



# A GUIDE TO MARKETING YOUR CAMPGROUND DURING A CRISIS



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The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic is changing the way we all do business.

As this unprecedented crisis continues to evolve, many outdoor recreation and hospitality business owners are wondering how to minimize losses, and what steps they can take to protect their businesses.

You're a resourceful small business owner and now's the time to lean into that resourcefulness, make a plan, and get to work. If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take, this guide will serve as a good starting point.

Let's take a look at some ways you can take stock of the situation, generate solutions, and take action to protect your RV park or campground.

As you know, things are developing rapidly. Remain flexible so you can make changes on the fly, and remember, you've got ARVC support when you need it.

You can contact us any time at 303-681-0401 or [info@arvc.org](mailto:info@arvc.org).

Your first priority is to make sure that your family, employees, and especially yourself, are safe and safeguarded, to the best of your ability.

Next, make sure that you're doing everything you can to safeguard your guests. You can do this by reviewing ARVC's guide "[Re-Opening RV Parks and Campgrounds: A Guide for the Outdoor Hospitality Industry](#)". It will guide you step-by-step through best practices, recommended procedures and suggested steps to take to reopen your business in the safest possible way.

The guide details CDC-recommended guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting, proper Personal Protective Equipment, etc.—all things you should implement immediately.

While the guide is comprehensive, this is a rapidly moving situation, so the guidelines set forth by your local health officials should take precedent when deciding what precautions to follow. Don't worry the guide has links to those as well.

Since there are a lot of unknowns, it's important to think about various possibilities and what you can do to adapt to them. The problems you face will vary depending on, among other things, the uniqueness and location of your RV park or campground. Across most of the US and Canada, the primary concerns we are hearing from owners and managers are a decrease in bookings and an increase in cancellations.

Needless to say, the sharp decline in travel has changed the way the RV parks and campgrounds are doing business at this time, and it is likely the changes made now will influence how we do business in the future.

It's important to look at the struggles you're experiencing directly and to make a plan based on what you're able to do now, as well as what you might be able to do later on. Below are some examples of things you should consider.

You may want to write things down as you think through these questions and your answers. It'll help you formulate your action plan.

### **If you're not able to open right away based on the state you operate in, are there other ways you can still do business?**

- Are you willing to sell gift certificates for stays to be determined at a later time?
- Can you offer discounts to anyone willing to purchase a stay with a future date? If so, how far in advance can you schedule them? Will you offer refunds or credits if travel restrictions are still in place when the 'future' arrives?

### **What can you do to help support your current and future guests?**

- Think about reaching out to them proactively with your assessment of travel and tourism during this situation, your recommendations on how to proceed (even if it's just to hang tight until more is known about this crisis), and any other must-know advice they could use.
- Provide them with updates on what you are doing to get your park ready for them to come visit. Make them feel secure knowing you are planning for their arrival and are making sure their stay will be memorable and as safe as possible.

### **How will you respond to inquiries from potential guests during this time?**

- Consider formulating a response ahead of time that you can copy and paste into an email that lays out what you currently know about their travel options. This includes current options and information they will need to know for making future travel plans once the crisis is over and travel restrictions have all been lifted.
- Make sure to have a clear policy for bookings and cancellations during this time. It's very possible you'll want to implement special guidelines in response to this situation that are different than your normal everyday policies.

### **What if you get sick?**

- If possible, designate someone else to be in charge of your day-to-day operations.

### **What will it look like to temporarily pause operations?**

- How will you communicate it with your campers, guests, employees and community?

### **Is the "temporary" plan you put into place sustainable? If so, for how long?**

- If not, are there things you can do to adjust your plan so it will be sustainable?

### **Are there any other resources available to you?**

We've compiled a list of resources for you at [arvc.org/coronavirus](http://arvc.org/coronavirus).

**Your “business as usual” may no longer exist, at least for the time being. You’ll need to adapt to get through these trying times. Some things to consider:**

- When you’re constantly having to make changes to adapt to an ever-changing situation, it’s imperative that you let your guests know what you’re doing and when.
- Keep them aware of any changes to day-to-day operations.
- Be sure to include details your guests should know about, like your availability, the options available to them, and any precautions you’re taking regarding the virus.

**Consider the following tips to communicate the above information with your clients:**

- Update your website
- Email your customers
- Post to social channels and pin those posts to the top of your feed if possible
- Update your details on your Google My Business profile and any other sites where you have a listing. Follow reviews by signing up for this [Reputation Management Tool](#), created by **Insider Perks** and brought to you by ARVC.
- Think about posting signage in your windows and around your campground.

It’s also a good idea to review any communications you already had scheduled for their appropriateness and relevance based on the current state of affairs and adjust accordingly.

Need help creating emails? ARVC members, have access to an exclusive discount with Member Benefit Provider **Constant Contact**. To learn more about how to sign up for this amazing discount on your email marketing, visit [arvc.org/MBP](http://arvc.org/MBP). Have any questions, contact ARVC at 303-681-0401 or [info@arvc.org](mailto:info@arvc.org).

Letting people know about the changes you've made is a great place to start. Use the channels mentioned above to communicate on a consistent basis. Of course, consider your park's unique situation to gauge the most appropriate path forward for you.

**READ THIS:** [5 Tips For Marketing Your Campgrounds During/After a Crisis](#)

### **KEEP UP**

Make sure to keep all of your sites up to date. This means regular updates on your park's procedures, new hours, rules, etc. on your website, social media accounts, review sites, and business listings.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

As a small business owner in the outdoor hospitality industry, you're always looking forward. So, continue to apply that 'look forward' mentality. There are things you can do during this time to help your business when things start to return to normal.

Think about changing up your marketing to include thoughts of looking forward to the time after the crisis is over. Many people will be revisiting their bucket list when this situation passes and will think about how they can take trips they've been putting off due to cost or other restrictions. Encourage people to book those future stays at your park now and think about offering discounts if they pay in advance (make sure to add in allowances for rescheduling, or changes in reservations).

### **BE SOCIAL (BUT AT A DISTANCE)**

Social media is blowing up right now, so use it to your advantage. Post images of your destination on Instagram, post a video tour on YouTube, share a customer story on your website, or satisfied customer comments on Twitter.

Whatever it is that you decide to put out there, make sure that your content is sensitive to the current situation — with a positive attitude toward making lasting memories.

As we transition back to business as usual, it's important to plan ahead, so start making plans for what comes next. Review the changes you've made and what you've learned, then think about how you can use that information to move forward.

### WHAT CAN STAY?

Look for things worth making a permanent part of your business.

- Did your new hours of operation work better than the old hours?
- Were people interested in the content and messages you posted about your park?
- Did you come up with some innovations that worked surprisingly well?

If so, don't stop just because the emergency is over. Keep them going and see if they're a good addition to your business long term.

### WHAT COMES NEXT?

These are trying times with many unknowns. By doing your best to stay safe, review your options, and make a plan you'll better position yourself to come out on the other side.

Remember, you are not alone. The ARVC team is here to help.

Contact the ARVC team anytime:

303-681-0401

[info@arvc.org](mailto:info@arvc.org)

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Check out our information hub at: [arvc.org/coronavirus](https://arvc.org/coronavirus)
- ["Re-Opening RV Parks and Campgrounds: A Guide for the Outdoor Hospitality Industry"](#)
- [5 Tips For Marketing Your Campgrounds During/After a Crisis](#)