

Quick Covid response guide for business



With emergency measures, brick-and-mortar businesses are reeling. Here are a few steps if you're trying to stay open through the COVID pandemic :

1) Even if you're a mom-and-pop neighborhood business, make sure you have a website, and even more importantly, that it's UPDATED. List your new business hours, announce that you're open (and if you're open for delivery/takeout only, mention it too).

2) Reach out to your customers through a social account, such as your Facebook page or Instagram as well. Create a Facebook group if you haven't yet, and update regularly, even if it's just a snapshot of you working, or how you and your business cope with the quarantine. Create a space for your customers to

share their experiences and coping methods. People are feeling isolated, and are reaching out for contact. Keep it positive! Some of the local businesses I follow have created virtual open mic or comedy shows – streaming live on Youtube from Zoom, or weekly cooking shows. Take this time to show off your skills, or bring a weekly dose of support to your customer's days.

3) Apply for a SBA Payroll Forgiveness loan ASAP! You can apply through your bank or another lender, but do it fast – loans are getting snapped up and the smallest businesses might be last in line if you don't act FAST. Remember to prepare your payroll info for 2019 and 2018, and include the contractors in the amount. You can find more details on this option and other government relief programs here: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options>

4) Educate yourself on using online videoconferencing platforms. Zoom is the most popular one, and easy to work with. (Don't know where to start? We can help.) Employee virtual meetings help keep everyone on the same page and help maintain the team spirit, and this is a great way to organize family Zoom get-togethers in these trying times too! A basic Zoom account is free for currently up to 100 attendees. Besides the desktop app, there's also Zoom for phones, so no one is excluded.