

Customer communication is always vital, Covid-19 makes it even more so

 By [Greg Chen](#)

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In the midst of a global pandemic, it can be all too easy for businesses to lose sight of the fundamentals. That's understandable. Companies around the globe are fighting for their survival and doing everything they can just to keep the lights on.



Photo by Paul Hanaoka on [Unsplash](#).

But, as the world starts to emerge from under the shadow of Covid-19 and economic activity resumes at a meaningful level, a few things will set the companies apart that survive and go on to thrive from those that don't. One of the biggest factors will be how they communicate with their customers during the crisis and in its immediate aftermath.

In order to explain why that's the case, it's important to understand why customer communication is so important in the first place. From there, it's possible to see how and where businesses should be communicating with their customers as they ready themselves to recover from the crisis.

Customer communication is always vital

Even when economic conditions are good, the companies who communicate best with their customers are the ones which perform best. After all, communication drives customer engagement. And engaged customers come with serious benefits. They are [six times more likely](#) to try a new product or service from their preferred brand; four times more likely to have referred a brand to their friends, family and connections; and twice as likely to make a purchase with their preferred brand, even when a competitor has a better product or price.

By building engagement and trust, companies also build loyalty and returning customers routinely [spend more money](#) on brands they're loyal to. [Research also shows](#) that the probability of selling to an existing customer is 60-70%. By contrast, the probability of selling to a new potential customer is just five to 20%. Even more significantly, [80% of a business' future profits](#) will come from just 20% of its existing customers.

In the midst of the Covid-19 crisis and the economic turmoil surrounding it, that loyalty is only going to become more important. Finding new customers right now (unless you're Zoom or Netflix) is next to impossible.

As money generally becomes tighter, people will inevitably look to cut back on spending. The last brands they'll cut back on are those that have engendered their trust and loyalty. These will also be the brands that have communicated with them consistently and effectively throughout the crisis.

Be where your customers are, keep it relevant

And in order for customer communication to be effective, it cannot simply exist for its own sake. Now, more than ever, companies need to ensure that any communication they send their customers is relevant and hyper-personalised.

With people spending more time at home, with more time to read anything sent to them, they're far less likely to be forgiving of any communication that doesn't appeal to them. The wrong communication to the wrong person, on the wrong day, may end up costing you a customer. That's something no company can afford at a time when every customer is vital.

But it's also important that companies focus on communicating with their customers where they are. Now, more than ever, that means communicating with them on their mobile phones. As things were prior to the pandemic, [98% of all SMSes](#) are opened and, on average, it takes someone [90 seconds](#) to respond to an SMS versus 20% and 90 minutes for email. With more people at home now, spending [more time on their mobile devices](#), any communication you send out on that medium is likely to receive more attention than it would otherwise.

Using SmartSMS technology, you can further ensure that your communication is hyper-personalised by using the number of characters that make up your SMS as a subject line, before leading your customers to a personalised website with content that's unique to the individual customer - and not restricted by a limit on the number of characters.

Adapting to circumstances

While there's no doubt that these are completely unprecedented times, it's vital that companies don't forget the importance of fundamentals such as customer communication. Certainly, it's important to adapt to the circumstances, but as companies look to rebuild post-Covid-19, those that have retained customers will be in a better position than those that haven't. And customer communication, so vital in ordinary times, is vital to that.

ABOUT GREG CHEN

Greg Chen is the CEO and co-founder of Mbbiz. He has a long history in the South African mobile space and is passionate about the role technology can play in engaging the country's people across the spectrum.

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