**Marketing Advice to Combat an Economic Downturn**

Good afternoon to everyone. Thank you so much for joining us. I am very excited to share some ideas about how to continue using marketing to drive your business, specifically in this time of crisis. So, as Alexa mentioned, I work at a company called Deluxe. We work with 4 1/2 million small businesses on their marketing and operational needs. My main job is to produce a series called the "Small Business Revolution". It is a series that is on Hulu and Prime Video. It also streams online at SmallBusinessRevolution.org and each season we revitalize a different small town's main street and we do that through its small businesses. So it is essentially a small business makeover show, but done with heart. Each year we work with a different city and a small business within it to help the entire town thrived. So the information I will share today as some of the advice that we give businesses that we are featuring in season five. As you can imagine, we were in the middle of filming that season and helping those small businesses when the crisis hit, so now, more than ever, marketing has been a really important tool for us to use to help these small businesses weather this storm and this pandemic. I will show you a short trailer for the series, so you can get a sense for how we kind of approach these makeovers and get a little bit of context for what we will be covering today.

Small towns are fighting for their survival and the hit show "Small Business Revolution" is on a mission to bring back our main streets.

We don't know if we can just rescue it the way we have in the past.

Every season, America chooses the town. Deluxe chooses the businesses and teams with celebrity experts to put them back on the map.

You've got to raise your price.

You feel this area gets the kind of attention as other parts of town?

Not at all.

It is a business makeover show with heart and we are just getting started. Catch up with all of the season streaming on Hulu, Prime Video, and SmallBusinessRevolution.org.

Amanda? Hi, Amanda. Hi, Amanda, are you on the line?

There we go, so, sorry about that. So that gives you a sense of the show and what we cover in the series. So again, we always work with individual small businesses to help them with their marketing needs, operations, financial needs. So what I want to cover today is the advice we are giving the businesses that we are working with in season five. Season five is taking place in New York. As you know, New York has been hard-hit by the crisis. Some things we are talking with them about is really why communication with customers right now is so vital. The fact that, you know, people want to support small businesses. So it is up to small businesses to really make it as easy as possible for their customers to support them. I will talk a little bit about how to pivot your business model to adapt to this changing environment and how to really market your business differently. So you know, communication is critical right now. As I mentioned, people want to support small businesses, so we really need to make sure we are out in front of our customers, letting them know vital changes to our business. Making sure that they understand if you are open or closed, or if you have a hybrid model. We want to really make sure we are thinking through all of our customer touch points. Whether it is your website or social media, email marketing, directory listings or even signage within your windows. What are all of those customer touch points you can utilize to really communicate your customers in this difficult time? It is really important that communication be heartfelt and transparent. Making sure that right now, our communication isn't so much about selling, as it is helping our customers. All of our customers are really dealing with this crisis, as well, so we want to make sure we are positioning our business in a way that is helping other people.

So, some of the things that we want to make sure we are communicating about is, first and foremost, the measures your business is taking to adapt to the COVID-19 protocols, whether that is national, state or local protocols. We really want to make sure customers understand the safety measures you are taking for them, as customers. For your employees, as well as just the interactions with customers. We really want to make sure we are communicating, you know, how and where they can still purchase from you. So are you doing curbside delivery? Are you doing online ordering? You know, how can they still purchase and support your business? We want to make sure we are being clear about what your hours of operation are and the best way they can contact you. Is that online? On the phone? We really want to make sure we are using marketing again to communicate with customers right now. As a small business, this is not the time to go quiet. We really want to stay out front of our customers and be communicating with them about how they can still support your business and buy from you.

We talk a little bit about how to pivot your business model in this incredibly unprecedented time. You know, no business, large or small, has gone through something like this and it is affecting every business sector. So what can you do around your business model to really adapt and change? We are seeing that small businesses specifically that are using this time to really get focused and figure out, you know, what can we do to continue to make money to survive this pandemic? And what can we do to tighten our business plan and drop any distractions. Those are the small businesses that are really honing in and surviving right now. It is really about pivoting your business model. Everything from what you sell, to how you sell it and to where you sell it. Trying to figure out, are there ideas you can implement now and are some of those ideas things that will lead to growth on the other side of this that will stay with your business model after? So you know, what new segments can you tap into, when you are thinking about your business model? Are there customer bases you haven't been serving before or delivery methods you have not been utilizing before that not only right now would help your business survive and thrive, but that could actually be very beneficial to your customers and to the health of your business. So right now, in season five, one of the businesses we are working with is a gluten-free bakery. They typically relied on people coming into the bakery to buy these goods, so we worked with them quickly to set up an online solution, so people can now buy bakery boxes. Instead of coming into the bakery, they have an online ordering system, where people can order boxes at a time. So on a given day of the week, they can come in. On the porch, it is clearly set up, where they can pick up the orders. So this is a market segment that the owner wasn't really tapping into before. She wasn't really selling bakery boxes. It was more, you know, one or two bakery items at a time. So this may be something that she will continue to do. Almost a wholesale model, direct to consumers. We have also seen interior design firms who are starting to offer virtual design services to customers, who want to really refresh their space while spending so much time at home. Again, this is a new segment, because right now instead of spending thousands of dollars on high-end designs, people may be willing to spend a few hundred dollars on a consultation and a few additional items. So it is really about thinking, what are some new segments you could maybe tap into? Again, thinking about what you sell, how you sell it and where you sell it.

Another example is, how can you repackage your expertise? So there is a great salon and we are seeing this in the salon space, where businesses are starting to offer touchup kits or kind of those virtual, at-home consultations. And you know, most small businesses started because you have an expertise or a passion, so you want to continue to be able to bring that to your customers. If in person isn't possible right now, we want to figure out how you can repackage and still consider that expertise and is there a way to monetize it? In the salon space, each salon owner feels a little bit differently about this. Feeling like if they are delivering touchup kits and things like that, will business come back on the other side of it? I think people absolutely when they are doing it themselves, want to come back to the salon. So how can you do things like offering virtual at-home consultations and then sending out those hair coloring kits to clients? And really making it easier for them. When your customers are dealing with strange, new times themselves, how can you, as a small business, again, the repackaging your expertise to make their lives easier and better in the face of this pandemic? We are seeing gyms provide membership with online classes, rather than in the studio. We are seeing the art space, theaters and art studios, really adapt to this online environment. They are starting to offer online tutorial classes and you can charge for those. Instead of in studio or hands-on classes, you can have people subscribe to a certain class or take those classes online. We are seeing distilleries offer cocktail kits for at-home assembly, since people can't visit them in person. It offers something fun to do at home. So really thinking about how you can think differently again about how and where you are selling things and repackaging your expertise.

And it is really about, I love talking about this concept and the fact that businesses really can do well by doing good. We love that we are seeing one of the trends right now, that small businesses have such an instinct to do good within their community. It is one of the reasons we started the "Small Business Revolution", as a movement to inspire people to support small businesses, because small businesses make such a difference in our neighborhoods and communities and give back in such disproportionate ways. We are saying that businesses who have that goodness baked in our set up better in this time. So how can you be doing well in the long term, by doing good now? So how can you really make a positive impact to your bottom line, by making an impact in your customers lives? We actually recently started a new series in response to the COVID crisis, where we highlight business owners who are doing just that. Pivoting their business model and doing something good and inspiring within their communities. It is called small business, big heart. I want to use a couple of examples from that series to give an example of what I mean about doing good for other people and how it is actually doing well for these businesses. And the series is also on SmallBusinessRevolution.org, along with our show.

The first business I want to talk about is Dave Puente Photography, out of Minneapolis. It is a photographer and as you would imagine, after having no business come in, not being able to do in studio or being able to do photo shoots, he decided to start taking "Porchtraits" of his previous clients. Taking pictures from afar of people on their porches, capturing this slice of life in this unprecedented time we have at home with our families. So he started doing this for free, to provide them with an opportunity to have these, you know, special family moments captured in a photo during what is otherwise unsettling times for families. It gives families something to look forward to. Something to capture this special time. After one day working with his clients, he had people starting to reach out to him on social media, on his website. Asking for these portraits. So while he is not monetizing this right now, his instinct is to give these away for free, it is a beautiful example of doing well, by doing good. Because this will really benefit his business in the long run. He has significantly expanded his market. He has expanded his reach. People are sharing these photos and tagging him in social media and you just can't buy this kind of publicity. We love the fact that he is really getting this, because it is goodness he is doing for families.

Another great example is this wonderful store out of Austin, Texas, called Austin's Couch Potatoes. They are a family owned furniture store and pivoted to making protective gear, like masks. They realized one day they had a lot of product on hand that the used previously to make pillowcase linings, that could actually be used to make masks. So, Brian, working with his team, started to change their very small cutting table, to figure out how many masks they could make at once. After they started making masks, they started taking these requests from across the country for this protective gear. The Department of Homeland Security then gave them the contract, or issued a contract, for making isolation downs, as well. Brian shared with us that that contract covered what his revenue would have been for the month of April. Which is fantastic. So his goodness instinct was to make protective gear, because he and his team had the facility and capabilities and the skill set to be able to do it and that was just the instinct to make those masks and give it away for free. But I love how the universe rewarded him for this. Then a larger contract came on the heels of it and he has figured out how to operationalize and is making thousands of these isolation downs, which are protecting our front-line workers. Not only bringing revenue to his business and helping him keep his employees employed, but it is allowing him and his team to feel like they have a purpose in this fight against COVID, which I think is a really beautiful example of a company that is doing well by doing good. He led with goodness and his company is surviving this pandemic, as a result. Another great example is Good Apple, also out of Austin, Texas. This grocery subscription company partners with local farms to rescue produce that would otherwise go unsold. So they deliver fresh fruits and veggies to customer stores. That has always been there business model. Right now they are providing that food delivery to seniors and immune compromised residents, free of charge. So again, goodness was already baked into their business model. They were already rescuing this food and putting together these produce packages, but have now extended it to delivering to those who can't go out and shop at retail grocery stores. What is fantastic, is with all of this small business, big heart, Deluxe has started a GoFundMe page so our audience can support the good work these businesses are doing within their communities. Just $10 pays for groceries for an individual in need for an entire week, so again, we are seeing businesses that, again, have this instinct for good within their communities, really helping their businesses thrive. Good Apple has seen new subscriptions come in, paid subscriptions, as a result of the great reach they have been able to achieve, by again, following their instincts and doing good in giving away these produce items, again, to the elderly and immune compromised.

So let's talk a little bit about how to market your business differently in this time. You know, marketing is always vital for businesses of all size, but it is really, really vital right now to be marketing and communicating with your customers. So it is really important to keep your online presence current. This is a great time, if you find yourself with a little bit of extra time, this is a great time to be updating all of your marketing pieces that you perhaps were not addressing before. Making sure your website is up-to-date. That your social media, your posting regularly. That you are utilizing email marketing to stay in front of customers. Right now it is more vital than ever, but it is always important for small businesses to have a really robust online presence. So we often say that you have to think about your online presence, as important as having a sign in front of a brick-and-mortar store. If people can't find you online when they are searching for your kind of product or service, it would be like a business not having a door or a sign outside a brick-and-mortar store. It is really important to have your online presence not only updated in this time, but have it consistent. I will talk a little bit about that.

First and foremost, you want to make sure that your website has a COVID banner. It is a best practice right now to make sure you have updated your website, to first and foremost, inform people on your homepage the status of your business and have that COVID notice. From a user experience perspective, if you go to the website and they don't have some sort of banner or notification around COVID, it does look like the site hasn't been updated recently in the face of this pandemic, so it is really important to have that COVID notice banner up, as well as have critical information about, you know, not only what you are doing to combat COVID, but what you are doing to respond to it for safety, and again, your hours and operations. So it is important to have that banner.

The second thing is making sure you have updated your critical contact information. So if you are closed for business, it is really important to reflect that in your hours. A great example of a business in Minneapolis. They have updated their website to reflect new hours. The restaurant, the cafe, as well as guidelines for the number of shoppers and quantity limits on purchases. They also have a call to action to a letter they wrote to patrons about their COVID-19 policy. So again it is really important to communicate with your customers who want to support small businesses. Again, make this as easy as possible for them to understand how to do that and your contact information is key. It is also really important to make sure if you're offering has temporarily changed, let customers know. There is a great restaurant in Minneapolis. They updated their website to make it clear that right now they have a limited menu and you can order online and pay in advance, to really ease customers around the safety of that interaction. They have some best practices in place and are very clear about pickup instructions, that customers should call once they pull into the parking lot. Then in the parking lot, there are numbered signs on every parking spot that clearly state the phone number to call to pick up your order and then let them know which parking spots to deliver to. It is great, because customers know it is contactless delivery, experience, and they are clear about how to do that. It is not only important to make it clear that you are now offering take-out or delivery or curbside, but be very clear about the process your customers will go through in ordering from you. They are also doing something special and unique, in Minnesota, you can also order beer and liquor when you're doing curbside, so they are notifying customers that when you purchase their beer to go, the proceeds go to their employees. So, they really encourage further purchases by showing how you are supporting your staff at this time. People really want to understand. They feel for not only your small business, but your employees as well and recognize this is a difficult time to keep staff employed. So if you are doing special things to support your employees, it is a great time and great place on your website to leverage that.

Another example is really making sure that people know how they can still purchase. If they can still purchase from you, and again, how they can purchase from you. So, Spruce is a great flower shop in Minneapolis and one of our experts we brought in for season five to work with us in New York and they are still offering deliveries. They make that very clear on their homepage. Because as soon as people land on that site, they want to know, can I still order flowers and if so, how can I do that? They also make sure they are allowing people to sign up for updates as well. Every day is a little bit different in this pandemic and they want to make sure they are staying in front of customers. It is a great way to make sure you are capturing those email addresses so you can continue to communicate with your customers.

It is also really important to make sure people understand how to engage with you online. This is a great example of the art Guild, a community arts center that had to close. It is another business that we see in the small business, big heart series. But they have pivoted to offering events virtually as well as online classes. On the home page of their site they are promoting all of this, as well as creative tips and activities for home. They are also encouraging donations on the same page. This is a great time if you are a nonprofit to be out in front of customers or patrons, making sure that they understand that your mission is still vital in this time and encouraging those donations. We want to make sure, again, that it is as clear as possible how they can engage with you online, and making sure you have keywords built in across your website, so when people are searching for things like online classes or online art, that they are showing up in those search terms.

Also, your FAQ page can be a successful strategy from an SCO perspective. Build those search terms into FAQ's on your page. A great place to not only answer questions around how you are responding to COVID, but also to answer how you have pivoted your business. If you don't have a FAQ page on your site, it is a great time to edit. Again, a FAQ page is always a really great SEO strategy for any site at any time. It is a great way to not only drive organic traffic, but also to ease fears during this time. So an example, a golf company that does a great job outlining common concerns. Whether it is safe to play golf during the pandemic. How they are taking teetimes. How they are responding to it and how you can continue to engage. So again, your FAQ page can be a great page to make sure you're answering those most pressing questions. And again, this is a great example of why this is great for SEO strategies. You see the first question, is it safe to play golf during the COVID-19 pandemic? By having those keywords on their site, on a FAQ page, they are more likely to be returned when people are searching for exactly that phrase. So this might not of been something they had built into their site before, but now it will be returned against those search terms. Think through how people are searching for your kind of business. What you sell, how you sell it and where you are selling it. Build those kinds of terms into it, so that search is working in your favor.

Also this is a great time to consider a special offer, like free shipping, to drive sales. You know, this can be a great time to offer percentages off. Customers are really open to iterations and trying new things right now, so if you are a retailer, free shipping might just be the extra nudge people need to purchase through you, and a time when they might be reluctant to spend. So right now is a great time to use those offers and incentivize those searches and those purchases. This Minnesota apparel company is offering free shipping on their entire site for the month of April. We have seen retailers offer deals if you spend $100 within our shop now, you get a pass for 10% off for the rest of the year, which is a smart strategy for not only incentivizing purchases now, but really encouraging repeat purchases later in the year. It is still incentivizing people to come back and purchase from you throughout the rest of the year.

This is a great clothing company in New York. Called Haus of Hanz. This small clothing boutique is donating 10% of their purchases in New York City to COVID relief. So this is a great example of how transparency in your website can really translate into people wanting to support you. If you're doing something to support others. If you're doing that goodness, let people know how their dollars and their purchases are actually supporting COVID relief efforts. This is a great example of how they are lifting others up and bringing people together right now. So it encourages people to make purchases and feel better about their purchase, because they know it is going to something that is helping others.

So let's talk a little bit about how to engage on social media during this time. Again, we want to keep in mind that heartfelt sentiment. This isn't time for a selling tonality, but really about helping customers through it.

So, one of the great best practices is to pin the most important post at the top of your Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Instagram doesn't allow you, but Facebook and LinkedIn does. A lot of businesses leave older posts penned at the top of their pages, which can leave customers confused or searching for a status update. Again, this is where you want to make sure they know if you are open, what your new hours are, how they can purchase from your business in this time. This is a great example out of Illinois. Shampooches, which was a business we featured in season three of "Small Business Revolution". Her post shows that her business is not open, but letting customers know that she will reach out to reschedule appointments. So right away, when people come to your social profiles, you want to make sure you are updating them and pin that post, so it is the first thing they see. So as you continue to add content, that most important communication is staying at the top.

Since you can't pin a post on Instagram, the best practice on Instagram is to update your profile description. A great example, Glam Doll Donuts, one of our experts for season five. They have updated their Instagram profile description to clearly state they are open for take-out and curbside pickup at one of their two locations. They are being very clear on where to do that and instructions on how to order and where to order, with a link to their site. They are also doing a great job of creating demand and urgency, by saying that they are selling out Sundays. So it is great to make sure that you are updating, again, that profile description to let your customers know your COVID status right away when they come to that social platform.

It is great to create content that keeps your audience engaged. So, you know, Pizazz Art Studio on the left typically offers classes to adults and children, but are offering classes online for kids stuck at home who need activities and creative outlets. As their parents need that for them, as well. And teaching them about the history of artists and how to guidance. It is a great time to experiment with different guidance. Make sure you are publishing regularly. You know, all of her online video tutorials for kids, she posts them regularly. Crayola has even featured her because of this, so you never know where you will actually get picked up by creating really great content. So while the studio is just doing this to be helpful and supportive in a time of need, this will ultimately help drive class registrations when their studio reopens and as they start offering and monetizing classes. People will be reached, because they are expanding their reach right now and building followers during this difficult time. Really think about great content you can continue to put out on your platform, to keep your audience engaged during this time.

Another great way to use social media is to stay on top of messages that you received from customers, especially if they are inquiring about whether or not you're still open as a business. This is Bob and Allison from Annabella's Italian restaurant in Pennsylvania. They are one of the businesses that we helped in season two of the "Small Business Revolution". They did a great, heartfelt video, right to camera , talking about their status as a business. How you can order from them and most importantly, thanking customers for supporting them. It is very heartfelt. You feel as a customer that you are very much in the know. This is why it is so important to ensure that your social channels make it clear, again, how to buy from you during this time and recognize that you're still open and that you are communicating with them directly. While your website, again, is a different place to do it, this is a great example of how social media allows you to get that direct communication out, right away. It will also help reduce the number of westerns you received, if you are being proactive about communications around the business. So they started to also do family dinners. People can pick up family dinners. They are being very clear this video about how people can make those family dinners, how many it will serve and giving customers quick answers, that will likely result in a purchase and make it more clear to customers how they can continue to buy food from the incredible Italian restaurant.

It is also really great to let customers know if you're offering has changed. Pizza Luce is a great pizza chain. The CEO is also an expert in season five, working with Nina's pizza in New York. Again, because of the Minnesota changes and updates, they are now able to sell curbside beer and wine, due to these updated regulations. So it is a very important update, because it is new to the state. It is a perfect opportunity to post content for their followers. Not only does it give them great content and renewed messaging to their customers, but it will drive the purchases around it, as well. Make sure you're using social media to let them know if you are changing your menu, expanding your offerings or adding new items for sale.

Another thing that is really important for small business, always, but specifically in this time, is to update your directory listings. Making sure you are thinking through everywhere that your business is showing up online. We talked about your website, social media and then directories are really important. Making sure you are updating your business listing, yelp listings, in a directory that your business is listed on. Make sure you update your hours and status of operation. This is a small business in Minneapolis that has a few salons, where I normally get my hair done. The CEO of Haus is also an expert for season five and working with the hair bar, in Sedona, New York. They have updated their Google listing to reflect that they are temporarily closed. So Google my business, your listing allows you to update so much about it. It is important to make sure, again, your hours are updated, your status as a business is updated. If you have curbside delivery, take-out. That your social media is all updated.

Again, the search engines will award your site more favorably if the information is consistent across everywhere you are listed, amongst the directories. It is so key. So Om Nohm, the gluten-free bakery I referenced earlier, has adjusted their days and hours. They are still open, but the Google my business listing reflects that information to let customers read away know that they are not seeing old hours. Making sure again, that your hours are updated. Making sure you have claimed that listing, as well. If you haven't claimed your listing, but notice your showing up, make sure you have claimed that listing.

Make sure you are updating around things like dine in and take out and delivery statuses. So it is important to have your hours accurately updated, so customers don't have a poor experience. In this case, we aren't sharing the name of the business, but this is a coffee shop that indicated they are available for take-out, win in actuality they were closed, so we want to make sure we are awarding customers with a good experience. If they go through the effort of trying to support you, we want to make sure that you are accurately depicting whether or not you are open for dining, take-out or delivery and those are updated.

Also, use Google to post COVID updates and events or offers. This is Whilma's Filipino Restaurant in Arkansas, a business featured in season four of "Small Business Revolution". They are doing a great job of, right away, posting that update on their directory listing. So Google allows you to put a post right on your listing, letting customers know about COVID updates and offers. In this particular case, Whilma's Filipino Restaurant was able to post updated hours, details about their menu availability. And again, being clear about how to order. In their case, they want people to call to make those orders. They are being very clear about it, so when people come to their directory listings, they know how to order.

Also making sure you are updating images within your listing and reflecting, you know, in this particular case, Piece of Cake moving and storage did a great job showing employees wearing masks, for safety protocols, to really ease customers through a visual depiction of how they have made those changes to operations. This is a listing on yelp and they are again, showing images of how they are helping people safely move in this time.

Also update your customers via email. Email marketing is a great way to normally stay in front of your customers, but specifically right now. The Minneapolis Institute of Art is doing a great job of updating customers through emails. Make sure you have an opt in on your website where customers can subscribe to your email list and you can keep them informed. They are being very clear within their emails they are sending out to customers that they are temporarily closed and they have a COVID banner on their homepage as well. Email marketing is a great way to stay in front of your customers and let them know your status as a business.

And share how you've adapted to continue to offer services. This is a great example of an interior design firm who previously wasn't offering virtual design, but is now. They sent an email to customers explaining how that process would work, linking to their website, and making sure it was an opportunity for them to quickly update around fees and the process for virtual decorating. So if you are offering percentages off, free shipping, a sale. Anything. It is a great opportunity to stay in front of your customers.

And make sure you are informing your audience of upcoming events. Whether or not those are going to be online or you are pushing out events to the fall or the following year, making sure you are being very clear about that. So on the right-hand side, they have pivoted to offering virtual sessions for a fee. Sessions around things like how to manage COVID burnout or mindfulness and meditation classes. So this is just a really great way, again, or a great thing, to update your customers on things like events.

It is a great time for nonprofits to be asking for donations. Now is the time to ask, without being nervous about it. People who can donate, will. This email is from an animal adoption center asking for donations to help reach their goal to stay in business. They are being very honest about how difficult this time is and how important their mission is. You know, they are also encouraging people to adopt a pet and being clear about how to do so safely and why this is a great time to do so. If you are a nonprofit, this is a great opportunity and time to stand for your customers. Don't be afraid to ask for donations during this time.

Let your customers know if you are having a sale. It is a great way if you have a percentage off for free shipping. Again, making sure you are making the code very clear when the offer expires, but use email marketing to get back in front of customers and hopefully incentivize and remind them to support you.

You know, share what your brand is doing during this time. I think it is really important. This is an example from Dave Puente Photography, doing the portrait project we were talking about. In this case he is sharing his story and encouraging donations to the GoFundMe link we set up for him. So it was a great opportunity not only to get back in front of his customers and have a brand touchpoint, but it encouraged customers to support that work he is doing. So if your brand is doing something special in this time, giving back in a special way, it is a great opportunity to utilize your email list talk about that with customers.

Also utilize it to provide COVID related resources. Make sure those resources are relevant to your brand and the kinds of resources people would expect of your brand in the category you are in. But this is a great example of a local creative agency that is offering workshops and classes and creative speakers and is just offering relative content, like how to sew your own facemask. Working from home. And free children's books to download. It is true to their category, but resources beyond what they are normally selling and thinking through the customer experience and how you can be helpful to them during this time with something like resources.

And then audit all of your other touchpoints. Think through, is your voicemail updated? Make sure your outgoing message and hold message reflects your current status as a business. Think through the script we used to talk about how we are operating in this time. Make sure you are checking voicemail. People are trying to support your business. Make it as easy as possible for them to do so.

Also make sure you have signage. If you are a brick-and-mortar storefront, you are using creative branded banners and signs and phraseology to make sure that people know that you are still open. Making sure that it indicates clearly, at a quick glance, whether or not you're still open and how they can purchase from you. Whether it is your hours, website or phone number, to call. A lot of businesses say curbside available, with their website on it or a phone number. It is really great when people are actually out driving around, that they recognize that they can still order from you, and not just wonder whether or not you are open.

Cirilli, Leo's grill and malt shop in Minnesota has signage there in this example around online ordering. How curbside works and what hours they are available to do it.

So again, those are some tips. It is really again about communicating with your customers during this time. It is about making sure that you are utilizing all communication touchpoints. Your website, social media, your directory listings. You know, print, signage in your front windows, and making sure you are getting in front of customers. Encouraging them to continue to buy from you, but making that is easy as possible for the way you are communicating. Again, people want to support small businesses. So let's use marketing communications to make that as easy as possible.

And as I mentioned, the "Small Business Revolution" series, we are in the midst of filming season five. It will air this fall, in November and it will take place in Sedona, New York. In the meantime, you can go back. Great contact to be binge-watching. On Hulu and Prime Video, the previous four seasons are available and we would encourage you to follow Deluxe and "Small Business Revolution" on social media for additional resources.

So, thank you for your time. I would love to connect with you, as well, so you can connect with me at @amandakbrinkman on all the platforms. I am happy to connect with you there, as well.

Thank you, Amanda. We will go ahead and move into the Q&A portion of this live webinar. We will use the remaining time to address as many audience questions as possible in the time remaining. We have a lot of really great questions coming in, so we will jump right to them. Amanda, this first question comes to us from Dawn, wanting to know regarding an economic downturn, if you can advise, the primary focus, to efficiently reduce cost, while at the same time increasing satisfaction levels amongst your current customers?

Yeah, so again I think it is a great question. It is about, again, figuring out, you know, what does your business do really well and what does the situation ask for when you think about it through the lens of your customers. Thinking about what you sell and again, how and where you sell it. We are not only seeing small business utilize this time to really get focused, but to think about, you know, shedding those additional distractions. Whether it is an idea that hasn't really taken off for it is a new product line that has not been successful. This is the time to shed those things and get laser focused on the ways in which your business can make money today. Nobody predicts this will be the most profitable quarter or month for small businesses. Right now it is really about figuring out how you can continue to stay in business. How you can continue to survive. How you can keep your employees on staff, if possible. So it is really figuring out what about your business could you still be doing and how could you be continuing to bring revenue through it, but all while modifying, again, the way in which you do it. We are seeing a lot of businesses, again, figure out new things that are actually going to stay with their business. So there is a great performing arts studio outside Atlanta that I was speaking with the other day, Forsyth Academy, and they started to offer, you know, dance lessons online. This isn't something she was doing before, but she has actually dramatically expanded her addressable market by offering these classes online. She has seen people sign up from California to New York, to Wisconsin. Previously she could really only offer her services to those within a drivable distance of her studio. She now can charge for these classes and bring in people from across the country. Now she feels like she will continue to offer online classes, even after in-person classes are possible again. So looking at your business and figuring out, are there things you could be offering to customers that you might actually end up keeping? And this is a great time to be creative about those solutions and they may actually lead to growth in the long-term.

Amanda, that was a great answer and example, for many of the questions that we have received during today's webinar, pertaining to service-based businesses. Also we have seen questions come in around B2B businesses and asking if strategies presented on today are applicable or are there different strategies that should be considered for those types of businesses?

There are three trends we are noticing right now. One, small businesses, the ones that are thriving and surviving right now are those that, again, as I mentioned before, I really getting focused and figuring out, how do they make money, how do they survive and how do they pivot their business model? The second is that small businesses with goodness baked and are better set up to succeed. And the third thing, businesses using marketing technology during this time of figuring out how to still reach the customers. So having that consistent presence, having your website, social media, listings and email marketing all in conjunction is a best practice for small businesses, always. But regardless of sector, all of these ideas apply. You really have to make sure that your website is updated and reflects your current status as a business, whether you are B2B, retail, restaurant. Any business should make sure that their online presence is followed and that we are making it very clear to customers how to buy from you in this environment. Again, social media and directory listings apply to any sort of business. And email marketing is a great tool, again, whether you are B2B or retail, it is a great way to stay in front of customers. In the B2B space, if it is a longer sales cycle, we are just noticing it is best to get back in front of prospects to check in with how they are doing. This might not be the time that you try to continue to push a sale or a lead, but people will remember your kindness in this time. If you have a longer sales cycle, the first outreach should maybe be just checking in on how customers are doing right now, rather than trying to sell and in subsequent conversations you can help them address your needs. But right now I think people are just hungry for connections and small business, whether B2B , can offer that and can offer that through communications.

Okay, Amanda, we have had many questions coming in, as well, around websites and what if you don't currently have a website? Should you go ahead and start developing a website? How do you do so, at a low cost, and are there alternatives if you just don't have the funds to create a website?

Absolutely, 100%, every business needs a website. You know, if you do not have a website, you're not alone. About half of the businesses in 2020 still don't have a website. They rely on a social media page or something else to keep customers informed, but this is the time to make sure you have a website. I think of anything this crisis is showing us, it is how important that online presence is and even if you don't build out e-commerce, you don't have to go all the way to building out a site where people can order from you online, but you at least need to have what we call a billboard site that allows you to capture that search value and allows a landing place for people to understand how do support you in this time. There are a lot of really great, free resources out there. Deluxe has a website. We can build websites. We can help you build a website. You can do it yourself. There are a lot of website platforms out there that there is not a charge for. So right now you need to build a website, absolutely, as a business. You know, this is a great time, when you have a little bit of extra time on your hands, to be building that website and making sure that online presence has been built out. So yes, 100%, make sure you build the website. Customers need to be able to find you online and the website is the best place for you to do that. Not just relying on social media platforms, but having a site, as well. Again, you don't have to build out a robust experience. It is really about having a couple of pages again that are clear about your hours, how to contact you, what your status is right now, what you sell. Special offers. It is just a really effective communication tool to use for customers.

All right, Amanda, the next question comes to us from Laura. It is kind of a combined question, actually. Laura is asking if your business delivery mode has always been online, is it redundant to remind people that you are online and involved in personal exposure? In the second part to this is, how do you really stand out amongst everybody that is going online? How do you make yourself stand out?

That is a great question. Yes. It is absolutely a great time to remind people. Maybe your customers didn't realize that you are completely online or not, but good for you that you are already ahead of the curve. So many businesses are having to try to catch up, so definitely make sure you are back out in front of customers, reminding them that they can buy from you online and how easy you can make that, because this has been your model. Definitely leveraging that. The best way to stand out is to utilize other platforms and make sure your website, that you're constantly thinking through the SEO experience. So making sure if you don't have a FAQ, making sure that all of the keywords and metadata on your site is capturing the keywords around how people might be searching not just for your business always, but specifically in this time. Especially if there is something around the experience that would be COVID related, like the example I gave with the golf course. So, definitely. Then using social media to push it out. Social media can be a great way if you are doing really fun content, with a call to action to your site. If the content is fun enough that people are sharing it or asking customers to share it on your behalf, it can be great. Doing an Instagram post a Facebook post, you are posting something that will really resonate with the audience. Asking them to tag a friend who needs that service or tag a friend who you think is doing a great job at X, Y, or Z. Drive engagement and think through how people can be sharing your content online for you.

All right. So those are all the questions that we have time for, to take during the live webinar. If we did not have a chance to address your question during this live session, I would like to recommend a couple of different options. One, we recommend getting real time mentoring assistance in a brand-new, virtual environment that SCORE launched last week. This is a free, virtual online meeting place, where business owners can go to get questions answered and advice by professional, certified SCORE mentors, who are ready and available to address those simple and more in-depth questions. That environment is open right now. So leaving this webinar, you can hop over there. If you visit the real time mentoring COVID-19 resources tab at the top of the screen in this web platform, you can access a registration link there. Or at a later time today, you can go directly to score.org/find-mentor and you will get the information to join there, too.

As a reminder, a link to the recording of this webinar and the slide deck will be sent to all participants, going out any postevent email. It includes Amanda's information, as well, that you can reach out to with questions or for assistance. Or contact Deluxe Corporation, as well. Forgetting those additional questions and ask for further assistance.

On behalf of SCORE, I would like to thank you all so much for taking time out of your day today and attending today's session. I would like to give a very special thanks to Deluxe Corporation for sponsoring this webinar and to Amanda Brinkman for presenting with us again. Amanda, thank you so much. We are truly grateful for your time and excellent presentation today.

Thank you. Can I just say one more thing, really quick?

Absolutely.

So I would just say my overarching piece of advice, too, is you didn't start your business because you are weak, you started your business because you are strong and you had an idea. These times are crazy, but you will get through this. You will be creative, you will be nimble, you will figure it out. The entrepreneurial drive that caused you to start this business and has allowed your business to be successful to this point will be the same thing that will carry you through. So we are all thinking of you and we know that you will, as business owners, do a good job and will rise to this occasion and survive.

Okay, well, thanks again, everyone. We appreciate you being here. We look forward to seeing you back next time. Have a great rest of your day and take good care.

[Event Concluded]