LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY + SOCIAL MEDIA DURING COVID-19 and BEYOND

TIPS + STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS
The Covid-19 pandemic has created a renewed desire on the part of residents and businesses to shop locally and foster local self-reliance.

According to a Nextdoor survey, 72% of members believe they will frequent local businesses more often after this crisis.
OUR PROMISE TO YOU

As your local media and news organization, we understand how your business has been impacted by the novel Coronavirus and the challenges you are currently facing. Our promise to you and the communities we serve together is to assist businesses like yours as much as possible through these changing times.

We want you to know that you are not alone in navigating this difficult time. We will work tirelessly to provide you with advice, resources, tips, and support you need to help ensure your business comes out successful in the weeks and months to come.

Together, we can get through this!
CONNECT
Develop a communication strategy - and continue to update it frequently as events and offerings change.

COLLABORATE
The way you communicate, and the methods used to reach your audiences are vital.

SUCCEED
Stay connected with your clients, customers and staff.
Of consumers feel more or as connected to their communities than they did before the pandemic. (Accenture)
The Cost of Technology
CONNECT
STAY CONNECTED.

Communicate with your Local, Loyal Customers. Make sure you have updated your hours and safety precautions across all platforms. Ensure your information is current everywhere your business is customer-facing.

DO

Consider new ways of communicating your business.
- Google My Business
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Text
- Email

Change the way you operate. Become community “for good”, promotion and positive content driven.
- Gift Card Promotions
- Curb-Side Pick-Up or Delivery
- Host Online Tutorials, Demonstrations, Events
- Opening up Free Resources

Work with other local businesses.

Even if you need to close your business, there are ways to stay connected!
If you haven’t already, consider what changes you can make to your business to not only stay afloat during these times, but also better serve your customers’ changing needs where they are – at home.

Many restaurants shifted to delivery, carry out, and curbside pickup with no or limited contact options available.

How can your company shift to offer services remotely in a virtual manner?
SHIFTING YOUR BUSINESS MODEL - IDEAS

ANNOUNCE CONTESTS & GIVEAWAYS VIA INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK LIVE VIDEO

JOIN LOCAL CURBSIDE DELIVERY RESOURCES –

OFFER VIRTUAL STYLING, TOURS, OR SUPPORT!

MAKE SURE YOUR BUSINESS IS LISTED ON OUR FREE LOCAL DIRECTORIES!

OFFER GIFT CARD bonuses TO GET INSTANT SALES FOR FUTURE SHOPPING

BUILD QUARANTINE CARE KITS FULL OF LOCALS’ FAVORITE THINGS TO EAT, SEE AND DO. SELL THEM ONLINE OR BY PHONE WITH CURBSIDE PICKUP

OFFER SOME PRODUCTS OR SERVICES WITH FREE SHIPPING, DELIVERY, OR FOR PROCEEDS TO BE DONATED WHEN PURCHASED
UTILIZE LIVE VIDEO PLATFORMS + HOST VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Live video can help you proactively educate and engage with customers. Zoom, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, Facebook Rooms/Videos are all FREE options that can keep you connected to your clients, employees and suppliers.

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM LIVE

If you typically provide a service that requires your customer to visit your location, strategize new ways to communicate with them through live video platforms. For Example:

- Virtual Cooking Class or Tips on How to Cook Recipes
- Virtual Styling 101 (great for boutiques!)
- Interior Design Tips
- Tutoring Services
- Virtual Consultations
- At Home Workouts

YOUTUBE:

YouTube offers a ‘live’ function, and also offers the ability to host your videos online – giving you the ability to add to your website.

- Post videos to your YouTube page now and share them on your socials later.
DO

- Work with other local businesses.
- Create survival or care kits.
- Develop partnerships, especially if you’re able to offer items from a business who has to close its doors during this time.

Increase Communication on Social Media.

- Disregard best practices on social post minimums and maximums – (Yes, you are reading that correctly!)
- Set-Up Auto Responses on Facebook Messenger and Instagram Direct Messages.
- Add Facebook chat/messenger to your website to help your customer service.
SUCCEED
STAY CONNECTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

It’s difficult in a challenging situation to continue communicating with employees and customers.

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM:
If you haven’t already, create business pages on both Facebook & Instagram.
• Post frequently with any information that is relevant to your audience – up to 5x per day is generally appropriate.
• Set-up auto responses on Messenger and Instagram Direct.
• Based on your goals, boost posts that are most relevant to your success or that you want larger audiences to see.
• New services such as delivery, curb-side pickup, online events or tutorials
• Special promotions or gift cards

If you haven’t already, create Facebook, Instagram, and Google My Business Pages to easily and effectively communicate with employees and customers.
SELL PRODUCTS and SERVICES ONLINE

Even if you don’t have an eCommerce website, you can look into promoting, or even selling your product through platforms you currently do utilize, such as Facebook.

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Put yourself in the customer's shoes – or, better yet, find someone who's never used your website to test it for you – and practice the customer's buying journey. Is it easy for them to find the product they need? Is the checkout process quick and easy? Can the customer find support information if they need it? Here’s what we know:
• 87% of U.S. consumers prefer to shop at stores that have touchless or robust self-checkout options. (Shekel)
• Click and Collect. 65% of shoppers like the BOPIS experience.
• Most online shoppers want 2-3 day shipping.

Get Set Up to Accept ONLINE Payments:

Many businesses are closing to the public so accepting cash or in-person payments is no longer an option.
• PayPal
• Square
• Venmo!!
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

DON’T

Go dark in the digital world, even if you close business for now.

Instead, continue to communicate with your customers and potential customers.

Use this time to re-develop your business plan and strategy.

Highlight key things your employees are doing or focusing on in the community.

Remain involved and continue to support other local businesses, your customers will remember this in the end and come back tenfold.
QUICK REVIEW
We’re Here to HELP,

We are stronger together

And we WILL get through this!