



Restaurant Action Plan

If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take during this time, use this guide to get you started. Here's what we'll cover:

Keeping safe

- Protecting yourself
- Protecting your customers

Assessing and generating solutions

- Identifying short-term modifications
- Starting to think long term

Adapting and overcoming

- Converting to digital solutions
- Putting a plan into action

Staying in contact

- Updating your communication channels
- Reaching out to customers

Marketing during this time

- Being sensitive and respectful
- Gauging the appropriate path

Planning for the future

- Thinking ahead
- Using what you've learned



The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic is changing the way we all do business. There is much we still don't know about how this situation will play out.

As this unprecedented crisis continues to evolve, many small business owners are wondering how to minimize losses, and what steps they can take to protect their businesses.

Small business owners are some of the most resourceful and resilient people we know. And now's the time to lean into that resourcefulness, make a plan, and get to work. If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take, this guide will serve as a good starting point.

Let's take a look at some ways that you can take stock of the situation, generate solutions, and take action to protect your business.

As you know, things are developing rapidly. Remain flexible to make changes on the fly.

Remember, you've got us and can get [Constant Contact Help and Support](#) when you need it.



Safety First

Your first priority is to make sure that your family, staff, and especially yourself, are safe and safeguarded, to the best of your ability.

Next, make sure that you're doing everything you can to safeguard your customers.

Implement [CDC-recommended precautions](#) in your business as soon as possible. Among the most important recommendations are:



- Actively encourage employees, especially those who are sick, to stay home.**
- Implement systems that allow them to work from home if possible.**
- Emphasize the importance of cough and sneeze etiquette as well as hand hygiene within your business.**
- Perform routine, thorough environmental cleaning.**

Once you've done what you can for everyone's health and safety, it's time to figure out how this situation may affect your business.

It's likely you're already feeling the impact. In any emergency, large or small, you'll often have to assess and reassess to generate solutions because things are always changing.



Note: Since this is a rapidly moving situation, the guidelines set forth by your local health officials should take precedent when deciding what precautions to follow. ([Find resources for your state here.](#))

Assess and generate solutions

Since there are a lot of unknowns, it's important to think about various possibilities and what you can do to adapt to them. The problems you face will vary depending on the nature of your business, and so your solutions will vary too. It's important to look at the questions directly and make a plan based on what you're able to do. Below are some examples of things you may need to consider.

You may want to write things down as you think through these questions and your answers. It'll help you formulate your action plan.

What if you end up short on staff?

- Think about reducing your hours or days that you're open.

What if you have a problem keeping certain ingredients or menu items in stock?

- Check your supply channels to find out how long it will take to get new stock.
- Think about limiting your meals to reflect the ingredients you are able to receive during this time.

What if you get sick?

- Designate someone else to be in charge of the daily operations.

What can you do to help your staff?

- Can you continue to pay them if they can't come in?
- Do you have something you can give them to help them out?

What can you do to help your customers?

- Can you offer discounts so they can save money on meals?
- Be transparent about your day-to-day operations and what you're doing to keep them safe.

What can you do to help your community?

- Do you have supplies that you can donate to the local shelter?



And at some point you may have to ask the bigger questions:

What if I have to temporarily close?

- Set up an online ordering system, if you don't have one already, to allow customers to purchase take out or delivery
- Communicate with your customers that you are closing temporarily so they will not be surprised if they try to stop by

Is the “temporary” plan you put into place sustainable? If so, for how long?

- If not, are there things you can do to adjust your plan so it will be sustainable?

What if this lasts several weeks or months?

- How this would affect your family, as well as your staff and their families – can you help them in some way?

Are there any other resources available to you?

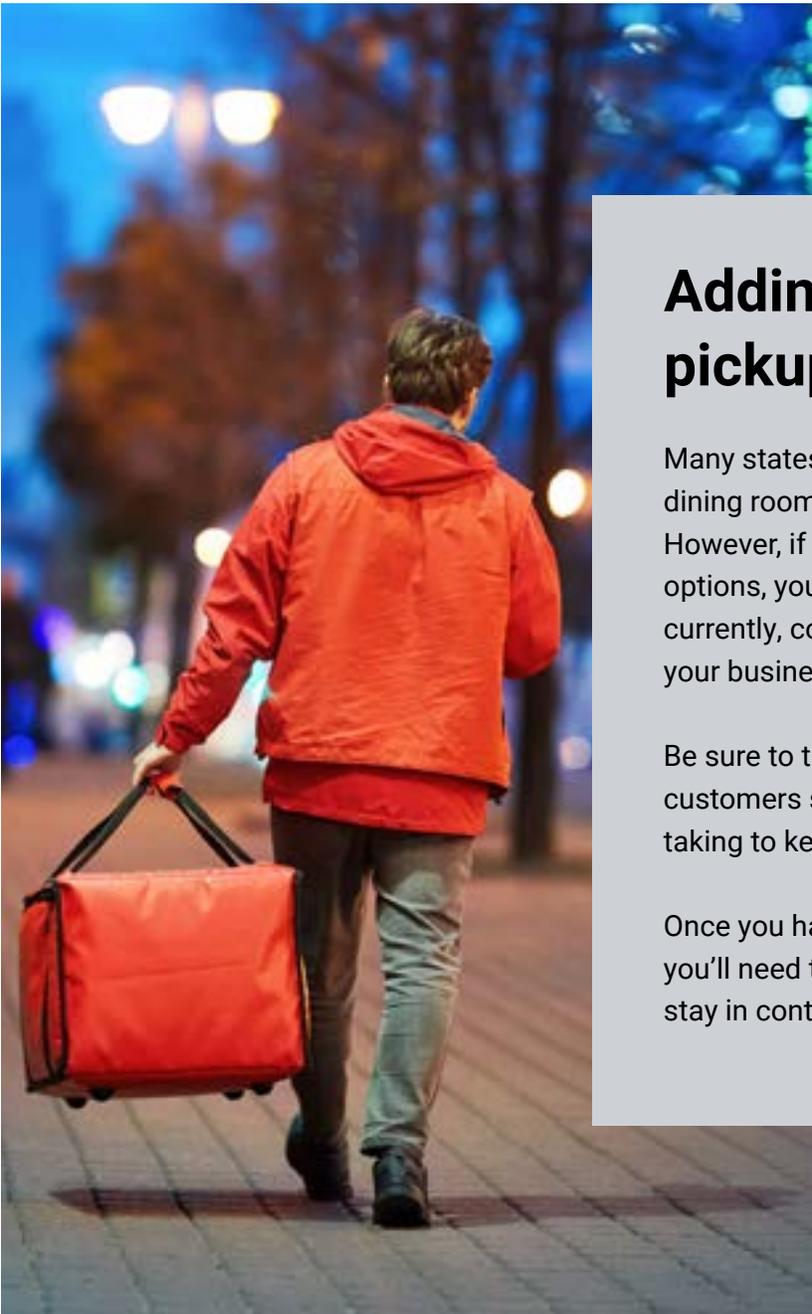
We've compiled a list of resources for you.

[Resources for Small Businesses Impacted by COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)



Adapt and overcome

Your “business as usual” may no longer exist. You’ll need to adapt to get through these trying times. Some things to consider:



Adding take-out, curbside pickup and delivery options

Many states have now mandated that restaurants close their dining rooms, as a result of inability to enforce social distancing. However, if your restaurant offers pick-up, delivery, or even curbside options, you can still do business in your community. If you aren't currently, consider whether adding options like this are feasible for your business.

Be sure to think through social distancing and keeping your customers safety in mind. Let them know what measures you're taking to keep them safe.

Once you have a game plan to adapt your usual business operations, you'll need to let people know about it. Read below for tips on how to stay in contact.

Offer the option to purchase gift cards or merchandise online

If you haven't been selling online, now's your chance to start. Your Constant Contact account comes with tools that make it quick and easy to start selling online, like shoppable landing pages or a full website with an online store. Our team would be happy to help you set something up if you need assistance.

While your restaurant may not offer physical merchandise, you still have a very valuable item to offer: gift cards. Consumers are eager to support small businesses in their communities through tough times. By offering gift card options on your website, you open the possibility of receiving crucial funds now for service in the future.



Offer DIY cooking kits

While your regular customers are at home, give them something to do. Consider offering a DIY cooking kit with ingredients such as pizza dough, sauce, cheese, and toppings to craft their own pizza at home. If you find yourself with an excess of certain ingredients, this is a great way to make sure they go to good use and it will leave a lasting impression on your customers.



Be the reason your customers smile today

We've seen many in the food service industry adapt by adding or expanding delivery options and providing take-out — complete with curbside pick-up. Be sure to think through social distancing and keeping your customers safety in mind. Let them know what measures you're taking to keep them safe.

Stay in contact

When you're constantly having to make changes to adapt to an ever-changing situation, it's imperative that you let your customers know what you're doing and when.

Keep your customers aware of any changes to day-to-day operations.

Be sure to include details your customers should know about, like your hours, product or service availability, and any precautions you're taking regarding the virus.

Consider the following tips to communicate the above information with your customers:



- Update your website.**
- Email your customers.**
- Post to social channels and pin those posts to the top of your feed if possible.**
- Update your details on your Google My Business profile and any other sites where you have a listing.**
- Hang signage in your windows and around the restaurant.**

It's also a good idea to review any communications you already had scheduled for their appropriateness and relevance based on the current state of affairs.

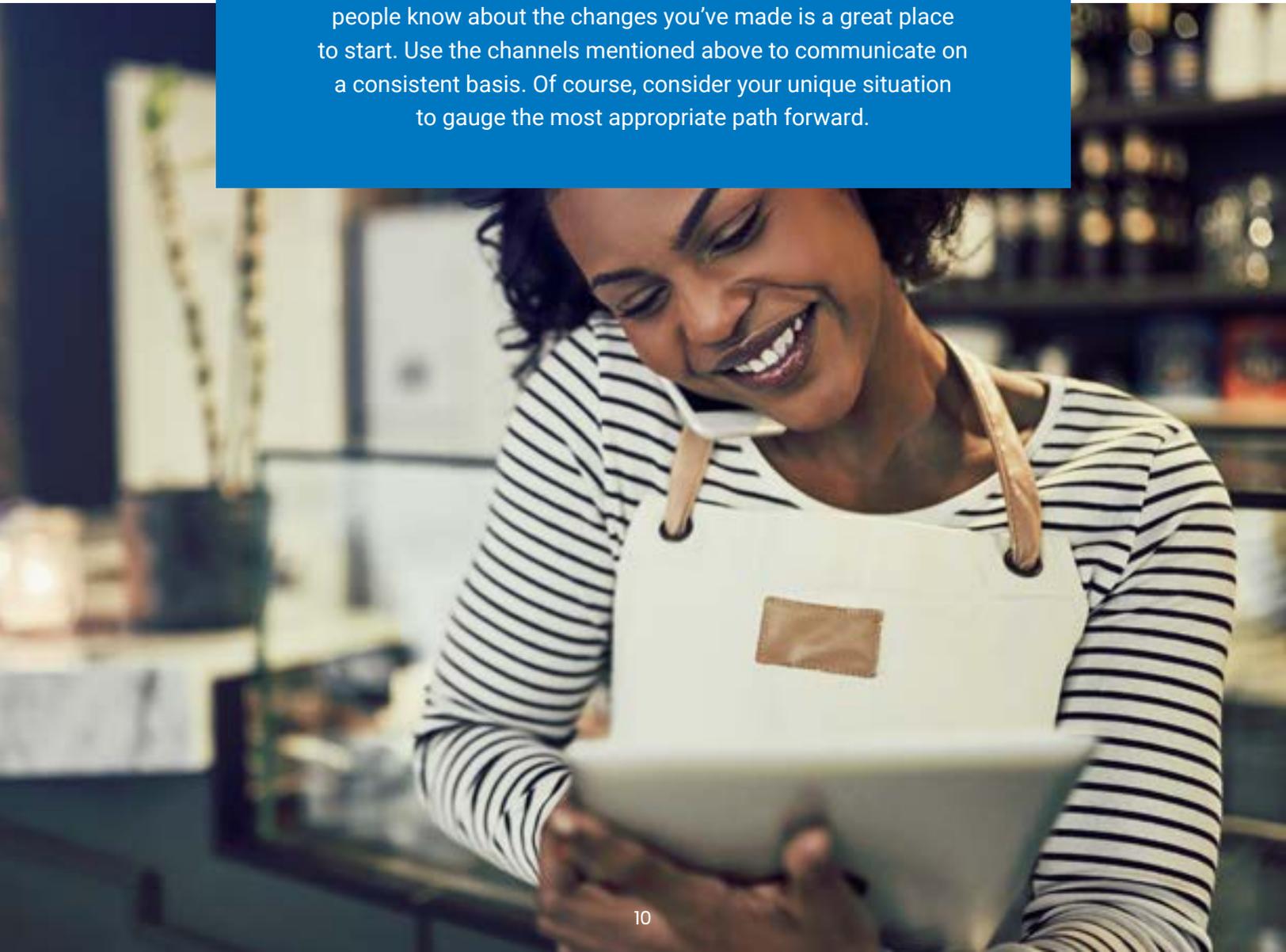
Remember, your Constant Contact account comes with tools to create a website, sell online, send email (including templates for you to communicate with your contacts about COVID-19 including tips on what to say), post to social media, and more. Need help? See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#).





Marketing during this time

Yes, it's okay to market your restaurant during this time. But you must be sensitive to the current situation and respectful of your audience and the situation they are also going through. Letting people know about the changes you've made is a great place to start. Use the channels mentioned above to communicate on a consistent basis. Of course, consider your unique situation to gauge the most appropriate path forward.



Plan for the future

Eventually, you'll need to transition back to business as usual. It's important to plan ahead. So, start making plans for what comes after the emergency.

Review the changes you've made and what you've learned, then think about how you can use that information to move forward.

What can stay?

Look for things worth making a permanent part of your business.



- Did the online store get more traction than you thought it would?
- Did having reduced hours turn out to be a great thing for you?
- Did pick-up and delivery add value to your business, if you didn't offer them before?

If so, don't stop just because the emergency is over. Keep them going and see if they're a good addition to your business long term.

What comes next?



- Do you need to reach out to your suppliers?
- If you've been closed, what do you need to do to reopen?
- How will you recall your staff? Will it be in stages or all at once?

These are trying times with many unknowns. By doing your best to stay safe, review your options, and make a plan you'll better position yourself to come out on the other side.



Remember, you are not alone

Our marketing advisors are here to help.

- Connect with other small businesses in the [Community](#)
- See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#)

You've got this. You've got us.

