

Navigate the Impact of COVID-19

Industry Experts Weigh In

Times are changing! And for now, so are we. What A/E/C firms need is a strategy to navigate the current uncertainty we're facing. We can't just put our businesses on hold; rather, we can adapt to our current situation and build a plan to not only survive but thrive so that when business as usual returns we'll be ready to pick right back up again.

Elevate is here to help! Do what you do best and leave the rest to us. We've researched and talked with experts to gather tips to help you through this time:

Stay Informed

- Misinformation is all around us. Look to professional sources like the Center for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) and the World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int>) for fact-based information.
- Share information with your employees regularly to demonstrate that you are in the know and are concerned about their well-being.

Communicate

- Communicate with your team frequently, with transparency and directness. Your team members are likely fearful about the climate of uncertainty and need regular communication and information from your leadership team.
- Listen to your people and their concerns.
- Proactively communicate your plans to keep your firm running with regular (daily) updates that are ready when employees arrive for work. Include new information from the CDC and WHO; what you are doing to keep employees safe; what employees can do to keep themselves safe; and openly share the impact of the virus on business.

Travel

- Put a hold on all work-related domestic and international travel, unless approved by your leadership team. Adopt guidelines for personal travel in line with the Centers for Disease Control recommendations. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>)

ABOUT ELEVATE MARKETING ADVISORS

Elevate Marketing Advisors develops marketing and business development campaigns to invigorate your brand, differentiate your firm, and drive business to your bottom line so you stay focused on design and delivery of your discipline.

We are driven to help people and firms realize their beyond through relationship, advocacy, and an elevated client experience. We do this through a daily commitment to our guiding principles:

- Embrace Authenticity
- Reject Mediocrity
- Invest in Relationships
- Deliver with Intention
- Have Fun and Kick Ass!

Navigate the Impact of COVID-19, *continued*

Work Remotely

- With schools and daycares continuing to close daily across the country, many parents will be left with little option but to stay home with their children. Establish a temporary remote work plan for your team members.
- Technology is your friend. While you may not have laptops for everyone in your firm, you do have desktops. Allow employees who need to work remotely to take their desktops and monitors home temporarily.
- For people who are able to work in the office, establish a rotating schedule with days in the office and days working from home to minimize face-to-face contact of your team members and reduce possible virus exposure.
- If you need to close your office, forward your main office number to a cell phone so that calls can be answered remotely. Or, at a minimum, change your office recording and provide a phone number for a specific point of contact who can receive calls and relay messages to your team.

Meetings

- Request that meetings be held virtually; if that is not possible, limit attendance to 10 people or less.

Work Environment

- Post signs around your office to remind employees to wash their hands frequently.
- Provide hand sanitizer in all common areas and meeting spaces and encourage employees to regularly clean their work surfaces.
- Increase facility cleaning and let people know what you are doing and why.
- Start a suggestion forum so that employees have an opportunity to weigh in and provide constructive ideas during this time.

Clients

- Reach out to clients and ask how your firm can support them. Proactively discuss project schedules and assure them that you've taken necessary steps to maintain schedule momentum.
- Ask your clients how they prefer to communicate when in-person meetings are cancelled.
- Communicate your firm's responsiveness and remote work plan so your client knows you are committed to the health of your people, but also to continuing design/production on their projects.
- Discuss or suggest alternative or relaxed payment schedules; your clients are likely going to feel a financial strain based on economic impact of the virus too.

Plan

- If your firm doesn't have a crisis plan in place, have your leadership team develop an action plan for the next 30/60/90/120 days. Do the same for firm financials.
- Economists project that GDP growth will fall under 1% in 2020 compared to 2.3% in 2019. (<https://www.conference-board.org/data/usforecast.cfm>)
- Consider how will you handle social distancing with your team.
- Do you need to rent or purchase equipment so people can work from home?
- Is your teleconference system in place so teams can meet virtually?
- Build a communication plan with frequent check ins to keep your leadership and team members talking regularly.

Navigate the Impact of COVID-19, *continued*

- Consider drawing on your line of credit (while your A/R is healthy). It's better to pay some interest and have cash on hand in the event your firm is impacted financially, and cash flow becomes a problem.
- **REMEMBER – this is only temporary. We will get through this.**

Use Time Wisely

- As project work may slow or projects go on hold, are there initiatives you've been putting off that you can tackle now?
- Implement webinar or virtual-based training to help your employees with their CEUs.
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- Implement webinar or virtual-based training to help your employees with their CEUs.
- Engage in market research to get ahead of a changing market to better plan for the future.
- Develop BD, marketing, and client capture plans that address market changes.
- Audit your BD and marketing processes to strengthen your approach.
- Develop a focused social media strategy based on client needs and pain points.
- Improve (or develop) your client experience strategy.
- Create recruitment/retention strategies that consider the current environment.
- Give managers and doer-sellers some time for virtual coaching.
- Develop thought leadership articles that position your team as experts and push that information out via social media channels.

At Elevate Marketing Advisors, we're driven to help people and firms realize their beyond. We're here to help you continue looking forward and, with the use of virtual technology, we're adapting to provide you and your teams with learning, coaching, and guidance remotely to enhance your skills, develop thought leadership content, and build a plan that keeps your business moving forward.

We're continually looking for ways to bring our values to life. **Investing in relationships** is core to who we are. Our team is ready to meet with you through virtual sessions to coach you through building a plan of action. And, if you don't have the capacity, we can offer services to help you implement. We're also offering, at no cost, a one-hour virtual discussion to provide guidance and resources on any issue you are facing. Do what you do best and leave the rest to us!

Elevate's here to help you thrive, not just survive as we face a daily changing world. When we return to business as usual, we want your firm to be stronger than ever and ready to win.

Contact Jen Newman, CPSM (jen@elevatemarketingadvisors.com) or Doug Parker, FSMPS, CPSM (doug@elevatemarketingadvisors.com) to help you today!