

Conquering a Business Crisis



 **NORTH DAKOTA
SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS**

Your Ideas - Our Expertise - Your Success



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Cash Management

- Prioritize who to pay first.
- Have conversations with vendors to ask for longer payment terms or partial payment.
- Have financial records in one, easily accessible place and review them daily.
- Review financial information and forecast cash needed to operate the business. Know your financial data well. Don't rely on your CPA to tell you how the business is going.
- Address problem areas where costs are out of line.
- Regularly review customer accounts and have solid credit policies in place.
- Place slow pay customers on COD or pre-payment.
- Require cash payment at time of sale.
- Talk to lenders about renegotiating existing loan terms and interest-only payments for a while.
- Keep payment promises (Don't make promises you can't keep).
- Work with federal and state government agencies about payment of past due and coming due taxes.
- Don't ignore collection letters from federal and state government agencies. They can freeze your bank accounts, cutting off access to cash.
- Have a line of credit in place, review it annually and adjust as needed.
- Sell unproductive assets now. Don't wait until a crisis. However, be mindful not to sell an asset that was used as collateral for an existing loan.
- Consider business credit cards, but understand the risk.



- While no one enjoys laying people off, have a plan to reduce labor if needed. Check with the North Dakota Dept of Labor about unemployment programs available to business owners in distressing economic times.
- Reduce embezzlement opportunities by limiting check signing to the owner or requiring two check signers. Examine payroll records for accuracy and reconcile bank statements and credit card registers daily

Pricing & Cost Containment

- Reduce unnecessary expenses like travel, entertainment and other areas that do not contribute to revenue generation.
- Review pricing and value. Don't cut prices in panic mode.
- Discuss rent reduction with your landlord.
- Review personnel requirements. Are vacant positions are really needed? Can duties of vacant positions be divided among other employees or performed by part-time workers or temporary workers? A lean workforce before a crisis, will help you survive.
- Consider renting unused space to other business owners.
- Eliminate discounts and giveaways.
- Negotiate discounts with vendors, when possible. Remember, trying times impact them too. They may be willing to offer short-term discounts they otherwise wouldn't.

Contact your local ND SBDC office for assistance with any of the items in this guide. With nine centers across North Dakota, there is an office near you. A complete list of locations is available at the end of the document.

Supply Chain Management

- Review inventory levels regularly. Conduct inventory at least monthly.
- Consider adding items with faster turn times.
- If your POS system has an inventory management feature, enter products as they come in. Your POS system will provide daily inventory information
- Look for vendors that provide a just-in-time option for ordering products.
- Eliminate slow sellers when reordering and liquidate products that have been in inventory beyond 90 days.
- Stay engaged with your suppliers. Don't wait until a crisis.
- Assess operations and capacity. Adjust as needed.

Our thanks to the Georgia SBDC for the original framework and content of this document.



Marketing

- Identify key target customers and consider a “niche focus.”
- Reassess your marketing strategy.
- Consider redistribution of marketing expenditures.
- Communicate regularly with customers to keep relationships:
 - Customer support, business hours, services, special order needs, promotions
- Strengthen digital communications and online presence.
 - Use multi-channels to reach your audience: social media, email, website, text, etc.
 - Develop/update online profiles
 - Update your website
- Use Technology to expand services:
 - Facebook Live, video, e-commerce sites, payment and services apps, video conferencing, chat box, networking, etc.
- Watch for new trends and look for opportunities to provide solutions.

About the ND SBDC

The North Dakota Small Business Development Centers help North Dakotans to start, manage, and grow their businesses.

We use our expertise to help you make your business successful. Our professional business advisors have years of experience and know what it takes to start a business and operate it successfully in our state.

We have centers located across the state to assist you.

ND SBDC Locations:

Bismarck
701.328.5865 or
701.202.8971

Grand Forks
701.738.4851

Bowman
701.523.5880

Minot
701.857-8211

Devils Lake
701.662.8131

Southeast ND
701.499.5276

Dickinson
701.483.2571

Williston
701.713.3839 or
701.570.7260

Fargo
701.499.5273

Crosby
(Williston satellite
location)
701.965.6006

Lead Center
701.777.3700