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10 Ways To Grow Your Engineering Firm During Challenging Times

by Kim Naughtin

Unprecedented. That word has been used more times than anyone can count as a way to explain what we are going through.

Unprecedented. Unparalleled. Unmatched. Whichever word you use, we have never experienced such challenges to our health, our society, and our businesses in my lifetime. The world is on lockdown. People are scared. Business owners are concerned. We know we will get through this; history tells us that. It's the question of "When will this be over?" or "What will it look like on the other side?" that's impacting many businesses today.

Even though the state of Colorado has deemed construction as essential, business owners and developers are still concerned. COVID-19 is already having an adverse effect on design firms and construction companies across the country.

The following principles can help you through the uncertainty of the coming months and can even help your business grow during these challenging times.

1. Keep working

Many engineering firms are worried, but worrying doesn't pay the bills. Being proactive does. Companies that choose to keep working through the challenges will be better prepared for success on the other side.

2. Be visible to your audience

Now more than ever, you need to let your clients know that you are open for business. Consistent use of social media and email marketing, along with refreshing the content on your website, will let people know you are here, you are open, and that you are ready to help.

3. Focus on leadership

To weather this storm, your team needs a leader. Stay up to date with current industry regulations and abide by all essential business requirements. Communicating your COVID-19 work strategies will help your clients feel comfortable continuing their projects during these times.

4. Evaluate your messaging

Review your website and ensure the wording does not come off tone-deaf in the time of a global pandemic. Think of your clients and where they are right now. How can you be of service to them in these challenging times?

5. Use video to introduce your value and services

It can be challenging to communicate your value and services to new clients without a face to face conversation. Create a short video that highlights your services and your importance – why new prospects should choose you. Videos can be emailed, posted on your website, and shared to your social media accounts.

6. Analyze financial statements more frequently

Now is not the time to make rash decisions based on fear or emotion. To keep your company moving forward, review your financial statements on a more frequent basis, and adapt accordingly.

7. Strengthen relationships

People like to know they have support, especially during challenging times. Connect with clients, sub-consultants, product suppliers, and simply have a conversation. Be a friend, see how they are doing, and ask if they need anything. In these times of social distancing, a simple phone call can mean a lot.

8. Master virtual client presentations

Don't be the firm that hosts lengthy, inefficient, and technically challenged virtual meetings. Invest in systems and train your team on how to look polished and on task when meeting with clients and project teams.

9. Invest in your future

Do you have a business plan? A marketing strategy? If so, revisit these plans. Temporary, small tweaks may be needed to guarantee that you are on track and moving toward your goals. If you do not have these plans in place, now is a great time to invest in these foundational pieces to business success.



MARKETING TO DO LIST

1. Speak with all past and current clients.
2. Send email campaigns.
3. Post to social media.
4. Build strategic relationships.
5. Connect and engage on LinkedIn.

10. Innovate, don't reinvent

Now is not the time to do what you have always done, expecting the same results. "The old way" will not serve you or your business in these uncertain times. Now is the time for innovation and fresh thinking that will propel your business forward. There's no need to reinvent your business – Just do better. Push harder. Work smarter.

Unfortunately, no one has the answer to when we will return to a resemblance of normal. However, those who confront these challenging times head-on and look for opportunities to grow their business will survive and prosper.



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