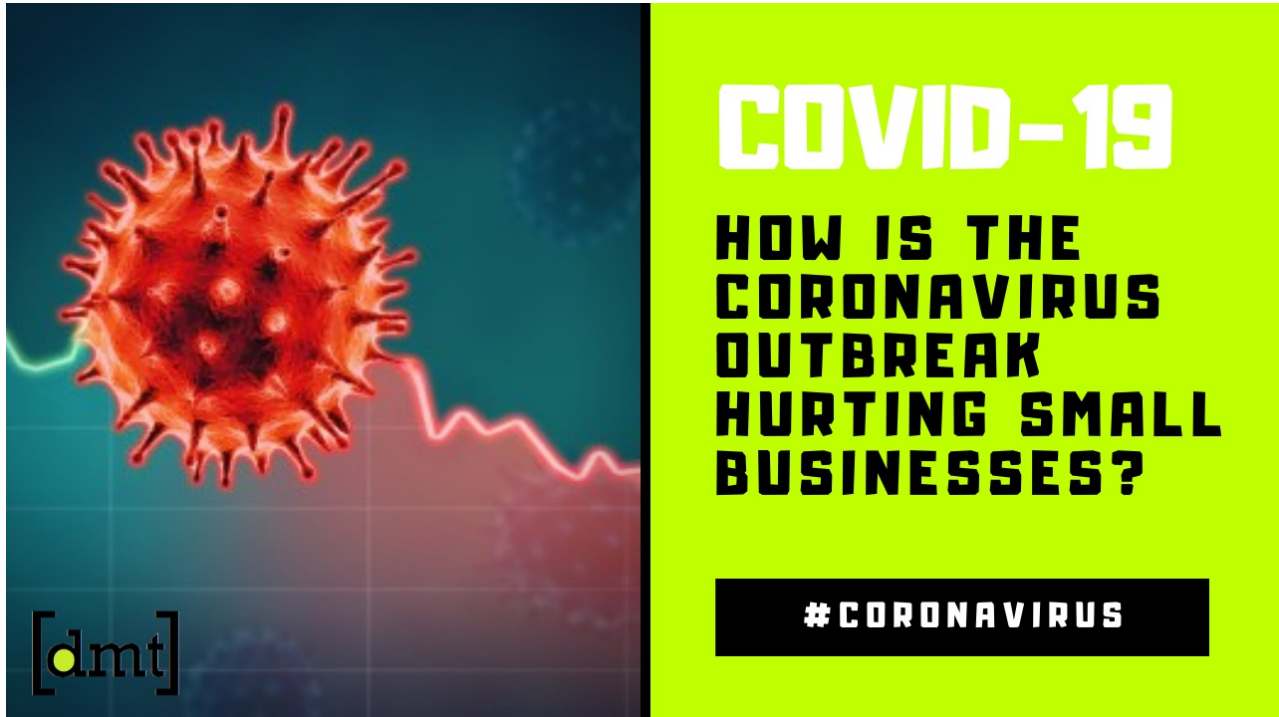


# How is the Coronavirus Outbreak Hurting Small Businesses?

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The outbreak of Coronavirus is becoming one of the biggest crises in human history.



As the virus spreads within communities, the pandemic has got everyone worried and scared. Amidst all the panic and chaos, people are striving to continue daily activities and business as much as they can.



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Working from home has become the new norm. Telecommuting and digital streaming are at an all-time rise, far more than it ever was. Many e-commerce mobile apps are generating traffic, as people are spending more time on their smartphones.

Everyone is hoping for the pandemic to end so that they can continue with their normal lives. The outbreak has caused millions of dollars in losses. Many businesses are struggling to generate the same amount of revenues while the rest can feel a pinch in their bottom line. The current situation is bad for small e-commerce businesses as well. Let us talk a bit about how the current pandemic is affecting small e-commerce businesses.

## 1. Less Consumer Demand

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The pandemic has completely changed the lives of people. E-commerce businesses are seeing a drastic shift in customer needs and wants. Initially, many people started panic buying and overstocking, which led to a decrease in supply. With time, markets also experienced a decrease in demand for a variety of items, except for masks, hand sanitizers, and toilet paper.

Customer demands are now very specific. So the industries that might be registering low consumer demands are also very specific. For instance, the industries involved in dairy products productions or medical, pharmaceutical business can actually see their business booming, although low labor presence is something of a stumbling block.

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Panic buying is very much obvious these days throughout the planet. Food and livestock are among them.

As people do not have to go out and attend events and gatherings, they are not buying as many clothes, shoes, and other accessories. Similarly, there is less demand for everyday products people use, except for food and hygiene products.

## 2. Ceased Shipping and Deliveries

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More than half of the world is experiencing a temporary lockdown. In several states, there is also a temporary ban on delivering various products due to the fear of transmission. While big e-commerce companies like Amazon and eBay can still continue to provide essential products, small companies are not that lucky. With harsh lockdown conditions in place, especially in ASIA, the logistics department finds it very difficult to deliver even the essential items to its customers.

There have been reports in some places where paramilitary forces such as police and law-enforcement using excessive force against delivery personnel. In these times even the eCommerce giants find it difficult to cope up with the pandemic.

Even if people use mobile e-commerce apps, they cannot order things other than food, medicine, and necessities. With no flights and trade between, there are no shipping and delivery services outside the cities. As if the decrease in consumer demand wasn't enough, shipping and deliveries coming to a grinding halt have made the situation even worse.

### 3. No Partnerships

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The spread of COVID-19 has forced many important tech conferences to postpone or cancel. This has likely resulted in a loss of partnership opportunities. These events bring together big and small companies to expand their network, share innovations, and form new business partnerships.

Several sports even and movies have been delayed or canceled. Like the Champions League and the premier league in Europe, the IPL in India and the 2020 Tokyo Olympics have all be either delayed or canceled. That also doesn't pan out well for the advertisement partners of these firms.

Several companies have rescheduled their events. But looking at the current COVID-19 situation, it's likely that we will not have any gatherings and events before the end of the year. Facebook has canceled its F8 developer conference while Google has confined its Google Cloud Next event online.

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Attendees in the online conference do not have the same benefits to make connections via live streaming as they would through personal interaction.

Other than these conferences, the overall opportunities for businesses to increase their network are reduced to none. Remote working is not healthy for building networks and partnerships.

Due to the outbreak, many small businesses have crashed. They are unable to make ends meet, let alone help partners in business.

#### 4. Loss of WorkForce

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The outbreak of this pandemic has caused a global health emergency. Infected individuals experience symptoms similar to that of flu, so they are supposed to stay at home and rest as a means to self-isolate. Before the outbreak, it was normal for workers to continue working if they had mild flu or flu-like symptoms. Labour power is some of the greatest assets of emerging markets around the world, with these daily wage workers fleeing to their homelands, there will be an acute shortage of manpower even after the lockdown is lifted and the nightmare of this pandemic is over. The major economies in the world would need at least 9 months to come out of the recession-like rut.

But now, organizations have no option but to excuse their workers or offer the option to work from home. The workers suspected of contracting the virus should go to the hospital or enter self-isolation. This has led to the loss of workforce in several businesses.

## 5. The Burden on Marketers

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Whether it's dealing with a decrease in demand or increased streaming of digital content, marketers' responsibilities have doubled. They have to create more streaming content and blogs to stay in touch with customers. They must find creative ways to deliver personal experiences from a distance.

Many marketers are exploring the potential of virtual events. These can prove effective in the promotion of their goods and services.

In a nutshell, marketers have more responsibilities and challenges than ever. Remote working and limited resources are some major hurdles marketers have to overcome these days.

## Wrapping up

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The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused a major economic blow to many small businesses. Many are still struggling to stay in the market in these difficult times. But with the help of digital tools, telecommuting, and creative marketing, there is still a silver lining for e-commerce businesses. 😞



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