

The Small Business Guide to Dealing with Coronavirus (COVID-19)

by POS Nation 

Just like our customers,
POS Nation is a small business.
And just like you, we are
navigating this unprecedented
shift in everyday life as a result
of COVID-19, or coronavirus.

In an effort to share best
practices for managing this new
normal, we've written this guide
to help you and your business
stay safe and keep public health
top of mind, while continuing to
serve your customers.



NOTE:

This guide is not intended to replace medical advice. Please follow CDC guidelines in regards to dealing with symptoms of the coronavirus.

Social Distancing and Your Business

By now you're intimately familiar with the term "social distancing" but to ensure we're all on the same page:

Social distancing means remaining out of places where people meet or gather, [including] avoiding local public transportation.

- CDC.gov

This practice is meant to curtail the aggressive spread of coronavirus to alleviate the strain of caring for infected persons on our healthcare system.

As a business owner whose store lifeline depends on face to face transactions, how can you navigate maintaining business while still adhering to this recommendation?

Aside from the most common sense methods of cleaning regularly, maintaining six feet of distance from another person, and generally practicing good hygiene, we have a few ideas.

Contactless Payment Options

Apple Pay, Google Pay, major credit cards, and others now provide options for customers to place their devices or payment options near a reader in order to complete a payment. In most cases, it doesn't even require a signature.

Near field communication (NFC) and radio-frequency identification (RFID) are technologies that can be utilized for a contactless transaction. If you must have customers in your store, employing a NFC payment option could be another way to encourage business while being mindful of social distancing.

Not sure if this technology is enabled on your PIN pad? Make sure you double-check with us and we'll confirm if you're good to go.



Contact support@posnation.com if you need any assistance getting this set up.

Business Hours for More Susceptible Customers

While this is a new reality for our customers in the United States, other countries have been battling this pandemic for some time and we can learn from what they've implemented.

In Iceland, grocers are opening one hour early to allow older shoppers to purchase food and other items without having to worry about crowds. Similarly, other stores are opening one hour early to allow both elderly and high susceptibility shoppers the opportunity to shop in a stress-free environment.

If this is something your business is able to offer, customers will appreciate the extra effort.



Employee Scheduling

With shortened business hours comes a cut in employee shifts, so make sure you have an open conversation with your team before making major changes to their schedules.

To help employees practice social distancing, you can stagger shifts. This creates a safe level of distancing for the employees and customers alike.

The less people there are in your store at once, the better.



Need a hand with scheduling? Your point of sale system comes equipped with this feature, too! Contact our team at support@posnation.com if you need help getting started.

Mobile Reporting

One of the many benefits of mobile reporting is that you can manage your business without being on-site.

If you don't need to be at the storefront, you can work remotely and check in on business operations from your phone, tablet, or laptop.

You can do almost anything from your web portal, including keeping up on sales by the hour, inventory levels, employee clock-ins, and so much more.

Reach out to us at sales@posnation.com if you want to set up a web portal.



Drive-Through or Curbside Pickup

Social distancing aside, the convenience of having a drive-through is undeniable. Granted, not everyone's store can support this type of option, but if you are able to adjust your business model slightly, you may be able to retain or even encourage business.

Consider a window setup with a pricing menu and product images in plain view. Another option is to create an online version of your shop with access to your products so potential customers can review your offerings prior to visiting your store or from their mobile device while waiting in the drive-through.



Many local restaurants who do not have a drive-through are offering curbside pickup. Try allowing customers to call in their order and pull up to your storefront at a designated time. An employee can run purchases right out to their car, limiting the level of contact and eliminating the need to go inside the shop.

Contact our team at support@posnation.com if you need help accepting credit card payments over the phone.

Take it Online

If you're able to take advantage of creating an ecommerce or online store, it's time to get creative and offer additional incentives to keep customers coming back. Consider offering free shipping of non-perishable products.

Does your shop offer any services? Can you stream them online or create video content for your customers as a supplement?

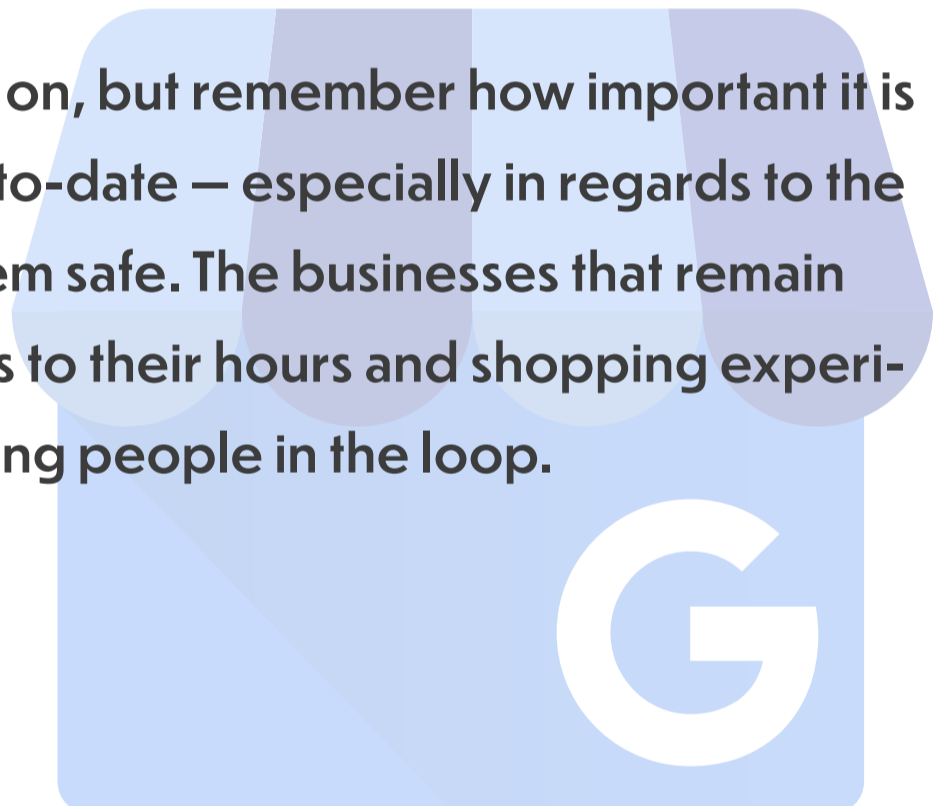
POS Nation software offers ecommerce integration so that your online and brick and mortar stores can exist seamlessly, from order taking to inventory management and everything in between.



To get this set up, contact our team at support@posnation.com for assistance.

Keep Customers Updated

We know that there's a lot going on, but remember how important it is to keep your customer base up-to-date – especially in regards to the actions you're taking to keep them safe. The businesses that remain open have made drastic changes to their hours and shopping experience, so make sure you're keeping people in the loop.



Refresh Business Listings

If your business hours have been affected, make sure you update them on your Google My Business listing:

1. Sign in to Google My Business
2. Click **Info** from the menu
3. Next to “Add hours” or your current business hours, click **Hours**
4. After you’re done adjusting your hours, click **Apply**

If you have a Facebook page for your business, it also displays hours – so make sure you update them there, too:

1. Navigate to your Facebook Business Page
2. In the top admin navigation bar, click **Edit Page Info**
3. Scroll past the General section to the **Hours** section
4. Adjust set hours or select Permanently closed

Try to think of anywhere else you may promote your hours and general business information and update the content. Consumers likely won’t be angry at you for missing something at this time, but it doesn’t hurt to be on top of it.

Use Social Media

Whether you're cutting down hours or offering a limited menu, blast any and all updates out on your social media platforms.

This is one of the first places consumers look for business information – and you don't want to disappoint anyone who drove out to your storefront only to find that it's closed.

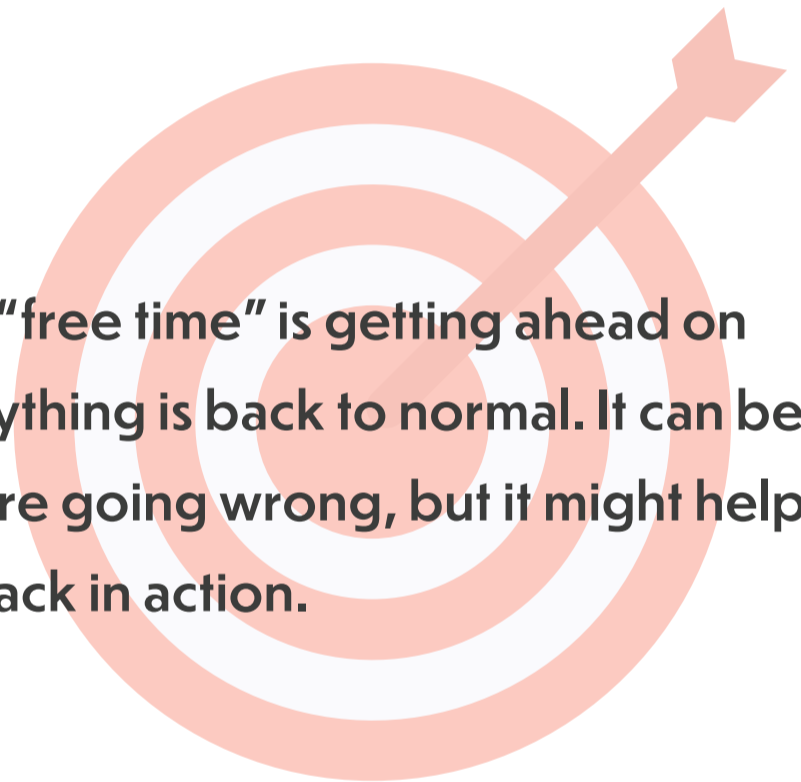


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Marketing for the Long Term

One positive that comes from more “free time” is getting ahead on promoting your business once everything is back to normal. It can be hard to get motivated when things are going wrong, but it might help looking forward to the day you’re back in action.



Communication is Key

You know this now more than ever. Are there holes in your communication efforts?

We always encourage small businesses to get involved with email marketing – especially because it's a feature that can be managed from your point of sale system. Now is the time to start brainstorming new ways you can communicate with the people most important to you via email.

If you don't already, collect customers' email addresses on their first visit and send them a coupon to get them back in the store. If they're given your shop a few visits, email them discounts for the specific items they've purchased from you before. And if you're running a store-wide promotion, sending out an exclusive heads-up ensures people on your list are the first to know.

In times like these, it is even more important to reach out to your customers through email. It is the perfect platform to let them know you care – and that you are taking steps to ensure they are safe to shop with you.

Want to manage email marketing through your POS system? Contact support@posnation.com!

Encourage Gift Card Purchases

Consumers are doing their best to support local businesses at this time. Help your customers help you!

Do what you can to encourage gift card purchases. They're helpful now while traffic is low and they ensure you'll have customers at your door once everything is back to normal.

Consumers are struggling, too, so consider offering a discount on a service or product with the purchase of a gift card. And if you're not doing this already, consider making gift cards available online to make the process completely virtual!

Here's a great email example of promoting gift card sales from a local business in Charlotte, NC:

We intend to continue to pay our employees during this time of uncertainty - a time that is particularly hard on the hospitality industry. If you are looking to support small businesses during this time, one way you can help is by buying a gift card. This provides us with a little stability during this uncertain time. You can purchase The Crunkleton Charlotte [gift cards here](#).

We are all in this together and we are grateful to have you as members of our club. It is a great pleasure being your neighborhood bar and we look forward to hosting you again, very soon.

The Crunkleton Charlotte

Gift cards are available for purchase in our [online shop](#) – and if you need help using them, contact support@posnation.com.

Time to Get Social

When we mentioned updating customers on social media, were you a bit nervous? Don't worry. Many small businesses struggle to stay active on their social media platforms. The good news? You can use this time to get comfortable.

Poke around Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and more to see what each platform has to offer. If you're already familiar with using and posting to your favorite platforms, this is the perfect opportunity to create future content.

If your social media presence has been lacking because you just don't have the time to think up a post every few days, create a mass document of posts that you can pull from or schedule out. This way, you're ahead of the game once things return to normal and there's never a lag in your social media posting.



Inventory Changes

How can you adjust what you offer to help consumers? What is something that your customers really want or need at this time? Are you able to add it to your product list?

Grocery stores might consider supplying more non-perishables. Garden centers can provide starter kits for people who want to begin gardening at home. Boutique shops can introduce fun products that encourage customers to try new activities while they're at home.

Not only do inventory changes benefit your customers in a time when resources are limited, but they'll remember you and your business for your efforts in providing resources to the community. It may be nerve-wracking to make these types of changes, but if you're making life easier for the people most important to you, they won't forget it. So...

How can you help?

Staying Clean

Obviously, one of the most vital preventative tips right now is to keep everything sanitized. You know to wash your hands and wipe down everything in your shop or restaurant.

You may or may not have thought about sanitizing your point of sale system – which is encouraged – but let's make sure you're caring for your hardware properly.

Hardware Do's and Don'ts

Do use an alcohol swab.

Do use rubbing alcohol on a lint-free cloth.

Don't spray disinfectant on your hardware.

Don't use Lysol, Clorox, or other similar disinfecting wipes.

Don't use sprays like window or glass cleaners.

We're All in This Together

While these times can feel stressful and overwhelming, know that we've got your back. Your community has your back. The changes at hand are affecting everyone worldwide and you are not alone.

Hopefully these tips are helpful to your small business, but if we can answer questions or assist in any way, don't hesitate to reach out.

Call us at **877-727-3548** or email us at **sales@posnation.com**.