

THE RESTART READY MARKETING GUIDE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW **NOW** TO MAKE YOUR
BUSINESS STRONGER AND RESTART FASTER

Hard times are inevitable and it doesn't make you a doomsdayer to plan for them.

The reality is: high stress can impact your ability to make wise decisions, so when you're in the middle of a crisis and need to act fast, it can seem almost impossible to do so if you don't already have a plan.

This guide is designed to give you a framework for what to do, what to think about, and how to communicate with employees and customers when you face a crisis that is impacting your business. ***Do these things, and you'll be ready to restart stronger and faster.***

Understand that in business, ALL communication is a function of marketing, whether you're talking to employees or customers. *If it affects the company, it's marketing.*

If you can pivot quickly with your message and your marketing, then you have a much higher chance of surviving.

So use the info that makes sense for your business and your situation, and think of this guide as supplemental to what you're already doing.

If you face the challenge head on, get creative, pivot quickly, and keep communication open and appropriate, you'll make it through stronger and wiser. You've got this.

COMMUNICATION TIPS:

You Can't Over Communicate

The first thing to remember when dealing with a crisis is that you can't over communicate. When you're in the midst of challenging times or total disruption to life and work, that's when your team and your customers need to hear from you most. It's when they need you to lead, more than ever. So ramp up your communication during times of crisis.

THE TWO THINGS EVERY MESSAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS:

When communicating with customers and employees during a time of crisis, the most important thing is that your tone and message fit the situation.

Do not be tone-deaf. Check all of your messaging and communication with clients and employees for two things:

1. Empathy
2. Competence

EMPATHY + COMPETENCE

Empathy means saying (and meaning) things like:

- I care about you.
- I feel your pain.
- I understand how this is affecting you.

This is important because if you don't communicate that you care, the rest of your message will fall on deaf ears. It all starts with empathy.

Competence means letting your team and your customers know you have a plan.

The plan can change as the situation changes, but you need to communicate that you have a plan you're going to work.

If you don't display competence when your employees and customers are hyper-focused on you and looking for a leader in challenging times, there won't be anyone to follow you through the crisis.

EMPLOYEES

Your employees are looking to you to lead them, to have a plan, and to pull the business through this crisis. They don't expect you to know everything or predict the future, but transparency and frequent communication will go a long way towards putting their minds at ease during times of transition and disruption.

Here are some ideas on what and how you should communicate during times of crisis:

- Have daily "keep it real" meetings.
- Make sure your team is informed and prepared for possible layoffs or reduced hours.
- Clearly communicate expectations around changes to procedures.
- Check in on their mental health.

#1 HAVE DAILY "KEEP IT REAL" MEETINGS

When your reality is changing by the day or hour, a weekly meeting isn't going to cut it. That's why you need to meet daily.

During these meetings, be transparent. Discuss the current situation, run through some worst case scenarios (and how you'll respond to each), and keep employees in the loop.

If they know what your plan is and that you're prepared to pivot as needed to keep the business going, they're going to feel calmer and more confident, even if you have to furlough or cut hours back.

Daily meetings are also a great time to hear your employees out and make sure you've addressed their concerns and answered their questions.

Don't underestimate the importance of daily communication with your team. Even if you're furloughing employees or cutting back their hours, keep them informed and in the loop.

#2 PREPARE YOUR TEAM FOR POSSIBLE LAYOFFS OR REDUCED HOURS

In crises like pandemics when you may be forced to lay off some or all of your staff, it's important that you prepare them for such possibilities and encourage them to be proactive in planning.

Don't scare them, but make sure they're informed and know what's available to them.

If there are financial institutions or government provisions like unemployment that can help them get through the crisis financially, make sure they have that information and know where to go and what to do.

The worst part of facing a crisis is feeling helpless, like a victim. If your employees know what they can do, should you have to let them go temporarily or cut back their hours, things will be a little less painful and stressful.

#3 CLEARLY COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS AROUND CHANGES & PROCEDURES

Crises can totally disrupt “normal” operations and require us to make changes to how and even where we do things. Don’t assume everyone on your team will know what to do or how to do it if there’s major disruption to their “normal.” Instead, provide them with written instructions or point them to a page in your employee handbook.

Will your team need to work remotely through the crisis? If they’ve never worked remotely before, make sure they have what they need to do their jobs from home and communicate what’s expected (i.e. phone etiquette, hours, professionalism, etc.).

Will there be extra safety and sanitation procedures that will need to be added to their normal work routine? Go over the new recommendations for safety and sanitation. Make sure they have access to those new guidelines and the equipment and time they need to follow them in the field.

When things are hectic and uncertain, structure and clarity can be a comfort for your employees, so keep that in mind. And never assume your team is thinking clearly or can read your mind during unprecedented situations and trying times.

#4 CHECK IN ON THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

In the midst of a crisis - especially a crisis that totally disrupts not just work, but life as well - anxiety and stress can reach all-time highs. You want to make sure your employees know that you're there for them and that they're not alone.

Contact them regularly to make sure they have what they need and gauge how they're handling the stress.

You may even want to schedule weekly video calls (using Zoom, Slack, or another platform) to get together as a team and share ideas on how to de-stress, or just take their minds off the crisis with some non-work chatter.

Even if you can't be together, you can be there for each other, as cliché as that sounds. So make use of the technology we have to stay connected and supported.

CUSTOMERS

Getting your messaging right is always important, but it's even more crucial during times of crisis.

If you're not empathetic or you totally ignore the current situation in your messaging, you could end up ruining your reputation for good.

If you're silent, your customers won't know what you're doing and won't have the confidence to call you.

More than ever, focus on empathy, communication, and competency. Here are a few quick tips on customer communication during a crisis.

- Address the crisis head-on.
- Reassure your customers.
- Let your customers know what you're doing to help.
- Communicate on multiple channels.

#1 ADDRESS THE CRISIS HEAD ON

Some business owners stick their heads in the sand when a crisis arises and refuse to acknowledge the elephant in the room. They keep messaging the same, they refuse to address the crisis or pivot their marketing and messaging.

And guess what? They come off as tone deaf at best, clueless and delusional at worst. That kind of reaction to crises doesn't build confidence in your customers. So pause, regroup, and make sure your messaging is appropriate.

Acknowledge the times you're in. Acknowledge how life may be different because of the crisis, and let your customers know you're fully aware of the situation and doing everything you can to continue offering them the crucial services they rely on you to provide.

If there are state recommendations or restrictions that limit your services or require you to alter how and if you can do business, let your customers know you're honoring those recommendations and restrictions.

Share with them what your plan is for serving them during these unprecedented times. And remember, if state restrictions only allow essential services during the crisis, it's your job to educate your customers on the essential services you offer and why it's important that you continue to offer them throughout the crisis.

#2 REASSURE YOUR CUSTOMERS

Times of uncertainty and upheaval can rob your customers of their confidence, especially when it comes to spending money or even having people in their homes. It's your job to reassure them.

In a health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, share the extra precautions you're taking to keep your team and your customers safe and healthy during this crisis.

List what you're doing on your social media, on your website, and in your emails to your customers. And of course, communicate that over the phone when customers call as well.

If there's uncertainty around what cashflow will look like over the next several months, make sure your customers know about your finance options.

But remember, the focus needs to be on how the finance options can help your customers get what they need during times of crisis - not about getting you paid.

Be sensitive and always double check your messaging.

#3 LET YOUR CUSTOMERS KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING TO HELP

Are you using your trucks to deliver food and medicine to the elderly during a health crisis? Are you helping with local restoration or repair work after a natural disaster?

Whatever you're doing to help your community out during a crisis, let your customers know.

The point is not to brag, but to show your community that you care beyond just thoughts and prayers. You back up words with action.

Keep the message customer and community focused and share what you're doing on social.

We all need good news during times of crisis, and your customers will remember how you responded during the bad times.

#4 COMMUNICATE ON MULTIPLE CHANNELS

You want to make sure it's easy for your customers to find the information they need and to communicate with you, especially during times of crisis. Here are just a few of the places you should be communicating:

Social media pages. Facebook organic and Facebook Ads are great ways to reach your customers when they're glued to their screens for the latest news and looking for ways to pass the time.

Website + GMB profile. Your website is your hub and should have accurate, up-to-date information at all times. During times of crisis, you may want to have a pop-up added that says what you're doing, how you're responding, and what services you're offering through the crisis. If you're temporarily shutting down, reducing hours, or shifting the way you do business through the crisis, this information should also be added to your GMB profile, so people searching for your business and services can quickly find that information.

Email + phone. It's always a good idea to proactively reach out to your customers via email when a crisis hits - but don't just send an email for the sake of sending an email. Provide value, keep the message customer-focused, and always triple edit for empathy, competence, and messaging. If there's an economic crisis and people are being laid off by the thousands, don't send an email that says "We're here for you. Here's where you can pay your bill." You're better off not sending an email at all. What should you include in your email? Precautions and changes to business that impact or protect your customers; ways you can actually help them at this time; and info on where and how they can stay up-to-date and informed if needed. You should communicate all these things when customers call as well, so phone scripts specific to the crisis and your local circumstances may be handy for your CSR.

THE PLANS YOU NEED TO HASH OUT

Emotions are bound to kick in when a crisis arises, but as a leader, the most important thing you can do is take some time to hunker down and think.

Here's what you want to be thinking about when a crisis hits or is imminent:

- Possible situations and outcomes
- 30, 60, 90 day cashflow plan
- How you'll make money now and when the crisis is over

#1 RUN THROUGH THE POSSIBLE SITUATIONS & OUTCOMES THAT COULD ARISE OVER THE COMING WEEKS & MONTHS

You don't have to know everything to get a general idea of how you'll pivot and what you'll do with each twist and turn the crisis could bring.

The important thing is that you give it some thought and have a general plan for each possible outcome.

Don't be afraid to include your team in this brainstorm session. Having more heads in the room can sometimes lead to creative solutions and solid plans you may not have thought of on your own.

#2 COME UP WITH A 30, 60, AND 90 DAY PLAN FOR CASHFLOW

The goal is to keep your business running if possible. Whether you need to dip into savings, look into small business loans, or figure something else out, try to have a 30, 60, and 90 day plan for cashflow.

And make sure to set goals for each benchmark, so that if you are below or above your goal number, you can pivot appropriately.

For example, "If we're below \$X at 60 days, half the staff will be laid off or we'll cut pay by 25%."

The idea of sharing these crisis cashflow plans with your team may seem terrifying, but we've found that transparency is always better than the alternative.

#3 PLAN HOW YOU'LL MAKE MONEY NOW OR AS SOON AS THE CRISIS IS OVER

Some people may think it's opportunistic when companies pivot in response to a crisis in order to continue operating.

But the reality is that our economy needs local businesses to survive times of crisis. Our communities need us to bounce back and be there when everything calms down.

So, respect government authorities and their recommendations, keep your staff safe and healthy, but get creative and think of ways you can still make money during the crisis or immediately following.

If you can't go into your customers' homes because of a health crisis, can you offer virtual inspections or focus on exterior work? If you're totally shut down because of state restrictions, can you use this time to create Facebook Ad campaigns to launch and marketing collateral to send out as soon as the crisis is over? Is there a particular service that will be especially needed post-crisis?

Focus your efforts on crafting the right marketing message so you're the empathetic, competent guide that's there when your customers need you.

TIPS FOR RAMPING UP BUSINESS POST-CRISIS

TIP #1 - Engage on social. One thing you can be doing now to ramp up business post-crisis is engage on social media. If you're there focusing on your customers, showing empathy and competency, and being a positive force when your customers are glued to their screens during the crisis, you'll be the company that comes to mind when your customer needs you post-crisis.

TIP #2 - Keep your essential marketing going. Many businesses will turn off their marketing or significantly cut back during times of crisis. But if you keep things going, you'll likely find that customers who would have called your competitors with deeper pockets are now calling you. If you can, keep at least your essential marketing going through the crisis. Essential marketing is pipeline marketing - like your website, and anything you do to keep in touch with your existing and past customers. As soon as the crisis passes, you can ramp up your leads marketing, like lead services (i.e. Home Advisor), PPC, and ad campaigns. Just make sure all of your marketing (including your website and social media) is sensitive to the new concerns of your customers and that you don't send out tone deaf messages.

TIP # 3 - Send out coupons + offer discounts. When you're coming out of a crisis or a recession, your customers are going to be looking for ways to save money, make money, and spread every dollar further. This is especially true if they've lost their jobs or had their income cut back over the last several months. So now may be the perfect time to send out direct mail coupons and discounts, bundle services, and focus on finance options. You may not make as much money on each service as you normally would, but you'll likely get more calls and close more sales.

EXTRAORDINARY TIMES CALL FOR
EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE DOING
EXTRAORDINARY THINGS.

We hope this helps you navigate any crisis you face so you can come out stronger and better. Your community needs you - so plan for what you can and be flexible. We'll make it through this together!

Always rooting for you,
HeatShield + Spark Marketer

RESOURCES

Editable Templates for Social Media

Share these images in your social media to reach both customers and prospects. Click the link below each image to edit colors and text before sharing (requires a free trial Pro account at Canva.com)



Facebook Business Page Header Image

[Edit using Canva.com >](#)

STRATEGY: Let your customers know the most important thing you could possibly communicate with them right now - that you care about them and we'll get through this together. Facebook includes an easy way to add a graphic near the top of your business page, if you have one. It's a great place to voice your solidarity and communicate important information with your community.

Editable Templates for Social Media (cont.)



Safely offering essential services

Some things should wait right now.
But some things just can't.
To keep our community healthy, we have chosen to continue limited essential services, with customer & crew safety always our #1 priority.

www.yourwebsite.com
555-555-5555

The graphic features a stylized illustration of a person in a red shirt and cap holding a clipboard with a checklist and a red cross icon. The background is white with a grey footer.

Edit using [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) >

STRATEGY: Many potential customers aren't calling right now because they don't know you are open. Remove that barrier right away with this graphic, and let people know why it's important that you still provide essential services, and how you'll conduct yourself for their safety and yours.



NOW OFFERING VIRTUAL CHIMNEY ASSESSMENTS

Safe. Easy. Fast. Economical. Call us!

www.yourwebsite.com | 555-555-5555

The graphic features two stylized illustrations of people using laptops. One person is sitting at a desk, and the other is standing. The background is orange with a white diagonal line. The text is in white and black.

Edit using [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) >

STRATEGY: While a virtual assessment isn't as thorough, it's amazing what you can tell, and most importantly it gets the conversation started safely and keeps an open revenue stream during difficult times. Use this on social media or on your home page. Customers can call to book their virtual appointment, and provide an email address so you can send them a videoconference link. You can use FaceTime, Zoom.us, or Skype easily and effectively with most customers.

Editable Templates for Social Media (cont.)

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of our essential services can be performed without ever entering your home.

- Service One
- Service Two
- Service Three



www.yourwebsite.com | 555-555-5555

Edit using [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) >

STRATEGY: Right now, fears about coronavirus abound. Customers may be reluctant to let you into their home, and who can blame them? After all, there may be risk for your employees there, too. But if you can focus on outside work, you could stay busy enough to offset some lost time and revenue. Let your customers know that you can still serve them safely from a distance.

Looking after our community

CONSERVING CASH FEELS IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW. TO HELP, WE CREATED A SPECIAL NO-INTEREST OPTION JUST FOR ESSENTIAL NEEDS. PLEASE ASK US FOR DETAILS.

www.yourwebsite.com | 555-555-5555

Edit using [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) >

STRATEGY: Customers aren't sure they should spend money right now. Who knows how long this is really going to take? Also, some customers may have just been laid off. This strategy requires a finance bank partner, but if you can offer interest-free or same-as-cash terms, you may find it helps you land more jobs right now, while getting paid sooner, even for jobs that may have to be scheduled later.

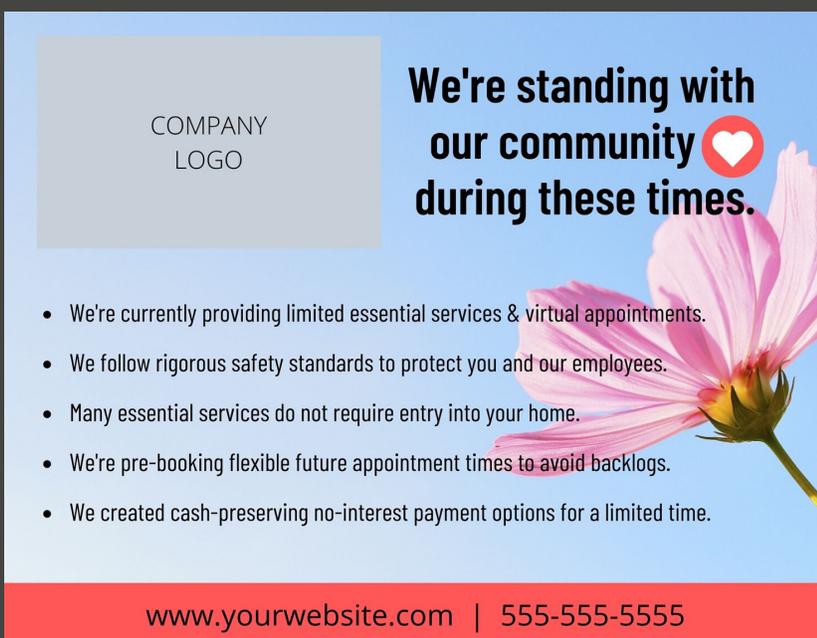
Editable Templates for Social Media (cont.)



Edit using [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) >

STRATEGY: Remember how confusing it was when your state's governor issued lockdown orders? Was your business considered "essential" or not? You may have figured it out, but never assume your customer knows what you know. Tell them!

Editable Postcard Template



Edit using [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) >

STRATEGY: Facebook is a crowded place these days, and while it is essential to be visible there, the good ol' mailbox still presents a real opportunity for your message to be seen. You can use this friendly postcard design and even order your printing inside Canva.com.

Email/Phone/Social Script Templates

Click the links below to find copyable templates for various timely and relevant marketing and communication uses.



SAMPLE SOCIAL POST: “WHAT IS ESSENTIAL NOW?”

Your customers have no idea what is essential right now, so it's up to you to educate them. Use the sample text in this document to create a post on social media, email, web site, or anywhere else you need to communicate with existing and potential customers. Don't leave something this important to chance. Tell them what you want them to know!

[Open document online >](#)



SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT: SAFETY INFORMATION

Extraordinary times require new safety protocols for your employees' safety as well as your customers. And customers want to know what precautions you are taking to keep them safe. Even if they don't ask, you should tell them during the booking call. It will help you close more appointments and provides peace of mind that prevents cancellations in the future.

[Open document online >](#)

Email/Phone/Social Script Templates (cont.)



SAMPLE EMAIL SCRIPT: PRE-APPOINTMENT FAQ

Besides preventing no-shows and cancellations, pre-appointment emails offer a great place to provide important information to customers. Never miss an opportunity to educate and prepare them for the experience they will have when you arrive. This sample script includes the safety information your customers are concerned about, even if they never ask.

Open document online >



SAMPLE EMAIL SCRIPT: LEAVE US A REVIEW

Sitting at home not working stinks. You know it, and so do your customers. But now is a perfect time to get in front of them, tell them you're thinking about them and can't wait to return to work. It's also a great time to ask them if they'd be willing to leave a review so you can restart stronger than ever! Use this email template and start racking up some new online reviews today!

Open document online >

EXTRA PRECAUTIONS + SAFETY TIPS

If you're still able to work in your area, it's your job to put your employees and your customers at ease. Here are some safety precautions you can be taking at this time to keep everyone safe and healthy. Share these on social media, your website, and on phone calls with customers, so they know what you're doing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

1 CALL AHEAD

When calling to confirm an appointment, ask if anyone in your customer's home has been sick lately or feeling unwell. If they have, let them know you'll need to push their appointment out for the safety of your team and their families.

2 TAKE TEMPS

If you have the means to do it, check the temperature of each of your techs daily, or ask them to check their own before coming into work. If anyone has a fever or is unwell, tell them not to come in.

3 SAFETY GEAR+DISTANCE

Have your team put on clean booties, gloves, and masks before entering the customer's home, and keep the recommended 6 foot distance. Instead of a handshake, a friendly wave.

4 VIRTUAL/EXTERIOR

Consider offering virtual inspections or sticking to exterior work at this time, so there's no direct interaction with customers and their homes. You may even want to offer discounts to those you've given exterior estimates to that haven't booked.

5 SANITIZE

Have your team sanitize their hands, equipment, vehicles, and commonly used items between job sites.



6 NIX CASH & CHECKS

Take payment online or over the phone or jot down/enter a card number on your iPad, so there are no cash, cards, checks, or pens being exchanged during the service.

7 CHECK THE CDC DAILY

For the latest on what you can and should be doing, check the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) or WHO (World Health Organization) on a daily basis. Always follow their recommendations and guidelines.

BONUS DOWNLOAD >>

Get the "Sanitization Technique Procedure" for a scientific approach to conducting safe in-home services.

PREP + PLAN

What You Need To Be Doing

APPLY FOR A PPP LOAN

As part of the stimulus bill, PPP loans will be made available through banks. These loans are designed to cover payroll, and as long as you use the funds to pay your team, it's a forgivable loan. So hop to it!

FIGURE OUT YOUR OPTIONS

If you have vehicle loans, mortgages on your business property or house, etc. be proactive, tell those relationships you've been affected by the virus shut down, and see what they can do for you.

TALK TO YOUR BANK

If you have an available line of credit, it may be wise to draw it out and stick it in your bank account, only to be used for mission-critical expenses.

THINK THROUGH SCENARIOS

Spend some time planning for and going over worst-case scenarios with your team. You don't want to be an alarmist or a pessimist - you want to be prepared. When you're prepared for the unknown, you and your team will have less anxiety.

OVER-COMMUNICATE

Your team may be feeling like fish out of water, especially if they're working remotely for the first time or worried about job stability. Now's the time to over-communicate expectations and realities, and to really engage and listen.

KNOW THE UNEMPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Our government has responded to this crisis by offering unemployment to people who would not traditionally qualify and raising the monthly max. Make sure your team knows what's available to them.