



# Arts & Culture Action Plan

**If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take during this time, use this guide to get you started. Here's what we'll cover:**

**Keeping safe**

- Protecting yourself
- Protecting your patrons

**Assessing and generating solutions**

- Identifying short-term modifications
- Starting to think long term

**Adapting and overcoming**

- Converting to digital solutions
- Putting a plan into action

**Staying in contact**

- Updating your communication channels
- Reaching out to clients

**Marketing during this time**

- Being sensitive and respectful
- Gauging the appropriate path

**Planning for the future**

- Thinking ahead
- Using what you've learned





The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic is changing the way we all do business. There is much we still don't know about how this situation will play out.

For many artists, musicians, writers, and other arts and culture businesses such as concert halls or theaters, business-as-usual has all but come to a complete halt. Most have been forced to close their brick-and-mortar locations temporarily to comply with state and federal guidance limiting groups of 10 or more to gather. And for those who are able to continue services, special precautions or new digital solutions need to be employed.

As this unprecedented crisis continues to evolve, many professionals in arts and culture are wondering how to minimize losses, and what steps they can take to protect their businesses or organizations.

Here's the thing — small business owners and entrepreneurs are some of the most resourceful and resilient people we know. And now's the time to lean into that resourcefulness, make a plan, and get to work. If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take, this guide will serve as a good starting point.

Let's take a look at some ways that you can take stock of the situation, generate solutions, and take action to protect your arts and culture business.

As you know, things are developing rapidly. Remain flexible to make changes on the fly.

Remember, you've got us and can get [Constant Contact Help and Support](#) when you need it.



# Safety First

Your first priority is to make sure that your family, staff, and especially yourself, are safe and safeguarded, to the best of your ability.

Next, make sure that you're doing everything you can to safeguard your clients.

Implement [CDC-recommended precautions](#) in your business as soon as possible. Among the most important recommendations are:



- ☐ Prohibit gatherings of 10 or more people in the same space
- ☐ Actively encourage employees, especially those who are sick, to stay home.
- ☐ Implement systems that allow them to work from home if possible.
- ☐ Emphasize the importance of cough and sneeze etiquette as well as hand hygiene within your business.
- ☐ Perform routine, thorough environmental cleaning.

Once you've done what you can for everyone's health and safety, it's time to figure out how this situation may affect your business.

It's likely you're already feeling the impact. In any emergency, large or small, you'll often have to assess and reassess to generate solutions because things are always changing.



**Note:** Since this is a rapidly moving situation, the guidelines set forth by your local health officials should take precedent when deciding what precautions to follow. ([Find resources for your state here.](#))

# Assess and generate solutions

Since there are a lot of unknowns, it's important to think about various possibilities and what you can do to adapt to them. The problems you face will vary depending on the type of arts and culture business you have — art studio, theater, musical hall, or something else, and so your solutions will vary too. In general, some of the things we hear professionals in arts and culture struggling with now are forced closures, decreased customers as people self-isolate, and a desire to delight current customers by bringing services online.

These issues are already changing the way arts and culture businesses do things for now, and it's likely that these changes could influence the industry in the future. It's important to look at these problems directly and to make a plan based on what you're able to do now, as well as what you might be able to do later on. Below are some examples of things you should consider.

You may want to write things down as you think through these questions and your answers. It'll help you formulate your action plan.

## How can you ensure your studio stays safe and CDC-compliant?

- ☐ Apart from making sure you're complying yourself, how will you get your staff and clients entering your facility to properly sanitize? How can you enforce social distancing within your studio or venue?

## How can you support your staff at this time?

- ☐ Are you able to offer them anything to help keep them afloat through this crisis?
- ☐ If your venue is closed, consider allowing staff to use it as a "studio" for virtual classes or shows, so they can stay engaged and continue to provide services to clients.

## What if you get sick?

- ☐ If possible, designate someone else to be in charge of your daily operations.

## How will you respond to inquiries from potential clients during this time?

- ☐ Consider formulating a response ahead of time that can copy and paste into an email that lays out what you currently know about how this is affecting your business, as well as ways they can stay active and take advantage of your expertise during this crisis through online classes or services (if you can offer them).



And at some point you may have to ask the bigger questions:

**What if you have to completely pause normal operations?**

- What will that look like? How will you communicate it with your clients and your community?
- Will you offer membership extensions? How will this impact your cancellation policy?

**Is the “temporary” plan you put into place sustainable? If so, for how long?**

- If not, are there things you can do to adjust your plan so it will be sustainable?

**What if this lasts several weeks or months?**

- How this would affect your family, as well as your staff, clients and their families — can you help them in some way?

**Are there any other resources available to you?**

We’ve compiled a list of resources for you.

[Resources for Small Businesses Impacted by COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)



# Adapt and overcome

Your “business as usual” may no longer exist, at least for the time being. You’ll need to adapt to get through these trying times. This includes focusing on services you can still provide without an in-person meeting. Some things to consider:



## Working from home

If you can, set up work from home options for yourself and your employees, if you have any.

Set up a workstation that can stay in place for as long as you need it. Create a space where everyone in the family knows that if you’re in it, you’re working. This can help you to stay focused when you’re working, and set up boundaries between working and hanging out at home.

## Moving in-person services and classes online

There are plenty of ways for you to connect with clients via videos and photos. You can also find platforms that allow you to hold virtual concerts and art classes. You may even consider a YouTube channel, video conferencing, or livestreaming. Start simple – even hosting a paint session on Instagram Live is a great way to dip your toes into bringing services online.





## Building your brand online

Your Constant Contact account comes with tools that make it easy to start building your brand online. You can create a logo, a full website where you can share updates and information about the services you provide, and even manage your social media.

## Sell your products online

If you are an artist and are not selling your artwork online, now is the time to bring your inventory to the internet. By creating a Constant Contact website, you can upload products for sale and take advantage of our inventory management tools.





# Stay in contact

When you're constantly having to make changes to adapt to an ever-changing situation, it's imperative that you let your clients know what you're doing and when.

Keep them aware of any changes to day-to-day operations.

Be sure to include details your clients should know about, like your availability, the options available to them, and any extra precautions you're taking regarding the virus.

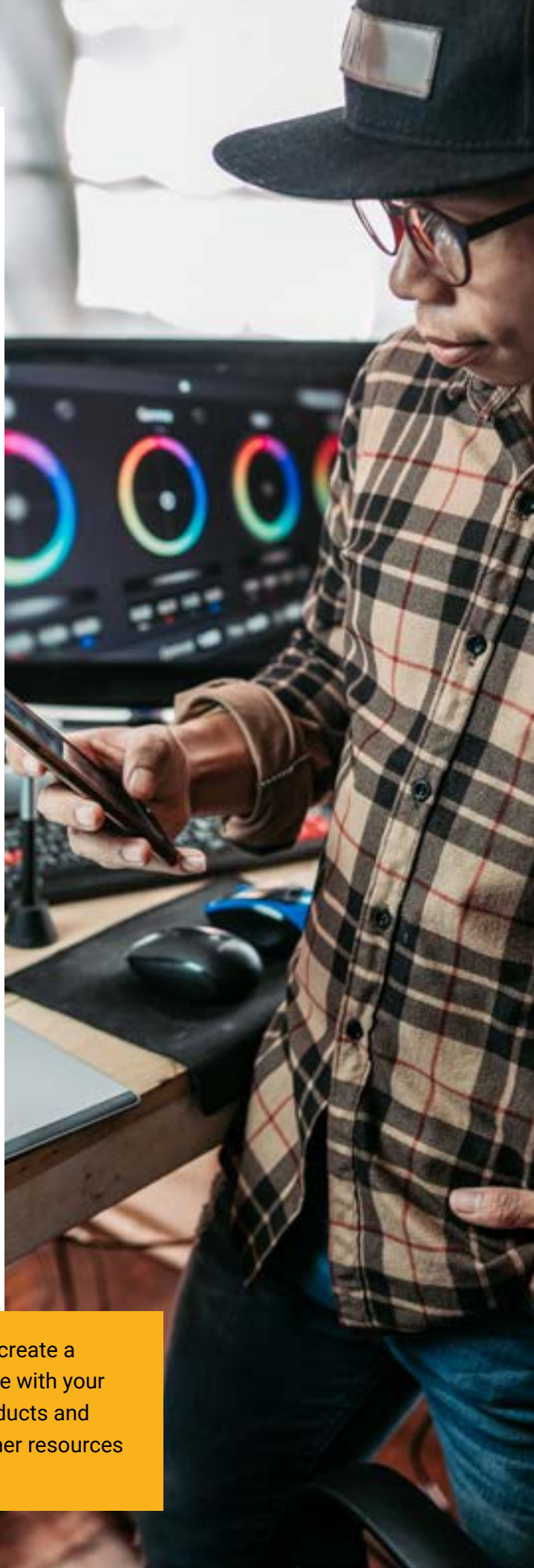
Consider the following tips to communicate the above information with your clients:



- ☐ **Update your website.**
- ☐ **Email your customers.**
- ☐ **Post to social channels and pin those posts to the top of your feed if possible.**
- ☐ **Update your details on your Google My Business profile and any other sites where you have a listing.**
- ☐ **If you have a physical location, think about hanging signage in your windows and around the store.**

It's also a good idea to review any communications you already had scheduled for their appropriateness and relevance based on the current state of affairs.

Remember, your Constant Contact account comes with tools to create a website, send email (including templates for you to communicate with your contacts about COVID-19 including tips on what to say), sell products and services, post to social media, and more. Need help? See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#).



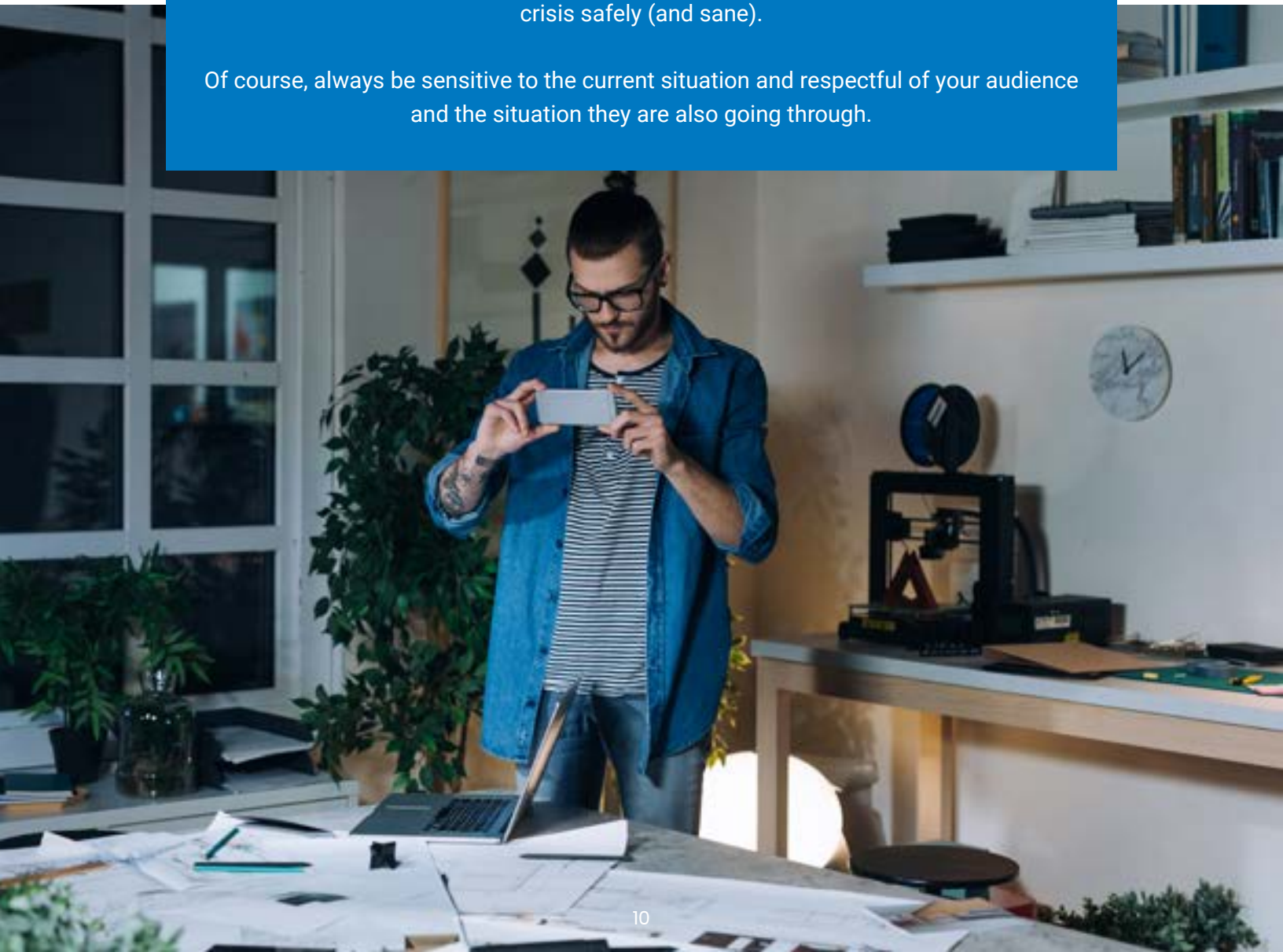


# Marketing during this time

Letting people know about the changes you've made is a great place to start. Use the channels mentioned above to communicate on a consistent basis. Of course, consider your unique situation and local market to gauge the most appropriate path forward.

As we've mentioned before, people are stuck at home and everyone has a need to stay busy and may even be eager to try new things right now, so your services might be just what they're looking for. Rather than "selling" services, focus on inspiring clients and potential clients to get creative and appreciate art and music so we can get through this crisis safely (and sane).

Of course, always be sensitive to the current situation and respectful of your audience and the situation they are also going through.



# Plan for the future

Eventually, you'll need to transition back to business as usual. It's important to plan ahead. So, start making plans for what comes after the emergency.

Review the changes you've made and what you've learned, then think about how you can use that information to move forward.

---

## What can stay?

Look for things worth making a permanent part of your business.



- ☐ **Were your online services a big hit?**
- ☐ **Did you make headway building your personal brand?**
- ☐ **Were people interested in the content and messages you produced during this time?**

If so, don't stop just because the emergency is over. Keep them going and see if they're a good addition to your business long term.

## What comes next?



- ☐ **If you've paused operations, what will it take to start back up?**
- ☐ **How will you recall your staff? Will it be in stages or all at once?**
- ☐ **How will you get the word out to clients?**

These are trying times with many unknowns. By doing your best to stay safe, review your options, and make a plan you'll better position yourself to come out on the other side.





# Remember, you are not alone

Our marketing advisors are here to help.

- Connect with other small businesses in the [Community](#)
- See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#)

**You've got this. You've got us.**

