

APRIL 2020

NEWSLETTER

A background image showing a city skyline with various digital overlays such as a magnifying glass, a person icon, a location pin, and a smartphone icon, all connected by a network of lines.

SHOULD YOU INVEST IN DIGITAL MARKETING DURING THIS CRISIS?

GOOGLE MAKES A HOST OF CHANGES TO GOOGLE MY BUSINESS DUE TO COVID-19

GOOGLE OFFERS \$800+ MILLION SUPPORT TO SMBS AMID COVID-19 CRISIS

FACEBOOK OFFERS \$100 MILLION CASH GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESSES FOLLOWING COVID-19 OUTBREAK



YELP GIVES AFFECTED LOCAL BUSINESSES FREE SERVICES WORTH \$25M

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SHOULD YOU INVEST IN DIGITAL MARKETING DURING THIS CRISIS?

Yes, there are uncalled times. As the global economy reels from the impact of COVID-19, many SMB's are forced to ask tough questions and make tough decisions concerning the future of their business.

Yes, businesses are going to struggle for a while amid the COVID-19 crisis. But the reality is - **businesses can thrive in downturns**. And many of the successful ones will choose to **invest in online marketing**.

From our experience of two major crashes (the 2000 dotcom crash and the 2008 real estate crash), we can tell you that the best time to double down is when others are not.

As Warren Buffet once famously quoted - **"Be fearful when others are greedy, and greedy when others are fearful"**

With more people working from home, consumers are **relying on the Internet** more than ever. In fact, even during a quarantine, people rely on Google search to look for services and products. This means businesses will still require digital marketing to keep up with the demand.

All we can say is - **Now is the time for social distancing, not forgetting about digital marketing**.

In fact, during this outbreak, companies like Google and Facebook are offering millions in Ad Credits to keep businesses afloat. Google has **offered** USD 340M in ad credits (a part of a larger USD 800M+ **commitment**). On the other hand, Facebook has **promised** USD 100M in cash grants and ad credits for up to 30,000 eligible small businesses. You should try and see if you qualify for this and can utilize these great offers. Not just big companies but even small businesses are offering great deals and offers to help their clients tide over this crisis. Think of potential ideas/offers for your clients. Also, renegotiate with all your vendors to see how they can help you in these troubled times.

Eventually, **COVID-19 will end** and things will normalize. The US may have a few weeks left to ride out before the Coronavirus is no longer a threat. Once life returns to normal, the need for law firms, doctors, home services, and other businesses will fully resume. Others like restaurants will have to adapt to more online orders via website or food delivery apps.

The demand for essential goods and food has also skyrocketed and businesses like Walmart, Instacart, Amazon, Dominos, and others are **hiring like crazy** (more than 300K people) to keep up.

The key here is not to press the panic button now and make a knee-jerk decision that might hurt your business. One such rash decision could be to halt your digital marketing efforts.

We know investing in digital marketing could be intimidating during this time. But, by continuing your marketing efforts now, you are more likely to have an established presence when this uncertainty comes to end. Thus, your return on investment will be bigger by acting now.

2

GOOGLE MAKES A HOST OF CHANGES TO GOOGLE MY BUSINESS DUE TO COVID-19

Businesses of all kinds have taken a toll during the unprecedented COVID-19 situation across the globe. As countries get into lockdown and maintain social distancing to control the spread of the virus, the effects have started to show on Google too! Therefore, a new set of guidelines were introduced for how Google My Business' Support Team would work during these hard times.

Following are the changes **announced**:

Google has taken steps to ensure the health and safety of its team during COVID-19 by reducing the need of people in their office:

- Temporary limitations on Google My Business.
- Critical services will be prioritized and could lead to a delay in customer support.

Google is currently focused on providing quality, reliable, and relevant information on Google Search and Maps. The company is dedicated to providing users the ease of access to communicate with businesses to know about vital features such as operating hours, special hours, and more. During such testing times, [learn the best practices for affected business](#) and what you can do to keep your customers updated at all times.

The temporary product changes made by Google are:

1. Business Information edits

High priority will be on reviews for edits critical to health-related businesses. Also, reviews will be prioritized for open & closed states, special hours, temporary closure, business description, and [business attributes edits](#) for other verified businesses.

2. New Listings, Claims, and Verifications

All new listings, claims, and verifications will be manually reviewed by our support team for critical health-related businesses. Due to the priority given to such critical services, there will be a delay in publishing new listings, claims, and verifications on Google Search and Maps for other businesses.

3. Reviews and Q&A

New reviews, replies, and Q&A will not be available during this time.

Note: You can now mark your business as “**temporarily closed**” - a new addition to their system that is being used widely all over the world. Google has **also stated** that moving your status to temporarily closed will not have any negative impact on your listing.

Our Take:

The world is going through testing times right now, and Google has done a great job with their temporary changes as they restrict users from leaving negative reviews due to closure, cancellations, etc.

In fact, businesses can ask customers to leave reviews directly, making it easy to grow their in-house reviews that can later be marked up with Structured Data.

3

**GOOGLE OFFERS \$800+ MILLION SUPPORT TO SMBS
AMID COVID-19 CRISIS**

During these unprecedented times, Google is benevolently offering support to the SMB community nationwide in response to COVID-19. Being a Google Partner, we are happy to inform you that Google is **committing** over \$800 Million in Ads Grant money to help alleviate some of the cost for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) to stay in touch with their customers during this challenging time.

The \$800+ Million in Google Ads Grants includes:

- \$340 million in Google Ads **credits** to ALL small and mid-sized businesses with active accounts since Jan 2019. These credits can be used until the end of 2020.
- \$250 million in ad grants for the World Health Organization (WHO) & hundreds of government agencies.
- \$200 million in support for NGOs and financial institutions that are needed to provide access to capital for small businesses.
- \$15 million in cash grants for Non-Profit Organizations from Google.org
- \$20 million in Google Cloud credits for academic institutions and researchers
- Additional direct financial support for manufacturers of products and services that are critical to the nation during this time.

We're here to help our partners, businesses, and health organizations secure these Google Grants to ensure your operations stay up and running at this time.

Do not miss out on this opportunity!

Reach out to our team to understand how you can avail these Ads credits, or if we can assist your business during this crisis.

4

FACEBOOK OFFERS \$100 MILLION CASH GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESSES FOLLOWING COVID-19 OUTBREAK

The COVID-19 outbreak has severely impacted the global economy, including small businesses. Considering this, Facebook has promised to reward \$100 million in cash grants to 30,000 businesses across the world.

“Facebook is offering \$100M in cash grants and ad credits for up to 30,000 eligible small businesses in over 30 countries where we operate. We'll share more details as they become available.”

How to apply?

For more information on the grants process and/or to fill in the application visit [this page](#), scroll down and click the 'Sign up for updates' button.

You can also check out some amazing tools and checklists that your business could leverage at the [new Facebook COVID-19 resource hub](#).

Here's a [resilience toolkit](#) with the best practices, tools and a self-assessment to help protect your business from interruptions. And a [quick action guide](#) to help minimize downtime and develop plans for emergency response.

Also, communicating with customers may be disruptive in this situation. Using these [customer service resources](#) you can learn how to quickly provide your customers with relevant support.

5

YELP GIVES AFFECTED LOCAL BUSINESSES FREE SERVICES WORTH \$25M

In an effort to extend support to the local businesses that are most impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, specifically the independent restaurants and nightlife industry-related businesses, Yelp has **announced** a special 'Relief Program'. On 20th March 2020, Yelp declared that they will be offering affected local businesses \$25M worth of free services.

How the Relief Program will help

Since independent local restaurants and nightlife businesses are the ones who've been most affected by the coronavirus outbreak, Yelp will support them by waiving advertising fees and offering free advertising, products and services.

Restaurants and nightlife businesses that remain open during this time will receive free access to Yelp page upgrades. The idea is to allow these businesses to quickly and effectively communicate important information to their customers through Business Highlights, Call to Action and Connect. It has also been decided that the restaurants will be given free access to Yelp Reservations and Waitlist for 3 months.

\$100 in free search advertising will be provided to restaurant clients that offer delivery and/or take out services. Yelp will also be extending support to local independent advertisers in other categories, who are currently finding it difficult to pay their bills.

What you need to do

The best part about this is that the relief program is not just limited to businesses with an active Yelp advertising account. If your business falls in any of the above categories, the best thing for you to do is to **check out the specifications** of this program and see whether you are eligible.

Even if your business is not a part of the above-mentioned industries but you still think that Yelp can help you out in some way, then we recommend you reach out to them with your ideas. Since it's quite clear that Yelp wants to help the businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19, they may be receptive to your ideas.