

## MANAGING THRU THIS COVID19 CRISIS

Thank you for asking for this package of proven crisis tips.

As business owners, there are at least eight different areas we need to manage well. Here are some proven tactics that I swear by because I know they do work. (I used them in business thru wars, hyper-inflationary periods, drought periods, times when product lines and divisions crashed, catastrophic fires, Hurricane Katrina, SARS, when insurance companies refused to insure facilities and when fire Marshalls threatened to close us and even recessions and bankruptcy.) Plus I used some of them when dealing with family emergencies like attempts at suicide, multiple deaths and also recovering from two strokes five years ago).

Now you know why I am confident; there is something in here for every business and every situation. This list of tactics is by no means exhaustive, and I do not pretend that they will apply to every business in its entirety. But you should find at least a handful you can implement yourself. Immediately.

Your Mindset

Your Communication

Your Finances

Your Sales

Your Marketing

Your People

Your Technology

Your Sanity & Strength

For your productivity and efficiency, please consider developing a new schedule or daily process that you follow. Include time for exercise, taking a break from sitting at the computer, huge belly laughs, creative expression or personal hobbies, talking with family and friends and even downtime/tune out time just for you. Expect this to last through April and towards the end of May. Plan accordingly.

We are all just frail human beings. We are in this together. And we need one another.

Want to know more? Reach out to Charlene Norman at [www.Bulletproofconsulting.ca](http://www.Bulletproofconsulting.ca)

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### *YOUR MINDSET*

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1. There are no rules right now. We are all writing the rules as we go along. So be fearless in your thinking.
2. This time is when the best rise to the top. Be part of the best. Don't get left behind.
3. Lose all thoughts about fear of loss. Because those thought patterns never lead to healthy, growth-oriented decisions.
4. There are no failures right now—just lessons from losses.
5. Acknowledge your losses quickly. And move on.
6. Everything is simply (an awful) temporary situation. The only thing we don't know is how brief and fleeting it will be.
7. Try to keep calm. Emotion will do none of us any good. Stand tall, smooth and assured. Even if internally, you aren't quite there.
8. Believe you are strong and you WILL survive.
9. Acknowledge everyone you talk with where THEY are. Nobody is immune from the actions currently in place. Therefore, acknowledge the other person's fears AND efforts. Think 'be kind' at all times because none of us knows how bad the other person's situation is.
10. Nobody is alone in this. We are all in this together. We will only get out of this when we act together.

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### *YOUR COMMUNICATIONS*

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1. Be honest and transparent at all times.
2. Get comfortable saying: I don't know.
3. Let your human side shine.
4. Speak in realistic terms with a positive spin. Happy talk and feel good only works for a moment. The glass is neither half full, nor half empty. The glass is what it is.
5. Try to find a ray of hope. It is okay to start with a negative; however, always try to end with a positive flourish. (I.e. a lesson learned, an upbeat ending.)
6. There is a big difference between upbeat and happy!
7. When in doubt, think about the other person. They are very likely in a worse position than you.
8. Be honest and transparent at all times. Now is not the time to hide.

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### *YOUR FINANCES*

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1. Have you developed a strict barebones budget (household and business) that addresses the cash shortfalls you now have and dramatically scales back the expenses?
2. Put yourself on the financials and data diet. Now is the time to choose facts over fantasy. Pay very close attention to your numbers and cash flow.
3. Be guided by a solid financial deck. Cut back on all non-essential spending right now. There is no room for hype and hope.
4. While the government is doing their best to develop bailouts, it is our prudence and ingenuity that will win the day.
5. Before you lower your prices, carefully review your payment terms, possible dates, spontaneous discounts 'just because' and also be on the lookout for opportunities to move the terms to upfront before the work starts.
6. Contact your existing customers and be honest when you broach the topic of collections. Stress how much their business means to you and express worry about getting lost in the cash flow shuffle that EVERYONE is doing right now.
7. Review your contract language and decide whether or not you will honour the penalty clauses and full terms right to the letter. Or whether you will modify.
8. Move your "free" line. Now is the time to expand your audience base. One of the best ways to do that is giving away a good chunk of what you do FOR FREE. Hint: freely give away knowledge that is attached to services. Donate or give the product at cost.
9. Can you move some of your products and services online? If you say no, why NOT? The costs are not high, and nobody is expecting A1 quality right now.

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### YOUR SALES

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1. Sort your existing customer list into A, B and C clients. "A" clients are your best clients and the most affluent of all. The B level is where most of your clients will be. These are the ones that will try to keep you but at drastically reduced levels. And C are those terrible customers that are often not worth the hand-holding and hassle at the best of times.
2. Seriously consider firing the "C" level customers.
3. Reach out to every single A & B client, past and present and ask them how they are doing. (Yes, use the telephone!) Now is not the time for selling stuff; it is a time for bonding, strengthening relationships and demonstrating that you care.
4. The most significant part of those personal conversations is just to LISTEN. You listen and understand what is underpinning their lives right now. Perhaps you can help by putting them in touch with a contact you have. Maybe you can give them alternative ideas. Or possibly, the best you can do for them is to be a kind voice.
5. Establish and stick to a routine of outreach. Consider anywhere between three and six weeks as the starting point.
6. This is not the time to reduce your prices. Think smaller offerings. Think deferred payment terms.
7. If an existing A or B level client wants to cancel or delay, be sure to have an empathetic and compassionate discussion. Understand their point of view and try to uncover if there is an opportunity to offer them smaller, adjusted or even new opportunities.
8. Can you offer anything in any way that helps meet them where they are today? Many times, a smaller offering or a drastic scale-back of an option works very well.
9. NEVER leave one of these conversations without you both agreeing to a follow-up meeting date and check back in point for the following month.

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### YOUR MARKETING

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1. Multiply your marketing efforts by a factor of ten. This time is all about getting you messages out there. However, it is not for advertising. It is about waving your hand and saying I care!
2. Consider more (unpaid) activity on Instagram and Facebook and LinkedIn and perhaps twitter.
3. Now is the perfect time to start an email campaign. The point is to be front and centre so that when the damn breaks you are top of mind in THEIR eyes.
4. Keep producing or re-purposing fantastic value and stay in front of your customers. Because you want to build and cement relationships, stay top of mind – for the day that will come when things change in your favour.
5. At a minimum, review your current marketing messages. Does your messaging reflect the real value you bring to your customers? Change it if it does not. What I mean is get off the ‘this is what I sell’ boat. And get on the ‘my customers love working with me because I give them permanent results, I let them sleep better, I shave 25% of their expenditures, I keep their whatever safe, I give them the confidence they need to’.
6. If you have a bit of cash, hire or trade your services with someone who has a flair for copywriting. You want to pull the words, results and transformation you create out of you and onto paper.
7. Tag team with other business colleagues who have complimentary services to suit the circumstances of today. For example, cross-market with experts in your network for health and fitness, nutrition, yoga or meditation, comic or creative play expert. The pairings are endless.
8. Consider video, text, pictures, audio for your content. Experiment.

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### *YOUR PEOPLE*

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1. Remember your employees are going thru the same things as you. Let your compassion and empathy shine. Treat them like you would a family member.
2. Reach out to your key laid off people. Ask how they are, really listen and remind them that they are still important to you.
3. Ask your people – laid off or not – to give you lots of ideas to better serve your customers. Engage them in the process even if you can't pay them.
4. While I understand this does not occur with every market place, do your absolute best to pay them something for as long as you can because this new reality is not about making profit money. It is about getting through and helping as many as we can.
5. Working at home or in a remote spot, is the new normal for so many businesses. This requires two significant changes: reliable technology that supports collaborative teamwork and leadership focused on feelings and results. Change your words from 'are you done yet' to "how are you feeling" and "is that impacting your progress?"

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### *YOUR TECHNOLOGY*

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1. Investigate decent technology. Zoom, slack, free Gmail or Hotmail or yahoo are not the best if you have 3 or more people in your company. You want to focus on collaboration, reducing duplication and keeping your teams focussed and together. For you, I suggest you look at moving into the cloud. It is now that expensive and right now Microsoft is giving free six month try me out. Microsoft Office 365 is a pretty good reliable solution.)
2. Many of us have projects we will ultimately get to one day. Upgrade your software, learn how to do things on line, rebrand or refresh your website. You want to be seen and heard so right now is the perfect time to do so.
3. Back up everything you have, document all your passwords, develop a contingency back up plan. You have the time now.

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### *YOUR STRENGTH AND SANITY*

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1. Establish a new personal daily routine. Include time for exercise, taking a break from sitting at the computer, huge belly laughs, creative expression or personal hobbies, making memories with and talking to family and friends and even downtime/tune out time just for you.
2. Expect a worst-case scenario. Assume this will last through April and towards the end of May. Plan accordingly.
3. Now is the best time to upgrade your own game. Dig into all the areas you have consistently put off.
4. Use any downtime in the most productive manner you can.
5. The best defence is a potent offence. Acknowledge you don't know. Ask for outside help. Therapists might be in order. Business mentors might be in order. Now is the time to reach out to others who have weathered these patches and ask them for specific advice and suggestions.
6. Remember, every cloud has a silver lining. And while we can't always see it ourselves, others who have gone thru economic turmoil before can.
7. Nobody will get out of this untouched in some way. Count your blessings and be grateful.
8. We are all in this together.

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