

Strategies to Help Your Business in the Wake of Social Distancing and Government Shut-down

The country recommended people stay in their homes; airlines are grounding flights; the state has implemented shutdowns on schools and entire industries. Your customers are being told to only leave for necessities; your employees are working from home, and you're looking around an expanse of open space in what used to be a bustling business. What do you do when you can no longer function as the business you've always been? Use this time to work on your business, not in it.

- **Professional Development** – Learn more about your industry, growing a business and how to lead. You know that feeling you have when you come back from a really good professional training? Where you are motivated and can't wait to implement the new things you just learned. You can still get that feeling; there is so much information to glean from books, podcasts or seminars.
- Books on Leadership, Communication, Marketing, Entrepreneurship
- [16 Best Business Books in 2020](#)
- [Top 15 Business Books for Entrepreneurs](#)
- Podcasts
- [20 of the Best Leadership Podcasts](#)
- Virtual Training from the Library or check your favorite associations for virtual alternatives
- [Gale Courses](#)
- [Lynda.com](#)
- **Update your skillset** – Have you always wanted to learn photography to better market your products? Or maybe you need help organizing your information. Or you've always wanted to perfect your bread making. Maybe you need a refresher in Quickbooks or to learn how to set up and update your website so you don't have to hire it out. Heck, maybe you've wanted to pick back up the guitar. You've got time on your hands, it's the perfect excuse to learn a new skill
- [Youtube](#)
- [Skillshare](#)
- **Implement Systems** – Systems can be great for your business. They help you to respond faster, not have to duplicate processing over and over, batch tasks and can help you run more efficiently.
 - Set up e-mail autoresponders
 - Create checklists for repetitive tasks
 - Organize your physical and digital files
 - Update your customer databases
 - Set up e-mail lists and clean up your contacts
 - Clean out your inbox
 - Set up online recurring payments
- [How to Create Systems that Will Automate and Streamline Your Business](#)

- [Entrepreneurs Scheduling Their Days for Ultimate Success](#)
- **Tackle that project** you've been avoiding. We all have projects that we have been procrastinating about that we mean to do. They may seem to be too much time, energy or they will be too disruptive to business. Well, now that you're out of excuses, it might be the perfect time to do it. Think of how good you'll feel when it's done. And it could be a nice distraction.
- Update your website
- Launch an e-commerce site
- Reorganize your office or store layout
- Upgrade computer systems
- **Review resources** – Check out what resources may be available to you. Maybe there are grants or opportunities available to you. We've compiled a list of business resources, grants, articles and information for you. Look it over and see what might work for you. Update the Chamber with your plans and concerns. Help us know where you're struggling and what assistance you need. We can advocate for you and your business and point you to resources or just serve as a sounding board. Attend virtual training and networking events offered.
- **Find a Mentor** – It's nice to get the perspective of someone who's been there. And while you'll probably be bereft of finding someone who's gone through this exactly; you can certainly find someone who has weathered storms before.
- [SCORE Mentors](#)
- **Get a Different Perspective** – Look at your company as if it was someone else's. What advice would you give them? How does your customer see your business? What suggestions might they have for you? If you were to start all over; would you do anything differently? Are there things that you are doing that don't provide value? Are their things that could be added that would create value?
- **Speak up** – Keep communications with your customers and supporters and other businesses.
- Let your customers know how they can support you during this time. Continue to post to your social media and send out e-newsletters. They want to hear from you.
- Communicate with other businesses. Check-in with your peer group. See what other people are doing, communicate and collaborate. Network and connect through phone, e-mail or online business groups and virtual meetups. Don't let the isolation bear down on you. It's nice to reconnect and realize that other businesses are facing the same challenges you are. Use telecommunication resources like [Zoom](#), [Facetime](#), [GoogleHangouts](#) e or even just call them on the phone.
- **Collaborate and Share Resources** – Look for collaborations. Are there ways you can partner with other businesses and pool resources? Could you barter services during this time? Maybe you have

a knack for accounting or a flair for design that another business may be lacking but they could provide you with marketing or technical support.

- **Get creative** – Are there other ways that you can provide value to your customers? Can you offer services or inventory in a different way? Could you offer online training or sales, virtual updates, delivery options, meetups or classes? Now is the time to step out and try something different. You've got nothing to lose and could potentially have a lot to gain.
- **Support Others** – What will you have wished that you had done with this time looking back? Are there opportunities that you can support or offer your time to organizing? Everyone is going to be feeling the effects of this. Reach out to your local nonprofit or check-in with at-risk populations in your community if you have something to offer. At the very least use your platform to share what others are doing.
- **Breathe** – Things are tough now, but nothing is permanent. Take a step back sometimes. It can be overwhelming and scary, so much uncertainty. Take some time away from the business. Connect with family and friends. Reconnect with nature. Meditate. Get some rest. Take care of yourself and your body. Know that you are doing everything you can and allow that somethings that are outside your control.

Most importantly, know that you are not alone; everyone is feeling uncertain. No one knows what the future holds. Prepare as much as you can so that when it does bounce back; you'll be ready, stronger than ever.