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**EVOLVING YOUR  
SALES STRATEGY  
IN THE MIDST  
OF COVID -19**

Comms Business Feature

“By leveraging virtual platforms that are already available, shortening sales cycles and rethinking operational workflows, businesses can take this challenge and turn it into an opportunity to excel and stand out from the crowd.” *David Sparrow, Director of Blabbermouth Marketing*

# Evolving your sales strategy

At a time when the world is adapting to Remote Working and staff are working hard to keep their businesses afloat, **Dave Sparrow**, Director of **Blabbermouth Marketing**, offers some advice to evolving your sales strategy during this unprecedented time

## CBM: What can be done to keep businesses relevant in these uncertain times?

**David Sparrow (DS):** While we all hope that this dies down sooner rather than later, we can all agree that it would be unwise for a business to plan around hope, and some businesses may instinctively go into ‘cut-mode’ and shut down any non-essential spending to maximise available resources. Instead, leaders should be taking stock of the new landscape, as we don’t know how long the situation will last, and exploring how best to adapt marketing strategies, operations and the products and services offered, to weather this storm and come out the other end, still swimming.

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workflows, businesses can take this challenge and turn it into an opportunity to excel and stand out from the crowd.

## Marketing Strategy

Some decision-makers may now find themselves with more free time compared to normal, and will be using that time to research the products and services that were already on the ‘shopping list’ before coronavirus, or possibly finding new products that will enable them to return fitter, faster and more agile than before.

## Sales automation

With all the extra meetings to attend and catch-up emails to write, some are finding that they have less time available in the working day to devote to nurturing prospects. It’s worth bearing in mind too, that many businesses will have routed numbers to mobiles or

voicemail boxes, which means that digital communication will become a key method of communication. Also, some workforces will get smaller, so remaining workers will have to take on more work as a consequence too. Therefore, automating as much of your employees’ workflows as possible, by leveraging a marketing platform like HubSpot, will help to free-up time for other projects and dealing with the ‘day-to-day’, while still serving your prospects. This ensures that any effects on planned pipelines are mitigated as much as possible by keeping prospects engaged and progressing through your customer journey.

## Education

Now is the time to be thinking about what those potential prospects need to know to help them along your customer journey and getting that information in front of them. Not only that, but this is an opportunity to stand out from the competition in your thought leadership and to say something that your competitors are not. While inboxes are being bombarded with remote working advice blogs and special offers, what can you say that’s different? In the coming months, staff will become accustomed to remote working, and when we all return to the office again, staff will want to take what they’ve learnt and apply that back to their office routine. So, integrating any new technologies, connectivity or software used currently back into office operations will be critical.

## Personalisation

We all like to be valued as people, rather than statistics or metrics, which is why a personally addressed email or a website that says “Welcome back Bob!” is going to be far more welcoming to Bob, than not being acknowledged at all. And, if Bob is choosing which business he is going to buy from, that friendly greeting could be the deciding factor between Bob being a prospect lost or won. Personalisation helps businesses give the impression that they are going the extra mile and considering the prospect personally. The right tools will make your brand more memorable, and given how people will be wanting to foster new relationships once we’re all back in the office, personalising your correspondence will help your business stand out from the rest.

## Sales Enablement

For the foreseeable future, businesses need to focus on identifying the products that are most suited to selling remotely, like low CapEx solutions and products that are suited to remote teams. Virtual sales teams need to consider the entire sales journey and provide sellers with solutions that help to achieve that first sale remotely. Not only that but having polished, slick assets (online presentations, FAQs, infographics, etc.) will help lift your corporate image compared to your competitors, while they are rushing to cobble ‘something’ together. It’s also worth considering whether your business could leverage webinar platforms for meetings and





Dave Sparrow, Director of Blabbermouth Marketing

training, Adobe Echosign for invoicing, Messaging platforms for ongoing project work, etc. that can all expedite the sales process and help teams keep their momentum and build a pipeline for future big-ticket deals.

#### Products and Services


When it comes to sales, current 'market uncertainty' may dissuade many businesses from making a considered purchase, until markets gain confidence and predictability. In the meantime, businesses should be considering both short- and long-term initiatives that will prevent 'uncertainty' from being used as an excuse for sales not reaching their expected conclusion.

#### Non-human interaction products

Businesses may want to consider how to better design products and services to be 'Plug & play', reducing the necessity for installations or engineer call-outs and preventing a backlog of install appointments. Also consider any ongoing maintenance; can a product be transitioned to a cloud-based platform, so that it can be adjusted and

maintained remotely, instead of on site?

#### Shorten sales cycle

While the opportunity for face-to-face meetings is non-existent, businesses should consider how to shorten the sales cycle or reduce the CapEx cost, so that salespeople are not so reliant on in-person negotiation tactics and 'the long sell' for considered purchases. For example, transitioning to an OpEx model, shorter contracts that reduce cost to try, a 2-week trial license or even free 'taster' products could be leveraged, to get prospects over that final hurdle. While businesses certainly shouldn't be (or even appear to be) taking advantage of the current situation, the cogs of industry still must turn, otherwise the economic effect of coronavirus will snowball. Businesses should still look to sell where the sale is appropriate; focusing on streamlining the product sales cycle, increasing operational agility and leveraging automation, businesses can develop a more creative, adaptable marketing strategy that refuses to be influenced or negated by the current climate. 

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