



Keeping business steady through challenging times – Now that's resilience!



My name is Selene Yuen, Partner and Co-owner at [Selenium Interiors](https://www.seleniuminteriors.ca/) based in Edmonton BC. We have been in business for 20 years and have 10 employees and we make custom cabinetry and premium woodwork for homes and offices.

Today, we also make clear shields to help keep staff and customers safe
<https://www.ensembleshields.ca/>

In mid-March, when COVID reached Alberta, we got a bit nervous watching our teenaged son go off to his part-time job at Simon's, and we wondered about the consequences of exposing him to the virus. We have 2 high-risk members in our family.

By late March, bus service was drastically cut back in Edmonton, and we started driving one of our team members to work. One of our morning conversations in the car centred on the clear shields that had been installed at the grocery stores almost overnight, and a story in the news about a local plastics manufacturer who was swamped with demand.

By now our son had been laid off, we had 4 sizeable projects postponed indefinitely, and we were very concerned about the coming months for our company.

We wanted to keep our team together, and we wanted to make our rent. Within 10 more days, we'd developed the bare bones of our mini-pivot. Our team built a key piece of equipment "farm-style" (by resourcefully adapting older components that we already had) to bend the material. We made and tested 3 prototypes. Our local pharmacist Ali was so supportive and graciously allowed us to test our second prototype in his pharmacy, as well as placing our first order for additional shields. And our son, having finished his on-line final exams for the year, used his experience in Junior Achievement to build a wicked little e-commerce site for us.



Since Premier Jason Kenney announced the phased re-opening of the Alberta economy, we have experienced a swell of demand. As with our core endeavours, supplying clear shields to the business community makes us feel like we are making a difference while helping to sustain our own Selenium Team.

As for the next chapter, we're not stopping at clear shields. We are currently developing more ideas for home offices, offices, and restaurants that address the new realities of life in this uncertain era.

Selene will be a co-presenter with Heidi Boudreault from [Denca Cabinets](https://www.denca.com/) at a CKCA National Webinar Discussion on July 9 at 1pm (EDT). Mark your calendars and watch for details to register.