

THE PURDUE LANDSCAPE REPORT

Managing your social media during Covid-19

By: Ariana Torres, torres2@purdue.edu



In a survey of Indiana produce growers conducted on April 2020, we found that 72% of them are planning to sell online. Their online strategy ranges from sales through emails, texts, e-commerce enabled websites, or online platforms that aggregate food vendors and buyers. The other 28% felt they lack the technical knowledge to transition online strategies.

If you are planning to integrate online sales, a good start is to have a plan to implement or boost your social media presence. Having a strong social media presence will help stay in touch with customers and maintaining and building relationships. This publication provides 3 steps you can take today to manage your social media marketing during social distancing times.

1. **Communicate, communicate, communicate**

Good and frequent communication with customers is probably one of the most important tasks you have right now. During normal circumstances, I would tell you to post a few times a week on your preferred social media platform. These posts will help you increase brand recognition, draw new customers, and improve loyalty. While these are still true, you may have to increase to daily posts to share frequent updates. Examples of your posts include changes in products or services, working hours, what measures are you taking to keep everyone safe, and instructions on how to place orders, pay, and pick-up or receive their orders. You would also want to proactively share important information

about your business and operations using other platforms such as emails, website, and mail marketing.

2. **Set up your page Inbox on Facebook**

As more people spend more time in social media apps, the importance of responding to comments, conversations, and interactions is key to tell your customers you are open for business. Setting up your Facebook Page Inbox allows you to read and respond to messages received via Facebook Messenger or Instagram Direct, as well as reply to comments and FAQ from your followers. A very useful tool of Inbox is to automate responses, especially to questions that come up frequently. You can customize Instant Replies to greet customers, give information about your business, or let them know that you will be reaching out soon.

3. **Take your events online**

As many events cancel due to social distancing, you can creatively turn lemons into lemonade. One example is to organize live sessions on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. If you want to create a more engaging experience, you would want to make sure that you are using a high-quality camera and/or microphone for your live sessions. You can also invite your followers to attend an online webinar and encourage speakers to check in with your attendees every 15 minutes. In addition to these virtual event tools, it is important to keep attendees engaged by using Q&As, chat boxes, and polling sections to keep your attendees attentive and feeling included.

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