

## CLIENT STORY: SAFETY CHECK INSPECTIONS LIMITED



# A pandemic pivot opens door to exporting

For more than 20 years, Safety Check Inspections Limited has provided in-person training, primarily for Occupational Health and Safety and professional development. The Sydney-based business, established in 2000 by Greg MacMillan, was sold three years ago to long-time employees Jennifer Fahey (Office Manager) and Chris Angione (Training Manager) in a succession plan that allowed MacMillan to retire. With Jennifer's husband, Frankie Fahey, also on staff as Project Manager, the team was in a strong position.

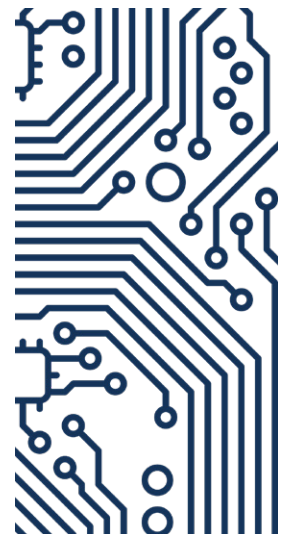
In March 2020, the pandemic changed everything.

"Before COVID, we were very busy," says Jennifer Fahey. "We offer more than 70 courses, and we were developing partnerships with different government organizations to put on programs tailored for their clients. We travelled all over Nova Scotia to do training, and we were doing really well."

When the doors closed to in-person training, the Safety Check team turned the challenges of the pandemic into an opportunity. They changed their business model to offer online training and became new exporters.

Fahey had previously met NSBI at a trade show. The Centre for Women in Business steered her to Wanda MacLean, NSBI's Business Development Advisor for the Cape Breton region. "Wanda is just a beautiful person," Fahey says. "She advised me on what programs and funding were available and helped me with the process of applying."

Auxilium Group helped Safety Check create a digital platform to run online versions of courses. "It took time, money, energy, and patience to develop this digital platform," Fahey says. "We're adding more courses to the 10 we now offer online and are planning to offer blended learning – the online platform with an in-class practical component."





To develop the digital platform, Safety Check used NSBI's Business Development Program. "The project cost \$27,000, and NSBI funded 50% of that," she says. "Besides providing resources for the project, NSBI encouraged us and made us accountable to get it done."

Operating the online platform has made life easier for Safety Check, especially during the recent shutdown, because they can direct people to their website to take an online course and get certified. For employers, the online option is attractive because it's easy to use, and learners can fit a course into their own schedule. Client-specific courses also enable employers to track who has taken the course and when they finished and passed it. For Safety Check, the online option frees up instructors to do more training.

"It's another form of revenue – one we did not have before COVID," Fahey says. "This revenue stream has been a real silver lining. During this last lockdown, many employers who had to delay the start date for new employees used the time to provide training."

Safety Check now exports their online courses, mainly within Atlantic Canada and to Alberta. "Our courses are recognized across Canada," Fahey says. "Anybody in Canada can take them online and get certified."

In November, they bought the business's building and added "landlord" to the company's portfolio.

"We're grateful for NSBI," Fahey says. "They encouraged us to do this and were there if we needed assistance. They are a wonderful organization, and they do wonderful things for small businesses in Nova Scotia."



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**JENNIFER FAHEY**  
Safety Check Inspections Limited