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# Managing Your Social Media During COVID-19

*This e-GRO Alert outlines steps to manage your social media marketing during social distancing times.*

In a survey of Indiana produce growers conducted in April 2020, we found that over 73% of them are planning to sell online. Their online strategy ranges from websites enabled for online sales (33%), sales through emails and texts (29%), or joining online platforms that aggregate food vendors and buyers (e.g. online vendors and farmers' markets) (24%). Another 28% felt they lack the technical knowledge to transition online strategies. Regardless of your strategy to sell to your consumers, you should have a plan to implement or boost your social media presence. Having a strong social media presence will help stay in touch with customers and maintain and build relationships, especially when advertising (and selling) online can be the only option.

This e-GRO Alert provides 3 steps you can take today to manage your social media marketing during social distancing times.

## 1. Communicate, communicate, communicate

Good and frequent communication with customers is probably one of the most important tasks you have right now. During normal circumstances, I would tell you to post a few times a week on your preferred social media platform (Fig. 1). These posts help you increase brand recognition, draw new customers, and improve loyalty. While these are still true, you may have to increase to daily posts to share frequent updates. Examples of your posts include changes in products or services, working hours, what measures are you taking to keep everyone safe, and instructions on how to place orders, pay, and pick-up or receive their orders.

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You would also want to proactively share important information about your business and operations using other platforms such as emails, website, and mail marketing. Using different platforms will help you reinforce your message and reach out to prospect and current customers that were not able to receive your message otherwise.

## 2. Set up your page Inbox on Facebook

As more people spend more time in social media apps, the importance of responding to comments, conversations, and interactions is key to tell your customers you are open for business. Setting up your Facebook Page Inbox allows you to read and respond to messages received via Facebook Messenger or Instagram Direct, as well as reply to comments and FAQ from your followers (Fig. 2). A very useful tool of Inbox is to automate responses, especially to questions that come up frequently. You can customize Instant Replies to greet customers, give information about your business, or let them know that you will be reaching out soon (Fig. 3).

## 3. Take your events online

As many events cancel due to social distancing, you can creatively turn lemons into lemonade. One example is to organize live sessions on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. If you want to create a more engaging experience, you would want to make sure that you are using a high-quality camera and/or microphone for your live sessions. You can also invite your followers to attend an online webinar and encourage speakers to check in with your attendees every 15 minutes. In addition to these virtual event tools, it is important to keep attendees engaged by using Q&As, chat boxes, and polling sections to keep your attendees attentive and feeling included.



Figure 1. Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and Instagram. Image credit: All social media platforms.

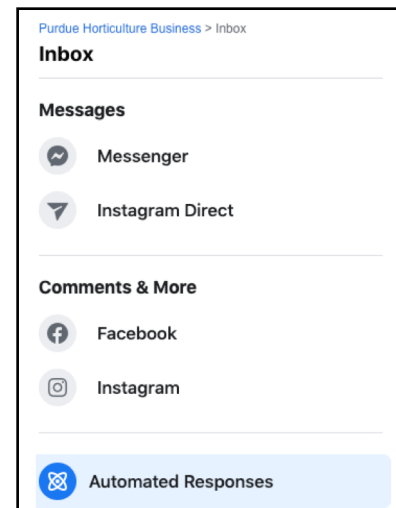


Figure 2. Setting up your Page Inbox can help you respond to messages, comments, and automate FAQ. Image credit: Ariana Torres.

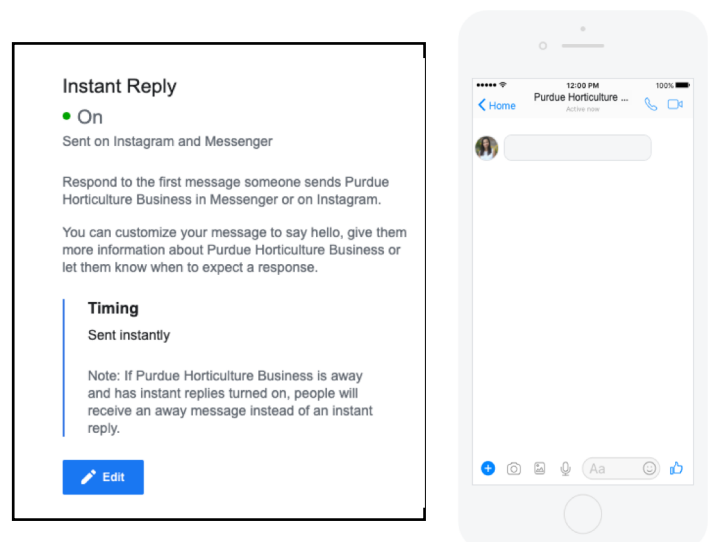


Figure 3. Setting up instant replies in your Page Inbox allows you to respond to customers questions after working hours. Image credit: Ariana Torres.

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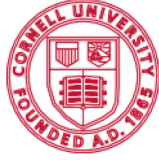
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