



The Future of Direct Marketing

Planning Ahead in Times of Uncertainty

A Publication of Compu-Mail



About This eGuide

This eBook is focused on helping marketers plan for the short- and long-term future of direct marketing, and everything in between.

We know that today's business environment is full of uncertainty, which can make it difficult to plan ahead.

To help you make the most of this challenging time, we put together a series of blog posts aimed at helping you plan for the short- and long-term future of direct marketing, and everything in between.

Feel free to read this eGuide from beginning to end, or skip to what's most relevant to you.

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"The best way to predict the future is to create it."

-Peter Drucker

Short-Term Marketing Tips

Here at Compu-Mail, we focus on the future of direct marketing.

Usually, when we say "future of direct marketing," we are referring to variable data printing, where cutting edge technology makes it easier than ever to deliver personalized, high-impact direct mail campaigns.

But in times of uncertainty like the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that many marketers find themselves unsure of the future. How long will this last? What happens next? Should we freeze our marketing efforts, or keep pushing forward?

There are a lot of differing opinions on that last question. Some marketers advocate for pausing campaigns now and picking them up again when things are less hectic. Others advocate for continuing on, proceeding with business as usual.

We are on the side of moving forward, with increased sensitivity to the new environment.

Rather than taking down your automated marketing messages or halting your direct marketing campaigns, think about what you can do to refine your messaging.

Are you just trying to sell a product or a service, or are you expressing compassion and understanding? That will go a long way toward your customers and prospects remembering long after this crisis is over.

For those of you that choose to keep moving, here are a few tips for the short-term:

Use SMS/texting for what's immediate.

When you need to reach your customers instantly, SMS/texting can be your first line of communication. Appointment cancellations, daily specials, and daily hours are great examples of things that might need immediate notification.

Just be sure that you have the proper consent to communicate this way, and take extra care with your messaging that it is relevant and well-timed.

People become more vulnerable than ever when they rely on their phones for updates of the crisis and checking on their loved ones. Be sure to take extra care to keep your messages simple and remember to lead with compassion and understanding.

Use email for what's ever-changing.

When you need to reach your customers with COVID-19 policies and updates, announcements from your leadership team, event postponements, closures, or other updates, email is a great fit.

The key is in email's flexibility. In situations where news changes fast and announcements are made every day, email allows you to be agile in your crisis communications efforts.

And depending on how many layers of approval your emails require, the turnaround time can be pretty quick.

As with SMS/texting, be sure that you have the correct opt-ins and aren't spamming people with your messages.

Think about ways that you can make your messages personal and engaging so they don't get lost in a sea of other emails and use this as an opportunity to connect with your customers authentically.

Use direct mail for what's constant.

We understand that there may be a reluctance to use direct mail in times of uncertainty, more than any marketing medium.

The fast-changing landscape of situations like COVID-19 makes it difficult to put your updates and policies on something as permanent as direct mail.

That being said, direct mail presents a great opportunity for sending messages about things that are constant, whether that is best wishes for your customers' wellness and safety, the link where you are housing all of your COVID-19 updates, your contact information, etc.

This is more of a time for deepening your connections with people that are already in your database and less about prospecting, though there may be ways to reach prospects during this time as well. Again, just be sensitive in your outreach and mindful of where your customers' and prospects' thoughts may be right now.



The future of direct marketing is uncertain but focusing on the short-term can help you keep moving forward.

Long-Term Marketing Tips

Now, we will shift gears and focus on long-term marketing planning.

Long-term planning is critical in times where the way in which businesses operate rapidly changes and the short-term future proves to be very unstable.

However, it can be difficult to imagine the long-term future of direct marketing. Many will struggle with the sheer number of unknowns: How long will this last? What will the new “normal” look like after all of this? How will we make up for lost time?

When dealing with any uncertain situation, it is important to focus on what is within your control instead of what is beyond it.

Of course, that is easier said than done and it may seem like there is not much that you can control.

However, we encourage you to look beyond the immediate future and focus on the long-term future of marketing. What you do in times of uncertainty is critical for setting yourself up for long-term marketing success.

Here are some tips for planning for the long-term future of direct marketing.

Remain in charge of your messaging.

First and foremost, it is important to control the message that you are sending by choosing to respond – or not respond – to the ongoing situation. First, you should coordinate with your sales and other client-facing teams to ensure that they are keeping the lines of communications with your customers open, providing critical updates.

As the situation progresses, you should have a plan for keeping everyone updated so everyone operates from the same set of information and it can be clearly and consistently articulated to your customers and other external stakeholders. Staying in front of the messaging will help you manage your brand's reputation.

Plan for the worst, hope for the best.

As difficult as it may be to think about, considering what might happen if your situation lasts 2-3 months or even 6-12 months. Doing so may limit the number of surprise situations you might face later if you choose not to think about the future now.

The goal of this exercise to put a contingency plan in place that you will hopefully not need, but if you do, your proactive efforts will have you feeling more confident than if you hadn't prepared for them.

Keep things moving as much as you can.

In whatever capacity your team is working in, try to get everyone together to evaluate your planned efforts and see where adjustments need to be made.

Think about the types of messages you were planning to send this time of year. Are the messages still appropriate? Do they need to be refined to reflect the situation, or tabled until things return to normal?

If there is any outreach that you are still able to continue with now, focus on adjusting that messaging and getting it out first.

It's important to continue as many of your current efforts as you can, both to stay connected with your customers and also to stay ahead of your competition that might be pausing or slowing down.

When things speed up again, you may find yourself facing more competition than ever as everyone tries to catch up. Maintaining a steady outreach now will go a long way toward staying ahead of the competition in the future.

That being said, there are likely going to be some projects that get tabled no matter what, whether it's a matter of resources, messaging, or any other timing concerns.

If that is the case, think about what stage of planning they were in when they were paused. Are they ready to roll, or is there more planning to be done?

In the case where additional planning is needed, some of that planning can continue now to keep the project moving so it is in its final stage when things resume.

It may be difficult to establish a new timeline, but if you remain flexible you can put together a basic outline of the next steps for each paused project so you know exactly where to pick up later.

Once the plan for your existing efforts is squared away, you might shift gears into thinking about future campaigns.

If you were already looking ahead to the future, you might already have started working on them. As with your paused projects, see what work can be done now to keep things moving.

Again, be mindful of the messaging and whether or not it is still appropriate or needs any adjustments.

If you hadn't had a chance to start thinking about future projects yet, consider using any down time to brainstorm ideas and come up with a basic outline of what you want to do next.

Again, doing the work when there is down time and keeping things moving will put you miles ahead of your competition.

Strive to be flexible.

When facing storms like economic disruptions, it is important to recognize that you may also be in the calm before the next storm.

When it reaches the point where businesses start to resume to normal operations, you may find that there is a short-term burst of demand from your customers for your product or service who may have held off on purchasing something until things settled down.

Think about what needs to be done to handle that demand, and work with other departments to see if there are any ways to be flexible and streamline your efforts when that happens.

If you can make it easier for your business to return to “business as usual,” the long-term effects on your business will be more positive.



Even in difficult and uncertain time for businesses, but it is not too late to hit your goals for this year or beyond.

Our hope is that this post (and series) may provide some guidance to help you build a solid foundation for the long-term success of your business.

Retail Marketing Tips

Retail marketers have always faced the challenge of communication with customers across multiple platforms. Web, social, mobile, mail, email and voice... with so many channels to choose from, it can be difficult to select the right combination to use in your marketing plan.

And with any uncertain business environment, there is a renewed need to ensure the platforms that you do choose work together to create a cohesive customer experience.

What does this mean?

- ✔ **Customer experience is not just in the domain of marketing. It's organization-wide.**

Marketing must work hand-in-hand with all departments within the company, in particular sales and customer support, to maintain focus on the end consumer's experience. In terms of accountability, marketing may be primarily responsible for customer experience, but everyone in your company plays a role in how the customer experience is formed.

- ✔ **The process is ongoing.**

“Customer experience does not stop after the sale — in fact, some of the most powerful opportunities to create loyalty and drive repurchasing and referrals are experiences with service and support after the sale is made.” – HubSpot article

With all of this in mind, the question is: how can retailers create great marketing experiences that set their brands up for success during (and after) economic crisis?

Retail Marketing Experiences

Product Marketing

During public health scares like COVID-19, physical shopping options may become limited and consumers may turn to online shopping to make their purchases.

This change in behavior may become permanent for some, as there will likely be reluctance of some people to return to shopping in stores, even once it is safe to do so again.

As you plan for the future of retail, you may need to factor in the increased reliance on online shopping and what the customer experience looks like for your shoppers.

When you think about promoting your website, it is important to remember that while many customers will find you on their own through your SEO and paid advertising, you may need an additional website traffic boost from email and direct mail.

When reaching out across multiple platforms, keep in mind that the different channels should complement each other rather than conflict. Consistent messaging contributes to a positive customer experience by providing clarity in what you want the customer to do next.

In terms of the online shopping experience itself, it is important to make sure that your website is optimized to handle an influx of online traffic, and that your supply chain is ready for fulfillment.

When you experience any delays in production or shipping, it is important to make this clear to the consumer as they are shopping, and again when they are checking out, so there are no surprises if it takes weeks to fulfill their order.

The transparency will hopefully leave the consumer with a favorable impression of your brand, which will go a long way toward them deciding to purchase from you again in the future.

Service Marketing

When facing increased limitations on how you can operate, you probably make a lot of changes to:

- ✓ Your hours of operation
- ✓ The number of employees working at a time
- ✓ How you process requests
- ✓ How you invoice for your work

To avoid interruptions in the customer experience, be sure to clearly communicate all of these changes to your customers.

If necessary, have your policies and procedures readily available on your website and social media pages, with a number to call if they have any questions.

When your operations begin to return to normal, keep the line of communication open so that your customers are always aware of the correct procedures for working with you.

By doing so you limit any unwanted surprises that may leave the customer with an unfavorable impression of your brand.

In turn, you will set yourself up to have long-term successful interactions that result in a positive customer experience.



A great customer experience should not leave your customer with any surprises. No matter what channels you are using, remaining consistent in your messaging goes a long way toward creating positive impressions of your company.

Augmented Reality for Retailers

Whether you are creating a new campaign or looking to get some extra mileage from a logo or printed message, Augmented Reality helps you stand out among the crowd.

Learn More

Direct Marketing Examples for Retailers

Product Marketing - Short-Term Direct Mail



Product Marketing - Long-Term Direct Mail



Service Marketing - Short-Term Direct Mail



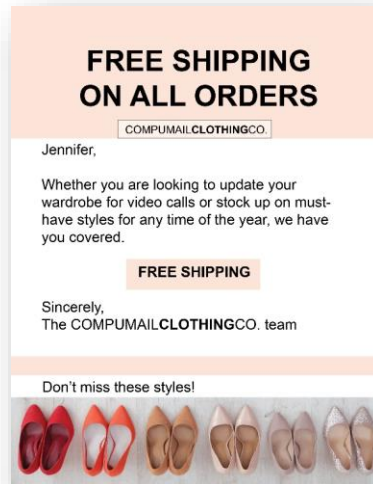
Service Marketing - Long-Term Direct Mail



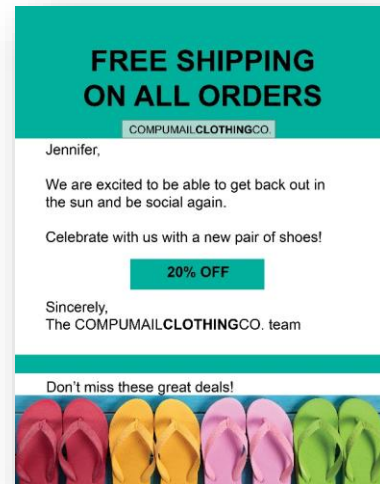
Direct Marketing Examples for Retailers

Product Marketing

Short-Term Email Marketing

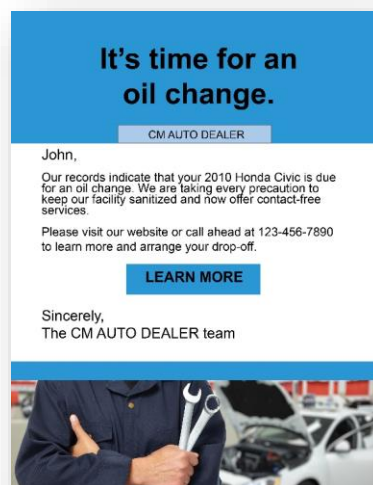


Long-Term Email

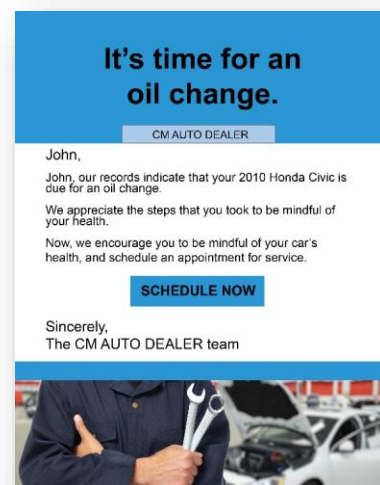


Service Marketing

Short-Term Email Marketing



Long-Term Email



Nonprofit Fundraising Tips

Nonprofit fundraising professionals work hard to get their organization to stand out among an abundance of other causes. With many organizations sharing similar missions, it can be difficult to find a niche fundraising strategy.

And when disruptions happen, there becomes a renewed need to ensure that your organization's mission is clearly defined and reflected in your messaging.

What does this mean?

✓ **Donors give when a nonprofit organization's values align with theirs.**

Having a clearly defined mission statement helps donors determine if you share similar values. It also helps to provide an understanding of where their money is going and what services their donation will support.

In some cases, you may need to scale back on your fundraising efforts, but donors that feel the most connected to the cause may still be moved to donate even without a direct ask.

✓ **Sharing the mission is not just the responsibility of development. The responsibility is organization-wide.**

Development must work hand-in-hand with all departments within the organization, in particular direct support, to maintain focus on your mission and the impact of your efforts on your constituents. In terms of accountability, development may be primarily responsible for communications, but everyone in your organization plays a role in how your work is perceived.

With all of this in mind, the question is: how can fundraisers share their mission in ways that set them up for long-lasting success?

Nonprofit Fundraising Challenges

In cases where donors experience strained finances, spending money on essential products and services takes precedence over philanthropic efforts.

Two questions that a lot of fundraising professionals are asking themselves and their teams right now are likely to be: "Is it appropriate to ask for money right now?" and "Do I feel comfortable asking for money right now?" These are not easy to answer.

To ask for money in a time of crisis will always run the risk of being perceived as insensitive. Even once everything returns to a “new normal,” there may be along-lasting impact on donations.

Either way, if you take a deep look at your organization’s mission, structure, and financial situation, the answer may be “yes” or “no” to either question.

Once you have an answer for each, you can determine the next steps using this decision matrix that we created:

	APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
COMFORTABLE	COMFORTABLE & APPROPRIATE PROCEED WITH SENSITIVITY	COMFORTABLE BUT INAPPROPRIATE DO NOT PROCEED
UNCOMFORTABLE	UNCOMFORTABLE BUT APPROPRIATE CONSIDER PROCEEDING WITH SENSITIVITY	UNCOMFORTABLE & INAPPROPRIATE DO NOT PROCEED

Created by Compu-Mail for this blog post.

CASE #1: COMFORTABLE & APPROPRIATE

You might fall into this category if...

Your organization provides critical and/or essential services, including (but not limited to) access to food, healthcare, education, mental health, and veteran services. For you, there is no time to wait. The fundraising is needed now for these services to continue.

In this case, we recommend proceeding with sensitivity to the current environment. Your messaging should already align with your mission, and taking it a step further and connecting it to your crisis response will be helpful as well.

CASE #2: COMFORTABLE BUT INAPPROPRIATE

You might fall into this category if..

Your organization is comfortable with asking for money but recognizes that other causes may be taking more of a priority right now.

In this case, we recommend that you do not proceed. If your organization can survive for a few months on limited funding, then you may have some breathing room to step back, re-evaluate your plan for the year, and wait things out until the current situation changes.

CASE #3: UNCOMFORTABLE BUT APPROPRIATE

You might fall into this category if..

Your organization needs money to continue providing valuable services, but you are not sure what you can be doing.

In this case, we recommend that you consider proceeding. If it feels inappropriate to ask for money directly, you might choose to engage your donors in other ways –social media challenges, online events, and more.

By maintaining the connection to your cause, opportunities may develop for unprompted giving.

CASE #4 UNCOMFORTABLE & INAPPROPRIATE

You might fall into this category if...

Your organization's services fall outside any of the above categories, and there is no priority to fundraise right now.

In this case, you may follow a combination of Case #2 and Case #3, where you might spend this time working on your plan for the remainder of the year, and thinking about ways to engage your donors outside of your usual fundraising/direct ask activities.

Tips for Proceeding with Caution



Be open to change.

Many organizations depend on in-person interactions with their volunteers and donors.

This usually means a reliance on events as a main source of fundraising. Moving events online can be a challenge for many organizations and require additional planning.

You can also use this opportunity to leverage social media to initiate “challenges” that engage your volunteers and donors by encouraging them to get involved by sharing photos and commenting on posts.

This content can be repurposed for other formats – email, direct mail, etc., giving you the opportunity to refresh some of your more outdated creative.

Showing that you are flexible and willing to adapt to new technology is key for your continued success.

Allow your constituents to speak for you.

It is one thing for you to talk about your mission and who you support.

It is another thing to hear directly from them.

Your website and social media pages are probably full of great testimonials about your organization from your constituents. They might be embedded into your content, featured as graphics, in videos, or other forms.

It is well-known that videos are more powerful than lines of text, but what you may not realize is that you do not have to have a large production budget to turn your testimonials into videos.

While it may certainly be ideal to film different individuals talking about how much your support means to them, this is not the only way to create a video testimonial.

A simple approach that you can use is to create a graphic or set of graphics containing your testimonials.

Using a video editor, you can select a song to play in the background (YouTube has a [great library of royalty free music that you can use](#)) and then add your graphics to appear one at a time throughout the song.

Once you have a video ready, you can use it in email, direct mail, and social media.

Yes, you can use video in your direct mail.

Augmented Reality makes it possible to bring a flat piece of mail “to life” and give it a voice.

Whether you are creating a new campaign for your video or looking to get some extra mileage from a logo or an appeal letter that already mailed, Augmented Reality is a valuable tool.

Learn More



No matter what your decision is to move forward, your outreach should always be guided by your mission.

Direct Marketing Examples for Nonprofits

Fundraising – Short-Term Direct Mail Postcard

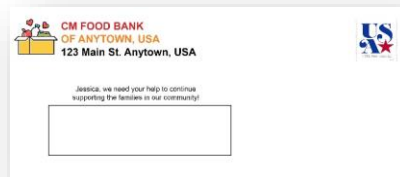


Fundraising – Long-Term Direct Mail Postcard

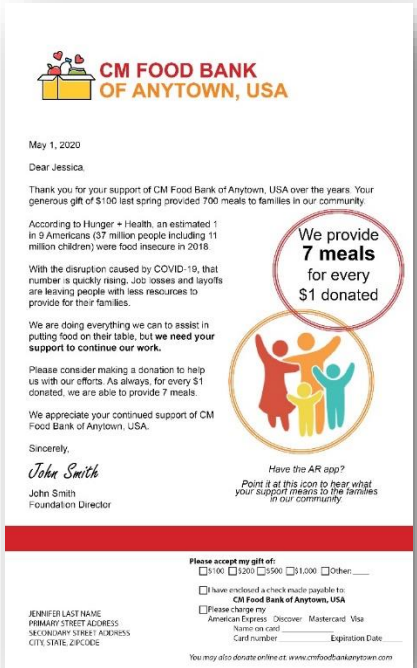


Fundraising – Short-Term Letterpack

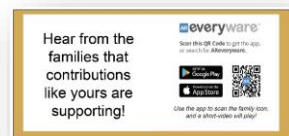
Outer Envelope



Letter



Insert



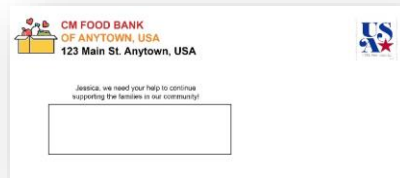
Return Envelope



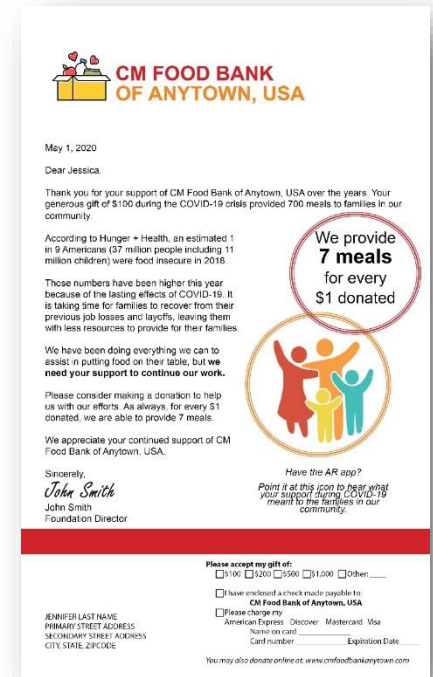
Direct Marketing Examples for Nonprofits

Fundraising – Long-Term Letterpack

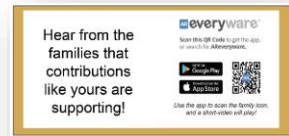
Outer Envelope



Letter



Insert



Return Envelope



Image credit for nonprofit stamp:
United States Postal Service

Healthcare Marketing Tips

Healthcare marketing professionals face many challenges with patient communication. With stringent rules about security and patient confidentiality, it is critical to ensure that you are sending timely and secure notifications.

In times of public health crisis, there is a renewed need to keep the lines of communication open with your patients to maintain their trust and help them feel supported by your organization.

What does this mean?

✓ **People need reassurance from healthcare professionals right now.**

We understand the challenges that healthcare professionals face and deeply respect the efforts of every frontline professional that contributes to treating our friends, family, and community members.

News articles about hospitals being overrun and overwhelming doctors and nurses are a much-needed wake-up call for many to understand the severity of the situation.

It is important for the public to have empathy for these individuals and understand how challenging their work is. At the same time, it is also important for healthcare professionals to have empathy for the patients as well.

Many of them experience challenges of their own:

- ✓ Anxiety and grief over a new way of life.
- ✓ Uncertainty of appointments or elective surgeries.
- ✓ A new or advanced fear of being inside a hospital where they could catch any illness.
- ✓ Adapting to new technology such as virtual healthcare services, including video visits.

While positives in this situation are certainly few and far between, taking steps to share them with your patients will go a long way. Talk about what you are doing, thank people who have already helped, and talk to them about how they can help as well.

You may also consider sharing tips for staying safe and healthy, and recommend situations where they can avoid the hospital entirely, such as virtual healthcare visits.

When it comes to online healthcare, there is a learning curve particularly for older patients that are not as comfortable with technology as their younger counterparts, in terms of both technical skills and general comfort. Be mindful of the need for easy access and use of these services, with emphasis on privacy and security.

✔ **Be cognizant of their communication preferences.**

As more healthcare organizations shift to online bill pay and patient portal, it is important that is not every patient's preferred way of interacting with healthcare organizations. There will always be people that prefer print copies of their appointment cards, bills, and other notifications.

Coordinating your online efforts with your print efforts will help ensure that you are reaching patients in multiple ways and allowing them to respond based on their preferences.

With all of this in mind, the question is: how can healthcare marketers keep lines of communication open during COVID-19 and beyond?

Healthcare Marketing Experiences

Short-Term

Uncertain times change the way people perceive healthcare services.

Your patients may have a lot of questions around how your healthcare organization is operating. Many healthcare services like dental are limited to emergency services only while others remain open for other crucial but non-emergency services like preventative care, but patients may find it difficult to determine where an organization falls on that spectrum and if it is safe to visit.

In those cases, it is important to share:

- ✔ If your office is open or closed.
 - If it is closed, how they can receive care in the meantime.
- ✔ What the office hours are.
- ✔ What the process is for checking-in and the appointment itself.
 - Wearing a mask to the appointment.
 - Checking temperatures at the door.
 - Cleaning/sanitizing protocols.
- ✔ What appointments can take place via video and how to use your telehealth services.
- ✔ How they can pay their bills.

For regular communications, a combination of email and SMS/text notifications with direct mail reminder postcards can be helpful.

(Of course, anything with sensitive or specific patient information should be kept inside an envelope.)

When it comes to bill payment, it is important to note that the shift to online payments that we mentioned earlier could be expanded to include over-the-phone payments, and can be a personal preference or a necessity.

In cases like COVID-19, there may be a reluctance toward cash or check payments, making debit and credit card transactions essential.

You can – and should – continue mailing the statements or sending electronic reminders, as long as you make clear the options for remitting payment.

Long-Term

Once your healthcare organization becomes less restricted on the appointments you can set, you should communicate it to your patients as soon as possible.

In this case, it is important to share:

How they can reschedule appointments that were missed or postponed.

- ✓ If you have the capacity to accept new patients.
- ✓ What the office hours are.
- ✓ What the process is for checking-in and the appointment itself.
- ✓ If and how this affected your organization.
- ✓ How they can continue to benefit from your virtual healthcare services.

This, combined with a thank you for their understanding during times of uncertainty as they allowed space for your organization to treat the public health crisis effectively, can be powerful for building and maintaining patient trust.

Again, a combination of email, text, and direct mail can be used for general announcements and updates, and letters sealed in envelopes are needed for secure information.

You may find that a preference for online and over-the-phone payments become a “new normal” as well as a preference for virtual appointments, but many people will still rely on print for their reminders and notifications.



Keeping the lines of communication open with your patients is not only important now, but for the long-term success of your healthcare organization.

*If you are looking for a provider for your critical patient communications, **let us know**. We are fully HIPAA compliant with SOC 2 – Type 2 or SOC 3 certification.*

Healthcare Marketing Templates

Healthcare Marketing – Short-Term Regular Postcard



Healthcare Marketing – Short-Term Virtual Appointment Postcard



Healthcare Marketing – Long-Term Regular Postcard



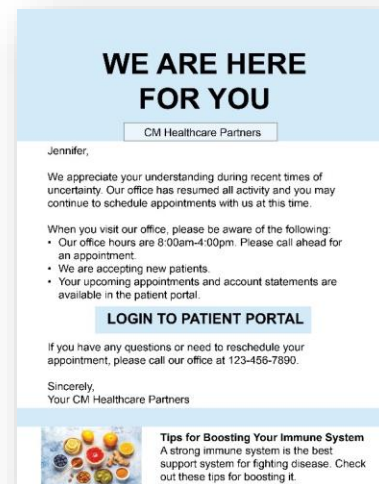
Healthcare Marketing – Long-Term Virtual Appointment Postcard



Healthcare Marketing Short-Term Email



Long-Term Email



Financial Marketing Tips

Financial marketers compete in a highly saturated market. With so many options for both physical and digital platforms in terms of bank accounts, credit cards, loans, and other services that may scatter a person's "digital wallet," it can be difficult to reach customers at the right time with the right financial services.

And during economic disruptions, there is a renewed need for your financial institution to stand out and help your customers through this dark time.

What does this mean?

✔ **Money is a very sensitive topic for people, and it's always on everyone's mind.**

Economic disruptions cause everyone to feel overwhelmed in general, and the stress of their finances, in particular not knowing what their financial future holds, can add to that stress.

This has a long-term impact on the economy and how people save and spend their money.

As the market becomes more saturated than ever with financial institutions and platforms jumping at the opportunity to compete for the same business, money remains a sensitive topic that causes a lot of pressure on the consumer.

While it is helpful to know there are options to refinance loans, consolidate debt, etc., it may be overwhelming to hear about it right now when they are focused on keeping food on the table and meeting other important needs first.

✔ **Data security is more important than ever.**

As people are forced to adapt technology that they may not already have, there is a learning curve with it, which opens up many vulnerabilities. Add that to hackers looking to scam people out of their stimulus money, and data security becomes the forefront priority. When it comes to the delivery statements and notifications, stringent requirements must be met and production must be seamless.

With all of this in mind, the question is: how can financial service marketers create great experiences that set their financial institutions and platforms up for long-term success?

Financial Marketing Experiences

Short-Term

With so many people experiencing layoffs, furloughs, and other disruptions to their ability to work and feed their families, finances are currently strained and stress-levels are high.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Make it easy to access your financial institution, whether it is in-person or remotely.

Clearly indicate the hours you are open and what precautions people should take when visiting you in person (wearing a mask, maintaining social distance while standing in line, etc.)

While online banking, bill pay, and other online services are in huge demand right now, they do not work for everyone.

For remote services, provide your customers with simple and secure ways to access their account information and complete certain transactions from their homes.

If you are able to provide real-time customer service support, make it easy for them to contact you.

Show how you can help.

This is a great time to strengthen connections with your customers by offering to help them through this tough time.

When you act as a helpful resource during times of crisis, you may prove your value as a one-stop shop for many of their financial services, and this may encourage them to expand their relationship with you.

Provide comfort of account security.

When it comes to their account information, people simply cannot afford to take losses from a lack of security right now.

They also cannot afford to wait for important updates on their financial conditions. Turnkey email and direct mail programs are essential for helping consumers understand and stay on top of their financial situation.

Long-Term

As with any recession, this will have a long-lasting impact on people. More and more people will put money into savings accounts and rain day funds in case something like this happens again.

People might be reluctant or even afraid to make large purchases for a while, worrying that they may get into a situation where they cannot pay it back. Businesses will need time to recover and gain back clients, and it may be a while before employment rates recover.

Providing ongoing support and helping consumers understand their options to consolidate their accounts will go a long way toward building deeper relationships.

In terms of communication, the shift to digital will likely stay for most, though you many people still prefer face-to-face interactions and print communications. (And depending on regulations, there are some communications that have to be in print.)

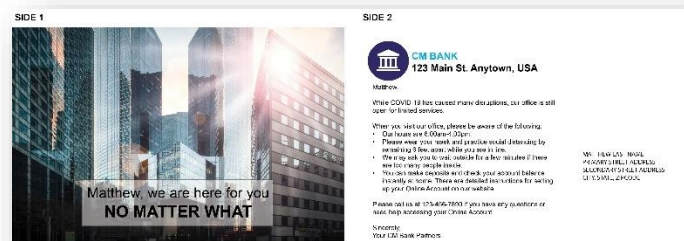


Everyone is dreading their current and future financial situations. Helping consumers understand their options and acting as a foundation for support will go a long way toward building trust.

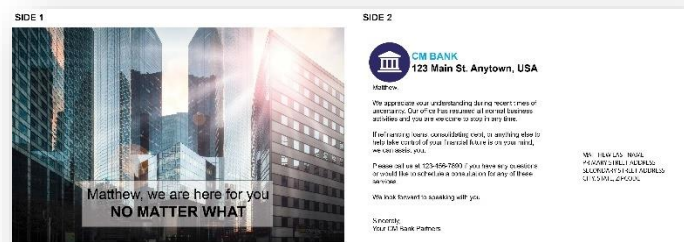
Looking for a provider for your critical communications? [Let us know](#) - we hold SOC 2 - Type 2 and SOC 3 certification and can help you with even complex secure projects.

Financial Direct Mail Templates

Financial Services Marketing – Short-Term Postcard



Financial Services Marketing – Long-Term Postcard



Higher Education Marketing Tips

Higher education marketers face challenges in communicating with many stakeholders. Different types of students, alumni, donors, and more... with so many people interacting with your school, it can be difficult to reach everyone effectively.

In disrupted environments, there is a renewed need to ensure your communications are reaching people the right way. What works for some people does not always work as well for other people.

What does this mean? The learning experience is completely different than what it was.

✓ **Some people may expect it to stay that way...**

There are a lot of people who are embracing the technology shift and will expect it to stay. The increased use in technology provides additional flexibility to those that may not have had as much before, such as students that are working and raising families in addition to their education. They may have previously faced issues with finding classes that worked with their busy schedules or choosing from a limited selection of online classes that were available.

✓ **...but the technology isn't for everyone.**

Online education does not work for everyone, but with it being the only option to continue their education, people have been forced to adapt quickly.

While many students are able to embrace the technology change, there are certainly others that face challenges in its adoption.

Some students may have learning disabilities that are best supported with in-person classes and interactions with professors.

Some students are not equipped to learn from home. They may not have access to technology and may have been relying on your library and other community resources to complete online work. Or, they may have access, but it has become limited as other members of their household have also moved to online work or schooling.

Some students are not comfortable with video technology, as it leads to sharing their home lives with their classmates which may reveal situations that they prefer to keep private.

With this in mind, the question is: how can higher education marketers create great experiences that set their schools up for lasting success?

Higher Education Experiences

Prospective Students

You are likely targeting prospective students in many categories: high school students that may soon be graduating, current college students looking to transfer to a different school, people who are returning to education after a break for reasons which may include starting a family or serving in the military.

Each of these individuals are at different points in their lives, and may need various things from you.

- ✓ For high school students, it may be difficult to think about college when things are so uncertain and they are trying to figure out what the rest of their high school experience looks like. In this case, you may want to reach out to the parents of these students to share ways they can support their children and talk to them about their options for further education.
- ✓ For current college students looking to transfer to your school, it is important to understand why they are transferring. One thing you may want to learn is if they are transferring because they had a negative experience with their previous university. Understanding this will help you determine where your school fits best within their needs.
- ✓ For those returning after a break, they may have different needs than the others. They may need flexibility of class schedules and online classes so they can continue to support their work and home life outside of school.

One thing that all of these prospective students will have in common is a need to connect with your school and make sure it is a good fit for them. If you don't have an option to schedule tours to view your campus in-person now, it is important to find ways to stay connected online, through virtual tours and events.

Even when in-person events become appropriate again, you may want to continue finding ways to keep people engaged virtually to expand your reach and provide additional flexibility and support.

Current and Incoming Students

In addition to their studies, your current students may be involved in groups, have jobs, find opportunities to travel the world, etc. Some may even be raising families while they pursue their academic careers.

Disruptions may cause some of these things to be put on hold, and it is causing extra stress on them as they cannot continue to support themselves the way that they were before.

Either way, it is important to help your current and incoming students feel supported and connected throughout this experience.

Alumni

While the adaptation of technology provides additional opportunities to connect with some alumni, there will always be people that prefer in-person events.

In cases like this, try to do what you can to connect your alumni network virtually. That might mean moving happy hours or networking events online or getting them more involved in participating in your member groups on social media.

The benefit of online events like happy hours is that they are relatively easy to plan – and are not nearly as expensive since you are not paying for space, food, or drinks. This may be helpful for your budget as you might be able to reallocate some of those funds to enhance some of your other events.

Once you can return to your regular programming, you might consider keeping a virtual event in the mix once a month, while keeping in-person options available.

Giving

Your fundraising efforts are already helping a lot of different initiatives.

And the shift to technology probably caused a strain on everything, between a possible delay in regular fundraising and the added expense of adapting technology.

Technology can be expensive and moving an entire school online with the required licensing, platform fees. IT support quickly adds up!

This, combined with your existing goals, and the fact that it may not be appropriate to ask for money during this time, you may end up needing to make up for lost time. Your grants, appeals, and events will be more critical than ever.

Sports

This disruption also caused an entire semester's worth of events to be cancelled, and there may be an impact on summer events as well as the way sporting teams operate in the future.

Try to keep your athletes and fans engaged online and encourage people to share their school spirit.

This may help keep them motivated throughout the duration of this experience, and have a positive impact toward how they feel about you in the future.



It can be challenging to communicate with multiple stakeholders that are in different stages of their lives. Understanding their needs will help you discover how to best support their needs.

Augmented Reality for Higher Education

In a time where people may be fatigued from the same digital messaging over and over again, print and more creative uses of digital can offer some reprieve.

Whatever videos that you may be promoting on social media or in emails, consider promoting via print as well.

Yes, print.

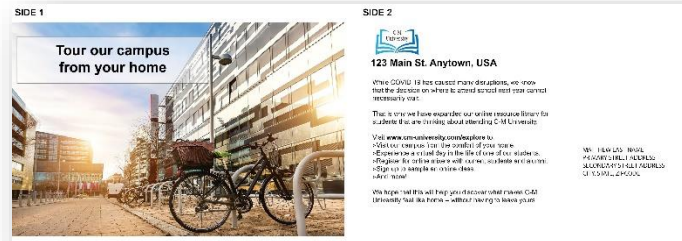
You can use technology like Augmented Reality to offer virtual tours, share student testimonials, and anything else to show what makes your school feel like home, directly from a flat print piece.

Make your mailers come alive with video using Augmented Reality through AReveryware.

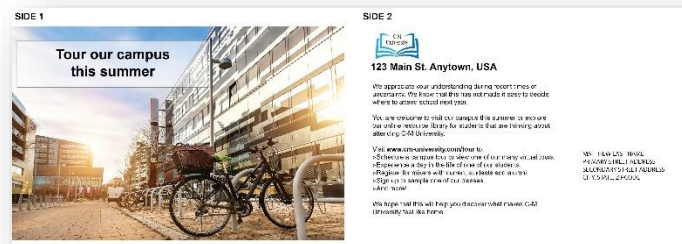
Learn More

Higher Education Direct Mail Templates


Higher Education Marketing – Short-Term Prospective Student Postcard



Higher Education Marketing – Long-Term Prospective Student Postcard



Higher Education Marketing – Alumni Giving Letter Example

 **Alumni Association**

May 1, 2020

Dear Jessica,

Today's students are experiencing education much differently than we did.

The disruption caused by COVID-19 has resulted in C-M University needing to transition all of its course offerings online.

Our Information Technology team worked hard to ensure the transition was as seamless as possible.



We found that this experience gave many of our students greater flexibility in their coursework, and we plan to continue offering online options for as many classes as we can moving forward.

Adapting to today's technology has been an important endeavor for C-M University, and we need your help to continue the work.

Please consider making a donation to help with our efforts. As always, these donations directly benefit our students.

We appreciate your continued support of C-M University.

Sincerely,
C-M University



Please accept my gift of:
☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ Other: _____

☐ I have enclosed a check made payable to:
C-M University Alumni Association

☐ Please charge my _____
American Express Discover Mastercard Visa
Name on card _____
Card number _____ Expiration Date _____

JENNIFER LAST NAME
PRIMARY STREET ADDRESS
SECONDARY STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

You may also donate online at: www.c-m-university.com/give

Casino Gaming Marketing Tips

Casino marketers compete in a highly saturated market. With so many options for both physical and digital gaming options that may scatter a person's "digital wallet," it can be difficult to keep their focus on you.

And during times of economic disruption, there is a renewed need for your casino to find ways to stay connected with your patrons.

What does this mean?

✓ **Your messaging needs to be more strategic.**

When access to casinos is completely restricted, the current way of marketing with promotions and incentives to visit becomes invalid.

This causes many marketing campaigns to be put on hold, in favor of more simple reminder campaigns that your casino will still be here when people can leave their homes again.

Moving forward, it may take a while to get back to the level of promotional messages that you were once sending.

In the meantime, it is important to continue strategically and consistently communicating with your patrons so they keep you top-of-mind when they are ready to return.

✓ **People become hungry for entertainment.**

After being cooped up for weeks with little to do, people are eager for outside entertainment.

While many people are experiencing disruptions to their finances, as long as they are able to meet their basic needs first, it will not be too hard to get them back.

Everyone will be looking forward to getaways, shows, and everything else they have been missing out on while stuck at home dealing with a new and different reality.

With all of this in mind, the question is: how can casino gaming marketers create great experiences that set their casinos and resorts up for long-term success?

Casino/Gaming Marketing Experiences

When a lot of people experiencing layoffs, furloughs, and other disruptions to their ability to work and feed their families, finances are currently strained and stress-levels are high.

Spending their money on something that does not have a guaranteed return may not be a priority for a while. But for others, it will.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- ✓ Communicate about what you are doing with your entertainment schedule.

If events were postponed, let ticket-holders know when the new date is and how they can get a refund if it does not work for them. If events were cancelled, let ticket-holders know how to get a refund.

- ✓ Remind them that your casino is here for them when they are ready.
- ✓ Emphasize your safety procedures and precautions moving forward.

Recessions will always have a long-lasting impact on people. More and more people will put money into savings accounts and rain day funds in case something like this happens again.

Your more loyal patrons will return either way, but it may take a longer time to get more casual visitors back.

Consistently reaching out with reminders and eventually more promotions will help you stay in touch so they will come to you when they are ready.



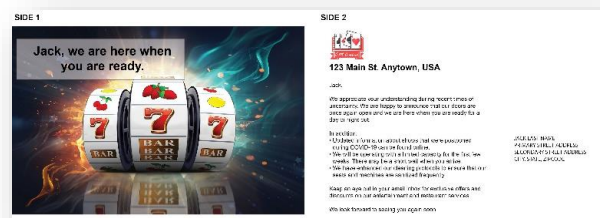
People are looking forward to getting back to normal entertainment activities. Setting up your campaigns now will help you be more prepared when that happens.

Whatever videos that you may be promoting on social media or in emails, consider promoting via print as well. **Yes, print.**

Learn More

Casino Direct Mail Examples

Casino/Gaming Marketing – Postcard



Casino/Gaming Marketing – Custom Booklet



Click the image to view the booklet as a PDF

Conference and Event Marketing Tips

Marketers that plan exhibitions, conferences, and other events and shows face challenges with communication with attendees and other partners across multiple platforms. With so many moving parts involved in the event planning process, it can be difficult to reach everyone effectively.

And during disruptions, there is a renewed need to ensure that your messaging is consistent and creates a cohesive conference and event experience.

What does this mean?

✓ **Communication is more fractured than ever.**

This is a crucial time for keeping lines of communication open with not only your attendees, but your vendors and sponsors. It is critical to keep everyone on the same page about the status of your events so they can manage their expectations on their end.

However, disruptions may find everyone in different situations. Some may be laid off or furloughed, some may still be working at limited capacities, some may be continuing with “business as usual” adapted to the current situation. As everyone adapts to their “new normal,” their accessibility for business communications may be more limited.

And depending on how widespread your events are and if your audiences span across different parts of the country or even the world, they might be in different stages of the crisis.

This provides an additional factor for determining when it is appropriate for people to gather in person again. If you have had the ability to move your events online during the time being, you may need to consider providing this option for a while afterwards.

✓ **There may be a reluctance to attend events for a while.**

Once everyone is able to start traveling again, not everyone is going to jump at the chance to do so. People that were previously hyper-aware of germs may be more so in the future, and even those that were not as worried before will have an increased sensitivity in the future.

It is going to be very important to stress the measures that your conference center or event organization is taking to keep things safe and clean – especially if the space that you are hosting in was temporarily turned into a hospital or other healthcare space.

While you know that you have done everything you can to sanitize the facility and prepare it to be usable for the general public again, people may need a little extra reassurance.

With all of this in mind, the question is: how can conference and event marketers create great experiences that set their shows up for ongoing success?

Event Marketing Experiences

Conference Center to Conference/Event Organizer

As the conference and event organizers that you work with face the challenge of determining whether to cancel or postpone their previously scheduled events, times like this are great for acting as a resource for helping them understanding their options.

Compile a list of regulations in the parts of the country your event organizers are in.

Make note of any relevant economic re-open dates and capacity restrictions. If the re-open happens in stages like the shut down did, events may need to proceed at a smaller scale for a while.

Help them with their backup plans.

There are many moving parts involved for conference and event organizers, as they are coordinating with their attendees, vendors, and sponsors.

It is easy for them to get overwhelmed by the pressure to meet everyone's expectations and find a new date that works for all involved, especially in consideration of other events that are also being rescheduled.

If your conference center is able to maintain an organized and updated calendar of events and potential backup dates of other events, you can help them understand all of the possibilities of what might work for them.

Continue marketing yourself to other conference and event organizers.

When it comes to show organizers that you are not working with yet, this can be a challenging time to get in front of them. Evaluating new venues may be low on their list of priorities unless the postponement of their event requires a new location, and even then, this can be difficult to do right now without in-person tours and meetings.

That being said, there are ways that you can make your facility easily accessible online:

- ✓ Take a video of you pretending to give someone a tour, and post it online so people can experience it themselves from their home or office.
- ✓ Share photos, videos, and testimonials from event organizers that have previously used your space for their events.
- ✓ Set up video calls with your clients to walk them through any questions they have throughout the process.

In either case, it is important to share the safety measures that are in place for your conference center to return to business as “usual,” whatever that might mean for you.

This will help you set appropriate expectations for them, which will help them set expectations for their own stakeholders.

[Check out these tips](#) for knowing what types of marketing messages to send and when to send them.

Event Organizer to Attendees

- ✓ **Be flexible.**

It is challenging enough for you to find new dates that work well for your events. Since you are not your conference center's only client, additional scheduling conflicts may arise throughout the planning process.

This requires a tough decision to make regarding whether it is worth it to reschedule the show, move content online, or cancel until next year.

Try to remain flexible and work through the pros and cons of each situation, so you can choose the option that works best for your event.

You may want to seek feedback from your attendees, vendors, and sponsors, to make sure that the outcome is suitable for everyone.

Whether you involve them in your decision or not, be sure to maintain transparency in all of your event updates so there are no surprises for anyone along the way.

✓ **Expand your offering with virtual tools.**

If moving an event is determined to be the best solution, keep in mind that this is like planning a whole new event.

You may be able to keep the basic themes and ideas, but it is very likely they will need to be adapted for the new format.

Moving events online can be a challenge for many organizations and require additional planning.

Here are a few resources for planning events:

✓ [International Association of Exhibitions and Events \(IAEE\)](#)

✓ [IAEE New York Chapter](#)

Showing that you are flexible and willing to adapt to new technology is key for your continued success.

✓ **Consider a hybrid of in-person and online components to your event.**

As we mentioned at the beginning of this post, if people from around the country or world are involved in your event, not everyone is at the same stage of this crisis.

Not only that, but even once individual countries re-open, it may be a while before international travel is appropriate again.

In cases like this, consider moving forward with some aspects of your event being online and some in person, to provide flexibility for everyone no matter where they are.



This is a challenging and uncertain time for all, and conference and event marketers face particular challenges in being able to do their jobs. Working on your communication and contingency plans now will help you be more prepared for the future.

Augmented Reality for Conferences and Events

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Learn More

Conference and Events Direct Mail Examples

Event Marketing – Short-Term Conference Center to Event Organizer Postcard



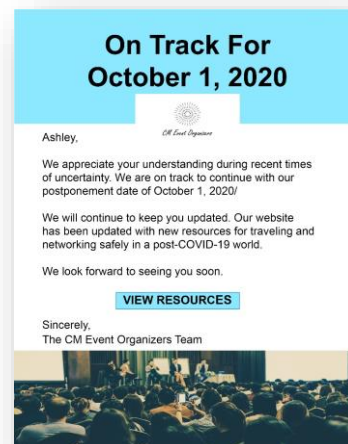
Event Marketing – Long-Term Conference Center to Event Organizer Postcard



Event Marketing Short-Term Event Organizer to Attendee Email



Long-Term Event to Attendee Email



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The Bottom Line

With COVID-19, we faced the storm of an economy that is suffering from the outbreak. At the same time, it also put us in the eye of the next storm: the full reopening of the economy and the subsequent flooding of marketing and advertising from every brand that scaled back or stopped marketing during the outbreak.

When this happens, there may be a lot of competition for limited dollars. And it won't just be your normal competition, i.e., people that sell similar products or services. The competition is going to be coming from *everywhere*.

Every brand will be hitting customers hard with deals and promotions to make up for the disruption.

When that happens, it is important to be mindful of the fact that consumers are currently dealing with strained finances and are spending money on the most essential products and services that are currently available. Even when they are given the go-ahead to return to normal spending, they may need time to rebuild their cash reserves.

With less money to spend and more options to choose from on what to spend it on, the competition will feel even more intense.

The important thing to remember is to be patient, because the future of direct marketing is a marathon, not a sprint.

Here are a few tips for getting your marketing into shape for the marathon ahead:

Keep moving forward.

You worked hard to build momentum at the beginning of the year. If your business has remained open throughout the outbreak, you may find yourself scaling back on some of your normal activities, but your marketing should continue moving forward to help you keep some of that momentum going.

This will help alleviate some of the potential damage and disruption to your business now, as well as help you build a foundation to help you navigate the long-term.

Maintain a steady pace.

We all know the old adage, “slow and steady wins the race.” It may sound cliché, but this will be especially true in the upcoming marketing marathon.

Depending on where your product or service falls into that category, this may be another factor as to when more normal spending levels will return.



Though many businesses are dealing with the effects of the disruption, that does not mean the whole year is lost. If you work on getting your marketing into shape now, you will be prepared for the marathon ahead.

GET A FREE CONSULTATION ON YOUR CURRENT EFFORTS

Need help reviewing your short- or long-term marketing plan?
We're always available to help.

<https://www.compu-mail.com/contact>

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