

# Plan for a New Normal

Although our lives have significantly changed over the last several weeks, one thing we know for certain is things will re-open and the economy will get going again. When things pick back up, when we start greeting customers in person, going out to eat with family and friends and traveling for leisure, we must look at our strategies in a new way, a new normal.

More than ever before, customers, visitors and employees are going to care about hygiene, cleanliness and safety. Their personal finances may be tight. At the same time, they will be seeking a mix of comfort and stability, delayed gratification for luxuries, and a regained sense of personal control. Businesses will be eager to get back in front of their customers and viewers, and the competition will be strong. Preparing for the new normal with a thorough strategy will put you and your business that much further ahead.

## Brand Considerations

People invest themselves emotionally in brands and act and think accordingly. That's why continuing to build a powerful brand is key to long-term success. How will your customers feel when things re-open? We've put together a few questions to ask yourself and your team as you build your strategy.



### Restaurants and Food Service:

Are you taking precautions to make customers feel safe and comfortable ordering online or dining in?

- How are you keeping your customer's health a priority?
- Are tables further apart? Are menus online?
- What food safety policies do you have in place?
- Do your customers know about your new policies?
- How are you keeping employees' health a priority?



### Retail

How are you aiding in social distancing and package sanitations to make customers feel safe? How do you communicate with your customers?

- Do you have a new policy for sanitizing inventory and are your customers aware of your policies?
- Do you limit the number of visitors in the store at the same time?
- Can customers shop online, and if so, how are you telling them about it?
- Can you reach your customers via text, email or phone call?  
How do you personalize these efforts?



### Financial Institutions

What challenges are your customers currently facing and which ones can you anticipate?

- Need for debt consolidation? Low interest rates? Are your competitors tightening their loan approval criteria? How are you alerting your customers when things change?
- What strategies can you incorporate or continue to build upon that keep customers loyal?



## Travel

When people start traveling again for business or leisure, what ways can you make them feel confident in their travel decisions?

- Does your state or city have new hygiene policies at airports, hotels, restaurants, museums or water parks?
- Are there activities families can do indoors or outdoors to stay active and keep their distance from others?
- Do you have an influencer or ambassador program to share the positive experiences?
- Do you have wide open spaces that you can promote?



## Healthcare

Do you have new policies in place that will remain after COVID-19, and how can patients stay up to date on changes?

- Are you offering telemedicine? If so, what are the requirements and how do patients schedule appointments?
- How do you communicate changes to your patients? Text, email, social media, mail?
- What are your hygiene policies for employees?
- How are you offering educational classes? Online, in-person, both?



## Education

Are you going to continue distance and online learning? How will you promote those services?

- Will students have the option to continue online learning to help enrollment numbers? How will that be structured for teachers and students?
- Do you have a good communication plan for students, teachers and parents both in the classroom and online?
- Have you implemented new cleaning and safety policies and communicated them to necessary parties?

No matter what industry your business is in, communication about new policies, practices and changes is key to success. Make sure your strategy positions you best against your competitors. If there are things you implemented during COVID-19 that worked well, consider offering those things moving forward and how that will look for your business.

## Workplace Considerations

Internal communication is just as important as external communication for brands. Communicating new workplace policies and guidelines effectively will ensure your staff is up to date on the latest changes. Did you use online resources for communicating during COVID-19 that were successful? Take advantage of what you learned as a company during this time about virtual meetings, shared resources, communication tactics and company engagement. Whether in-person or online, you'll be closer than ever moving forward with the right strategy.

*Remember, Odney is your partner now and into the future. As you ask yourself these questions and build new strategies to sell your value in a noisy marketplace, we're here to help you succeed. We have heard there may be a second round of COVID-19 this fall. As things start to pick back up, it's important to continually check in with your local health department so you can best prepare for the future.*

*Odney*