platform to Moneris; however, within a month or two, they moved to Moneris Online. Not unlike their approach to product sourcing, the partners wanted to use a provider where they would have a level of support that parallels their own. Thanks to the ease of use and support from Moneris on the backend to answer questions, MTL DNA can respond more quickly to customers, the original 48-hour turnaround in customer contact is now only 24 hours.

Because of Moneris' website builder, the company has a complete all-in-one solution from website creation to payment acceptance. But, as a start-up, the economics were a major draw, says Tariq.

"The biggest dealmaker was the waive period," Tariq says. "Not only did we get that one-in-all solution where we didn't have to worry about our payment solution and our website, but we also benefited greatly from the period during which our fees were waived for the first few months."

“All start-ups look for that help and support. In our own example, we have two dry-age fridges that cost about \$50,000 a piece because they were built from scratch, and there are always extra added costs when starting a business. Anywhere we can get that support from our partners is highly appreciated.”

Onboarding with Moneris Online was simple. Where the alternative website platform charged extra fees for technical help, MTL DNA was able to book calls with Moneris as needed and take advantage of the AI-based creation tool.

“We needed constant support as we built our website and tried to define our payment solution. It was our first experience doing this,” Tariq says. “We had a lot of questions, especially around the website.” “But Moneris checkout was a breeze; it integrated seamlessly with the website.” She attributes the ease of deploying Moneris Online to its intuitiveness, support when needed and strong documentation.





Looking Forward

Having brought its passion for dry-aged meats to the Montreal community, MTL DNA grew its product offering to include various marinades, other premium cuts, short-ribs and burger patties.

The partners have even bigger dreams: a bricks-and-mortar presence and possible expansion into other geographies from which they've been receiving requests, namely Ottawa and Toronto (ON). Tariq notes that Moneris' point-of-sale capabilities and nationwide presence will serve them well should they undertake such business expansions and looks forward to taking advantage of the same easy-to-use portal she uses today to verify purchases, handle custom orders, returns and to help automate accounting.

"People are requesting we set up pop-up shops in other cities. It would be a huge undertaking, but we are cautiously optimistic about expansion," Tariq says.

"We want to make sure we're making full use of our website, it's a great website and online payment solution, and we know that Moneris will help us throughout every stage from a POS system and beyond."



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