

OXFORD BANK SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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Every local business has a story worth sharing with the community. That is the belief behind Oxford Bank's "Business Spotlight" series – to shine spotlight on all of our favorite local businesses and connect businesses with their surrounding communities.

This month's spotlight is the Michigan Escape Games, located in Davison.

I had the privilege of getting to know Royce Lawrence, owner of Michigan Escape Games located in Davison, MI. Royce is an active member in the Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce and the Davison Chamber and has been a local business owner for over 25 years. He has brought a new and exciting experience to Mid-Michigan that is bringing people from all over the world to try his game room adventures!



AW: What inspired you to start your business?

RL: It all began about six years ago when someone suggested I help out the Davison Drama Club with a fundraiser by putting on a haunted trail for Halloween. The haunt went very well that first year and it has simply grown over the years. A couple of years ago I was introduced to the idea of an Escape Room while at a haunt convention in St Louis. I loved the idea and just ran with it! A lot of research and development went into creating our first rooms with the idea that we could make this fascinating idea even better. Now we are one of the largest, top-rated escape room facilities in the nation with numerous adventures to excite and boggle the mind!



AW: What's one thing your business is known for, over your competitors? Why are you known for that?

RL: Our company offers legitimately challenging puzzles and we match the puzzles in our rooms to the theme. So, Amanda, if you come to do the Viral Containment room, you're participating as a lab technician in the CDC Laboratories, you're trying to get the antivirus before you've become infected, you are doing laboratory related puzzles, and some of the puzzles are going to be kind of "icky" because, after all, it is the CDC Laboratories. There are also plenty of secrets and surprises in each room that keeps the adrenaline flowing right to the end of the game. This is what sets us so far apart from our competitors, the rooms are genuinely tough and we have worked diligently to make the escape room experience as exciting as possible, and this is why people keep coming back to us for multiple challenges. None of the rooms are "easy," where would the fun be in that?

AW: What has been your business' proudest moment? Why?

RL: We have FIVE-STAR ratings on TripAdvisor, Google business, Facebook, and Bookeo, and people are excited to share their experience whether they have escaped or not. Guests have visited from all corners of the world and some of our regular customers drive as much as three hours one-way on a regular basis just to do our rooms. It's quite amazing. That's why we chose Davison for our location. It centralized us.

AW: What has been the biggest risk you ever took for your business? What was it, what could have gone wrong, and what was the end result?

RL: We have the largest escape game room in the country offering 9 different rooms and we are expanding even further. It's a huge risk and undertaking to have this many puzzle rooms, but it's been worth it. People keep coming back to try the different rooms and experiences. They tell their friends, bring in new people with them and try their hand at something different each time. It's a lot of work to run this many rooms and we can have as many as 50 people in our building at once but, it's a huge reward to hear the excitement in people once they have experienced one of our creations whether they have escaped or not!

AW: Tell us something interesting/fun about your business.

RL: People sometimes come in costume! No kidding! They determine which room they're going to take on, and they will come in a costume themed with the room. We've had guests come in trench coats when doing the CSI detective room, hazmat outfits when doing the CDC room and SteamPunk attire when doing the SteamPunk Time Machine escape. It's great!



AW: What is your favorite room that you offer currently?

RL: That's a tough one to choose, Amanda. I think it would be a draw between the Abduction room and our newest room, the Dwelling. The Abduction is meant for experienced players because of its extreme intensity but, it isn't necessarily 'scary.' The Dwelling is a Haunted Escape from a Manor House and it is definitely on the scary side. This room has recently opened and is getting incredible reviews from all that have attempted it. Many people who are enthusiasts having done escape rooms all over the country say that it's the best one they have ever done by far! These rooms are best with groups of at least eight participants if they want any real chance at actually escaping them.

If you'd like to check out Michigan Escape Games, you can view the current offerings and book your experience at MichiganEscapeGames.com.

Michigan Escape Games
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