Service Businesses Need a Digital Revolution: Here's How You Do It



September 18, 2020 4 min read

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Millions of people are now working from home, a number that skyrocketed in March as the current global crisis spread across the United States. Many businesses are realizing that remote work can still be efficient, sometimes even more efficient, than working in a physical office.

These benefits have led many companies to keep their employees working from home longer than originally anticipated. With so many people spending the majority of their time at home and avoiding physical interaction, service businesses need to adapt to how they reach current and new customers by getting

their digital affairs in order.

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Customers want to interact from home

The new normal for many people is less physical contact. People just aren't entertaining neighbors, throwing a few beers back at the BBQ and talking about who does their lawn.

So, how do you reach customers under this new paradigm?

George Kocher, CEO of Brand North, a digital growth consulting company, says "With customers at home, word-of-mouth referrals will start to decrease for the service sector as a result of unusual interaction. For this reason, it's more important than ever for service businesses to reach customers through new channels and streamline their purchase experience. The more friction, the less their service will be consumed by a work-from-home and millennial and younger generations that hate picking up the phone."

It's been documented that millennials are less likely to pick up the phone or request a call, for several reasons. If they can't find the answer from their own research, they believe it's easier to move on to the next issue rather than waiting for a call.

Traditional businesses have moved to remote operations

Traditional businesses that always had physical interactions with customers have seen their operations move to remote situations. This includes law firms and many other consultative service providers. Prior to the global crisis, it would have seemed a bit odd to hold a meeting with your

attorney to draft a will using Zoom or another video conferencing tool. But, ever since March, attorneys have moved their operations completely remote. This includes onboarding new clients, holding appointments, drafting wills, revising legal documents and much more.

There are hundreds of examples where businesses are going online and closing down brick-and-mortar locations. More than 6,300 stores are closing in 2020 as traditional businesses are seeing less walk-in customers. Service businesses are doing well, but it’s time to get ahead of the changes in consumer behavior and create a purchasing process that limits friction.

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How to adapt to the times

No matter what type of company you operate, it’s important to adapt quickly. This involves getting online and finding your audience there, in a few different ways.

Update your company website

The first thing you should do is conduct an audit of your website and make the necessary changes to speed, loading times and user experience. Make sure your website allows visitors to purchase your products or services without having to interact with you, and make sure that your site has visibility online with SEO.

The future brings with it a lot of unknowns, but be prepared to make a lot of sales without interacting with your customers — and make that process easier for them.

Engage current customers online

You should engage with your current customer base online

often. Whether you do so via email marketing, newsletters or social media accounts, engaging with your current customers online is quite easy and can build a lasting relationship.

Encourage customers to comment, share and bookmark the content you distribute online. Share customer testimonials. Include frequently asked questions on your website so the customer doesn’t have to pick up the phone. Include video tutorials, how-to guides, listicles and any other type of content that positions your company is an expert in its field.

Get social with new landing pages

Creating and engaging social strategy that’s backed up by paid engagement to a landing page with purchase options can be huge. People are still buying. The world hasn’t stopped, but it is happening more remotely than it was before. Having an easy online conversion is a huge step above the competition.

The bottom line

There’s no way around it; we are going to continue to move further into a remote-based, online society. Make a solid effort to streamline how your company communicates with and sells to customers as soon as possible so you can capitalize on the new normal and grow with the times.

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