

How Small Businesses Can Overcome the Omicron Era

Opinions expressed by *Entrepreneur* contributors are their own.

For small businesses, the rough news surrounding Omicron cases is hard to hear considering the hardships they have been dealing with for the past two years. While some small businesses received financial aid or PPP loans during the pandemic, many did not. This means the recent Omicron surge has continued to add to the widespread staffing and inventory shortages.

Around 70% of small businesses were financially affected by Omicron, according to a study by Goldman Sachs. Fortunately, there are a few options to help businesses bounce back. Firstly, businesses should research funding and loan opportunities available to them outside of traditional lending. Over five million new businesses started in 2021. Consequently, in 2022, these new small business owners' needs include raising affordable capital to scale their business, developing efficient digital marketing to get more customers, and most importantly, finding time to run their business.

How businesses can cope

Several companies will help entrepreneurs grow their businesses and offset the difficulties often associated with traditional bank lending.

Additionally, businesses can continuously highlight pandemic precautions within their staff to ease customer concerns. Careful customers who are already limiting their outside

exposure won't take the time to visit brick and mortars if they know they're not taking precautions against the virus. Businesses need to mask up, vaccinate or test their staff and keep the customers safe. Owners should tell their customers about the safety procedures they're implementing, both online and on social media, to keep them aware so they're comfortable enough to start shopping again.

Related: 3 Stocks Leading The Omicron Rebound

Optimize your digital presence

Next, develop and optimize a digital presence for your brand with social media and a website. Small businesses that didn't have an online platform before the pandemic are currently among those that are struggling the most or have already shut down.

Today, consumers are shopping online more than they are in person. Without an online presence or a way for customers to interact with a business online, these businesses are simply not on the consumer's radar. Additionally, social media can be a great tool for small business owners to communicate business changes with their audience, and there have been plenty of those opportunities during the pandemic.

There are more online steps that entrepreneurs can take to ensure better business practices. Owners can create an email list, but more importantly, they can pay attention to their SEO. Google My Business is a part of SEO, and those listings are more likely to attract local visits and increase a business's sales and web traffic. This also ensures that a business ranks at the top of Google keyword searches, increasing viewership and awareness.

Related: 2022 Grammys Postponed Indefinitely Due to Omicron Surge

Pay attention to community

In addition, small businesses should be aware of their current standing in the community. This can be as simple as online reviews. If customers see that a business hasn't responded to a negative review or any questions on social media, it could compel them to go somewhere else. Owners must be diligent about reviews and ensure that they have offered to help customer concerns in any situation.

Business agility has never been more important, and that's true for global industries. Small businesses that have fewer customers must take the time to ensure that each person who walks through the door, or shops online, is a recurring customer. Business owners need to provide great service and quality products during this economy, or they'll be left behind.

Small businesses need to lean on digital funding, marketing resources and effective communication with their customers online to ensure they thrive during this Omicron spike.

Related: 4 Ways to Lead Your Organization Through the Omicron Surge

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/417094>