



MARKETING & CORONAVIRUS

WHAT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS NEEDS TO KNOW

pensacola news journal

LOCALiQ

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CORONAVIRUS & YOUR BUSINESS

As a local business owner, you're likely prepared for a lot of scenarios: an employee calling in sick, cancellations, late shipments, and more. One thing you may or may not have been prepared for: the impact of a global pandemic on your business as well as your community and loved ones.

As we navigate the uncertainty that comes with COVID-19 and the ripple effects we'll likely see for months to come, your business may be taking a hit.

Many businesses are closing for a couple of weeks, and experts say this may just be the first wave of temporary closures we see as we try to flatten the curve and wait for a widely available vaccine.

So, how can your business continue operating in this temporarily new world, and how can you make sure you're setting yourself up for success long-term?

In this guide, we'll cover:

- What your business can do now to keep customers interested and engaged even if you're temporarily closed.
- Lessons you can learn from how big brands and handling the pandemic and adapting their businesses.
- Adjusting your marketing.
- And more.



5 STEP CHECKLIST OF THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

When there's so much going on, it can feel paralyzing and scary. So, here are some things you can do right now to help your business adapt to what's happening around us today.

1. UPDATE YOUR WEBSITE

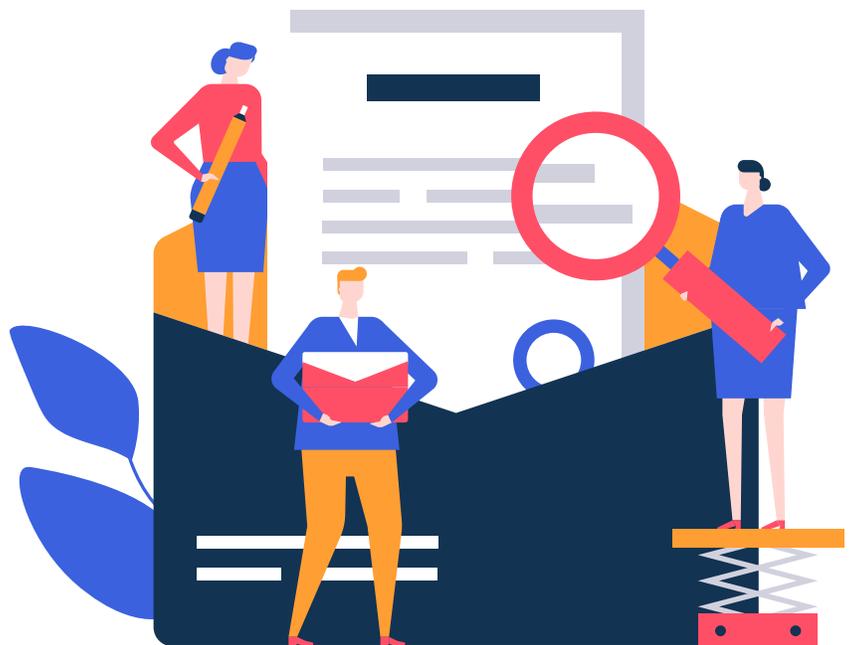
Our situation is changing daily. Businesses that were open yesterday are closed today, and consumers will likely turn to your website for the latest updates with your business, so it's important to keep it up to date.

- Add updated hours.
- Outline payment options.
- Include delivery or pick-up options.
- Let users know what you're doing to keep employees and customers safe.

2. CHECK YOUR LOCAL LISTINGS

As more and more people stay home and businesses close or change their hours, this is an important step you can take for your business to keep your customers and prospective customers updated. Do a quick audit of your top local listing sites or work with your listings management partner to update your sites.

- Check your phone number.
- Make sure your URL is correct.
- Add any special services you're offering (like delivery).
- Include any specials or promotions you're running.



3. ADAPT YOUR BUSINESS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

As we practice social distancing, now is the time to adapt your business as much as possible.

Think outside the box on what you can do to continue offering your products and services – just in different ways – while keeping your teams safe.

- Take updated payment options.
- Offer contactless delivery.
- Ask your employees what would make them feel safer during this time.

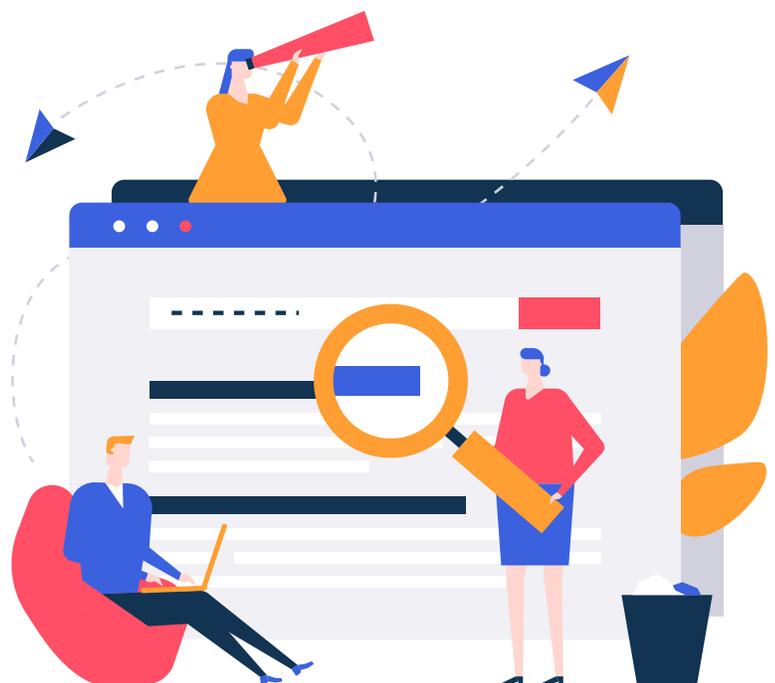


There's a lot that goes into SEO and an effective strategy. Download our guide to learn more.

4. KEEP YOUR SEO RUNNING

While many consumers are staying home, they're spending more and more time online – either for work or for play. Now is an important time to ensure your business is showing up on search engines through a robust search engine optimization, or SEO, strategy.

- Invest in an SEO strategy that gets you in front of local searchers.
- Create relevant, regular content for your website.



5. STAY SOCIAL

Another thing people are doing while they're home: spending time on social media. Not only is social media a great place for your business to communicate with your customers, but it's also a great time to engage with your community.

- ❑ Post regular updates to your social media pages.
- ❑ Let your audience know what's going on with your business, your community, and your team.

We hope these quick tips will help you feel more in control of your situation and understand what you can be doing to keep your business running as smoothly as possible.



LESSONS YOU CAN LEARN FROM REAL BUSINESSES

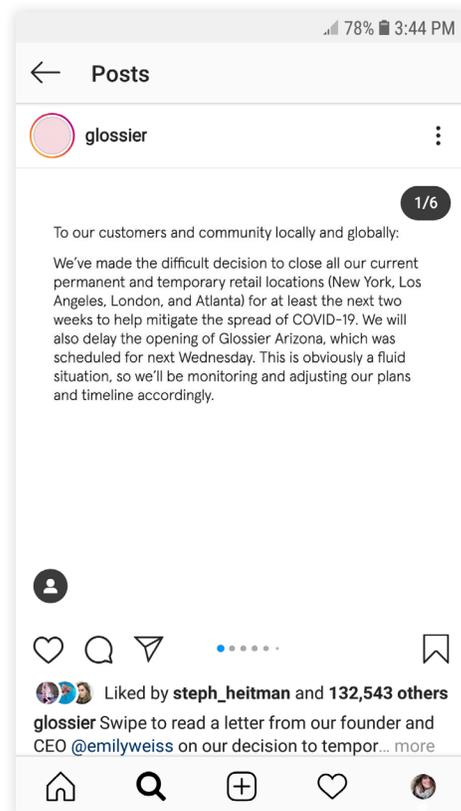
Now that we've outlined some quick items you can check off your to-do list, we can see what other businesses are doing to adapt to the changing times.

RETAILERS: *Leading the Way with Closures & Authentic Communication*

Retailers, like Glossier, were among the first businesses to announce closures related to the pandemic. Glossier's CEO not only announced the closure but also that their employees would be paid for their scheduled shifts – highlighting how they were supporting both customers and their employees.

Now, obviously not every business, especially a smaller local business, has the resources to keep paying their employees when they're losing profits. We understand that. But the fact that Glossier was one of the first retailers to both close and continue to pay employees was a big statement. And many more retailers followed suit, including Anthropologie, Warby Parker, and more.

Many of these retailers are also offering incentives for consumers to shop online – including free shipping and discounts.



KEY TAKEAWAY: *Customers connect with how companies take care of their employees. And they don't hate incentives to keep spending with these retailers online.*

AUTO DEALERS: *Getting Cars to the People Without Showrooms*

Many dealerships are introducing delivery options for their customers so they don't have to visit the showroom. This includes picking up and servicing cars and then delivering them back to customers' homes. This limits the interaction they may have and doesn't create any disruption in their service.

KEY TAKEAWAY: *While customers aren't coming to you, think about how you can come to them.*

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REAL ESTATE: Showing Homes Virtually

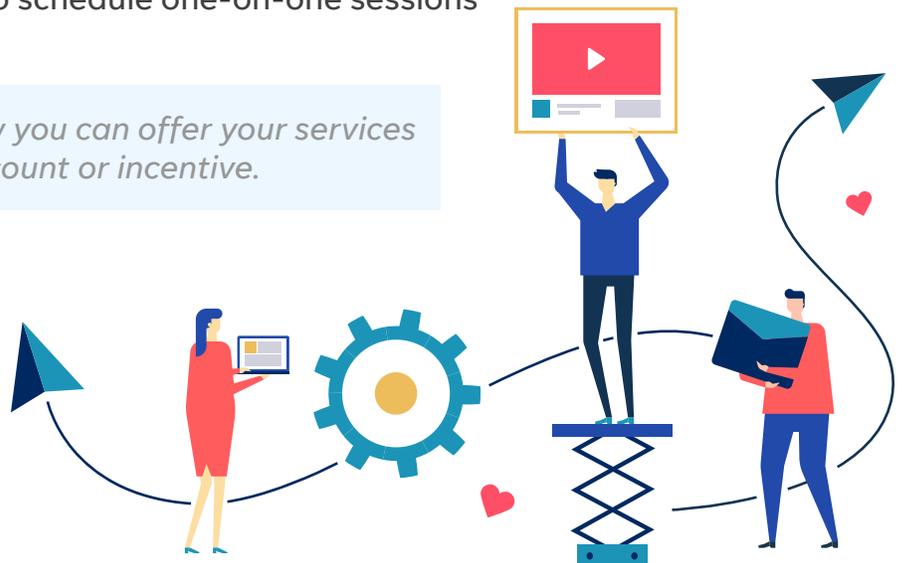
In order to continue serving clients in need of a move, many real estate agents have launched virtual tours. They either film a walk-thru to share with their clients, have the existing homeowner create one, or video call the client for a live walk-thru. All these options keep new visitors from coming in and out of someone's home but still provide a vital service to the agent's clients.

KEY TAKEAWAY: *Think about how technology can help you continue connecting with customers during this time. It might be through social media, video content, or emails.*

GYMS: Taking Fitness Online

With the majority of gyms now closing, people still want (and need!) to get their exercise in. Many gyms and fitness providers are taking their classes online. Yoga studios are live-streaming classes, online subscription services are offering two free weeks of classes, and personal trainers are reaching out to schedule one-on-one sessions over the phone.

KEY TAKEAWAY: *Think about how you can offer your services virtually – and possibly with a discount or incentive.*



HEALTHCARE: *Turning to Telehealth*

Many healthcare providers are urging people to stay home unless it's absolutely necessary to visit the doctor in order to keep the risk of infection low. Many healthcare providers are turning largely to telehealth solutions so they can keep in contact with their patients without needing to actually be in physical contact with them.

KEY TAKEAWAY: *Consider new and innovative ways you can continue serving your customers. This might include pick-up or delivery services even if it's not typical for your business.*

EDUCATION: *Writing Letters to Seniors*

Many students (and parents) are facing an unprecedented early release from school or a complete switch to online learning. But, beyond that, many schools are encouraging their students to correspond with seniors who are quarantined in their senior centers so they don't feel so isolated.

KEY TAKEAWAY: *Think about ways you and your business can support your local community during this time – and get others involved, too!*

We know that things are looking a little different right now. So, let's use this opportunity to see what we can learn from companies and businesses that are doing a great job at building people up, providing relevant and useful information, and sharing posts that bring a little smile to our faces.



3 WAYS TO ADJUST YOUR MARKETING DURING COVID-19

If you're like us, you probably had multiple campaigns, content pieces, and promotions scheduled before we entered this pandemic. Businesses, like we outlined, have done a great job at pivoting not only their offerings to customers but also their marketing. As a business owner, it's important to connect with customers on an authentic and transparent level, which can be difficult when you're trying to adjust so many aspects of your business so quickly. Here are three quick steps to adjust your marketing.

1. DETERMINE YOUR MESSAGE

This is the overall message you want to convey to customers, prospects, and employees, and can include what you'll be doing to address the pandemic, any adjustments to your business operations, and more.

2. PRIORITIZE WHAT NEEDS TO BE UPDATED OR CHANGED

This could be social posts you have scheduled, ads that may now be deemed insensitive, and more. Prioritize these first and then address the rest of your marketing plan to ensure you're clearly communicating to customers and prospects across all your marketing channels. You can use our checklist we outlined above to get started!

3. DETERMINE WHAT YOU NEED TO ADD TO YOUR PLAN

What, in addition to your current marketing, do you need to ramp up or adjust based on what's going on now? This could be new promotions or specials for pick up or delivery, social posts that relate to what's going on with your business, and more. This could also be different marketing strategies to help you proactively engage with how consumers are spending time and searching now – like with an SEO, social media, and website strategy.

Once you've completed these three steps, stay nimble as things change day-to-day. It may seem stressful to pivot your plan so quickly, but consumers connect with businesses that are able to rise to the challenge of a crisis.



WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

At LOCALiQ, we understand that local businesses are the foundation of our communities, and our goal is to help them thrive. We know that this is a challenging time for most local businesses. We're here to support you and help you in any way we can. Give us a call if you'd like to learn more.

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