Safe and Sound: How businesses can respond to the coronavirus

The recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus, also known as 2019-nCoV, has impacted businesses all over the world. Maintaining open lines of communication with customers is even more important during such periods of uncertainty. Facebook is committed to building meaningful connections between people and businesses and has launched quick guides to help businesses like yours. In this document, you’ll find strategies to stay connected to customers during this challenging time.
01 Keep yourself safe and informed

Stay up to date on the situation by monitoring official sources like WHO and your local government health department. It’s important to stay informed of any developments so you can respond quickly to changes that may affect you or your business.
Highlight important announcements

To proactively inform and educate your customers, consider creating an announcement post on your website, Facebook Page or Instagram Business Profile. You can pin important announcements to the top of your Facebook Page for ease of viewing.

Your post might include information about the measures you're taking to make your premises and products safe, as well as your approach to handling customer queries during this period. You can convey such information across various communication channels, including eDM and push notifications.
In case you should need to postpone or cancel any planned events as a result of the outbreak, you could consider using alternative channels for hosting or facilitating these events, while still keeping your customers engaged. For example, you could turn a physical workshop into an online webinar, or social media channels to organize live sessions. Learn more about hosting a Live session on Facebook or Instagram.
Respond to customer service queries

Equip your customer service team with guidelines and resources on how to best handle queries. Consider drafting template responses across eDM, Facebook Messenger, Instagram Direct and any other communication channel where your business has a presence.

It's vital to be responsive and to provide your customers with visibility and transparency during this period. Handling a high volume of inquiries whilst ensuring responses are timely and accurate is key. Learn more about managing Direct Messages on Instagram Direct, setting up your presence on Messenger and creating a WhatsApp Business profile.

Consider what information your customers will be seeking. For retail companies it may be about their orders; for events and travel businesses it may relate to cancellations; and for gyms, educational centres and other establishments that host groups, the information may be about refunds and membership pauses.
While the road ahead may appear to be a long one, we believe that we will be able to overcome the difficulties by banding together, staying vigilant and showing up for each other. We would like to remind everyone to stay safe, take sensible precautions and protect yourselves first and foremost. We are with you for the long term and are committed to provide proactive, responsive and real-time support and develop new solutions as this complex situation continues to evolve.

Provide clarity through FAQs

It’s a good idea to think about questions you’re likely to be asked and to prepare FAQ responses that provide as much visibility and reassurance as possible. We’ve compiled some common FAQs that may be applicable across industries:

Q: Can I cancel my order (e.g. travel tickets / educational programs / gym memberships)?

A: Of course. As part of calibrated responses to the evolving situation, authorities are considering applying additional measures to reduce human-to-human interactions, such as cancelling mass gatherings, suspending schools, and paring down non-essential care services. In line with these efforts, we will cancel your order / reschedule or cancel your trip / pause your membership on request.

Q: Is it safe to receive packages from China?

A: The health and safety of our customers and staff is our priority. According to the US Center for Disease Control & Prevention (US CDC), coronaviruses have low survivability on surfaces, meaning that there’s a very low risk of the virus spreading from products or packages shipped over a period of days/weeks. There is currently no evidence to indicate the coronavirus is transmitted via imported goods. For more information, please visit the US CDC website.