

## Business Crisis Toolkit:

*Marketing, Communication, And Sales During  
the COVID-19 Crisis*

Presented by Rich Gannon  
Rural Business Advisor Great Falls Development Authority

# AGENDA

- Marketing Review
- Communication Basics
- Pivoting to Alternate Sales
  - Solve a customer problem
  - Review your customer segments
  - Become consumer focused
  - Review your human and fixed assets
  - Pivots and other sales options
- Online Store Options

# The Top Line Takeaways

Pivot	Market
Communicate Honestly	Market
Preserve Cash	Operations

\*see our 3/20/20 webinar on this topic at

<http://www.msucommunitydevelopment.org/smallbusiness.html>

*Remember: Every Decision Made Impacts Financials*

# Rich Gannon

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Rural Business Advisor - Great Falls SBDC

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## Education

- 1998 – University of Montana – BS Business Administration  
Management and Marketing

## Entrepreneurship

- 2008-present – Front Range Web – Cut Bank, MT

## Experience

- 2001-2006 - General Manager, Kuskokwim 300 Race Committee
- 1998-2000 Comptroller, Lower Kuskokwim School District, Bethel, AK



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# Marketing Review

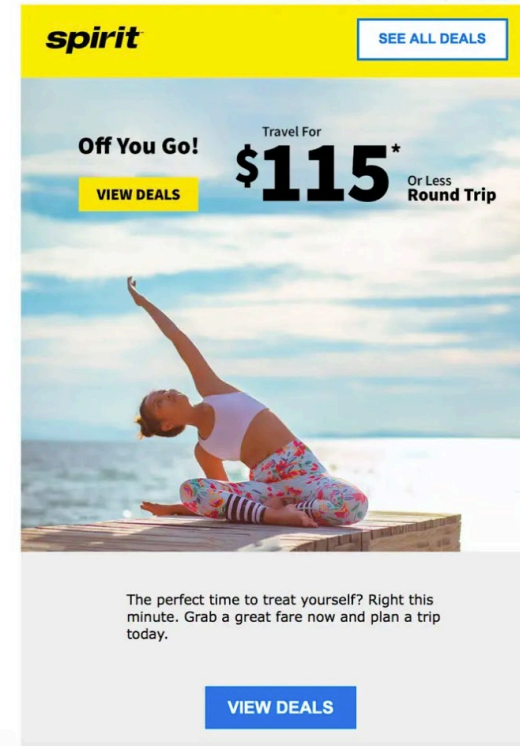
- Review pre-purchased print, radio, tv or internet ads
- Review for tone and timeliness
- Review pre-written blog or social media posts
- Review re-planned email marketing
  - See Spirit Airlines- as a bad example.

# Marketing Review

## Don't be Sprit Airlines! Review your preplanned medi

Spirit Airlines sent out this mass email a week ago with the subject; "Never A Better Time To Fly."

Source; [Business Insider](#)



# Communication Basics



- Existing Media:
  - Direct, regular, & on-going contact
    - Social media, printed postings, email, or phone calls
    - Remember – your customers may access information different
    - BE TRANSPARENT
  - Adjustments to store hours, policies, procedure, inventory, services
    - [EX: Billmans True Value Cut Bank](#)- From TP to Phone orders – keeping their customers informed.
  - Build your brand long-term by being a good corporate citizen
    - This doesn't mean you can't make a profit.
    - [EX: Double Barrel Coffee House Café](#) in GF – Giving free sack lunches to kids. Creating tremendous brand recognition and good will.



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# Communication Basics



- New Media?
  - As your business or revenue model changes
  - What new or different platforms, processes, or procedures should be considered?
    - *EX: Hotels leasing out to hospitals for hospice/recovery care –will be communicating with and marketing toward a whole new customer.*
- Manage Time
  - Pick what is:
    - Most important
    - Most profitable
    - Will have greatest impact



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# Pivoting to Alternate Sales Methods



## Solve a Customer-Facing Problem

- Who are your existing customers?
  - Who could they be?
- Where are your existing customers?
  - Where could they be?
- What are the problems existing and potential new consumers are facing?
- *Having kids full time at home- something new lots of us are facing. What's the problem? Do you have a solution?*
- **Innovation Equation**: Problem + Solution = Opportunity



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# Pivoting to Alternate Sales Methods



## Review Your Ideal Customer Profiles

- Review customer traits – Who bought from you before COVID-19?
  - Customer type
    - Business to consumer; business to business; business to government
  - Demographics – age, gender, household income
  - Buying behaviors – how people consume products and services are changing
  - Purchase Psychology – Wants vs. Needs
    - Emotional - “I want new shoes.”
    - Rational - “I need toilet paper.”

What adjustments do you need to make to market to a new customer?

*EX; Hotel with a campground...now becomes a campground with a hotel. New customer, new source of revenue.*



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# Pivoting to Alternate Sales Methods



## Shift from product focus to consumer focus

- Consumer focused companies are flexible about the product and work to address customer needs and improve customer experience.
- By focusing on customer needs companies can find new ways to solve problems for consumers that may involve completely new products or approaches.

The Farrier Product Focus vs. Consumer Focus – What business would thrive in 1910?

### Product Focus

I'm a Farrier – I'm in the business of fixing horse's shoes.

### Consumer Focus

I'm a Farrier – I'm in the transportation repair business.  
I fix horse's shoes & I also repair car tires.



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# Pivoting to Alternate Sales Methods



## Review Human Capital and Assets

- Review your human capital
  - What are their strengths and backgrounds?
  - Is a shift in some workload appropriate?
  - Ex. Can a store clerk who stocked products turn into a delivery driver?
- Review current and fixed assets
  - How else can your inventory be used?
  - Do you have equipment or other assets that can be repurposed to fit another function?
  - *Example; Lotion manufacturers and distillers now trying to make and market hand sanitizer.*



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# Pivoting to Alternate Sales Methods

**Consider pivots to create new streams of revenue.**

- Consider the obvious changes like going from a sit down restaurant to delivery.
- Consider not so obvious changes
  - Restaurant? Create a subscription recipe service for a weekly meal.
  - Lumber yard? Offer local delivery for DIYers with time on their hands. Create a kit for families to build a product.
- Leverage Technology
  - Use free meeting platforms to meet with clients
  - Create online payment functionality

# Pivoting to Alternate Sales Methods

## Add ways for your customers to buy from you and support your business.

- Offer gift cards that will be used at a later day
- Online gift card options - [Square](#) or [Gift Up](#)
- Don't feel like going digital? Take gift card orders via phone – just be sure to set up a system to track payments and redemptions.
- Consider selling discounted gift cards, - \$100 face value card for \$75. –
  - [\*\*EX; Cut Bank Creek Brewery\*\*](#)
- Start sending digital invoices that customers can pay online – [Square](#) or [Wave Apps.](#)
- Add prepayment options for future products or services

# Pivoting to Alternate Sales Methods

Create clear call to actions and reduce payment friction

- If you don't ask – you won't get an answer.
- Create clear call to actions to ask your customers to do something..."buy our gift cards", "subscribe to our YouTube channel"
- Try to reduce payment "Friction". Make it easier for customers to pay you.

**BUY NOW**

# Online Store Options

## Three online store options for the DIY-er

- Shopify (<https://www.shopify.com>) – Built specifically for online stores. \$29/month
- Square Space (<https://www.squarespace.com/>) –\$18/month
- Wix (<https://www.wix.com/>) \$23/month
- Both Square Space and Wix offer restaurant packages with online menu and online food ordering options.
- Check out this link for more side by side comparisons of these and other website builders, <https://www.websitebuilderexpert.com/website-builders/comparisons/>



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# Conclusion



- People still have money to spend, give them a reason and a method to spend it with you.
- Beyond “survival” mode for your business – take the time to work on something new, always wanted to learn how to do email marketing, or how to create a YouTube channel? Now is the time.



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## Resources Available

GFDA's Business Crisis Tool kit: <https://growgreatfallsmontana.org/disaster-toolkit/>

U.S. Small Business Administration: <https://www.sba.gov/>

America's SBDC: <https://americassbdc.org/coronavirus-information/>

MT Small Business Development Center Network: <https://sbdc.mt.gov/>

MT Department of Labor & Industry: <http://dli.mt.gov/employer-covid-19>

# The Last Word

## Contact Trusted Advisors

Banker

Accountant

Insurance

Lawyers

Business Advisors

# The Last Word

**UNTAME**  
YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL  
**SPIRIT**



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Rich is on the front lines of our business coaching and training services to existing businesses and startup entrepreneurs in Cascade, Fergus, Glacier, Judith Basin, Pondera, Teton, and Toole counties.  
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Tyler oversees GFDA's content marketing efforts. He also counsels small business owners to innovate their digital presence and marketing efforts.



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Small business and entrepreneurial development are important to the GFDA. Jason leads our business coaching team helping entrepreneurs start and grow.



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Barnett leads our efforts to grow and diversify food, ag and bioprocessing across the region. He also supports efforts to increase and diversify agricultural production in the Golden Triangle.



**Lillian Sunwall, CPP**

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Lillian leads our Procurement technical Assistance Center helping businesses with government contracting. She leads our brownfield assessment and cleanup efforts, and also staffs the Great Falls Agritech Park.  
[Connect with me on LinkedIn!](#)



**Shannon Clancy**

Government Contracting Advisor  
Cell (406) 590-1184  
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Shannon splits her duties between our Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), helping businesses with government contracting, and our business development team handling our various company and contact databases.

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**We want to hear from you**

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