

Four Tips to Stay Engaged with Your Customers

During these challenging times, you can easily connect with and share information among your customers and your community by creating and managing your dealership listing on Google My Business. It's an easy way to keep your customers updated on changes at your location.

- 1** Maintain your store hours and information in Google My Business. Create a social media post telling your customers of any changes to your hours or services you provide.
 - <https://www.google.com/business/>
 - You can create a Google My Business account for no charge to manage your dealership information directly.
 - **BONUS TIP:** Filling in more fields in My Business typically results in more searches (25% increase) and more views (37% increase)*
 - Update the Attributes for your business; Google is adding more Attributes to My Business. Attributes let customers know more about your dealership, such as whether you have ethanol-free or diesel fuel, if your dealership is family-owned, or if you offer military discounts. Adding relevant, accurate attributes to your Business Profile helps you stand out to your customers who find your business on Google.
 - Searches for "store hours" have increased since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; help your customers understand your new hours, new processes, phone number changes, etc.
 - Listing your business as Temporarily Closed will not have any impact on your search rankings.
 - Add a note to notify your customers if you are changing, or will change, anything about your business, such as curbside or home pickup and delivery, remote service or a virtual showroom.
 - If you add a post to your Google listing regarding COVID-19, Google will extend the display time from 7 days to 14 days

- 3** Consider digital advertising. Ready-to-use digital assets available on the Mercury Dealer Marketing Portal include ads that you can use in paid campaigns, on your website or in your emails to customers; videos; social media post images and copy; email copy. Click on the Dealer Marketing Portal link in the Marketing menu on MercNET.
 - More customers are indoors and online.
 - Digital ad campaigns can help you target customers much more easily and more effectively than traditional methods. You can speak directly to boaters in your community based on their browsing history or streaming video services.
 - Digital ads are quick and immediate, and can drive traffic to your website or social media page.
 - Digital ads are easy to edit, update, change or redirect.
 - Digital impact is measurable – learn what effectively brings customers to your website
 - Look for support from publishers such as Facebook or Google.
 - > Google is offering \$340 million in ad credits to small and midsize businesses with active Google ad accounts as part of an \$800 million coronavirus response package. <https://blog.google/inside-google/company-announcements/commitment-support-small-businesses-and-crisis-response-covid-19>
 - > Facebook has established a Small Business Grants Program with \$100 million dollars in grants available to small businesses <https://www.facebook.com/business/boost/grants>

- 2** Communicate with your followers on social media.
 - On Facebook, you can pin the post to the top of your page so it's always visible at the top. To pin a post, click on the edit icon (either a pencil or three dots) in the upper-right corner of a status update. A drop-down menu will appear – choose "Pin to Top of Page".
 - Explain or illustrate your involvement in your community.
 - Work with other local businesses to support your customer base (jointly or independently).
 - Be open about ways your business and employees have been impacted by COVID-19:
 - > Changes in hours, processes or procedures
 - > If your content regarding this is longer, consider entering it as a post rather than an image so it's easier for your customers to read and understand.
 - Demonstrate empathy for your customers and their challenges – "Together, we can get through this!"
 - Social media is one of the most effective ways for people to connect and stay in contact with one another, and it's a great way for you to connect with your customers.
 - Your communication can consist of a simple image, a brief video or descriptive copy – consider posting information that helps you and your followers.

- 4** If your resources or time are limited, go where your customers are – primarily Google and social media

Remember, there is no downside to staying engaged with your customers and your community.

*BrandMuscle "Treat the Economic Symptoms of Coronavirus with Proactive Brand Management Webinar" (3/26/2020)