NC MAIN STREET & RURAL PLANNING CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Promotion Tech Sheet

Marketing Downtown from 6ft Away

Marketing during COVID-19

With the COVID-19 pandemic many of our downtown districts are witnessing business closures. Foot traffic is at an all-time low with so many "stay-at-home" orders in place. Downtown merchants need marketing now more than ever, During this time of uncertainty for downtown staff, community leaders and merchants must think of innovative ways to reach the citizens of the community where they are. The use of technology will be extremely beneficial to your small businesses. Creating a marketing plan for the next 18 months will provide guidance during this pandemic and will support a transition back to our normal routines.

Staying Connected

North Carolina is under a statewide "stay at home" order. Thus, people are home and unable to physically visit your downtown. We do, however, have full access to televisions, mobile phones, computers and tablets. Now is the time to make sure your downtown and your small businesses have an online presence.

How to connect online:

- **Social Media**
  (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)
- **Downtown Website**
  Make sure to keep your website up to date. Provide COVID-19 closures and operation hour changes. Provide links to social media on your site. Google offers free website speed testing at www.GYOB.com. You can also update Google business information and create a free landing page website for downtown businesses without websites.
- **App Visibility**
  Make sure downtown businesses are on Yelp.
- **Email Blasts**
  Use email marketing campaigns to communicate with your subscribers. Inform them of changes and news.
- **Promote Health and Information**
  Be sure that you have included a link to the NC Department of Health and Human Services website on your website to provide additional information.

Encourage Innovation

Businesses can still connect with their customers. Daily communication on social media platforms, video blogs, and live videos keeps the community engaged. Utilize some of these tools to keep connection strong :

- *Provide status updates (i.e., business updates and changes).*
- *Share articles and crucial community information .*
- *Share information on resources available to your customers during this pandemic.*
- *Share pictures and videos of and about your business, products or services.*
- *Use the "LIVE" feature on social media to communicate in real time with customers.*

Online Sales

Do you have a retail business suffering from lack of sales? *Suggest that they offer products for sale online. Have them utilize online marketplaces to continue sales (e.g., Facebook, Letgo, OfferUp). Encourage retail businesses with existing websites add E-Commerce to their site and display their inventory online.*

Virtual Tours & Virtual Engagements

Do you have business that has great visual experience to the in-store customer? Or a captivating and engaged owner? *Suggest that they get online!*

A **virtual tour** *is a simulation of an existing location. It is usually composed of a sequence of videos or still images, but it can also use other multimedia elements such as sound effects, music, narration and text. Virtual tours are distinct from live television and they are used to encourage tele-tourism.*

Virtual tours can be made using as traditional videos on platforms such as Vimeo and Youtube. Virtual tours can also be created using new Live features on Instagram and Facebook. Facebook Live can be saved to your timeline and viewed at anytime. Instagram Live will delete after the live is completed.

Virtual engagements *can range from classes, lectures, public meetings and conferences. These engagements can happen on social media platforms, Google Hangouts, Microsoft teams, or other virtual meeting platforms.*

Electronic payments can be set up using Paypal, Cashapp or other trusted payment apps for payment or donation for these virtual events so that the business can receive profit during this time.

NC MAIN STREET & RURAL PLANNING CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Promotion Tech Sheet

Marketing Downtown from 6ft Away.

Restaurants and Farmers Markets

- *Encourage restaurants to offer carry-out, curbside and delivery options. As a precaution, curbside delivery is a safe way to keep customers from having to exit their cars when picking up their orders.*
- *Offer daily specials. This information can be posted every day on social media platforms.*
- *Restaurants who do not normally offer delivery can offer delivery and give servers the chance to continue to work doing deliveries. (**Check insurance and current driving status)*
- *Farmers Markets will be hit hard during this time. Encourage downtown Farmers Markets to create bulk packages or gift baskets with a variety of their products to continue sales. This strategy could be used for butchers, bakeries, coffee shops and other retail shops as well. Bundling products is a strategic way to continue sales during this pandemic. Offer delivery or curbside pick up of these packages.*

Marketing with Radio and Television

Traditional methods of marketing such as radio and television broadcasting are a great way to reach your community during this time.

- *Create a commercial for your downtown businesses.*
- *Create a Public Service Announcement for radio to inform the community on how to stay connected and learn of changes in downtown.*
- *Schedule radio and television interviews to answer the communities questions and inform the community of what's going on in your downtown.*
- *Send PSAs from downtown businesses as well as PSAs from the downtown office. Local television stations that offer community announcements are free.*

Assistance Creating your Marketing Plan?

If you need assistance creating your marketing plan, do not hesitate to contact the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center by emailing Tierra Norwood at tierra.norwood@nccommerce.com

Drive-Thru Services

Many nonprofits and other civic organizations will be hosting giveaways and free food distributions. Suggest that these services be done using a "drive-thru" method. Instead of requiring patrons to come in and pick-up supplies and food, offer drive up services and bring the items directly to the persons car. This precaution will limit person to person contact. Be sure all volunteers that load items are wearing gloves and following all other necessary safety precautions when dealing with the public.

Increase Sales by offering free gifts

As businesses continue to try and reach customers, have them consider offering free COVID-19 essentials as gifts for purchases. This could include a free roll of tissue, free hand soap, free hand sanitizer or a free pair of gloves with purchases.

An Outer Banks distillery is making and giving away free bottles of hand sanitizer.

PILOTONLINE.COM

The Helpers: Outer Banks Distilling making, giving away free 150-proof hand sanitizer

Marketing Downtown from 6ft Away

Examples of Using Technology to stay connected:

Join us Thursdays from 5 until 6 pm (EST) on Facebook Live as we discuss how our communities are adapting to the ever-changing landscape caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences
35 mins ·

DIGITAL ART EXHIBIT: Explore Anne Willson's "Markings of Wildness" solo exhibition from your home! This beautiful woven sculpture and contemporary basket exhibition is sure to amaze. We look forward to providing more online exhibitions soon! Stay safe and be kind.

TBC West: Taproom & Tacos
2 hrs ·

You asked.
We delivered:
Quarts of Pimento Cheese with a bag of chips are now available for pick up for $18.
Pairs well with Sexy Canoe or Pinot Grigio or Rose' or I don't know, whatever you're drinking. All 6 packs are $10 and bottles of wine are $12.

Also, we've got:

Tomato Soup by the quart with Take and Make grilled cheese kits featuring @alimentairebakery bread!

1 quart of soup, 2 grilled cheese kits: $22 or 2 quarts of soup, 4 grilled cheese kits for $34

And of course, we're still taking orders for our Beef Enchilada Casserole and our King Ranch Casseroles and our Family Style Portico Salads.

As always, please text your orders to 214-600-9400!

PS: Y'all, I gotta confess to you that this business of coming in early and making take out meals only to try and stage a photo op for social media is taking me down. You guys are about to see my face with food next to it every. daggum. day for this entire quarantine.

#rockymountmills #tarborobrewingcompany #tbcwest #feedfeed #takeandmake

Downtown Aberdeen
7 hrs ·

318 Views

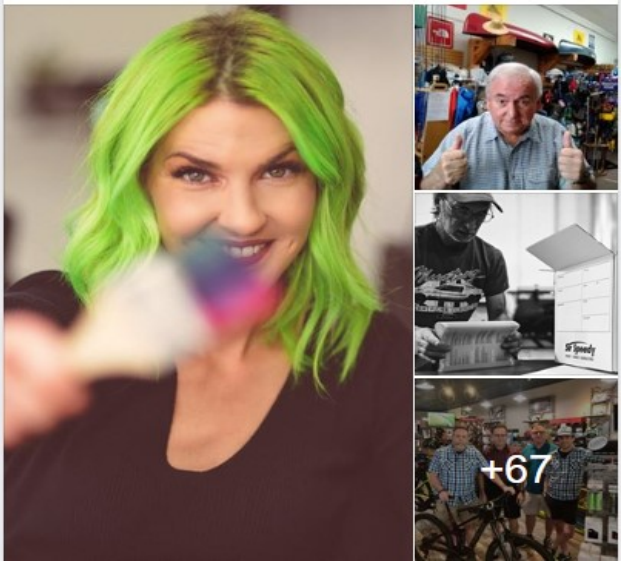
1350
23 hrs ·

✓ Liked

Make shopping from your chair easy. Let us wrap up a gift and have ready for pick up or we can ship it for you. #giftideas #tshirts #embroidery #dtgprinting #birthdays #coolers #thirteenstripesand50stars #veteranowned

Downtown Statesville
Yesterday at 3:58 PM ·

Over the past week, we have been collecting and featuring the faces of the business owners and the teams behind the businesses that make up our Main Street Community in this album called "We are Downtown Statesville!"

Now we need YOU, our community. Please take a moment to visit the album, click on the link for the business associated with each photo to LIKE & FOLLOW their page. You'd be surprised what this can do to support our business community.

#SVLTogether #SVLNeighbo... See More