

**BUILDING**

**YOUR**

**RECOVERY**

**PLAN**

A MARKETING  
GUIDE TO  
NAVIGATING  
YOUR SERVICE  
BUSINESS  
THROUGH THE  
COVID-19 CRISIS  
AND BEYOND.

# INTRODUCTION

**The sudden outbreak of Covid19 caught us all by surprise, and life as we knew it ground to a complete halt.** Within a matter of days, many business owners came to the painful realization that they had actually just been coasting in a flush economy, and that they didn't have the infrastructure in place to withstand a crisis.

Whatever position you find yourself in now, it is important not to give up. We will recover from this downturn, and many of us will be stronger than ever before.

If you have a service that you can sell right now, you have an obligation to yourself, to your employees, and to your customers to continue to do so. The following guide will help you decide the right way to market your offerings to be the most sensitive to the current situation, yet still allow your business to thrive.



ANSWER THE FOLLOWING **5 QUESTIONS** →

# 1 How well do I know my clients?

**If you can't describe your ideal client in great detail, now is the time to figure it out.** Create an ideal client avatar - a fictional representation of your 'perfect' client. Here are some pieces of information to include in your avatar:

- Demographic info - Name, age, gender, location, family size, marital status, occupation, annual income
- Hobbies and habits
- Their greatest fears and challenges
- Their greatest hopes and dreams
- What does failure look like to them?
- What does success look like to them?

If you don't have the answer to these questions, there's no better way to get them than to interview some of your current clients. Don't worry about conducting a formal survey or interview- just be a listening ear, and you'll get the most valuable info.

Once you've built an 'avatar,' you can refer back to it before making any decisions. Your marketing messages should be so specific to your avatar's needs and problems that their immediate reaction should be something along the lines of, "THIS is what I need in my life!" In a time of crisis, it is particularly important to make sure your messages resonate; otherwise you risk coming off as insensitive or tone-deaf.



## RECOVERY PLAN ACTION STEP 1:

> *Create an ideal client avatar.*

## 2 Do my services fill an immediate need for my ideal customer?

You may be wondering if it's ethical to market and sell your services during a time of crisis. If you have to convince people to buy something they don't really want or need, then your sales aren't ethical in the best of times! However, if you are marketing for the right reasons— which is, for the purpose of matching your service with people who need it – then you are actually helping them. So not only is it appropriate, but it is an act of kindness.

Depending on what it is that you sell, you may need to adjust your services and/or marketing strategies in order to be successful.

**Firstly, make sure it is very easy to buy from you;** now is not the time for lengthy sales calls or complex customization options. If your services normally involve a multi-step process, break them down into individual steps that can be purchased on their own, or create limited options of pre-packaged combinations. Ideally, these should all be available for purchase with one click on your website.

**Secondly, make sure your message is simple and clear** - who you help, how you help them, and why NOW is the right time to act. Refer back to your ideal client avatar EVERY time you attempt to connect with your audience.

### RECOVERY PLAN ACTION STEP 2:

> *Write one sentence that explains who you can help, how can you help them NOW, and what they need to do to purchase your offering.*

**Some businesses will have a particularly hard time selling in the current environment. Here are some out-of-the box ideas for generating revenue:**

- If your service is an industry that is completely on hold, evaluate your resources and see if you can temporarily switch gears to fill a current need. For example, a catering company that normally services events can deliver meals and food door-to-door.
- If your service is normally delivered in-person, such as makeup artistry or massages, offer one-one-one virtual sessions or online classes.
- Focus on giving back and helping your community. For example, you can offer to donate a portion of all proceeds to a good cause or to help another struggling business.
- Partner with other businesses to combine resources.

No matter what your business can or cannot do, make sure you continue to connect with your customers on a regular basis and constantly monitor updates from your local authorities so you'll be ready when it's safe to resume business as usual.

# 3 Does my website reflect the current situation?

**Before you restart your marketing, update your website and make sure it incorporates the following:**

- Any impact that the Coronavirus has had on your current operations and what you are doing to address them
- FAQ's related to the updates above
- Simple means of contacting you if someone has questions
- A quick and easy way to purchase your current services
- A clear message about how you can help people NOW and a way to gather contact info (see #3)



**RECOVERY PLAN ACTION STEP 3:**

> *Update your website.*

# 4 Am I collecting leads?



## RECOVERY PLAN ACTION STEP 4:

> *Set up your simple sales funnel.*

**Sure, you may have managed until now with word-of-mouth referrals, but that is not going to get you very far in a recession.**

When times are hard, a sales funnel will mean survival. It may sound overwhelming and complicated, but it doesn't have to be. Here's a pared-down funnel that you can get up and running in one day or less.

### STEP 1

Create original content that will be helpful to your clients now (like the document you are currently reading!)

### STEP 2

Add the content to a landing page or website popup up, and promote it on your social channels, LinkedIn, and in your email signature. You can give some of it away for free, but make sure the full content is 'email gated' - meaning someone has to enter their email address to access it. Worry that email-gating will mean less exposure? If done correctly, you'll be giving just enough free value to convince the *right* leads to give you their information, while weeding out the rest. Your gated content will perform best when promoted on a channel where you have an established presence, so people already know, like and trust you.

### STEP 3

Create a simple email campaign to nurture your new leads. A good nurture campaign strikes the ideal balance between education and value, with a dash of subtle promotion that feels helpful, not 'salesy.' Every email should include ONE call-to-action. The timing of your follow up campaigns are important too, and you may need to experiment until you find what works best. Don't be afraid to mix up the style of content included in your emails; for example, a personal video from a founder can be a great way to welcome a prospect and get them to trust you.

**TIP: If you don't have a developer to help you, there are many free or inexpensive platforms that will help you set up email gated content and follow up emails. At 14Minds, we use Mailchimp.**

# 5 How can I help my current and past clients?

**Your sales funnel will help you survive and thrive long term, but you're going to need a more immediate way to generate cash.**

There's no better way to do this than to reach out to the people who trust you because they've already worked with you and had positive results. Contact your past clients – good old fashioned phone calls are ideal – with offers of how you can help. If you've already answered questions 1 & 2 above, you should be ready with some suggestions of services you can offer to get them through the current crisis.


Some thoughts about pricing; when everyone is having a tough time financially, it is tempting to immediately offer dramatic discounts. However, don't make assumptions without talking to people first. Some savvy clients might have rainy day funds for these types of situations or may be willing to invest in certain purchases. In general, discounting prices can often cause more harm than good, so consider other ways of attracting immediate buyers:

- Throw in additional 'free' value along with what the client is paying for, for example, extra consulting hours
- Offer more lenient payment terms

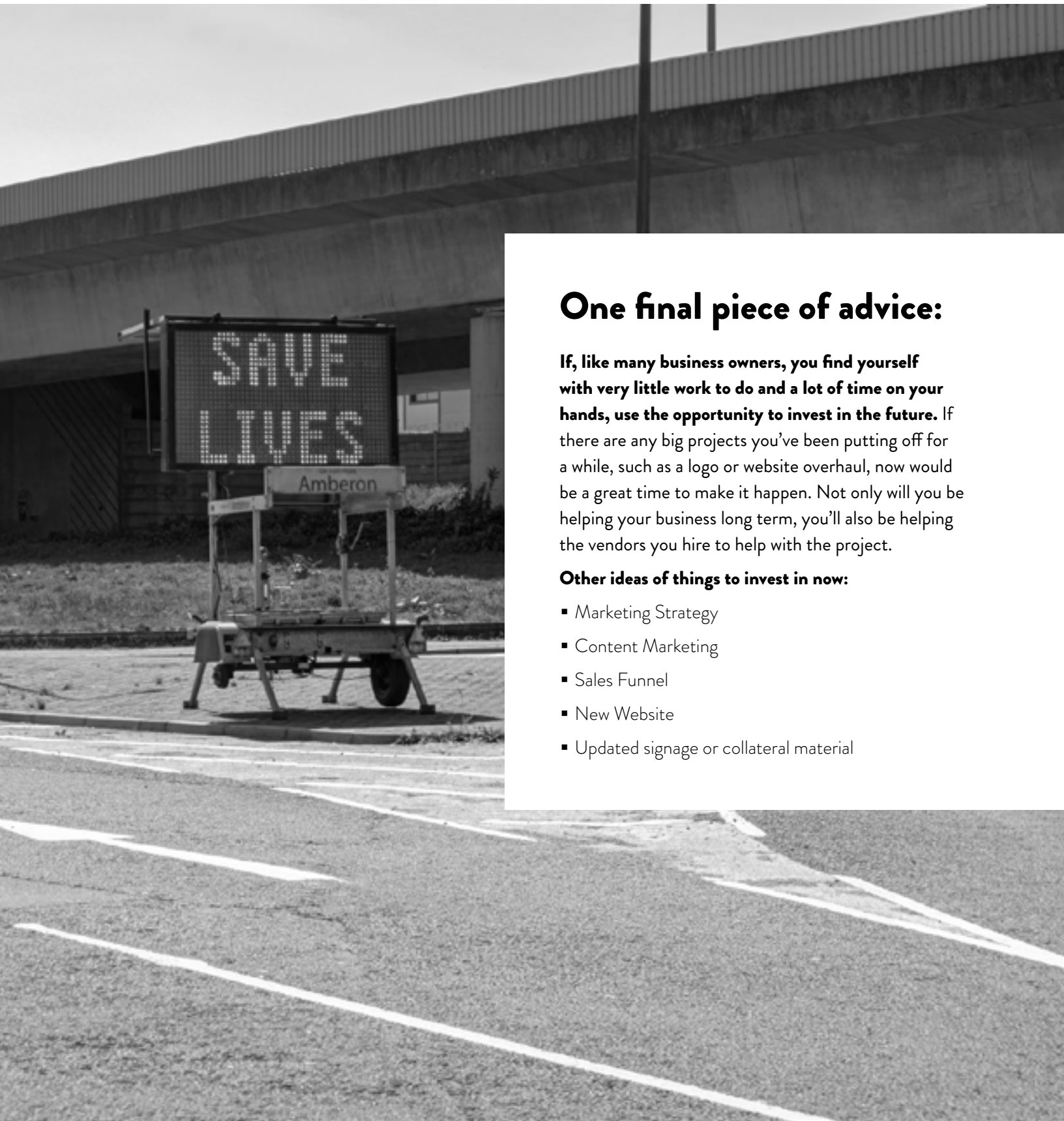
If you do discount your services, make sure you note it multiple times- on the contract, in emails, etc - so the client is sure to remember for the future that they did not pay the actual price.

## RECOVERY PLAN ACTION STEP 5:

*> Reach out to 5 past clients and offer to do new work.*



THINK  
OUTSIDE  
THE BOX



## One final piece of advice:

**If, like many business owners, you find yourself with very little work to do and a lot of time on your hands, use the opportunity to invest in the future.** If there are any big projects you've been putting off for a while, such as a logo or website overhaul, now would be a great time to make it happen. Not only will you be helping your business long term, you'll also be helping the vendors you hire to help with the project.

### **Other ideas of things to invest in now:**

- Marketing Strategy
- Content Marketing
- Sales Funnel
- New Website
- Updated signage or collateral material



THANKS FOR READING!

[Click here](#) to learn more about how  
14Minds is helping Service Businesses  
through the Covid19 crisis.

