Managing Through the COVID-19 Crisis Webinar Series

“Marketing and Customer Engagement in a Pandemic”

Thursday, April 30, 2020
Panelist

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Agenda

Marketing and Customer Engagement in a Pandemic

- Fairfax City COVID-19 Resources
- Navigating New Customer Behaviors
- From Face to Face to Screen to Screen
- Telling Your Story
- Building and Engaging Your Audience
- Increasing Loyalty
- Expanding Your Reach
- Website User Experience
- Planning for a New Different Normal
### Fairfax City Economic Development COVID-19 Resources

**fairfaxcityconnected.com/covid19**

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Navigating New Customer Behaviors

► **Shopping Local as a Civic Duty**
  ▶ 70% of women surveyed recently by Meredith Publishing responded that they viewed supporting local businesses as the way to help others during this crisis

► **Shopping as Entertainment**
  ▶ Expect friends and families to shop together and choose destinations that offer experiential shopping to be the first choice

► **Home Decor and Fashion Trends**
  ▶ Shoppers are, and will continue, to embrace bright cheerful colors

► **Little Luxuries**
  ▶ After long periods with limited shopping, customers will want to treat themselves to small but high-end things like cosmetics and fashion accessories

► **Treat Yourself at Home**
  ▶ Small incremental home improvements like outdoor speakers, TVs and furniture will be popular purchases
Navigating New Customer Behaviors

- **Germ-Free Entertainment**
  - Outdoor movies, BBQ receptions, al fresco dining and sidewalk shopping will be popular
  - Individually packaged and disposable materials will be preferred
  - Sustainability continues to grow as a motivating factor, so extra consideration will go to businesses that offer biodegradable single use options

- **Slow Foods**
  - Now that our pace of life has slowed, our appetite for meats and vegetables simmered, marinated, slow-roasted or smoked all day has grown
  - Desserts will trend toward cobblers and cakes made with frozen fruits

- **Homegrown Foods**
  - Foods from commercial farms are out and local farms, city gardens or your own back yard are in

- **Hunger for Live Entertainment**
  - ‘In-the-moment’ offerings will be highly sought after
Navigating New Customer Behaviors

► Multi-Generational Living
  ► Many families will be starting home renovations to make their space more comfortable for Grandma and Grandpa

► Staycations
  ► A weakened economy will have people staying close to home for vacation, visiting the homes of friends and family and investing in outdoor furnishings and entertainment

► Weekend Getaways
  ► No yard work left to do - time to get away. Expect lots of group birthday, graduation, reunion, etc. celebrations to happen over weekend getaways

► Secluded Destinations
  ► Preference given to destinations with lots of elbow room - private pools, beaches, backroads and small town visits
From Face to Face to Screen to Screen - *Taking your service digital*

- Experiment and try something novel

- Offer Virtual Services:
  - Grow your audience with free classes and ask for donations
  - Video consultations (personal shopping, bang trims, interior design)
  - Wine tastings, mixology

- Expand Offerings:
  - Consider adding kid-friendly options/services
  - If you can get and they need it, sell it: provisions, masks, puzzles
  - Add value: family style meals, special occasion packages for presell
  - Package your experience: take & make meals, to-go color kits, facials
Telling Your Story - Public Relations Best Practices

► Be Authentic
  ► Share personal stories about you, your brand and your business family. Do not share anything too ‘produced’, artificial or ‘glossy’
  ► Do not force a connection to Covid-19 and do not ignore Covid-19

► Shared Values and Share Value
  ► Tell the stories that motivate your customers to spend: versatility, sustainability and doing good

► Share anything novel and unique you are doing
  ► Announce new initiatives, partnerships products, tools for customers
Building and Engaging your Audience - Social Media Best Practices

► Bring your brand to life and build the personal connection
  ▶ Humanize your business with behind the scenes moments, videos from home, include staff when possible
► Create viral moments
  ▶ Giving away a roll of toilet paper with a diamond ring is not of $ value but is a conversation starter
► Communicate consistently
  ▶ Post all updates, highlight online order capabilities, highlight gift cards, fundraisers
  ▶ Use trending hashtags, tag people that can help you get the word out especially in stories, use appropriate stickers, music, filters etc. to enhance posts
► Influencer Ambassadors, Proceed with Caution
  ▶ Work with influencers when the story is genuine and believable. Nano and Micro influencers tend to have better engagement and are more willing to enter into affiliate/commission relationships that will help you track your return on investment
Increasing Loyalty

- Focus on building loyalty - acquiring a new customer is anywhere from 5 to 25 times more expensive than retaining one

- Develop your loyalty program that offers perks/discounts for increased frequency

- Engage your customers through email
  - Send regular updates and offers
  - Create a template and maintain a consistent look and feel
  - Utilize user-friendly platforms such as MailChimp

- If you don’t yet have a customer email list
  - Set up a form capture on your website and encourage your customers to sign up for updates

- Recognize that your customer’s behavior has probably changed. You may need to do some A/B testing to see how they respond to different offerings
Expanding your Reach - *Partnership Marketing Best Practices*

- In down-time, Ideate and Cross-Promote
  - Gain a new audience by partnering with another entity that shares similar customer psychographics
  - Examples: Ornery and Duck Donuts brunch delivery, Van Metre Homes and Chef Spike Mendelsohn, Easter baskets featuring several local retailers
Website Optimization

- Add a Clear Call to Action on Home Page
- Capture Payment Online
- Be informative and timely
  - It’s important to recognize the current climate and share with your customers how you are coping and what actions you are taking
- Show your customers what options they have
  - Are you offering online ordering; pickup or delivery? Call ahead and curbside pickup?
- Offer your loyal customers other ways to help the business
  - Your customers are looking to support your business, offer them gift cards and other merchandise
  - Give them an option to make a donation to your business
- Optimize your online presence
  - Start by setting up Google MyBusiness or if already implemented make sure it is up to date
Preparing for a New Different Normal

► More direct to consumer business models will emerge
► Inventory will be much more scarce than in recent years
► Omnichannel platforms will be smart investments for retailers
► Successful marketing campaigns will celebrate American fortitude and togetherness
► Value will be the main sales driver
  ► Emotional value, versatility, discounted price
  ► Worry less about devaluation, repurpose inventory when possible
► Customer needs come first
  ► Payment plans: layaways, AfterPay
  ► Meet them where they are
Friendly EDO Reminders...

Subscribe to our Business Bulletin

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FAIRFAX CITY Economic Development

Survey closes
Friday, May 1

COVID-19
Business Impact Survey

fairfaxcityconnected.com/survey

- assess economic impact on the city’s business community
- assists in determining what resources are necessary
- aids in resiliency and recovery

COVID-19
Face Masks for City Businesses

fairfaxcityconnected.com/masks

FAIRFAX CITY Economic Development
Questions?