

Crisis Management Plan: Strategies on Navigating a Business During Disruption

How to Adapt Your Business During Disruption

Shift Your Marketing Strategy

- **Online Content:** Develop interactive online content that resonates with your target audience, such as webinars or live broadcasts.
- **Web Chat:** Enable web chat to answer customer questions immediately and prepare customer support with the most up-date-answers on business operations.
- **Online Communities:** Create online communities for customers to discuss creative ideas for navigating through crisis, such as Facebook groups or custom Slack channels.
- **Event Strategy:** Find alternatives to your event strategy by hosting virtual events.
- **Thought Leadership:** Turn the focus inward - deliver content from your organization's thought leaders on navigating through disruption.
- **Promote Resources:** Focus on promoting resources that will help inform your clients of best practices/tips, rather than promoting your own products/services.
- **Be Innovative:** Encourage your team to be innovative - there's no better time to try something new!

Create a Communications Plan

1. Break out key audience groups and tailor your messaging to these segments.
2. Create personalized outreach that matches your customers' purchase behavior and calls them by name.
3. Ensure your communications are empathetic, but don't negatively impact your organization's reputation.
4. Train company executives on fielding questions from the media.

Shift to More Creative Communication Styles

- Your customers are likely experiencing a high volume of emails from every brand and many messages will go unread.
- Update your customers through social media, such as status updates, original posts, live streams, and Instagram Stories.
- ‘Pin’ the most imperative information to your social pages so customers see it first.
- Consider live broadcast formats to directly engage with customers and open the lines of communication even further.

Adjust Your Sales Strategy

- **Build New Prospect Lists:** Invest this time into researching and building a new network of prospective customers so you can hit the ground running once operations fully resume.
- **Develop Sales Processes:** Start developing sales processes to target your new pool of potential customers after the crisis is over.
- **Reposition Your Business:** Re-adjust your current positioning to resonate with potential prospects during disruption.
- **Build Trust:** Sales teams should focus on empathetically managing relationships and building trust with current prospects to prove credibility and increase interest in purchasing after the crisis.

Continue Innovating Digitally

- Organizations that focus on reinventing their digital playbook during times of crisis will come out on top.
- Continue to focus on digital innovation to set your company up for success in the market post-crisis.
- Ensure engineering teams have tools and resources in place to continue scaling digital innovation efforts during remote work.
- Invest this time to research more ways to build on your digital initiatives.

Today, with 80% of revenue growth hinging on digital offerings and operations by 2022, IT leaders should continue transforming their operating models. **(KPMG)**

Quick Tips on Adaptation

Quick Tips

- Update your business hours across websites, local listings, and social media.
- Evolve and offer your services digitally, if possible.
- Communicate with customers frequently by providing new information about your business across all channels.
- Train all employees on empathy cues to effectively communicate with customers and prospects.
- Provide employees with the resources necessary for remote work.
- If you work in an essential business, prioritize your employees safety and well-being.
 - **Example:** adjust hours for staff to stock shelves/clean stores, and increase breaks from normal frequency for mental and physical well-being.

Empower Your Customer Experience Team(s)

Fine-Tune Your Customer Experience (CX) Strategy

- **Increase engagement with your customers.**
 - If possible, interact face-to-face over video conferencing tools.
 - Conduct longer check-ins than usual and allow for unstructured conversation, brainstorming, and time for customers to talk through their frustrations.
- **Prepare CX teams for changes in customer needs.**
 - Ensure your CX team has solutions in mind for their customers as their expectations and needs will likely shift during disruption.
 - Offer free trials or products, payment plans, etc. to reduce churn.
 - Work with marketing teams to create online resources for your customers.
 - Be proactive with sharing any new, useful information that could be helpful to your customers.

Take Your Customer Experience (CX) Data and Turn It Into Actions

- Research ways your customers are being impacted and build customer scenarios based on data you have access to.
- Utilize your CX data to analyze your customer journey and make changes to adapt to disruption.
 - Look for trends in sentiment, engagement, and common customer service questions.
- Improve critical areas of your business that are shown to be lacking according to insight from your data.
- Continue to analyze CX data closely during crisis and make changes to the customer journey as you learn more about customer needs and expectations.
- Work with marketing to create collateral that speaks to any specific area customers need support in based on these data trends.

Maintain a Healthy Brand Reputation

Strategies for Humanizing Your Brand During Crisis

- Offer discounts to your customers, if possible.
- Be empathetic in all communication.
- Host your resources for free to the public.
- Help your community in times of crisis through donations or creating resources.
- Take care of your employees during this time; they are your front-line brand advocates.

Plan for the Future

Prepare for Post-Crisis Market Changes

- The market will be different after major disruption and companies should plan to expect drastic changes.
- Companies should conduct a business impact analysis to assess potential risks and strategize solutions to market shifts that may occur post-crisis.
- Utilize customer feedback to help infer what the future of your business should look like.
- It is likely customer needs will change post-crisis; it is vital for businesses to be prepared for these shifts in customer expectations from their business/product/service.