LOCAL LIVES & LIVELIHOODS

DIGITAL
SKILLS
TO BOOST YOUR
BUSINESS

A guide for town centre businesses

RUSHMOOR
BOROUGH COUNCIL

To survive and thrive in lockdown and beyond, it is vital to be able to digitally communicate with customers, generate revenue remotely and keep your business secure online.

We have launched a free programme of digital skills training to help you adapt to changes within your business whatever your current level of knowledge.

DON'T MISS...

Mentoring and intensive training for town centre retailers

Clockwork City are offering free digital business skills training for Rushmoor town centre businesses delivered over four evenings of training, one 1-to-1 mentoring session, phone or online support plus post-training review work shop.

The aim of the training is to help you increase profitability, deliver effective social media promotions, understand Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as well as increase your discoverability. To check your eligibility for funding and to book your place email

amy.macallan@rushmoor.gov.uk

Free digital toolkit

Do you want to sharpen your business digital skills, but aren't sure where to start? The current lockdown measures mean that more businesses are turning to online solutions to continue trading throughout the crisis and beyond.

As consumers are social distancing and working from home, they're spending even more time online than ever before. An online presence can give your business a real boost.

In this booklet, we've pulled together a wealth of free online resources, training, workshops, hints and tips, so no matter what your digital ability is, you'll be able to work towards moving your business online or developing your current customer offer.

- Find out what digital training is available online

- Learn how to create a website

- Discover how to start selling online

- Understand the best ways to keep in touch with your customers

- Master social media

Digital Skills for Retail – free online course at your own pace

Sign-up online for free and access this FutureLearn course to learn anywhere, anytime and at your own pace.

This course aims to equip you with a wider understanding of the digital impact on the retail industry. It will cover the foundations of customer experience, new types of retail channels, digital marketing and the influence of social media in the era of digital technology.

The course will also consider the critical role of data analytics in retail, and how businesses can utilise data to improve performance. In the final week, the course will explore the future of technology in retail by exploring the increasing use of artificial intelligence and automation and how they are shaping the future of the retail industry, and the importance of ensuring these technologies are free from creator bias.

By the end of this course you will be able to:

• Describe how digital has created new ways for retailers and customers to connect

• Describe how digital can help retailers improve customer experience

• Explain what omni-channel means and understand how digital technology enables channels

• Explain the increasingly important role that digital marketing and social media are playing in retail

• Describe how digital enables retailers to give their customers a more personalised experience

All materials stay available after the course ends.

To sign-up, visit:
www.futurelearn.com/courses/digital-skills-retail

...MORE TRAINING

Every business can benefit from being online, particularly during social distancing measures, when your physical premises may be closed. Whether you are a beginner, or already have some digital skills, a range of online training is available. Why not brush up on your digital skills, become more tech savvy and keep up-to-date with new online trends during the lockdown?

Barclays digital wings for beginners

If you're a complete beginner and want to learn how to utilise your computer and the internet more effectively, the Digital Wings programme is designed to give you the knowledge and confidence to do more with digital.

www.barclays.co.uk/digital-confidence/digital-wings

Barclays digital business training

Barclays has a range of online tools that can help you to manage and grow your business online, plus brush up on your digital skills

Topics include staying safe online, cyber security, storing data and GDPR, operating in the Cloud, growing your business.

www.barclays.co.uk/business-banking/business-insight/digital-skills-for-businesses/
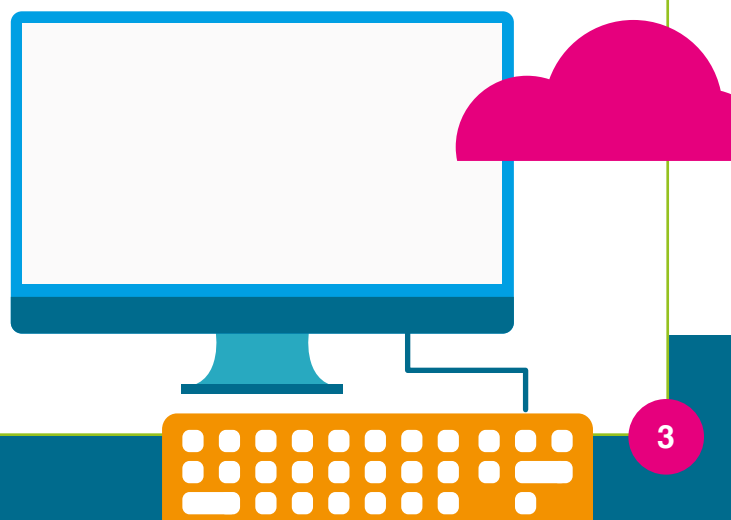
BT Skills for Tomorrow

Skills for Tomorrow is a new online and community training programme by BT that is designed to provide essential digital skills training to businesses. Webinars include:

• Social media strategy

• Digital marketing strategy

• Design and develop digital business ideas
• Collaborative tools to support remote working

• Connecting with your customers online

• Top tips to help keep you connected with your customers on social media

• Digital handshakes: Sales in a digital world

• BT Skills for Tomorrow: Digital Marketing Strategy

• Get Started with Digital Advertising

• Get Started with Digital Marketing: tips and tricks from Cisco

Register in advance to join the training.
www.bt.com/skillsfortomorrow

BE FOUND ONLINE

There has never been a better or more important time to invest in a website for your business. A website offers a wide variety of benefits for small businesses. In 2019, the number of consumers that went online to find a local business jumped to 97%, and in the current lockdown, people are using the internet from home to find out which businesses are still operating.

Websites are no longer intimidating to create and manage, with a little learning, you can create a website yourself. So if you're keen to carry on trading through the next few months, but are not sure how to set-up a website at low cost, these resources will help you discover how to create a site, showcase your products and services, encourage customers to contact you, attract new customers through Google and also helps to secure your success over the long term.

Google's 'Get a business online' course

This free course will share what it takes to start and run a successful business online. You'll also learn how to build a digital presence or website, use e-commerce, keep your business safe from hackers and get noticed locally.

www.learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/
course/business-online

How to build a website: the step-by-step guide to easy setup

Today anyone can make a website, regardless of technical skill level. It can seem like a daunting task, but this article will walk you through making a website-step-by-step and point you towards some easy 'website builder' options so that you can get up and running.

www.websitebuilderexpert.com/building-websites

Search Engine Optimisation if you're already online

If you already have a website, but are struggling to be found on Google, you can learn how to optimise your website with these online search engine optimisation courses.

www.learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/
course/digital-marketing

Shutterstock's free image library for your online activities

Image library Shutterstock has created a resource hub with creative assets to connect with customers. It includes free images, videos, and music for those who might be expanding their business online, plus collections for addressing the pandemic and free virtual background packs to make your home office look professional when making video calls.

www.shutterstock.com/explore/covid19-resources

SELL ONLINE

Did you know that you don't need a website to sell online? Have you been thinking about selling through an online store during lockdown? Maybe you have a website, but want to add a payment option? Maybe you just want customers to be able to look through your products online and then call you to order, offering them a delivery service? Or do you offer workshops and advice that could be delivered online, but aren't sure where to start?

Here's some creative ideas for selling online:

• Offer a delivery or collection service

• Promote gift vouchers

• Set-up 1-2-1 coaching sessions

• Offer group classes

E-COMMERCE

Selling your product or services online through e-commerce can hugely increase your potential customer base, it has small start-up costs (trials are free) and you can start selling straight away. Selling online means that your customers don't have to leave their home and they can shop at any time, 24 hours a day.

Building an online store can be an intimidating thought, but anyone with a computer can get started within a matter of minutes and without acquiring any special skills, using a number of pre-built website tools or 'platforms' such as Spotify or Amazon.

Start Up's 'How to start an online shop' guide

From integrating secure payments to marketing your shop, get your fledgling retail business off the ground with this step-by-step guide to starting an online shop.

www.startups.co.uk/create-online-shop/

Google's 'Build your online shop' course

Tap into the world of e-commerce and learn how to effectively sell your products online. From the tools you'll need to build your online shop from scratch, to payment methods and managing orders, this introductory topic will get you on your way.

www.learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage/course/business-online/module/22

Shopify's ecommerce training course for beginners

Shopify has put together a free training package for people who would like to start selling online. Shopify is a subscription to a software service that allows you to create a website and use their shopping cart solution to sell, ship, and manage your products. They even offer a 14-day free trial to get you going.

www.shopify.com/start

'Sell online with Amazon' guide

Selling online on Amazon is an easy and effective way to reach millions of potential buyers. Whether you have to sell a little or sell a lot, Amazon offers the required tools and experience to sell online successfully. Follow this step-by-step guide to find out more.

www.services.amazon.co.uk/services/sell-online/how-it-works.html

If your business normally offers 1-2-1 sessions or group classes, have you thoughts about running these remotely? Just because people are at home, doesn't mean they aren't willing to pay for an expert's service.

There are a number of online video conferencing tools that can be used to run sessions. You can set your sessions up as 'private' and only send a link to people who have signed up in advance. This way, you can charge people and then give them access to your activity.

Here's some of the video tools available to run sessions online…

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams lets up to 250 people join traditional virtual meetings. It works on computers, mobile devices, and with conferencing equipment. Video and audio come in very clear and the program syncs with other Microsoft 365 apps and programs for a bigger and better collaboration experience. You will need Office 365 to use Teams, but can join for free.

www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software

Zoom

Zoom hosts up to 500 participants at a time and has a webinar option to include more people. Its collaboration tools allow everyone to work on projects in real-time or show demonstrations through screen share. Chats can be locked in so that only paying customers can interact. While Zoom has paid-for tiers that allow for bigger calls, the free version enables 100 people to video-conference together, although it does put a 40-minute time limit on meetings of three or more people.

www.zoom.us

Skype

Probably the best known video calling tool, Skype is marketed more as a social platform but it does support calls for up to 50 people, making it viable for business.

Like Google, Skype offers a web app which means each user won't have to download new software to use it – ideal if customers are using their personal computers or working with older, slower hardware. It can also be upgraded to Skype for Business for a monthly fee, allowing up to 250 people to join the same call and offering stronger security options for those whose work involves handling sensitive data.

www.skype.com

Google Meet (previously Hangouts)

Google's video-conferencing service has been specifically designed with business needs in mind and features a clean, easy-to-use interface that can handle up to 250 users. As a Google product, it also works well in tandem with the company's other services like Google Calendar which can make it easier to create and discuss plans even as many people are self-isolating. It can also provide written captions from the meeting using Google's speech-to-text technology.

www.meet.google.com

Other options

Facebook Live, Twitter, YouTube, Twitch or Snapchat can all be used to broadcast scheduled classes and promote these to your audience in the run-up. Visitors can join in as they wish, and you could leave a gentle reminder to donate if they like your content.

SELL GIFT CARDS

Just because people are indoors doesn't mean they won't want your services in future. While some people are tightening their belts, others are twiddling their thumbs looking for self-care, birthday presents and surprise gifts for loved ones. Gift cards allow your customers to 'buy now, enjoy later', and are suitable for businesses that require their customers to be in the premises.

DELIVERY AND CLICK & COLLECT

Remember that home delivery and click and collect isn't just for hot food and groceries. If you normally sell products, why not offer these services to your local area? You can list products on your website or social media and then offer people a way of ordering, either online or by telephone.

For deliveries, if you don't have a vehicle, why not team up with a local 'man and van' or house removals firm? With people self-isolating, these firms might have space in their calendar to transport your product. Businesses are getting creative with their services right now, so even if movers don't list this on their website, reach out and ask.

The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) delivery checklist

The ACS has put together some home delivery guidance for local shops which covers how to take an order, receive a remote payment, operate a collection service, manage data security and delivery charges. You can view and download these free pdf guides by visiting their website.

www.acs.org.uk

Online third-party delivery platforms

Food and grocery stores can easily sign up with an online third-party platform like Deliveroo or Just Eat and benefit from their ready-made infrastructure, resources, network of delivery riders and so on. Most of these delivery services have already implemented a "contactless delivery" policy, meaning couriers place the meal or delivery bag on the customer's doorstep, so they can collect it without having any human contact. Deliveroo and Just East are currently delivering groceries for local small convenience stores and Morrisons nationwide.

www.just-eat.co.uk

www.deliveroo.co.uk

We would love to hear from you if you are offering a delivery or click and collect service as we can promote this for you. Email us and let us know!

amy.macallan@rushmoor.gov.uk

GET SOCIAL

There is a huge range of digital communication tools that you can use to stay in contact with your customers (and staff). These include emails, instant messaging and video conferencing, alongside social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Youtube. Selecting the right communications tools will depend upon on your business and what you do.

Social media is a great way to reach thousands of people across a variety of platforms. It is one of the most popular online activities and current projections expect 3.1 billion users worldwide in 2021 - about 45% of the worldwide population.

It's not surprising that customers increasingly have an expectation of being able to research and engage with a brand or business using social media and companies not servicing these channels will be falling short.

Top social media tips for business

This article includes a guide to different social media platforms and which ones might work best for your business plus simple but effective tips.

www.smallbusiness.co.uk/top-social-media-tips-small-businesses-2540617/

Facebook for Business training

Build your business through self-paced courses and resources with Facebook. Take a look at these free, five-minute lessons, where you'll learn how to write the perfect post, how Facebook advertising works and how to reach more customers through Facebook and Instagram.

www.facebook.com/business/learn

Send a free e-newsletter with Mailchimp

Email marketing is an important tool in today's marketing efforts and e-newsletters help you to stay in touch with your customers. Mailchimp is free software that lets you stay in touch with groups of people via email. Through Mailchimp, you can send newsletters to people who've signed up for your mailing list.

www.mailchimp.com/resources/mailchimp-101/

STAY SAFE

Everyone who uses the internet should understand how to work securely. Learning about cyber security should reduce the risk of your business becoming a victim of cyber attacks.

Cyber security's core function is to protect the devices we all use (smartphones, laptops, tablets and computers), and the services we access - both online and at work - from theft or damage. It's also about preventing unauthorised access to the vast amounts of personal information you store on these devices, and online.

Cyber security is important because smartphones, computers and the internet are now such a fundamental part of modern life, that it's difficult to imagine how we'd function without them. From online banking and shopping, to email and social media, it's more important than ever to stake steps that can prevent cyber criminals getting hold of your accounts, data and devices.

Ways to protect your business

Protecting yourself and your business from cyber security risks can seem daunting but there are some simple steps you can take to ensure you have the basics in place. In this online guide from the National Cyber Security Centre, you'll learn about cyber security and ways to protect your business.

www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/information-for/self-employed-sole-traders

A beginner's guide to scams

Scams are getting more and more sophisticated, particularly when it comes to targeting you online and through mobile devices. This guide will explain how you can recognise a scam, protect yourself and what to do if you're a victim or have been targeted.

www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/beginners-guide-to-scams