

Businesses learn to thrive by sharing

By Kelly Zhou, Orange County Register

Tennis rackets hang from the wall alongside Babolat bags, rows of string and colored grips. The other side of the shop features Bodyglide balm for chafing, Asics shoes and energy gel blocks for long-distance runs.

In the difficult world of small business, Tony Krogius and Aaron Faygenov are taking an unexpected approach to lower costs and expand their customer base.

“It was kind of a no-brainer,” said Krogius, owner of String Tennis Shop. When Krogius first looked for a retail space to open his shop, he only wanted about 500 square feet: enough room to sell equipment, shoes and bags. But the places he found were all 900 square feet or more, meaning he had to offer more clothes and inventory on the floor to fill the space.

He settled into Blue Lantern Plaza in the beginning of 2012, even though “it was a lot bigger than what I needed, but the smallest I could find.”

Krogius later met Faygenov, who opened Running World on Pacific Coast Highway in 2010, when Faygenov was trying to figure out ways to better market his business.

“We came up with the brilliant idea: Why don’t we offer both services in one place?” Krogius said.

The duo decided to combine forces in early 2014, with Krogius moving into Faygenov’s space and cutting each man’s rent in half.

“This is the perfect synergy for two small businesses, to help

each other out without wasting money,” Krogius said.

The owners believe they have the only store in the area operating under such a business model. For the two easygoing, affable business owners, it helps them fight their largest competitor, the Internet – from Amazon to Zappos to Tennis Warehouse.

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