



Hibu Small Business Guide:

Your Crisis Communication Checklists

The key steps you should be taking now to keep in touch with your customers and best position your business to weather the storm.

No matter where you are in the country — Northeast, West Coast, the heartland — the current crisis is having an impact on your small business.

Sure, everyone's situation is different depending on your location, on the type of business you operate, and the local governmental safeguards in place in your area — but one thing that all small businesses absolutely must be doing now is staying in touch with your customers.

This short guide includes three short checklists that walk you through the steps you need to take to keep the lines of communication open, to keep your communications up to date, and to keep your business in front of your customers even if your business is severely impacted.

Let's get started...

First order of business is to communicate your status...

There's nothing more frustrating to a consumer than to visit your website or Facebook Page and there are no updates — nothing that indicates whether you're open or not, or how you're serving customers — when they know nothing is normal. Often, they just assume you've gone AWOL — and then you've lost that consumer's confidence and loyalty, not to mention a chance to do some business. Getting that customer back when things return to normal is going to be tough.

You need to help your customers and your community stay up to date on any changes to your business. **Here are three steps you should take:**



Adding a notice on your Website

- ✓ Are you still open?
- ✓ Have you changed how you're conducting business?

For example — *restaurants moving to takeout/delivery, physicians moving to online consultations, contractors focusing only on emergency repairs, etc.*

- ✓ What's changed, and what are you doing to keep your customers (and employees) safe and healthy?



Adding the same notice on your Facebook Page

- ✓ You can do this in the form of a “pinned post” on your Facebook Page. That means it always stays at the top of your timeline, so new visitors to your Page will see it
- ✓ If you don't know how... [Facebook has a great website that walks you through it](#)



Updating your Google My Business Page

- ✓ Your Google My Business Page is the information that shows up on Google when someone searches for your business by name
- ✓ Update your hours — if they have changed
- ✓ Update your “Business Description,” again to reflect anything that's changed in how you're operating

Next, you need to keep the communication going...

Once you have those basics covered, you should consider stepping up your direct communications with customers and prospects. **Here are four steps you can take to keep communicating**, to maintain that connection with your customers, and to best position your business for the post-crisis future.



It's time to supercharge social media

- ✓ Consider more frequent posts on social media — Facebook, Instagram, your GMB Page
- ✓ Let your customers know how you're doing, that you're thinking of them and their families and their safety
- ✓ Use frequent posts to continually update any changes to your business



It's not just business, it's personal

- ✓ Let people know that you're still around, and how you're faring — personalize your experience to keep or even strengthen the connection you have with your customers



Remember that social is two-way communication

- ✓ If people are posting about your business, try to be as responsive as you can be — answer questions quickly, respond to comments with updates and positive reinforcement
- ✓ Be aware that Google has temporarily suspended adding and replying to reviews



Add new tools to your customer-communication toolkit

- ✓ Now is the time to expand your social media — for example, if you're only using Facebook, branch out and use Instagram, too
- ✓ If you haven't already, consider activating Messenger on your Facebook Page as another way for consumers to reach you 1:1

All of these things will take some time — especially the ongoing efforts to keep up regular communication. But it's an investment that will pay off later. People remember those local businesses that were “present” during situations like this, that communicated well, and that stayed engaged with their local community.

Last but not least, keep marketing your business...

Beyond these steps, you should also think about your marketing overall. A lot of businesses make the mistake of pulling back and going underground when there's a crisis — they simply expect (hope) that their customers will still be there when they return. **Here are a few reasons why this can be a mistake — and what you should be doing:**

Consider re-allocating your investment to do more awareness-focused advertising

It's a misconception that consumers who are staying home, sheltering or practicing social distancing aren't looking at ads. In fact, it's just the opposite — people right now are spending more time than ever online — on social media, using apps, etc. They may not be making big discretionary purchases — but they are absolutely doing research, getting ideas, and planning for the future.

This isn't a time to be hiding. But, if your marketing has been heavily focused on lead generation and driving immediate demand, you might want to think about focusing your investment to more brand-awareness advertising. That will keep you in front of your customers and put you in a good position as we, inevitably, get back to more normal life in the coming weeks or months.

Refocus your advertising on the parts of your business still in business

Too many small businesses will make the hasty decision to pull their ads... leaving their competitors alone online. Instead of halting your advertising, you should try to refocus it on those parts of your business that are still "in business" like emergency services or repair work, or where you've been able to pivot and provide your services in a different way. If you are able to, and haven't already, shift your business model — like those

restaurants moving to takeout, companies moving to online services (from video consultations to online fitness classes) you'll want to let the world know. Posting about it on social is great, but will have limited reach and exposure. People are out there looking for businesses that can and will meet their needs, in whatever form — make sure they find you (not your competition).

Be the flexible, accommodating business still doing business

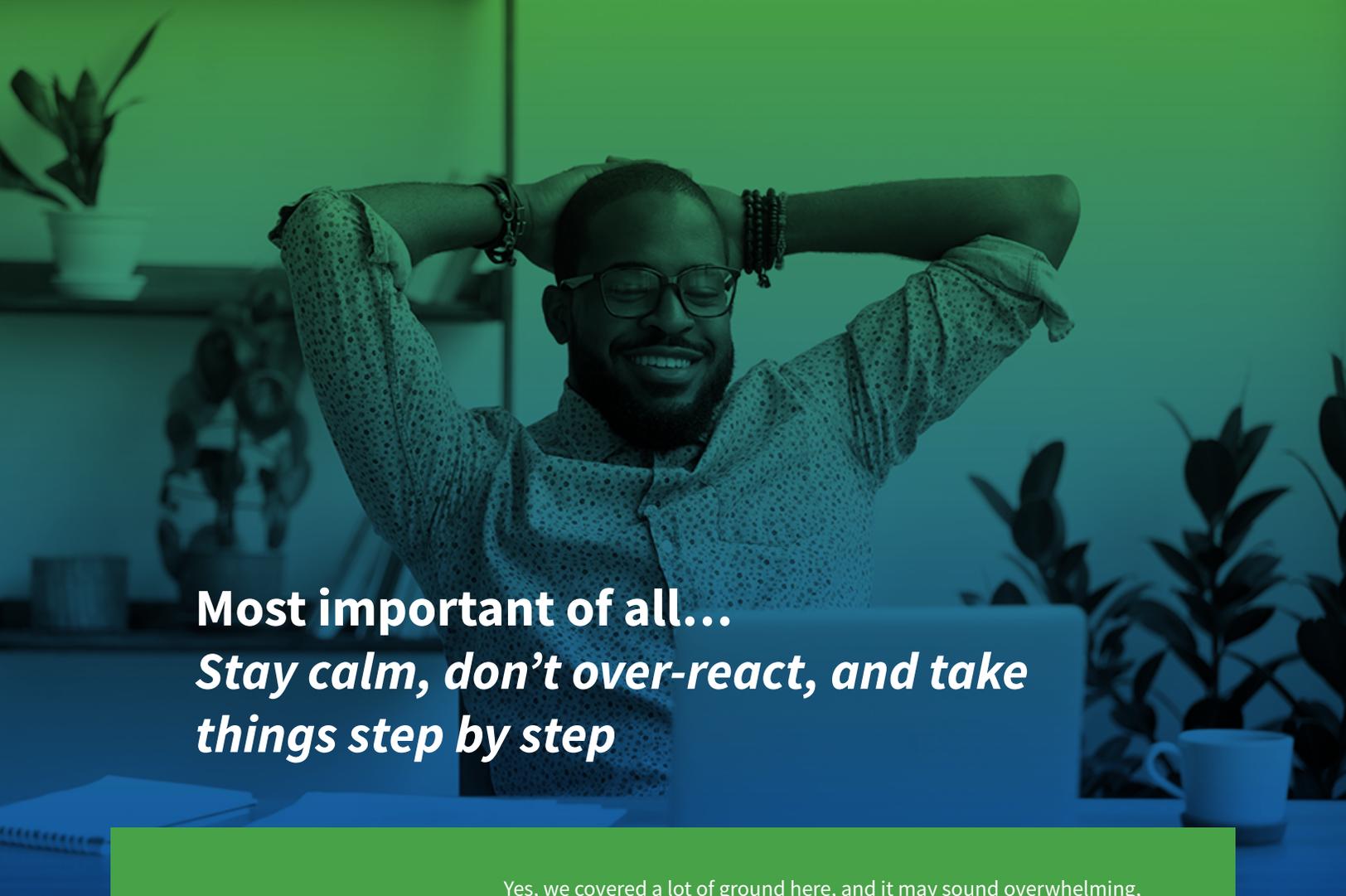
As we said before about continuing to communicate, people will remember those businesses that were flexible and creative during tough times — those businesses that kept servicing their clients in the face of

challenges. If you are one of those businesses, you want to make sure people know it and are able to take advantage of it. Get the word out.

Advertising now also makes sense looking at the dollars and cents

Lastly, costs, in some cases, are actually down. With consumers spending more time online, there's more ad inventory to be had. And, as some advertisers do decide

to back off or stop completely, that can also reduce costs. So, it's quite possible that your ad \$\$ will go farther today — getting you more exposure and more action than before.



Most important of all...
Stay calm, don't over-react, and take things step by step

Yes, we covered a lot of ground here, and it may sound overwhelming, but remember... the most important thing right now is to stay calm and don't over-react — take things one step at a time. And we can help you with lots of it.

If you already work with an online marketing agency, like Hibu, it's likely they can help you with a lot of what we've outlined here. If you're a Hibu client, we can definitely help. We're here to help you get through this any way we can. Our teams at Hibu are actively working right now with hundreds, if not thousands, of local businesses that are taking some or all of these actions. You don't have to do it all on your own.

If you do decide to tackle it yourself, just remember... put yourself in your customers' shoes and think about how you would want a trusted and favorite local business to act — and then do your best to meet their expectations and deliver what your customers want.

We're here to help you... and we've made it easy to help yourself



Here's a quick list of all the things Hibu can help you with right now...

All of us at Hibu are committed to providing outstanding support for you and your business throughout these extraordinary circumstances.

Don't hesitate to **reach out to your individual Hibu Sales Rep, call our central support number — 877-237-6120 — or chat with us at Hibu.com** — or, as always, there are [DIY tools](#) available to help you make updates on your own...



- **[Update your website to keep customers informed](#)** — we suggest you update your business description with anything you're changing at this time — any precautions you're taking, extra services you're offering, and whether customers can expect delays. (If you've connected your Hibu account to your Google and Facebook pages, your information will update automatically there, and across our Hibu Listings Network.)



- **[Update your hours of operation if they're changing.](#)**
- **Use social media to keep your customers up to date** on your services, hours of operation, etc. If you manage your Facebook Page and GMB Page yourself, [we've provided instructions](#) for you to make changes on your own.

Getting the support you need

Remember... we're here for you today and we'll be here after we're all safely through these tough times, to continue to help you grow your business.

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