



# Navigating the road ahead

A guide to help businesses adapt  
their digital marketing strategies  
and prepare for what's next

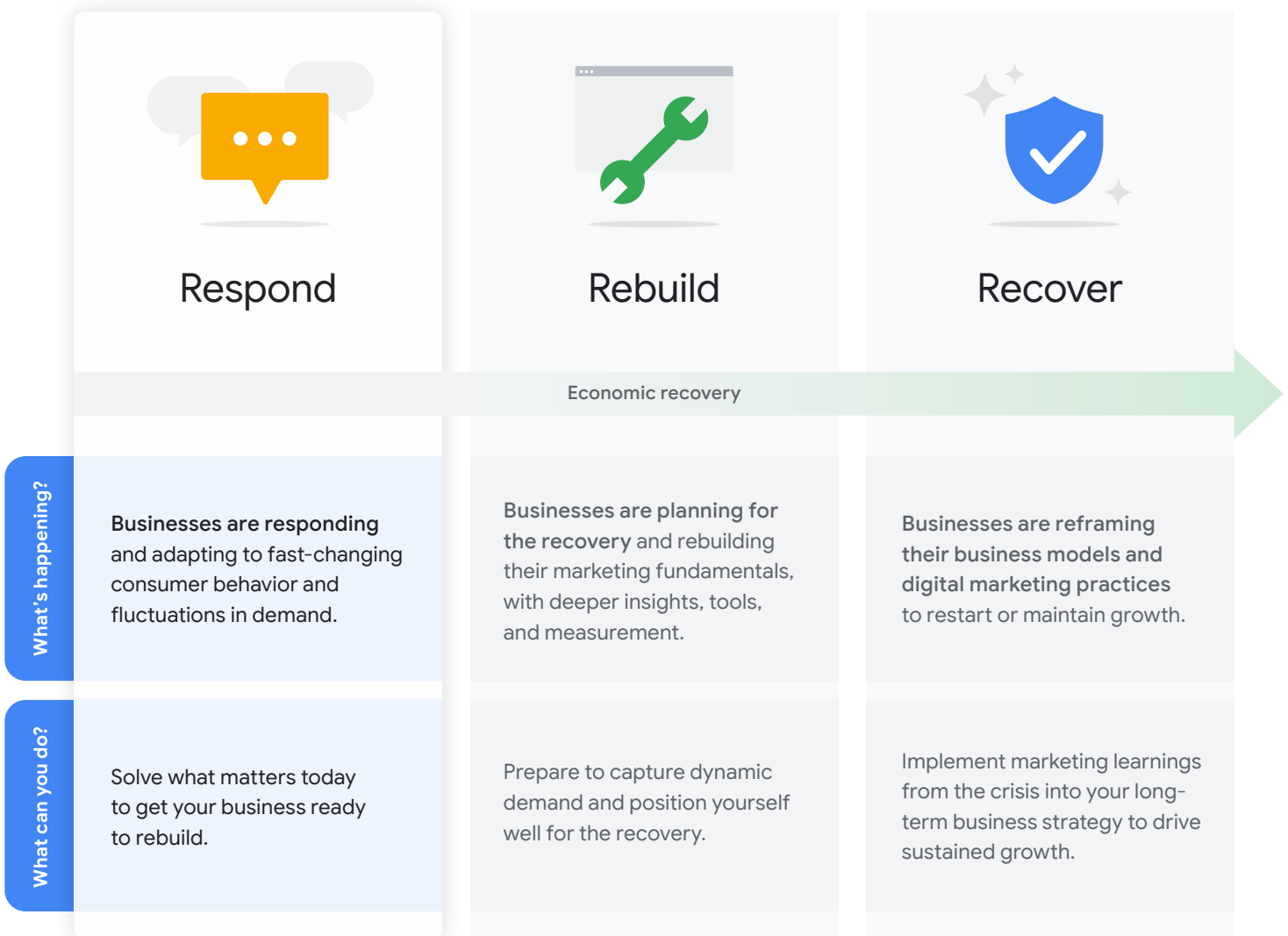
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# Stay ahead of the changing landscape

COVID-19 has changed life as we know it – and as we do everything we can to keep each other safe, our routines have fundamentally shifted. The necessary measures taken to manage the pandemic have disrupted the global economy and altered consumers' expectations, habits, and purchasing behavior. This has resulted in new challenges to supply chains, fulfillment, physical stores, and for employees and customers.

At Google, we've seen businesses around the globe – including our own – adapt to these new realities. While these are unprecedented times, we've seen businesses start to think about the path to economic recovery in three stages – respond, rebuild, and reframe – each with distinct priorities. Businesses, industry verticals, and markets are affected differently by each stage – with some moving faster than others – but we've observed that the vast majority remain focused on responding.



The timeline of economic recovery remains fluid – but there are things you can do during each of these stages to act with more certainty. The intention of this guide is to help you prioritize what to do next and take action. That includes ways to utilize the latest consumer and industry insights, how to evaluate the situation facing your business, and next steps to shift your digital marketing strategies to meet customer needs.

The nature of this crisis requires us to go beyond business as usual. For marketers, it can be a chance to try new strategies, think outside of the box, and reinvent the way we connect with audiences. And when we get through this, the innovative and compassionate approaches we put in place have the potential to bring us closer with our customers and communities.

## Navigating your response

01

Base your approach on consumer insights

...

02

Understand the impact to your business

...

03

Develop a strategy and take action quickly

# 01

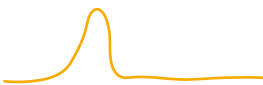
## Consumer insights to drive your approach

### What we've seen in Search patterns

If you want to engage your audience, meet them where they are. And with over four billion people staying home worldwide<sup>1</sup>, consumers' behavior and media consumption habits are changing rapidly.

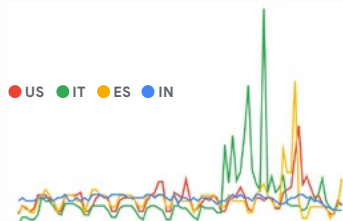
While we don't know how or when the crisis will resolve, we have early insight into how people's needs and behaviors may evolve as they seek to regain a sense of balance. To date, we've identified **three search patterns** since the onset of COVID-19: shock, step-change, and speed up.<sup>2</sup>

#### Shock



Sudden change in behavior, unlikely to sustain

- ▶ Quick rise and fall in school-related searches as quarantine orders went into effect



Top Searches

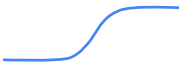
US 100th day of school ideas  
school districts **closing**  
schools **closing**

IT scuole **chiuse** coronavirus  
**chiusura** scuole coronavirus  
**riapertura** scuole

ES **cierre** colegios coronavirus  
**cierre** colegios andalucia  
**cierre** colegios madrid

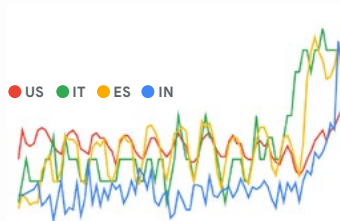
IN noida school **closed**  
bangalore schools **closed**  
up school **closed** news today

#### Step-change



Sudden change in behavior, may sustain

- ▶ Quick rise in exercise-related searches showing signs of stabilization at elevated levels



Top Searches

US **at home** shoulder workout  
**at home** back workout  
resistance band workouts

IT total body workout **a casa**  
**street** workout  
**7 minuti** workout

ES ejercicios para mayores  
**en casa**

ES ejercicios para hacer  
**en casa con niños**  
ejercicios para hacer  
**en casa mujeres**

#### Speed up



Acceleration of existing behavior, may sustain

- ▶ Acceleration in growth rate of delivery-related searches showing signs of continued behavior for now



Compound Annual Growth Rate (2017-19)

US **7.24%**

IT **19.40%**

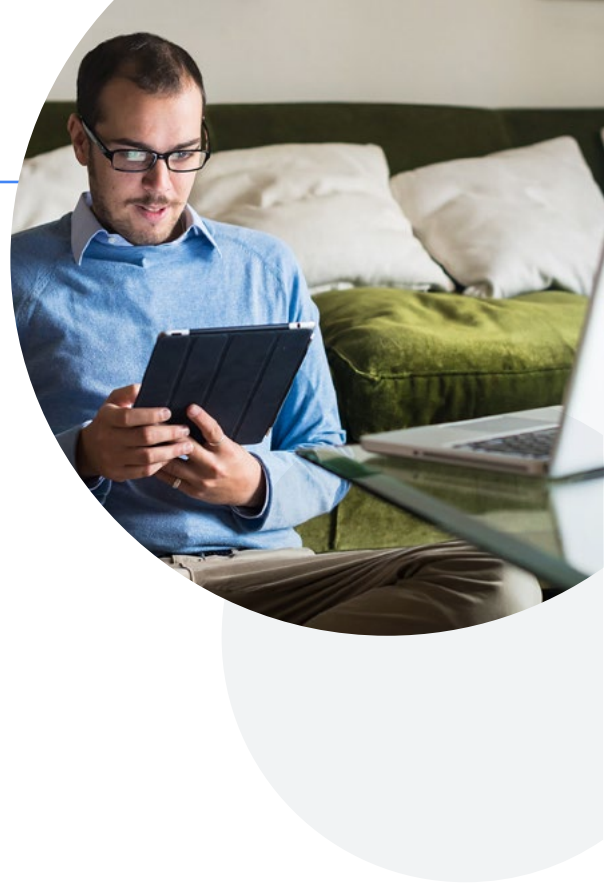
ES **7.69%**

IN **0.88%**

As you evolve your short and long-term digital marketing strategies, it's important to understand nuances in consumer patterns so you're in the best position to respond to this dynamic environment.

## How consumer behaviors have shifted

Here are **five key consumer behaviors** we've seen playing out across industries, based on how people are interacting with technology.



### CONSUMERS ARE

## Using multiple devices to go online at unprecedented levels

Connecting with the world online is more important than ever right now, with at-home media consumption increasing dramatically and permeating all aspects of life.



In the US, staying home has led to a **60%** increase in the amount of content watched – Americans are watching roughly **12 hours of media content a day**, according to Nielsen data.<sup>3</sup>



Consumers across the globe are spending **20%** more time in apps than they did a year ago and app usage in China grew to **five hours/day** (+30% year over year), according to App Annie.<sup>4</sup>



## CONSUMERS ARE

### Searching for critical information and content to meet essential needs

COVID-19 has made life anything but normal. With retailers adapting to delivery or online models, people are looking for clear, specific information about where, how, and when they can get what they need.



Search interest in “[online grocery shopping](#)” and “[grocery delivery](#)” grew **23%** year over year in the US.<sup>5</sup>



Americans are watching videos related to recipes and cooking at a rate **31%** higher than they did in March 2019.<sup>6</sup>



We’ve seen search interest in [telemedicine](#) increase **150%** week-over-week in the US.<sup>7</sup>

## CONSUMERS ARE

### Discovering new connections and nurturing relationships (virtually)

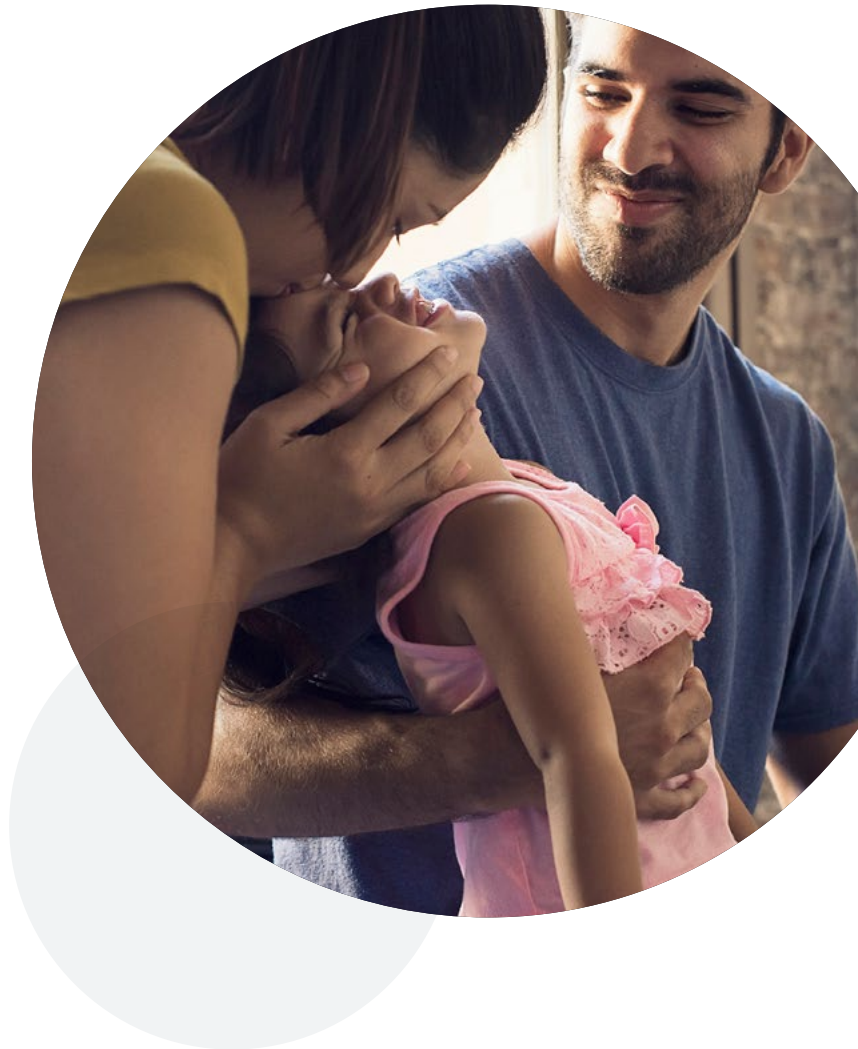
Even as people physically distance themselves, they're using technology in a new way to connect with others.



50% of US consumers said they used video to communicate with family and friends in March.<sup>8</sup> And search interest for “[virtual happy hour](#)” is rising, especially in the US.<sup>9</sup>



On YouTube, we've seen a rise in [“with me” videos](#), where people film themselves going about ordinary tasks like cleaning, shopping, or cooking. In the US, views of videos containing “[study with me](#)” in the title are 54% higher compared to the same period last year.<sup>10</sup>





## CONSUMERS ARE

### Adjusting routines to be internet-first

As routines and schedules change to meet the demands of isolation and new realities, so have online habits.



Search interest for “[telecommuting](#)” in the US reached an all-time high on Google and YouTube<sup>11</sup> in mid-March, and continue to grow with no sign of slowing down.



Workout routines are getting an overhaul all over the world too. There’s growing search interest for “[stationary bicycles](#)” worldwide, especially in Spain and France,<sup>12</sup> and “[dumbbell set](#)” in the UK, for example.<sup>13</sup>





## CONSUMERS ARE

### Practicing self-care – and being there for others

As people stay home, they're focusing on taking care of their own physical and psychological needs – in addition to those of friends and loved ones.



People are turning to online video for help in [coping with anxiety and stress](#). So far in the US this year, views of meditation-related videos are **51%** higher than the same period in 2019.<sup>14</sup>



People are searching for things to do when they're bored. Searches for "**bored**" have spiked significantly in the month of March, and searches for "**games**," "**puzzles**," and "**coloring books**" increased considerably during the same period.<sup>15</sup>



## Insights to guide your marketing strategy

Today's rapid market changes create a massive amount of data and insights, but it's hard to find clarity in the noise and determine which trends will empower your decision-making.

To identify real-time insights and trends that are relevant to your business, **use the four tools below**. From there, you can reference this information to prioritize the most impactful digital marketing strategies based on your goals.



## Google Trends

Stay on top of market trends

In this dynamic environment, consumer behaviors are changing constantly. To meet their needs, consider using [Google Trends](#) – a tool that provides access to real-time search requests across Google Search, YouTube, Shopping, and Images based on a keyword or topic to ask the right questions to inform business decisions. For example:

*How is the customer demand in my industry changing right now?*

*How is demand changing across my product assortment?*

*Where can I find the most valuable customers?*

Here are **five tips** to help you find insights and get the most out of Google Trends.



### **Filter across properties**

You can now explore trends across Google Search, Image Search, News Search, Google Shopping, and YouTube Search.



### **Compare your search terms and topics**

You can add topics for simultaneous comparison across languages, locations, and time periods.



### **Explore by category**

Words often have multiple meanings, so make sure to find what you're looking for on Trends. For instance, if you search for “mask,” you can add a category to indicate whether you mean protective health equipment or a type of beauty product.



### **Use [Trends search tips](#)**

Refine trends with punctuation, group search terms, and filters.



### **[Understand the data](#)**

Understand exactly what data is in your results and how Trends data is pulled, including how it should be interpreted.

Read more [here](#) about Google Trends for marketers in a dynamic environment.



## Shopping Insights

Know what shoppers want

[Shopping Insights](#) helps you understand what shoppers are looking for across Google, compare competing products in your category, and discover local demand for your brands and products.

Here are **five useful tips** for getting the most out of Shopping Insights.

- ✓ **Compare products over time**  
Add up to four products or product lines in a single report to see their performance over a time period, popular locations, and more.
- ✓ **Understand device behaviors**  
See how many searches came from mobile devices during a time period.
- ✓ **Understand local demand**  
Filter by geography to gauge local interest in your brand and products.
- ✓ **Find results by category**  
See how your brand stacks up against competitors in the category.
- ✓ **Subscribe to Shopping Insights and stay up to date**  
Just tell us which products and categories matter to you, and we'll send all the relevant trends – with supporting data – straight to your inbox weekly.



## Rising retail categories tool on Think with Google NEW

Understand fast-rising retail categories in Google Search

Use this new [rising retail categories](#) interactive tool on Think with Google to surface the fastest rising retail categories in Google Search, the locations where they're growing, and the queries associated with them. The data will update daily to reflect changes in Search interests.



## Google Alerts

Stay informed with the latest news

To help you stay on top of shifts, use these curated [global trends related to the pandemic](#) with an option to dive more deeply into any of 24 local markets.

To set up your own custom [Google Alerts](#) on the latest information and news, input the topics you're interested in. You'll get an email when new results show up in Google Search.



## Find My Audience

Understand how to reach your audience

[Find My Audience](#) helps you understand who your most valuable customers are on YouTube – so you can discover new audiences and learn how to reach them individually with relevant messages.

- ✓ **Identify your audiences**  
Discover new audiences based on their interests and habits.
- ✓ **Download your profile**  
Get your audience profile, with insights to help inform your video ad strategy.
- ✓ **Connect with your audience**  
Use your insights to start a YouTube campaign that reaches the people who matter most to your business.

# 02

## Assess the impact on your business

Each company has unique goals, so the Respond stage will be different for everyone. But overall, we've seen **businesses' marketing impacted in four distinct ways** by COVID-19 — and they don't always progress directly from one to another.

Identify which of these four situations relates most to your business, then consider the corresponding digital marketing strategies. These recommendations should help you sustain your business in the short term while laying a foundation for recovery.



**Your business is experiencing new challenges**

Are you experiencing supply and demand disruptions, as well as logistical disruptions?

Find strategies to help



**Your business is reassessing priorities**

Are you reassessing your approach and focusing on mitigating risk until you settle on next steps?

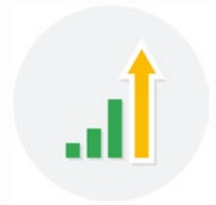
Find strategies to help



**Your business is pivoting to adapt products & services**

Are you quickly pivoting to create new offerings and reach your customers in new ways?

Find strategies to help



**Your business is investing to meet increased demand**

Are you focused on meeting increasing customer demand across product categories or markets?

Find strategies to help





# 03

## Take action now

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No matter which situation your business is facing, determining your priorities is key. Use these curated strategies and tips to quickly identify the steps you can take today to adapt your business efficiently.





YOUR BUSINESS IS

## Experiencing new challenges

**COVID-19 has created new challenges –  
and we're here to help.**

The response to COVID-19 has changed the way people interact with businesses, presenting supply-and-demand disruptions, as well as logistical disruptions that have made operations unpredictable.

If your company is **facing these challenges**, you might be looking to invest in digital marketing only if it has a positive impact on your business in the next 30 days. You might also be contemplating pausing your advertising campaigns if you're experiencing severe supply-and-demand volatility.

Amid these challenges, you can still be there for your customers by adapting your approach and marketing objectives. Below are some recommendations to help you rethink your advertising strategies as you navigate this time of uncertainty.

## Three strategies to help shift your digital marketing

### How to execute this strategy in Google Ads



Find ways to get better results from your digital ads



Switch to a bidding strategy like [Target Cost Per Action](#) or [Target Return On Ad Spend](#) that makes conversions more cost-effective.



Set more conservative targets (lowering target for Target Cost Per Action bidding or raising target for Target Return On Ad Spend bidding).



Pause ad groups and campaigns that aren't cash-flow positive.



Focus on your most valuable customers



Adjust audiences to prioritize people who are most likely to take action.



Exclude geographies where you have paused or significantly reduced operations.



Adjust ad scheduling to reflect any recent changes to your operations.



Make sure your updated offerings show up in your creative



Use dynamic creative where applicable to drive performance with limited budgets ([Dynamic Search Ads](#), [Smart Shopping campaigns](#), [responsive display ads](#), [App campaigns](#), and so on).

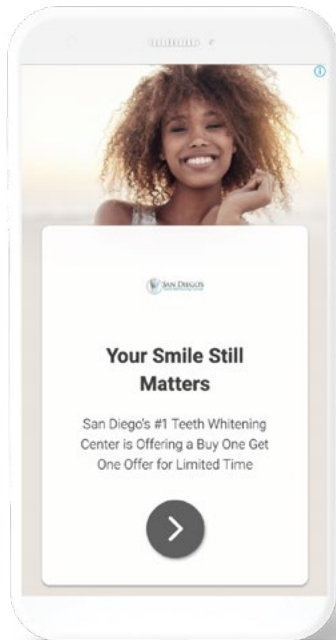


Update your ad extensions (Call, Location, Callout, Lead Form, Structured Snippets, Promotions) to reflect changes in your business.



Update ad creatives to reflect changes in available products or services, limited hours, special terms or conditions like "senior hours," etc.

## See how other brands are managing new challenges

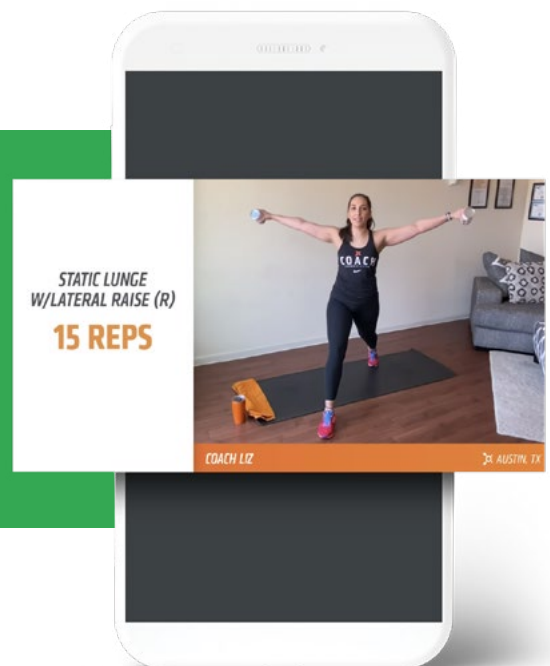


San Diego Teeth Whitening is a boutique dental service provider impacted by nonessential business closures. To create demand for the business post-pandemic, they launched a buy-one-get-one-free teeth whitening offer to create a “bank” of future business. This promotion was complemented by a new search campaign focused on capturing interested customers – resulting in a **+600%** return on ad spend.

**+600%** return on ad spend



Orangetheory Fitness is a boutique fitness franchise operating over 1,300 locations globally. After closing all brick-and-mortar studios in accordance with applicable distancing and stay at home orders, the company shifted to posting free Orangetheory At Home™ virtual workouts promoted via branded and non-branded Search. This approach has enabled Orangetheory to help members and non-members stay active, energized, and healthy while continuing to facilitate a strong sense of community.



Next fine-tune your creative and media with these best practices



YOUR BUSINESS IS

## Reassessing priorities

### Are you reassessing your business's approach as a result of COVID-19?

If your business is **reassessing its approach**, you may be focusing on mitigating risk until you settle on next steps. This can include thinking critically about how to be resilient through cash management challenges and fluctuations in customers – or even scaling back efforts so you have more time to make a decision.

While you keep an eye on shifting trends, there are ways to alter your business plan and adapt to the current situation so you can be there for your customers.

Below are some recommendations to help you change your digital marketing strategies and focus on optimization while you reassess your approach.

## Three strategies to help shift your digital marketing

### How to execute this strategy in Google Ads



Focus on your business and let automation help with your digital ads



Utilize [Smart Bidding](#) ([Target Cost Per Action](#)/[Target Return On Ad Spend](#)) to adjust to changing auction dynamics and device trends.



Remember to include your most important conversions in the [conversion column to maximize return on investment](#).



Use shared budgets to automatically allocate budget across campaigns. This helps ensure that top-performing campaigns have adequate headroom and lower-performing ones are deprioritized.



Utilize [planning tools](#) to optimize bids and budgets.



Make sure you're communicating your new priorities to customers



Review your creative and extensions to make sure they reflect your current business operations.



Use [responsive display ads](#) to gain access to the most inventory and quickly find the message that resonates.



If your business is in an industry like education, travel, or local services that have changing availability, use feed campaigns to automatically keep up with any product/inventory changes. Retailers should focus on [Smart Shopping campaigns](#).



Adjust video creative messages based on the situation and add sitelinks to communicate new messages to clients using [TrueView for Action campaigns](#).



Talk to your high-priority customers where they already are



Use [Dynamic Search Ads](#) to automatically capture new, relevant Search queries outside of your existing keyword list.



Review keywords (look at new keywords and negative keywords, and pause underperforming keywords) and focus on [optimization score](#) recommendations.



Adjust audiences to prioritize high-intent/high-converting groups and identify the geographies that work best for you. Adjust your investment accordingly.

## See how other brands are reassessing priorities

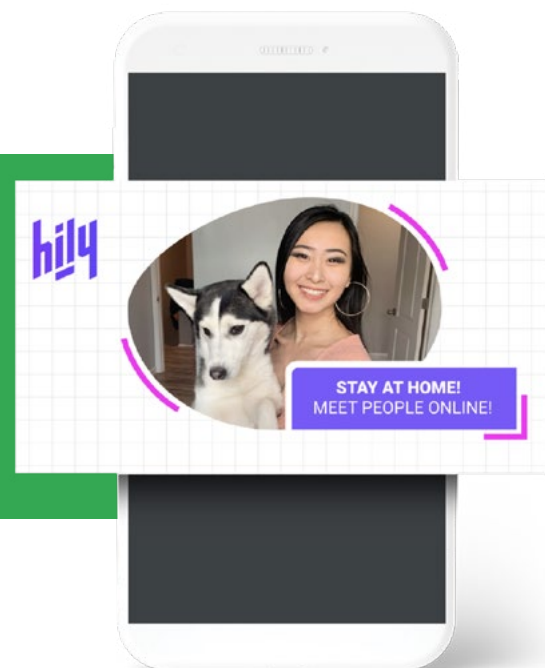


Owlet Baby Care creates smart monitor tools that allow parents to better care for their baby in the home. They proactively shifted their marketing mix to focus on agile, digital-first strategies, allowing them to hero their digitally-savvy sleep training product, Dream Lab, to offset any potential supply chain delays with their other products. As part of this strategy, they utilized Display campaigns to create awareness and shifted Search Ad copy to capture demand.



Hily, an online dating app that uses machine learning to match prospective partners, wanted to raise awareness of its social features and promote connectivity during stay-at-home orders while users couldn't meet in person. Their "Stay Safe, Date From Home" campaign boosted installs +80% by using App campaigns to reach users interested in video chats and "digital dating."

**+80%** increase in installs



Next fine-tune your creative and media with these best practices



YOUR BUSINESS IS

## Pivoting to adapt products and services

Market changes due to COVID-19 may  
mean pivoting your business strategy.

If your business is quickly **pivoting** to adapt your products and services, create new offerings, or reach your customers in new ways due to new consumer trends, you may want to focus on understanding how to shift your strategy and investment accordingly.

By moving your products and services online and taking advantage of technology tools, your business can be discovered online and be present for your customers. Below are some recommendations to help move your digital marketing strategies toward new objectives.

## Three strategies to help shift your digital marketing

### How to execute this strategy in Google Ads



Keep your creative updated based on your current business strategy

✓ See [Creative Section](#) for more helpful tips



Update creative to reflect business priorities. Highlight critical products/ services and align ad formats with your priorities by implementing relevant new formats, and pausing irrelevant ad formats.



Review and update [extensions](#) to reflect any changes in your marketing strategy or opening hours.



Implement [automated ad formats](#) to test and iterate on the best possible combinations based on changing consumer trends ([responsive search ads](#), [responsive display ads](#), [Dynamic Search Ads](#), [App campaigns](#), etc).



Use automation to match your approach with changing customer behavior



Implement the [Smart Bidding](#) strategy most aligned with your marketing objective to stay on top of changing auction dynamics and device trends.



Create a [Dynamic Search Ads](#) campaign or ad group to automate capturing new, relevant Search queries outside of your existing keyword list.



Apply keyword recommendations from [optimization score](#) to stay on top of search trends.



Align your campaigns to your goals and priorities



To reflect business priorities, update which conversions are included in the conversion column and ensure that credit is given across customer touchpoints with [data-driven attribution](#) or [non-last-click attribution](#).



Use [Performance Planner](#) to understand and adjust your targets and budgets based on changing auction trends.



Implement the budget reallocation recommendation in [optimization score](#) for more control or shared budgets to meet changing consumer trends.



If your hours of operation have changed, for example, update your customer-facing sites and [Business Profile](#) on Search and Maps.



## See how other brands are pivoting to adapt products and services



### HUDA BEAUTY

Huda Beauty, a global beauty brand, saw demand shift from makeup (historically their most popular category) to skin-care. To adapt, they reallocated search budgets to bolster skin-care ad groups. Ad copy was also tailored to focus on self-care, directing audiences to a new, sitewide “Self-Love Sale.” Through this tailored ad messaging and responding to the increase in skin-care demand, Huda Beauty saw a **+75%** increase in search traffic and **+262%** sales revenue increase from Search Ads when compared to the prior period.

**+75%** increase in search traffic

**+262%** increase in sales revenue



Pilot Flying J is the largest travel center operator in North America with over 750 locations. They serve professional drivers and motorists, selling gas, diesel, convenience store goods, and fast food. While stay at home orders have decreased the number of motorists utilizing their locations, they remain open to providing services and food to essential workers, such as professional truck drivers. Pilot Flying J pivoted to focus on launching a loyalty program that rewards essential drivers, so they can earn rewards while driving to keep North America moving. They promoted this “Thank you, drivers” message through App campaigns and YouTube for Reach.



Next fine-tune your creative and media with these [best practices](#)



YOUR BUSINESS IS

## Investing to meet increased demand

### Seeing increased demand for your products or services due to COVID-19?

The moment we find ourselves in has brought a shift in consumer behaviors, leading some businesses to experience higher demand for their services and products than before. If your company is **investing to meet increases in customer demand**, you may be in a position to expand into new audiences, markets, and customers.

By assessing your immediate and long-term marketing plans, you can find ways to invest in your business to address your higher demand – and serve your customers in the best way possible. Below are some recommendations to help you evolve your digital marketing strategies and focus on operating efficiently in times of uncertainty.

## Three strategies to help shift your digital marketing

### How to execute this strategy in Google Ads



Scale your bids and budget to meet demand



Utilize and expand [Smart Bidding](#) for all campaigns ([Target Cost Per Action](#), [Target Return On Ad Spend](#), [Max Conversions](#), [Max Conversion Value](#)).



Increase or reallocate budgets, and set more relaxed targets to drive more conversions and expand capturability.



Use planning tools to optimize bids and budgets ([Performance Planner](#), [target simulators](#), [Reach Planner](#) with this [Reach Planner Guide](#), etc).



Serve more people by using a variety of format and targeting approaches



Expand creative formats and campaigns to maximize reach ([Smart Shopping campaigns](#), [Smart Display campaigns](#), [Discovery campaigns](#), [responsive search ads](#), [responsive display ads](#), apps).



Expand coverage by adding [Dynamic Search Ads](#) and reviewing keyword lists to make sure match types are not too restrictive.



Broaden reach by expanding targeted audiences across products.



Make sure to use best practices and help your ads perform well



Implement [Dynamic Search Ads](#) and [keyword optimization score](#) opportunities and move to broad match for campaigns that are using fully automated Smart Bidding.



Ensure that you're following budget recommendation guidance. Your Display budget should be five times your tCPA, while your TrueView for Action campaign budget should be 20 times your tCPA. Apps budget should be 10 times your CPA and 50 times your CPI.




Follow creative best practices to optimize performance.

✓ See [Creative section](#) for more helpful tips.

## See how other brands are investing to meet increased demand



*milk*



Milk Bar, a quirky American cult-favorite bakery, temporarily closed the majority of their store locations across the US. Using Google Trends, they chose to double down on delivery and their ecommerce presence, as there has been surging interest in dessert delivery and gifting during quarantine. Milk Bar utilized Smart Bidding and Smart Shopping to quickly meet demand and drove an increase of 20,000+ sales (+300% increase in sales month-over-month).

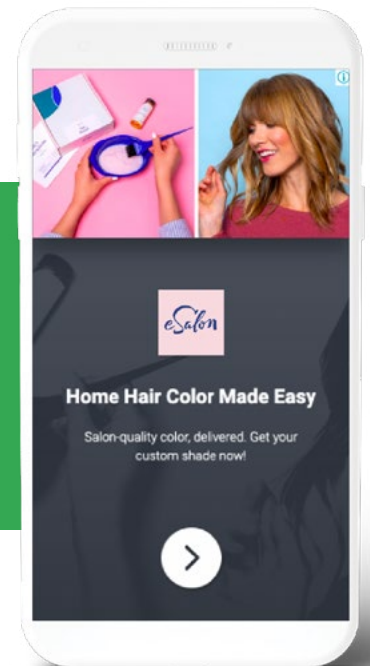
**+300%** increase  
in sales



*eSalon*

eSalon, a direct-to-consumer custom hair color company, responded to increased demand by creating a comprehensive Search and Display strategy that uses automated bidding. With this approach in place, eSalon was able to automatically meet the surge in demand during COVID-19 while beating their CPA goals using Target CPA. This led to +600% sales growth compared to the prior 2 week period.

**+600%** increase  
in sales



Next fine-tune your creative and media with these best practices

# Creative and media best practices

As you update your marketing strategy, consider adapting your creative and media campaigns.

## Best practices to make sure your video creative stays relevant

With an increasing number of consumers staying at home, YouTube is filling a vital role in entertaining and educating people. If Video makes sense for your marketing strategy right now, here are a few tips to ensure your creative stays relevant.



01

### Assess if it's right for the current context

If you're already running videos, you may need to reassess campaigns, assets, and creative guidelines as market dynamics change.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:



#### Modify tone and situational creative

Consider the tone and whether your videos fit today's context. For example, over-the-top humor or upbeat music might be poorly received.



#### Be sensitive to visual imagery

Be cautious of imagery depicting large gatherings and social interactions – or calls to action that require in-person interactions.



#### Include helpful and relevant messaging

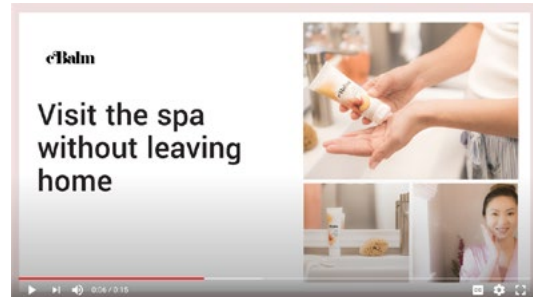
Consider what aspects of your brand might be the most helpful to customers during this time. For example, try reworking your creative to highlight business changes you've recently made or product offerings that can help your customers and affected communities.



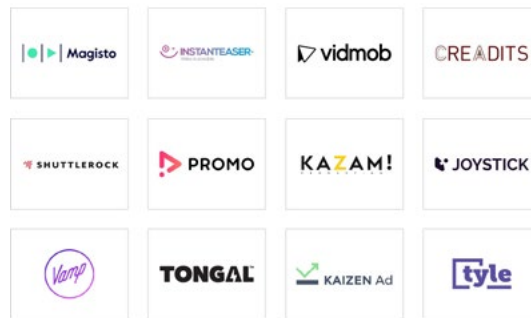
## 02

### Create video content from home NEW

Need to get a message out on YouTube, but don't have a video? With [Video Builder](#), you can turn static assets like images, text, and logos into short YouTube videos using a variety of pre-designed layouts. Sign up for free [here](#).



#### YouTube Ads



For more creative options like re-editing existing assets, fresh animations, or product shots from afar, explore YouTube's [creative directory](#) of video producers and do-it-yourself creation tools. No matter what your creative goal, budget or deadline may be, our partners are here to help.



## 03

### Connect in helpful, human ways with livestreams

Livestreams can be a great way to connect with your customers when in-person meetings or events aren't possible. If you've decided that hosting a virtual event is right for you, [download this guide](#) or read this [how-to article](#) for making videos and hosting events on YouTube.

# How we're responding to COVID-19 with our marketing

Google has changed the way we approach our own media campaigns during this uncertain time – and it's given us some insight into what's resonating with customers and what isn't.

To solidify our approach, we've developed [five principles to guide our media campaigns in the wake of COVID-19](#). Though we continue to tailor our approach to the ever-changing landscape, we hope these tips are as helpful for you as they've been for us.



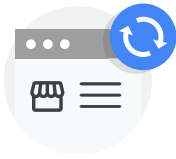
## 01

### Context, always

**Guiding question:**

*Is this campaign right, given the current context in a local market?*

Though this is a global pandemic, its impact is local. We've found it helpful to carry that thinking into the evaluation of our marketing campaigns. Our global teams are providing guidance centrally, but we've found it's best to trust each market to make decisions locally. In other words: direction from the center, but decisions on the ground. At a very practical level, we've built out a centralized, shared spreadsheet for all paid and owned tactics across markets, so we can capture and learn from what is being decided locally. Every team around the world has access to this worksheet in real time.



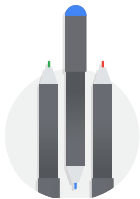
## 02

### Constantly reassess

**Guiding question:**

*Though we greenlit this campaign last month/last week/yesterday, is it still right for the context and moment?*

As market dynamics change rapidly, we're constantly reassessing campaigns, creative, and even our guidelines. What we decided two weeks ago isn't necessarily appropriate today. The one constant assumption we have in this situation is that things will change. Because of that, we're reassessing every possible touchpoint for our brand across paid and owned channels, from video ads to the automated emails we're sending via customer relationship management (CRM) systems.



## 03

### Creative considerations

**Guiding question:**

*Are all of the creative elements – tone, copy, visuals, keywords, placements – appropriate and relevant to this new reality?*

In the spirit of reassessing campaigns, we're finding that all kinds of creative elements need scrutiny right now. From tone and visual imagery to copy and keywords, the context of our media buys needs to be carefully assessed. We're asking ourselves these questions with every campaign, no matter the channel or size of spend behind it.

For instance, we don't think humor is appropriate for our brands right now. So we're holding off on some campaigns that were funnier in nature. We're reevaluating creative that shows interactions like handshakes, hugs, and high-fives, since social distancing is an important tactic for slowing the spread of illness.





## 04

### Changing priorities to navigate uncertainty

**Guiding question:**

*What are the most relevant brands, products, or campaigns our media can support right now, and do we need to shift budgets?*

Our guiding principle as a brand, particularly in this moment, is to be helpful. And as people turn to technology for information and connection in these times of need, we're mindful that some of our products — like Google Search, YouTube, Hangouts, and Google Classroom — can be more helpful today than they were yesterday. In that spirit, we're shifting our paid media priorities to brands that help more people get vital information or bridge the gap between what was once “normal” and their current reality.



## 05

### Contribution, at every opportunity

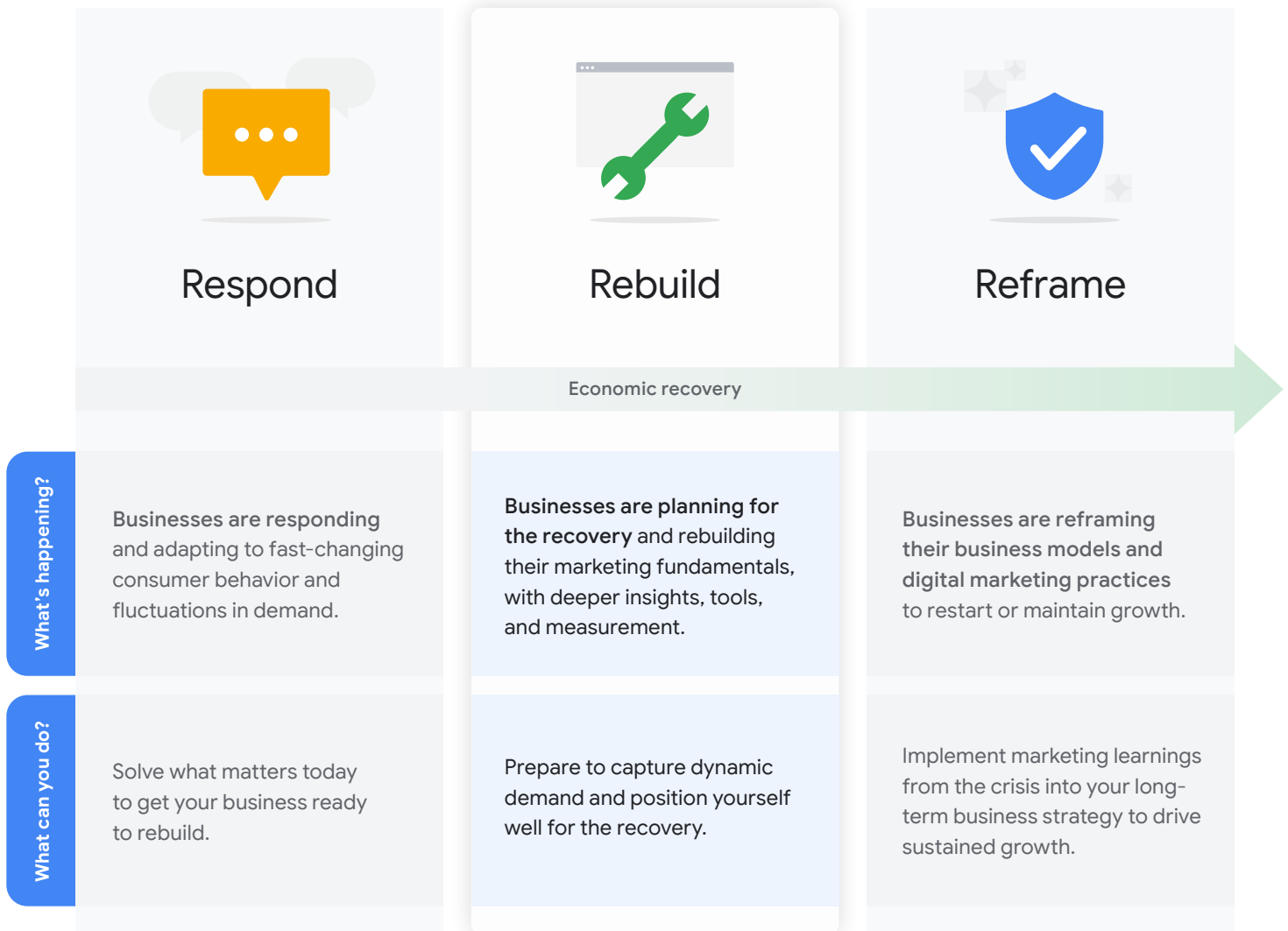
**Guiding question:**

*What ways can our brand – and even our owned media channels – be helpful to people and businesses in this moment of need?*

If there's ever been a moment for us to come together and help one another, this is it. Every brand has its “owned media,” whether stores, websites, or even social handles. Across Google, we're using many of our properties to help however we can. Take the [YouTube homepage](#), for instance, that directs users to videos from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or other locally relevant public health agencies.

# Prepare for what's next

As we work to respond quickly to the challenges of today, we're striving to be thoughtful and strategic with how we start planning for recovery. By learning from other markets and teams – in local neighborhoods and around the globe – we're beginning to chart a path forward.



As unprecedented as COVID-19 is, there are learnings we can draw from previous crises. Specifically, we know that the companies that weathered uncertain times were those that stayed close with consumers, acted quickly and with urgency, and began planning early for the recovery.

Here are some thought-starters to consider as you prepare for what's next:



01

## Incorporate learnings from the crisis into your long-term business strategy

### *Guiding question:*

*Where are the gaps in your business processes and what helped you course-correct? What can you learn from your digital-only marketing efforts?*

Take a moment to reflect on what worked well for your business when responding to the crisis – and what didn't. What can you learn from your digital-only marketing efforts that worked during this time and apply to the non-digital world, whether it's in-store marketing or out-of-home channels? By scaling successful tactics to address other gaps in your processes, you can set up a strategic approach that works for you. And if you've redefined your marketing objectives, think about how your business has changed to meet these new goals. Finally, look at the recovery efforts that followed other crises or recessions to see if there are any learnings that could apply now.



02

## Invest in infrastructure to measure what matters

### *Guiding question:*

*Is your measurement strategy optimizing for the metrics that drive business impact?*

When it comes to measuring your results, it's important that you prioritize metrics that drive tangible business outcomes like profitability. Once you've identified the right things to track, use them to make your measurement framework more robust. By investing in deeper marketing analytics and forecasting, you can better understand changes in consumer behavior and anticipate when demand will return as we work toward recovery. Identify which trends from your marketing analytics are temporary responses, which are accelerated consumer trends (like technology adoption), and which are permanent behavior shifts. You can also implement an impact matrix, similar to [this one](#), to measure the bottom-line impact of your campaigns.



### 03

## Redefine your brand principles and reassess what your brand needs today

### *Guiding question:*

*Do consumers have the same expectations for your brand today as they had prior to COVID-19? How has the perception for your brand or category evolved?*

During this crisis, we've seen consumers turning to brands they trust and engaging with new brands that have offered an innovative or compassionate response to COVID-19. Evaluate what your company means to your most valuable customers today and periodically reassess whether their needs have changed. Use this context to create flexible creative that allows you to react to fast-changing consumer behaviors – and make sure to spend some time developing, investing in, or rethinking your loyalty strategy to build brand love during recovery.

### One thing is clear during COVID-19 – change is a constant.

While we don't know when the disruptive shifts of this crisis will resolve, we do know that remaining flexible and adapting with agility is the key to staying connected with customers and giving them the support they need.

Only time will tell if certain consumer behavior shifts will endure, but the sum effect will be a lasting acceleration to digital. So as we work to be there for one another, use this time to reevaluate business priorities, test innovative approaches, and connect with customers in meaningful new ways.

# More resources to help your business adapt

While this guide is primarily focused on helping you adapt your digital marketing strategies, we recognize that's not the only challenge that's top of mind. We've curated some of Google's most useful resources to assist with business continuity, like remote collaboration and digital education.

### Run your business remotely

Try these digital tools to help you and your team stay connected and productive from afar

- Set up a video meeting with conferencing tools like [Google Meet](#) and make sure everyone is [familiar with video conferencing](#). [G Suite Essentials](#), our collection of business productivity tools that includes Google Meet, is free until September 30.
- Collaborate with your co-workers using a [shared document](#) or by creating an [email list](#) or a [chat room](#).
- Access important documents from anywhere by uploading them to the cloud through a product like [Google Drive](#) or downloading to your mobile phone or computer for [offline access](#).
- Visit the [Google for Small Business COVID-19 Hub](#) for more.

### Advance your digital skills

Explore these [nine learning modules](#) to develop your skills across a wide range of topics – including coding, understanding consumer behavior, or improving your own digital well-being.

- Expand your expertise on Google's professional tools and solutions with [Skillshop](#), e-learning courses you can take at your own pace to get Google product certified.
- Take your digital marketing skills to the next level with Google Academy on Air, on-demand trainings from Google product experts on core topics like [Smart Bidding](#), [Search Excellence](#), [Drive Online Sales](#) and [Performance Display](#).

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