

Running a Small Business During COVID-19

- 1. Be transparent.** Tell your clients, team members, children where the business stands. In moments like these, when we don't communicate we further feelings of uncertainty.
- 2. Activate your own support system.** Someone in your network likely has sorted through the thing that you are contending with. Ask for what you need.
- 3. Give.** Trade secrets and keeping things to yourself won't serve us in a global crisis. It's actually the same thing as toilet paper hoarding. If you've created something that others might be able to benefit from; share it with others. We are in this together.
- 4. When you don't know, say you don't know.** As a leader, saying "I don't know" can be tricky. Yet, COVID-19 didn't grant SBA owners all-knowing powers and all of us are in a state of unknown. It's okay to say, "I can't tell where we stand on this yet" or "I'm trying to find that answer for you."
- 5. Be empathic.** Many of your employees may have pre-existing conditions or vulnerable family members. None of us know what our employees are carrying

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6. Stay available. This isn't just opening up your calendar to people you serve, but keeping your heart emotionally available to support people even when you are struggling with the daily realities of running a business during a national crisis.

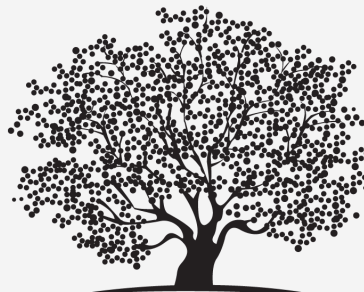
7. Don't be a hero/martyr. Situations like this activate my natural tendencies to try to save the world, do it on my own and single-handedly solve all my business problems. Yet, this is not actual courage, this is my response to hurt. We all need to attend to our own natural response to hurt. Most of us over-function or under-function. I'm a classic overfunctioner; so my homeschool schedule has a tendency to be grueling, while I also overschedule myself at work. If your house is a disaster and you haven't clicked on your child's district learning links; then you might be an under function when you are stressed. Both are normal responses to crises. Respect where you are at in this process and acknowledge that you are doing the best that you can.

I've owned and operated my small business for 10 years and never have I experienced such an onslaught of changes that affect my business at every level; from client to employee to our business relationships to my home life.

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8. Attune your attention to what supports you living by your values. There are many people that are suggesting limiting media exposure or those of us that are gobbling up COVID-19 memes. There is no one size fits all response to this crisis. Remind yourself of your own personal values and reject things that move away from that. For me, I've chosen a new value during this time: Adaptability. I choose to adapt to this situation. I choose to remain open to future changes. I will embrace my changing life.

9. Provide hope. A leader that can enact positive change, understands her limits but also knows to share hope. This isn't a false reality or painting our situation as something positive. It's in allowing ourselves to acknowledge that there is hope within sadness. Sharing hope doesn't minimize the disaster that we are facing. Whether you are the leader of your family through this crisis or running your small business; we are called to find these moments where hope exists. They are everywhere.



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