

## Businesses Step Up Amid Coronavirus Pandemic

They say hard times bring out the very best — and the very worst — in people. As the coronavirus sweeps across the world, disrupting normal life on every level, this axiom is more real than ever.

The coronavirus outbreak has brought out the very worst in people. Panicky shoppers are pushing others aside to get at the last case of water on the shelf. The slightest cough is setting off pointed looks and nasty barbs. Even racism has reared its ugly head as immigrants hailing from countries currently experiencing intense outbreaks are shunned and avoided by some members of society.

At the same time, though, the outbreak has brought out the best in people, as another movement of kindness, empathy and generosity gains momentum across the country. Let's take a closer look at some of the goodwill the outbreak has spurred on a business level, and explore some ways we, too, can exhibit this goodwill in our own lives.

Businesses are stepping up to the plate

Every sector of the economy has been, or will be, affected by the coronavirus pandemic; however, this has not stopped dozens of large and small businesses from supporting their staff through this time, establishing relief funds and donating generously to individuals whose financial situations have been adversely affected by the outbreak. Here are just a few examples:

**Amazon:** Amazon has been at the forefront of support for coronavirus victims and their families. The giant e-commerce company has established a \$5 million Neighborhood Small Business Relief Fund to provide cash grants to Seattle-area small businesses in need of assistance for weathering economic challenges related to COVID-19. The company also donated \$1 million to a new Seattle Foundation fund for community members affected by COVID-19 and is subsidizing two months of rent for tenants in the buildings Amazon owns.

**Uber:** The ride-share giant is offering 14 days of financial assistance to any driver who is diagnosed with COVID-19 or is quarantined.

**Postmates:** The delivery company created a fund to help cover the costs of doctor's appointments and other medical expenses for workers impacted by COVID-19. It is also waiving restaurant commission fees for new merchants who'd like to use its service to accommodate customers who won't visit restaurants for fear of contracting the virus.

**Scholastic:** The public educational company has set up a "Learn From Home" website to help students stuck at home due to school closures continue learning at home. The website is completely free to use, and is divided into four categories: PreK and Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2, Grades 3-5, and Grades 6+. Each section is currently equipped with one week of content for students, and another 15 additional days will be added soon.

**Spectrum:** The internet company has offered 60 days of free Wi-Fi for families whose kids are home from school. This gesture enables them to join the online classes being offered by Scholastic and individual schools.

The above is just a small sampling of the generosity and goodwill that many businesses are displaying during the outbreak. There are many other ways small companies are helping out, like Toasted, a burger and "crafted grilled cheese" chain in Orlando, Florida, which is offering free grilled cheese lunches to kids who are stuck at home across Central Florida.

**NorState FCU is also doing its share in relieving the financial stress of those affected by the virus. We have multiple options for our members who have been financially impacted by this pandemic. We encourage you to call us should you foresee issues with loan repayments or needed emergency monies to get through hard times. Call us 1-800-804-7555 today!**

You can help, too

You don't have to be a multi-millionaire or a business owner to do your share in making this challenging time a little easier for everyone. Here are some ways you can pay it forward:

Share your staples. If you have more pantry staples and dry goods than you actually need right now, consider sharing. Post a short note on the neighborhood WhatsApp or Nextdoor group or Facebook page asking if anyone needs some milk, bread, toilet paper or hand sanitizer because you've got some to share. To avoid physical contact, drop the extras off at your neighbor's doorstep rather than handing it to them personally.

Call the elderly. If you have a family member or a friend in a nursing home or an assisted living residence, they're likely feeling especially vulnerable and lonely. Non-essential visits are out, but a friendly phone call is always welcome.

Help the homebound. If you know of people who are currently quarantined, give them a call to ask if there are errands you can run for them. You can pick up some groceries, do a Target run for them or bring them a takeout dinner. (Follow the guidelines detailed above to avoid physical contact.) They are likely feeling isolated and helpless, but your small offer can go a long way toward lightening their burden.

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the world as we know it, and its impact will be felt long after the outbreak has passed. Let's take this unique opportunity to make the world a brighter place, one act of kindness at a time.

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