

MARKETING FOR YOUR REOPENING

A CHECKLIST OF BEST
PRACTICES TO KEEP IN MIND
FOR COVID-19 REOPENINGS



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SOCIAL MEDIA

Update your hours on Facebook, and make a post announcing your new hours, what you've offering & how people can interact with your business.

The more safety information you can share, the safer people will feel. Let your customers know how using your business will be different now (takeout only, curbside pickup, etc.) Be overly specific -- this is not a time to make your customers wonder, wait, or come in to your store unnecessarily. Consider boosting your reopening post for \$10-20 to your customers' geographic area to reach more eyes.

Don't forget about Facebook groups.

If you're a restaurant in the Eastern Sierra, take advantage of the Mammoth and Bishop restaurants open Facebook group to promote your restaurant/specials. If you're a member of another relevant Facebook group, look for non-spammy ways to promote your reopening there. Check the rules of each page for best practices.

Always use your brand voice.

If you're a lighthearted, fun brand, find a way to create content around COVID-19 that feels authentic -- you can stay true to your voice while addressing the seriousness of the situation and your response to it. Don't feel like you need to write/talk like the CDC. More than ever, your customers are craving the human side of your business, and they're more likely to support you if you show them your humanity.

Consider increasing your social media presence right now.

If you're reopening in a limited capacity and have some staff time to spare, consider assigning social media management to one of your employees. You can train them yourself, or you can use the SBDC's consulting program to connect them with a free marketing consultant. It helps to have a marketing strategy/plan in place, which you can also work on with an SBDC consultant for free.

Think about incentives for people who help expand your reach.

Offer a discount to customers who share about your business on social media, or create an online loyalty program to encourage repeat business.

Lift up other businesses.

A rising tide lifts all boats. Show that community is important to you by sharing posts from other businesses that are doing amazing things, whether that's donating to worthy causes, celebrating their staff or offering specials/discounts.

WEBSITE

Leave any COVID-19 specific pages and URLs live on your website.

Don't discard any pages or URLs. Feel free to remove COVID-19 content from your home page and menus when the time comes, but don't delete the pages. You never know how long an old link will circulate. If you need to make a change, add a URL redirect.

Don't have a website? Make one.

More now than ever, people will be researching your business online. They'll want to know how they can safely be a customer of yours. Up-to-date information is key. If you don't have money for a web designer, you can easily and cheaply set up a website through Squarespace, Wix or Shopify. Or you can hire an SBDC consultant to teach and guide you through the process.

Post new operating info (hours, procedures, etc.) clearly on your home page. Update them as they change.

Don't make people go digging around your site to find out how to patronize your business. Share as much information about your safety procedures, new offerings, new systems, etc. on your website as possible. And be sure what you're saying on your website is what's happening in your store -- if people arrive at your business and find many people inside when you promised just a few, it won't inspire confidence.

EMAIL MARKETING

Share relevant local news sources.

You can't (and shouldn't) provide all the info. If you have reliable local news sources you support, share those in emails. Especially if you're a tourist-facing business, sending links to Mono County's coronavirus page, Visit Mammoth, reporting by Monica Prella, etc. can help visitors get a better idea of what's going on here.

Get creative with promotions.

Don't have a birthday program in place yet? Consider offering something for free to people on their birthdays. Grow your email newsletter list by offering (via social media or in-store) a discount or free product to people who sign up.

Let your loyal customers know how they can support you, even if they're far away.

As we move toward reopening, not everyone will feel safe traveling. Be sure you have a way for distant customers to support you -- think gift cards or crowdfunding. If you've been considering setting up an online shop, now is the perfect time to launch.

OTHER

If you **changed your hours** on VisitMammoth.com, MammothLakesChamber.org, or review sites like Yelp, TripAdvisor or Google My Business, be sure to update all of those.

Be sure your **phones & email inbox are staffed** to answer questions that come in. The more thorough your website and social media are, the fewer questions you'll receive.

Be sure you're following all the **local guidelines** on safe business operations during COVID-19, and always convey these clearly to your employees.

If you have extra time, work on nailing down your **brand/business story**. Getting a marketing plan or marketing strategy ironed out is a worthwhile use of a few hours.

If you run any **newspaper ads**, radio ads or other ads via traditional media, make sure you notify customers of your reopening through those platforms too.

Marketing is just a tiny piece of the reopening process. There are dozens of things to think about in this crazy time, but hopefully this list helps make the marketing side of things a bit more straightforward. Everything in this list can be applied to non-COVID-19 times too.

If you need additional marketing assistance, I offer free & paid consulting and done-for-you marketing services for small businesses in Mammoth Lakes & beyond. You can reach me at hello@jessicarskennedy.com.



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