

## QUICK MARKETING SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS DURING EXTENDED LOCK DOWN

*By: Angel Camacho-Paulino, Guam SBDC Business Advisor*

"The phone hasn't rang today, maybe they think we're closed?"

"Our shipment hasn't come in yet, but we will let you know as soon as it arrives."

Do any of these conversations sound familiar? This is probably some of the recent questions and conversations you've had with employees, customers, and vendors via social media channels, email or phone in recent days. As small business owners, having those conversations isn't always easy.

With the extension of an additional mandatory 14-day island wide quarantine, you may encounter even higher volumes of these conversations with others in your network. However, the nature of business must go on; our community depends on it to support working families. Entrepreneurs are multi-taskers and we will continue to find creative ways to stay afloat no matter the circumstances. Earlier, we shared some tips on how to manage your finances and cash flow during difficult times. This is also a time to keep in touch with your stakeholders to maintain open and honest communication lines with them so they know you're still here. Here are some key tips business owners can work on to stay top of mind with your network:

- **Communication is the key with customers**- If your business has a Google My Business listing, now is the time to update your current information in your business profile. Current information includes hours of operation, business offerings, business description, contact numbers, and any special offerings. This information can be the key to keeping your customers up to date during this difficult time. Think of how customers are going to find you. A Google Business Listing that is outdated or incorrect could cost you a valuable lifetime customer.
- **Post timely and relevant information via Social Media** - If you haven't already created a Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter profile for your business, now is the time to get started. Information is dynamic and forever changing during this time. Building your online presence in social channels helps to keep your customers informed real-time. Be sure to choose the right social media platform that works for your business and your customers. You don't want to stretch your time too thin if you're the only person managing your accounts. Current information on your business page includes hours of operation, contact information, business offerings, business description, business location, and relevant photos of your products or services. Try to be consistent with your posts; from time of day, to the types of content you choose to focus on. Encourage your customers to provide feedback of your business or recommendations for activities or promotions they would like to see. There are simple graphic design programs available to you for minimal to no cost to give you some ideas for visually appealing ways to post your content. These tools include: Canva, Adobe Spark, Over, InShot.

- **Reach out to your network through their Inbox** – Email is the third most influential source of information for consumers and is the preferred means of communication for businesses. On average, people receive around 90 emails per day in their inbox and about 3 in 5 consumers check email on their phones. If you have established email lists, now is the time to let your network know what you're up to. You may have some customers who haven't heard from you in a while and could be in need of your products or services.

Getting in the inbox is half the battle, so remember to focus on creating compelling content that is relevant to your different customer segments. Think of creative ways to connect and grow your email lists. Maybe you could develop some special offerings for your current customers and provide incentives or rewards if they refer someone to sign up for your email list.

Above all, remember to practice proper email etiquette by being mindful of the frequency in which you are sending messages. The goal is to deliver helpful information to your network, not annoy them. Don't let your messages be caught in junk mail.

- **Update your Website** – Your website should be the hub of information about your business for your next potential customer. To do that, you need to maintain it and keep the information as current as possible. As you work to build your online presence for your business, the website should be the gateway for your network to gauge if you're the right choice for them before they make a purchase decision.

You may want to review your content in these areas. 1) Are your products or services current? 2) How can my website serve as a resource to existing and potential customers? 3) You may want to identify some frequently asked questions to guide your customer through a decision or inform them of a process or policy your business has. And most importantly, check for overall functionality of the site. Ensure that all your links are valid and working, and that your business contact information is up to date.

- **Don't be afraid to ask for help!** Guam SBDC offers FREE one-on-one counseling assistance for small businesses. We also offer different marketing trainings that can help you maintain your online presence. Furthermore, we have resources that we share with our business owners that can help you if you are not a marketing guru. We provide counseling in other areas, such as operations, accounting and finances. All you need to do is to request for counseling on our web site: [www.pacificsbdc.com](http://www.pacificsbdc.com).

**“Gift of time for you all to learn more on Marketing. Take this time for self-improvement in the areas that you are not familiar with, Get it Done!”**