



## HOW DO WE BEST POSITION OURSELVES FOR SUCCESS AS THINGS REOPEN?

On your marks, get set... re-open!

If that phrase hits you with a weird mix of excitement, hope, and a whole lot of "yeah-but-what-about," congratulations! You are entirely normal.

Normal is a word most of the world is longing for right now, and with good reason. But, as business owners, why should we settle for normal? Why not challenge yourself to aim for *better than normal*?

If you think about it, it's like the whole world is starting their freshman year of high school. We're all newbies trying to wade through something we haven't gone through before. But on the plus side, all of us get a fresh start. We have the opportunity to throw out what wasn't working and craft a new (and better) way of doing things.

Winston Churchill famously said, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." Those are some poignant, relevant words for the days we're currently living in. Don't let this unique opportunity in the world's history pass you by without squeezing every last drop of lemonade out of those lemons.

As you embark on your path of re-opening your print business and finding your new (better) normal, keep these tips in mind.

## TIP 1: THINK LONGTERM

Desperation doesn't sell.

Offering your print buyers crazy incentives, such as paying them a “stimulus” to buy printing from you, doesn't come across as helpful or empathetic; it comes across as desperate.

So, think bigger. In this sea of unknowns, look to the horizon rather than that single, scary-looking wave ahead of you. This crisis is simply one piece of your (and the world's) puzzle. It's one scene in a movie; one thread in a tapestry. In other words, it's impossible to see the whole masterpiece from a single snapshot, so carry that perspective with you in days ahead when you're sailing through those choppy waters.

## TIP 2: UNDERSTAND YOUR PRINT BUYER EXPECTATIONS

A recent study from Gartner regarding consumer sentiment about COVID-19 revealed that “Consumer trust – in all institutions – has deteriorated considerably...”

This decreased trust has led to a powerful consumer need for both comfort and security that will need to be addressed:

- One of the greatest disruptions has been the lack of structure and sense of routine. So, look for ways your business can create this routine through connection. For example, if you haven't already, re-establish a monthly direct mail campaign or consistent email newsletter.
- Employees are also struggling with worries of their own. Many have carried a fear of losing their jobs (or making up lost income), personal investments that have decreased significantly, or even the unsettling feeling of seeing empty store shelves for the first time in their lifetime. This is why you must look for ways to nurture that sense of security. As quickly as possible, re-establish a consistent routine of regularly scheduled meetings or connection touchpoints.
- You'll also want to create messaging that points toward the values that matter most to your print buyers. Giving your print buyers the feeling they're in control through easy online ordering, special pick-up and delivery options, etc. will help increase that trust level exponentially.

## TIP 3: SCHEDULE YOUR STRESS

Just because your re-opening your print business doesn't mean your stress level will level-out. In fact, you'd probably be wise to anticipate the stress and come up with a solid plan for handling it.

Here are a couple of ideas:

- Dr. Henry Cloud, co-author of the book, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life*, suggests a unique idea. Create two columns. In one column, list all of the things you can't control. This is the opportunity to spend a few minutes and let the worries come. Then, in the other column, list the things you can control. This simple exercise will help you strip away the worries, eliminate those feelings of powerlessness, and take action on what you can.
- Juliet Funt of White Space at Work offers this tip: Make a daily appointment with your stress. Set aside ten minutes, or whatever you need, where you can let your mind wander and ruminate on the worries. Allow yourself to go "there." Then, if you feel those thoughts creeping in at other parts of the day, you can tell yourself, "No, I'm not going there right now. I'll address it tomorrow at my scheduled time."

## TIP 4: STEP UP YOUR MARKETING FOR YOU AND YOUR PRINT BUYERS

Just like when you first opened your print company, your doors are open once again, and people should know about it!

Here are some ways to get the word out for your business and to encourage your print buyers to do the same.

- Go big with banners, signs, and flags outside your business that clearly say you're open.
- Partner this messaging with your online strategies as well through social media, Yelp, or your Google My Business listing, so others know you are open.
- Create a direct mail campaign centered around affordable items like magnets that highlight that you're now open and your hours of operation.
- Consider additions and incentives to add to your marketing pieces, such as:
  - Drive-thru, pick-up, or delivery options
  - Bundled or discounted services and products
  - Rush delivery or no minimum orders

## MOVING ON: PATIENCE REQUIRED

Remember, that even if you roll out the red carpet for your print buyers, it will probably take a while for them to feel comfortable going back to their pre-coronavirus ways of ordering printing or communicating with you.

In the meantime (and beyond), continue to press into ways to sustain your business without face-to-face interaction, such as beefing up your online order capabilities, investing in an MIS/CRM solution, and connecting through the power of regular print communications.