

THE MILTON SCENE

Marketing your Small Business During a Pandemic

Top Tips & Workbook



Marketing your small business can be difficult enough during those "normal" times we are all longing for.

Marketing during a pandemic adds a new layer of confusion. I've heard from a lot of local businesses who are trying to figure out what they can do to stay afloat. These conversations are not easy; sometimes they're heartbreaking.

Here are some tips to help market your business during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Cater to remote workers and learners.

A huge portion of the population is working from home or learning from home, or some combination of both. How can you cater to these people?

For example, a restaurant might offer daily lunch deliveries which you sign up for a week in advance. A local auto repair shop might offer to pick your car up and drop it off for maintenance or repairs during the work day.

A local crafter might deliver handmade masks, or wrapped birthday gifts.

Anything that makes a parent of a school age child's experience, in particular, easier, is a win for your business.

What steps can you take to cater to remote workers and learners?

2. Talk about the precautions you are taking in your business in order for customers to feel safe.

People's comfort level with being out and about in businesses varies greatly.

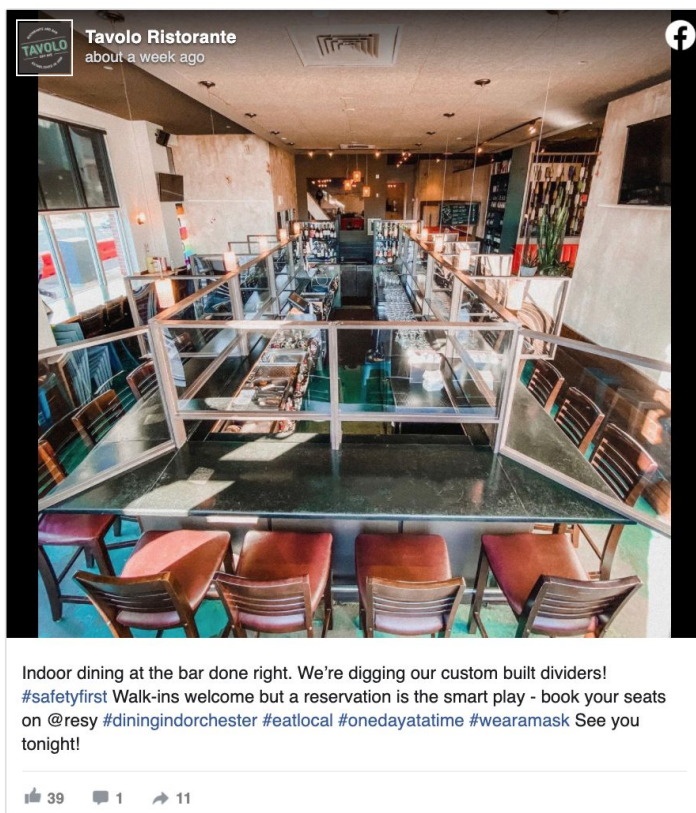
On the one hand, some people have barely left the house since mid-March.

On the other hand, we've all seen those other people wearing their masks under their noses (or not at all), indicating they're not too worried about being infected or infecting others.

As a business, being transparent about the exact precautions you are taking - and announcing those precautions - is key to making your customers feel comfortable. You might also make your expectations of customers clear. (For example, shop owners might want to put a sign outside that says, "Masks required, maintain 6 feet distance from one another.")

You should also communicate your business precautions via email and social media. Include the steps you are taking to maintain a safe environment and even better, **add pictures!**

This will demonstrate to everyone that you take safety seriously - which is great for business!



List the precautions you are taking to protect customers and workers:

How will you let your customers know about the precautions you are taking? (social media, email, physical signs, advertisements, etc.)

3. Make it easy for your customers to buy from you.

Are you a local crafter? Provide free delivery.

Are you a local store? Post photos of your wares on social media and provide free delivery.

Are you a local restaurant? Make ordering as seamless as possible (both online and via phone) and provide free delivery or super easy curbside pickup.

Get **really good** at responding to emails, direct social media messages, phone calls, and maybe even texts - so that you can be sure to meet people where they are comfortable communicating.

List 3 ways you can make it easier for your customers to purchase from you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

4. Pivot.

You might need to shift your business right now in order to accommodate changes.

For example, a dog walking business might find themselves lacking customers because... well, 1) so many people are home and 2) walking the dog is now an excuse to get away from the people you're cooped up in the house with.

However, have you noticed the amount of covid puppies popping up? Lots of them to households that have no idea how to train a dog?

That dog-walking business might pivot to flow with the covid shifts, and become a dog-training business!



Negative Space
on Saturday



THE BEST BAD IDEA EVER

Introducing Winston Charles Breininger, 4-month-old shephard mix from @safehandsrescue who joined our family this week!

We decided that we needed some joy and energy to get us through the long winter ahead and figured that since we're all home indefinitely, it would make training more manageable. Plus, Maya turns 14 tomorrow (!!!) and so was ready (or so she thought!) for the responsibility. And since we aren't letting humans into our house for the fore... [See More](#)



Brainstorm some pivoting options for your business:

5. Ask for reviews.

We are lucky to live in a town where there is a great deal of support for treasured small businesses. And while not everybody may need your business right now, or be in a financial position to support it at this time, current and former customers can still help you out in the form of reviews.

It can be hard to ask for a favor, so here are some tips on how to do it:

- **Run a contest** - ask customers to write a review, and then have them snap a pic of the review and share it to your business's social media page. Randomly choose a review and mail them a gift card (you can do this all virtually using Amazon, if you'd like, but even better, mail them a gift card to a local restaurant.) This will also get you some nice hits to your social media outlets!
- **Send out an email** - let your customers know that now is a tough time for all small businesses. Ask them if they'd mind writing you a quick review.
- **Ask on social media** - use sincere language and a cute photo ([check out these adorable and eye catching free puppy pics on Pexels](#)) to request a review.
- **HINT:** Don't forget to provide the link(s) to where you'd like the reviews to be posted. (IDEA: [Get a FREE business listing on this website](#) and post the link to solicit reviews!)

Describe our plan(s) for soliciting reviews:

6. Explore Facebook ads.

The price of Facebook ads has dropped precipitously during the pandemic.

What does this mean?

There are even more people on social media now than pre-pandemic, so activity is up and prices are down.

Basically, you get way more bang for your buck so now's the time to revisit those ads!

According to [ROIRevolution](#),

"An increase in social media usage means greater activity in Facebook's ad auction and more opportunities to reach customers on these platforms. As restrictions across the country begin to ease, now is the time to start leveraging this increased activity to ramp up engagement and purchases.

Whether your brand has brick-and-mortar stores or operates online only, paid social media ads can help you target valuable traffic. You can serve an ad directly to the device of past customers, site visitors, or even potential new customers – which is especially valuable compared to other platforms where users must express intent before seeing an ad."

Brainstorm some ideas for Facebook ads (ex: links, photos, videos, etc):

7. Consider discounts and sales.

Now would be a great time to sweeten the deal for potential customers by introducing discounts or incentives, particularly incentives that involve a commitment.

For example, a local gym might want to deeply discount an annual membership if folks commit for a year.

A restaurant might want to discount take-out offerings over dining-in offerings, or vice-versa, depending on the desired business type.

Last spring, we introduced the brand new [Milton Scene Business Membership](#), which gives tons of access for posting business ads to Milton's largest online community. Of course, this endeavor, which was over a year in the making, was announced just before COVID hit (hooray for terrible timing).

Realizing that most local businesses were taking a substantial financial hit, we cut the [Business Membership's price](#) nearly in half in an effort to help small business market themselves for a deeply discounted price. (Click here to learn how to maximize a business membership in this free [One Stop Milton Marketing Master Class](#).)

List some ideas for possible sales or discounts:

8. Prepare for the future.

The numbers aren't looking great. We could go into lockdown again.

Think about your business plan now for if a return to lockdown becomes a reality.

What business adjustments and improvements can you make while in lockdown?

For example, you might want to have a gift card promotion ready in the event of a temporary business closure. Selling gift cards during tough times will help keep the lights on while we all wait it out. You might want to include a gift card incentive - for example, sell a \$100 gift card for 15% off.

Yet another strategy might be some deep cleaning of your business. For example, maybe you want to get some marketing materials revamped or wrangle that bookkeeping you've been avoiding.

The key is to prepare and plan in advance. ([Check out my favorite tool for setting goals and staying focused.](#))

Brainstorm some ideas for business development during a future lockdown:

Want to learn more about marketing your business?

Check out this free class: [10 Easy Ways to Promote Your Business](#).

Want to be on our recommended experts/businesses list?

[Sign up for a business listing](#).

If you have any questions, please email info@miltonscene.com.