

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Secrets to Success: It's Time to Think Differently**

This world is always evolving. Technology, healthcare, education – you name it. The world looks much different than it looked 100 or even 50 years ago. Our nation has, for years, been adapting to change. Today, however, we find ourselves in chaos and crisis as we are forced to change virtually everything about our everyday lives in just a few short days.

Often when we are faced with a sudden loss, we take a time out. We surround ourselves with family and friends, share memories, allow time to grieve and then try to resume life with a new normal. When it comes to businesses and the COVID-19 situation we are facing, there is no time to grieve. There is no time to evaluate how this will affect their bottom line, their employees, their tomorrow. Things have (and continue to) change so rapidly, many businesses have been forced to skip the planning phase and jump right into survival mode.

We've seen some unique ways that businesses have already adapted and evolved in the last few days and we will continue to see more in the coming weeks. Extension.org defines innovation as "the process of improving, adapting, developing or creating a new product, system, service or process, large or small, to deliver better results, create value for people, or move an organization forward." For our small businesses to survive this time in history, innovation is key. I'd like to share some steps to help businesses think outside the box in an attempt to serve their communities during these trying times.

- 1) Think of innovation as a creative process. Engage current employees, suppliers, and customers to brainstorm on ways to serve the community through your business.
- 2) Work together. You've heard so many of our leaders and celebrities say "We are in this together" in the last few days. How can you as a business owner put aside your differences with the other business down the street in an effort to provide services for the community and help each other?

- 3) Use the resources available to you. Information is coming in daily regarding new resources that are available for businesses. The State of Kansas announced the Hospitality Industry Relief Emergency Fund (HIRE) loan initiative for the hospitality industry and the Small Business Administration is currently taking applications for disaster loans. You can find out more information on the SBA loans at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>. I anticipate more relief programs in the coming days. Take advantage of them. You don't have to do this alone.

For business owners, these next few months are going to be challenging. These times are uncertain for all of us, but I encourage you to study to the facts and take care of yourselves. While we are all affected in different ways, we are truly all in this together.

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