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How to Safely and Successfully Reopen Your Business Amid the Pandemic

Whether you closed your business or simply changed your approach during the pandemic lockdown, you are probably wondering how to reopen fully. It will be a while until things can actually go back to business as usual, but that's why you need a plan for helping your business navigate the rest of the pandemic. Below, find out what steps you can take to safely reopen and start drawing back your customers and clients.

Use Local Resources

There are a number of federal programs in place to help small businesses, but don't forget to check for resources close to home as well. For example, Small Business Trends notes that your local [chamber of commerce](#) can be a great place to go for guidance, information, connection and support. Other community organizations, such as [OrangeCelebration](#), can be equally helpful resources for businesses.

In addition to utilizing opportunities provided by local organizations, don't be afraid to [network](#) on your own with other small businesses in your area. Doing so can give you new ideas that you

might not have tried. Even if you see other businesses as competition, the pandemic has affected everyone, and you might be surprised to see how much value there is in reaching out to others who are in the same situation as you.

Implement New Safety Measures

One surefire way to bring back customers is to show them what you're doing to keep everyone safe. Your approach will depend on the type of business you have, but there are many ways to reduce contact and help your patrons maintain physical distance.

For example, providing a [contactless payment](#) method will give customers peace of mind when making purchases. Likewise, you can try repositioning displays, aisles, tables or chairs so there is more space between them. Installing plexiglass barriers in strategic places can be effective as well.

Implementing safety measures will likely cost some money, but it's important to think about the trust you will build with your customers. [Communicating](#) with your customers about what safety measures you are taking via social media, an email announcement or any other free or low-cost form of advertisement can help you mitigate the expense.

If you're stressed about how much it may cost to install safety equipment or implement new systems, help is available. The pandemic has resulted in [new sources of funding](#) for businesses, such as SBA Express Bridge Loans. However, traditional SBA loans are still available, as well as other government programs.

Try New Online Strategies

Many small businesses don't devote much time or effort to their online presence. If your business has always done well enough with foot traffic alone, there's nothing wrong with that. However, the pandemic has profoundly changed consumer behavior. Because many of these new shopping habits and behaviors will stick around after the pandemic is over, it's important that you think long-term with your approach.

If you don't already have a good website, now is a good time to consider building one or updating your old site. Even if you don't think a website would serve your business well, you might be surprised. For example, boutique stores that rely on foot traffic can expand their customer base by opening an [ecommerce store](#). Retailers that traditionally only served customers in-store can find success by offering a buy online, [pick-up in store](#) option. It means customers have improved convenience without paying hefty ship-to-home fees, and brick-and-mortars still enjoy a steady flow of income.

By using a website builder, you can make your own website without a ton of technical know-how. However, you can also hire a web designer to do it for you if you don't feel confident in your skills. Even if you take a DIY approach, creating a website requires a [small investment](#).

However, Constant Contact points out that there are countless more [reasons](#) why having a website will pay off in the long run, such as 24/7 contact with customers and the ability to have an online influence over how your business is perceived.

The pandemic is unlike anything we've experienced in our lifetimes, which means there's not a road map for success. Even businesses that have remained open throughout lockdown are facing their fair share of challenges navigating this new territory. Using resources in your community, improving your web presence and upping your safety protocols are just a few things you can do to make it through these challenging times.