

MARKETING DURING TIMES OF CRISIS

Running a manufacturing or distribution business during critically uncertain times includes crisis communication to employees and your customer base alike. At Full Gallop, we are advising our clients to review short-, medium-, and long-term strategies and tactics to break even. Right now, the goal should be to stay afloat, not to obtain high ROI.

Short-term Tactics

Be flexible in the short-term. Track all of your marketing activities closely to stay ahead of any abrupt changes. Now is not the time to abandon your entire strategy, as the need for brand visibility will only increase moving forward. Companies that understand this will be ahead of the pack as conditions begin to settle and improve.

- Data analytics will be your ally during this time. Be sure that your data is reliable and that someone is looking at your metrics on a very regular basis to get ahead of new trends.
- Digital and Search advertising - watch your costs closely. You may need to hit pause for a short time (2-3 weeks). This is a temporary adjustment. As nobody is able to predict what will occur in the current environment, keep ads running for products that are still moving or in high demand and hit pause and save dollars on the products that are not typically big sellers for now.
- SEO will continue to be necessary, and likely increase in importance, as the world moves further online over the coming months. Ways of making sales and creating business will rely less on face-to-face modes and more upon digital ways of finding solutions. Begin thinking about ways to structure your website and content that build trust and broader reach.
- Look for ways to add value quickly to your customers. Offering free shipping is one way to keep customer fees down for e-commerce brands.
- Expand your visibility by using social media. By adding new channels for sharing media, information, and immediate communications, you allow people to find you faster and get their data where they prefer. For optics and photonics businesses, this looks like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Set up a weekly editorial calendar to support your product lines and service messaging.

Medium-term Strategy

The goal here is to stay in business for the next 3-9 months. Continue to build through your marketing funnel by reviewing product lines that are still critical to market areas of life sciences, military, and aerospace. Review your strategy for the

next 2-3 quarters and look at adjusting for key product lines to remain front and center to keep up demand. Take advantage of PR to showcase what your products can do to support the current market shift. PR also adds to your SEO rankings and is often overlooked.

Focus on relationships with your existing partners, help them wherever possible. We will only get through this together.

Taking the long-term approach

As we do not currently know how long COVID-19 will be a factor or what the overall impact will be to our global economy, we do not recommend making any significant strategic changes at the time of this article.

Everyone is going through this together. Don't make any rash decisions, stick with data-driven changes, and stay calm. We will get through this. Remind your team that marketing will make the difference between long term success and failure.

Be smart, and stay safe.

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