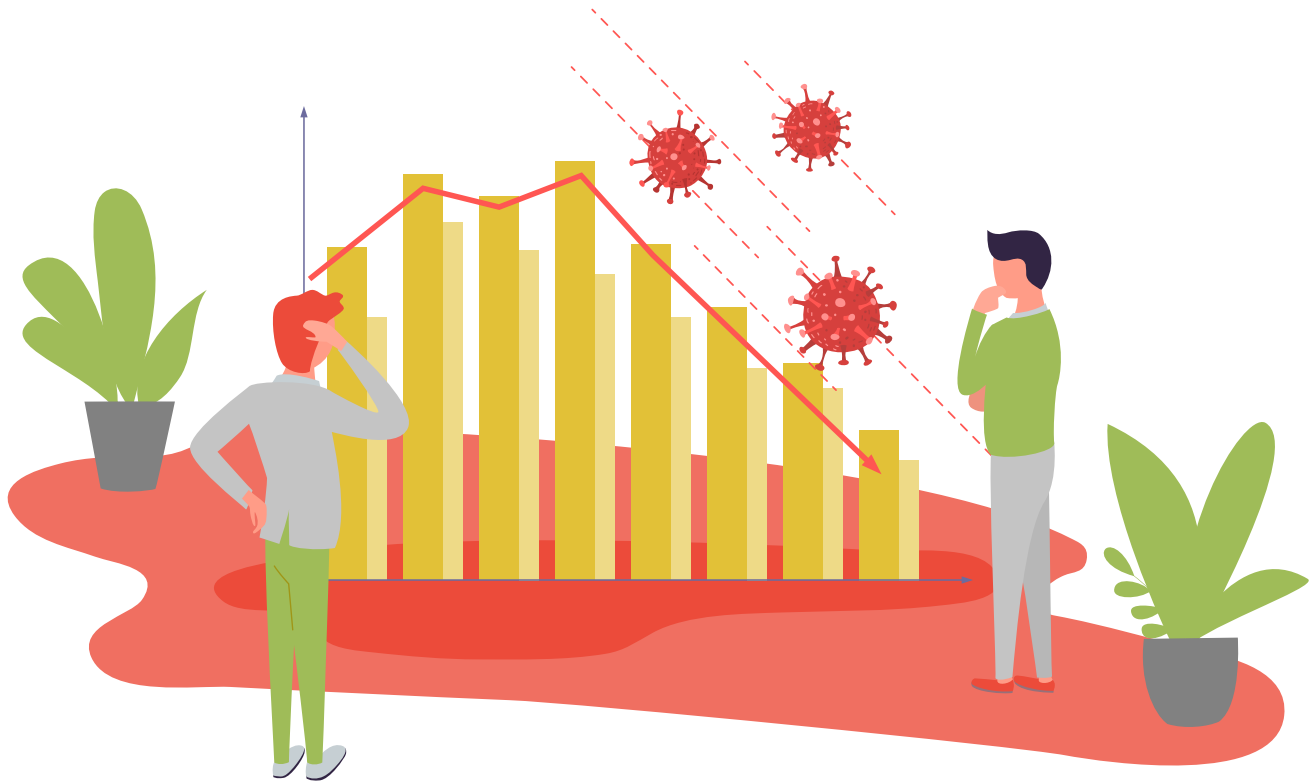


CallCare



**Building consumer confidence
in the post-pandemic era**



Introduction

With the global economy being affected by the coronavirus pandemic in ways that businesses could never have predicted, building a trusting relationship with customers is now more important for many companies than ever before. People's lives have been impacted greatly, leading to significant changes in how they think. As a result, many consumers are being more cautious in how they spend their money.

As we begin to emerge from life in lockdown, different industries will face various challenges along the way. Brands should identify short and long-term strategies they can adopt to reflect the changes in consumers' attitudes and behaviours. In this eBook, we take a look at the different strategies businesses can implement in order to rebuild consumer confidence and we turn to industry experts for their advice on how brands can adapt and succeed in a post-COVID-19 business world.

Customer experience

Consumers want to be heard and appreciated by brands, which is why it's vital that you prioritise customer experience and ensure your customers receive a prompt and helpful service to maintain a level of trust in your business.

The pandemic has left many people feeling anxious about the future, and this could affect how your brand is seen. A great way to formulate a post-pandemic strategy is to survey your customers to gain insights into any new habits they have adopted during this period, and to achieve a better understanding of these changing behaviours. Also, make sure you are always available for your consumers, as people take comfort in knowing help is at hand.

“ Don't let it get to the point of having to “rebuild” customer confidence is my main advice. During the COVID lockdown we rang everyone who had ever spent money with us (or planned to pre-COVID) to tell them to call us in a cybersecurity emergency, or if they needed advice. It's not something we charged them for. They are valuable to us and the advice given has been the occasional 25-30 minute phone call here and there. Think of ways to help them through this now. If you're in the business of sales, I'm afraid It's not about you, it's about them.

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- Eliza-May Austin, CEO & Co-Founder of th4ts3cur1ty.company

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/elizamayaustin/> <https://th4ts3cur1ty.company/>

Marketing

A strong online presence is crucial for any business, especially during these uncertain times. Websites that incorporate good SEO with informative and shareable content could see an increase in the number of visitors. A well-thought-out social media strategy can help to boost visibility and brand awareness and this is another way for you to share content that could lead to further engagement on your website.

Communicate with your consumers through email marketing and really think about what they want to hear. Are you still open for business? Will they experience delays? Are you making your services more accessible by offering discounts? These are things your customers will want to know and you can inform them via newsletters. Not only will this help to build a community but it can also fuel your brand's success.

“ There are several ways to communicate with your target audience online, from email marketing to PPC (pay per click), which is why the ‘place’ element of the marketing mix is just as important online as it is offline. You must know where your audience is in order to reach them. This means considering their interests to identify relevant websites and influencers. When you work with digital it can be simpler to monitor and retarget to your audience time after time, which means any effort you put in during the pandemic will not be forgotten when it is all over. In fact, you may find this strengthens your online presence as you climb up the rankings, build your character on social media and generally gain visibility.

- Sophie Edwards, Head of Campaign Outreach, Click Consult Ltd

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Advertising

Now is the time for brands to be sensitive and compassionate. Many businesses will need to adjust their tone of voice in order to convey the right message, while recognising and showing gratitude to customers. Brands that focus on pushing sales aggressively are unlikely to be well received at this time. Instead, inform consumers of the steps you are taking in the interests of public safety.

Budgets at this time will likely be limited, with brands having to prioritise and re-allocate to other areas. This will see a pivot to digital marketing, focusing on online advertising, social media promotions and influencer collaborations. In particular, influencer collaborations offer great value to brands, as this allows more product positioning and honest, genuine reviews at a time when they're needed.

Product and service offerings

Many industries are likely to be transformed in a major way post-COVID-19. Brands will have to adjust product and service offerings in order to accommodate these new consumer needs, whether that means moving your services online or finding a new purpose for your product. Ultimately, if your products and services are still needed, it could simply be a case of finding the best way to deliver them in order for your business to continue operating.

For many people, purchasing essentials continues to be a strong focus and brands may need to transform their products to ensure they fit in with this. Communicate with your customers to understand what it is they want and analyse current trends to develop or enhance your strategy.



Brand positioning

There's no doubt that the coming months, and possibly years, are going to be difficult for many businesses, but how you act now during these uncertain times could determine your brand's credibility. Help your customers wherever you can, whether that's offering discounts on your products and services, or by organising fundraisers with proceeds going towards those who need it most.

Approaching new customers is never easy as people tend to buy from brands they know and trust, which is why you need to build a credible reputation to position yourself among other trusted brands. Be transparent about your products or services, even if this means new leads may go to a competitor. Not only does this show you prioritise consumers' needs but it also demonstrates the honesty of your brand.

“ Many smaller businesses have had to pivot dramatically in these last few months. Their agility, transparency and social connection, often going that extra mile in terms of customer service, has brought convenience to the doors of their local patrons (and sometimes further afield) and increased brand loyalty. Buying from such retailers has given the customer not only a convenient, safe and friendly experience but also the feel good factor of supporting a local business. But as we nudge back to normality, or a 'new normal' what can bigger brands learn from these smaller companies?

Without a doubt customers will look at brands in a new way. They will pay more attention to what they consume and the consequences of their choices. They have enjoyed shopping local and while they will turn to bigger companies, any brand who can give assurances on provenance through transparent and friendly communications will lead. Customers should be given increased behind the scenes access and brands should let their personality shine through where possible, showing their human side.

- Sarah Duguid, Marketing & Branding Consultant

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Business strategy

We've seen a shift in many businesses being more empathetic and appreciative of employees, which is a good strategy to take into the post-pandemic era. Employees who are valued highly are likely to stay loyal, helping the company grow.

For some industries, the pandemic will alter operations and processes significantly, but by acknowledging this and preparing for the shift, you could put your brand in a better position. No one truly knows what the post-pandemic era has in store for businesses and you're not expected to get it right immediately. Stay resilient and learn to adapt to this new normal.

Future-proofing

It's vital for any business to always have a contingency plan in place as it not only protects company assets while reducing any inconvenience to customers, but it also allows operations to resume and recover as quickly as possible. The COVID-19 outbreak has shown that by having a plan in place, businesses can adapt and continue to operate to some degree. For example, switching to remote working has allowed many companies to continue functioning.

Strong communication is crucial for any successful business, whether that's keeping employees informed of updates and changes to the company, or trying to gain an understanding of consumers' wants and needs. Having strong communication strategies in place, not only helps to build relationships and trust, but it allows you to work together through challenging and difficult times. Moving forward, try to keep channels of communication open.



Building consumer confidence in the post-pandemic era won't be easy, which is why it's essential for brands to identify and implement short and long-term strategies like those mentioned throughout this eBook.

We hope that you can apply some of these strategies to allow your business to evolve and adapt during this period of transition.

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