



# Stay social during COVID-19

## Using Social Media

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has presented challenging and unprecedented times to all. You, your clients and your business will be facing major personal and professional disruption; it's important to consider your position and how you can be a valuable contributor to the conversation. Rather than battenning down the hatches, now is the time to open up more lines of communication; social media and digital marketing (managed well) could be the best way of maintaining quality contact – from a distance.

The following are a few simple to follow 'golden rules' on how best to use social media and marketing during these difficult times.



# Do's

## 1 Stay up-to-date with this ever-changing situation

There is no single approach that will work for every single company. As we've seen, things are changing rapidly which means there's no single playbook to deal with this.

People may turn to you in times of uncertainty for reassurance and support; by keeping an eye on developments, you can ensure that your content and messaging is relevant and appropriate.

## 2 Show empathy

With people having to self-isolate and businesses (and jobs) being put under pressure, it's important to show empathy throughout your social activity.

Any messaging on social media at this time should be empathetic, engaging or educational. You should consider what customers need to hear from your business. Your messaging must be essential and useful.

We've all seen humorous memes relating to loo roll shortages etc. Resist the urge to share 'funny' content, many of your clients will be experiencing major disruption and this kind of content will not reflect well on your business!

Use these difficult times to share your story and experiences to make your content authentic and relevant.

You have the opportunity to provide a small sense of normality in unusual times.

## 3 Maintain a consistent brand identity

During this difficult time, it is all about relevance. You have to decide which products and messaging are relevant to your audience at this time.

Due to the severity of the situation we have to be very cautious about the ways we are seen to be selling, now is a time to be showing support – any overt product pushing should probably wait.

Stay focused on the consistent brand identity you've worked so hard to create and your loyal customers will continue to use your services.

## 4 Engage with your audience

Once you've assessed the landscape and listened to the issues and fears your audience is experiencing, you can effectively determine how best to engage your customers and how you can bring value to them through social media

And remember, while we may be social distancing, humans crave connection. Engaging and creating that connection with your customers can illustrate the personality and compassion of your business/brand.

## 5 Focus on audience expansion

This is a great time to focus on audience expansion. People are actively seeking information, so you need to find a way to provide them with that, through value-added content.

This means giving more away to your audience for free, acting as a thought leader, making helpful suggestions and building a relationship that they'll remember when we all return to some sense of normality.



# Dont's

## 1 Ignore it

Your messaging should also acknowledge the pandemic, not ignore it.

While you may think some positive content is good to distract people, it is front of mind for everyone at this time, so ensure your communications reflect this. You can monitor as things develop and adjust your messaging accordingly.

## 2 Stop your marketing

It's important to maintain your presence on social media during these uncertain times. Your customers will want to know about your brand as the situation develops; your visibility within your industry provides some much needed consistency.

Instead of ceasing your marketing efforts, tweak them to reflect the current situation and bring more value than ever to your customers to engage them and build brand recognition and loyalty.

## 3 Focus on revenue

It may be tempting to find new ways to stimulate your own business and the economy, but you have to ask yourself whether it is appropriate during this time.

Instead, play the long-term game and determine whether there is an organic way for you to add value to your audience and educate them on something relevant.

It goes without saying, a global crisis is not a marketing opportunity to capitalise on. There may be short-term gains to be made, but the long-term damage to your brand could be immeasurable!

## 4 Neglect your visuals

Whilst what you say (your words, your copy) is of high importance, your visuals are equally significant for your messaging and brand identity.

Professional imagery of crowds, people out enjoying themselves, or sporting events may seem off kilter in a world where most people are in self-isolation, or dealing with the cancellation of their favourite events.

So be careful with the images you use during this time and think about how any visual reflects your brand.

## 5 Market fear

Brands should be careful not to market to the fear and anxiety people are experiencing.

This is a delicate time, it is your responsibility to support your clients with advice and guidance, do not pin your marketing efforts on the fear of the situation.

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