
SMALL BUSINESS TIPS & RESOURCES

TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL ECONOMY

#SupportLocalSafely | #NCDowntownStrong | #NCSmallBizStrong

Note to Users: The references to companies mentioned herein are not intended as endorsements of services by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. However, now, more than ever, is the time to share best practices and borrow from one another to provide resources for our communities.

“Small businesses are more than just job providers; they are pillars of our communities.”

~ North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper



Tips for Small Businesses

Make Sure That Your Business Is Safe:

- Follow the [NC Department of Health and Human Services guidelines](#).
- Follow the [Governor's Executive Orders](#). **NEW Executive Orders Added**
 - Statewide Stay at Home Order went into effect on 3/30/2020 at 5:00 p.m.
- Text 898211 and write COVIDNC to receive Coronavirus text alerts.
- Food banks have an urgent need for donations. Get or give food through a food bank near you. www.feedthecarolinas.org

Be A Leader:

- Tap into Federal, State and Private resources for assistance and share with your neighboring businesses. See the [NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center's Webpage for COVID-19 Resources](#)
- Research business interruption insurance and apply if you qualify.
- Reach out to your Main Street Organization, Chamber of Commerce, and/or Town/City Government for technical assistance, resources, and information.
- Find ways to help neighboring business owners connect and build relationships.
 - *Example: Ask community leaders (business, government, education, religious, neighborhood, etc.) who are already “connectors” to help. Have each contact five business owners, for example, and talk about how they can get to know each other. Business owners may learn that the product or service or helping hand they need is just down the street. They may also find businesses that are willing to trade goods and services or delay, or even waive, payment for them.*

Source: [Hitting the Pause Button on the Economy: Fund Small Business Relief of COVID-19 Now](#)

- Work with neighboring businesses and community leaders to brainstorm new forms of revenue.
 - Example: Work with small business owners to help them identify new needs being generated by COVID-19. Are there products or services that are and could be in demand that existing businesses could provide, at least in the short-term? Ask business owners to participate in brainstorming sessions with five other businesses, for example, to discuss potential business opportunities.

Source: [Hitting the Pause Button on the Economy: Fund Small Business Relief of COVID-19 Now](#)

- Use this time to take some additional online business courses to come back even stronger when you reopen. Encourage a neighboring business to take the courses with you.
- NEW 4/21/20 – Look for ways to add [Small Scale Manufacturing](#) to your business to increase and expand revenue.
- NEW 4/21/20 – [Read Articles](#) to help grow your business during this difficult time.
- NEW 4/21/20 – [Pivot your business plan](#) to provide much needed COVID-19 products.
- NEW 4/21/20 – Research Opportunities to add [Military Contracts](#) to your business model.
- NEW 4/21/20 – Plan for recovery. Develop opportunities to cross promote personal service businesses, i.e. hair & nail salons, spas, gyms etc., with retail and restaurant businesses that share common customers.
- NEW 4/21/20 – Develop creative, innovative [marketing and promotion opportunities](#).
- If you are a property owner, try to offer free or reduced rent for business tenants for a specified period (or defer it). Business retention is a better long-term economic development strategy than business recruitment.

Increase Your Online Presence:

- Tell people if your business is open. Post its status, plans, and hours prominently on your website, social media, in an email newsletter, etc. Also update your [Google My Business](#) profile. If you need assistance, contact your Main Street Organization, Chamber of Commerce, Town/City Government, or a local technology business for help.
- Share the business's commitment to protecting the health and safety of customers, staff, etc., and steps it is taking to do so.
- Promote existing and new product offerings, services and experiences that are available now or will be in the future (e.g. offer bundles items, such as books, puzzles, art supplies, etc., that could keep homebound families busy).
- Develop online shopping list services. For example, many grocery stores offer grocery pickup or delivery to customers who submit shopping lists online.
- Advertise discounts and sales for online orders.

- Sell gift cards for future use.
- Cross promote your goods and services with other businesses to increase revenue for more than one business.
- Share web and social media posts from local businesses through your social media outlets.
- Promote locally sourced products and local supply chains on web and social media platforms.
- Offer a Frequent Buyer Discount Program for 3 purchases per week.

Offer Virtual Services:

- Use technology (e.g. FaceTime, Skype, Facebook Live, and others). If you need assistance, contact your Main Street Organization, Chamber of Commerce, Town/City Government, or a local technology business for help.
- Have live, face to face, interactions/events with customers for buying/selling, responding to inquiries, conducting meetings, etc. (e.g. personal shopper service).
- Livestream educational programs, fitness training, music and art lessons, gallery tours, cooking classes, and more.
- Provide virtual social activities/interactions with and between customers (e.g. a brewery offering a virtual version of its trivia nights or a salon previewing new trends, styles, and techniques, etc.).
- Conduct telemedicine, counseling, and other appointments/consultations.

Increase Communication:

- Write stories about your business to build a personal connection between your business and your community.
- Keep your Business Top of Mind by dressing up your windows.

Offer Delivery, Pickup, and Subscription Services:

Enhance or establish services to:

- Allow for telephone, online, text, etc., ordering and (curbside, back door, or other location) pickup or delivery of products such as groceries, pet supplies, meals, etc.
- Partner with local delivery services or use those offered by larger businesses such as Door Dash, Grub Hub, Uber Eats, etc.
- Offer free shipping for retail items as a means of increasing online sales.
- Become a personal shopper and offer to do the shopping for your customers.
- Offer subscriptions for customers to order and have products such as meals, produce, fresh-roasted coffee, etc., delivered according to a schedule (e.g. "subscribe and save" discounts; coffee of the month; etc.).

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