



A guide to help businesses make the best of road construction.



Belleville
Chamber of Commerce

BELLEVILLE

DANE COUNTY
GREEN COUNTY

WHAT YOU CAN DO AHEAD OF TIME

Partner with other neighborhood businesses.

- Remember: You're not alone. Develop a group plan for staying in contact with the village, construction project leaders and customers.

Take note of all communications from the Village and attend all meetings.

- Projects change, and this will ensure you have the most current information and can organize your business accordingly.

Work closely with village engineering staff in the pre-bid stages.

- Get involved before construction contracts are written, to ensure the contracts include business-friendly requirements. These might include regularly scheduled meetings before and during construction with business owners and construction staff.

Work with your employees to develop a game plan.

- Talk to your employees about the process and strategies to stay prosperous during construction. Discuss marketing efforts and allow employees to share any concerns they may have. Your employees will appreciate the opportunity, and the dialogue may spark new ideas that will benefit your business.

Identify sources for marketing, advertising and design support in the community.

- Professional firms and college interns may even provide pro bono assistance with communication efforts.

Inform customers in advance.

- Keeping your customers informed gives them the ability to navigate construction and access your business. Examples can include putting up signs or passing out copies of alternative routes to the business before the project.

Gather customer contact information.

- Do this before construction begins so you can keep them apprised of road conditions, best routes and promotional specials during the construction period. Consider sending weekly e-mails to customers—if you keep them informed and in the loop, they may not be as likely to change their buying habits during construction.

Use Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

- These are excellent channels for providing updates and reminding customers you're open for business.

Contact lenders.

- Inform current lenders of the upcoming project and see if there are opportunities to restructure existing debt and lines of credit in light of potentially diminished revenues.

ONCE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

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- Remember: You're not alone. Develop a group plan for staying in contact with the Village, construction project leaders and customers.

Consider using alternative entrances for better customer access.

- Access to your business is often a problem during a construction project. Make sure there are signs directing your customers to the right entrance.

Make sure signage is clear.

- Traffic delays will also be inevitable during a construction project, but signage can help a great deal. See what sort of signs are going up to direct traffic and make sure they make sense for your customers. Construction crews aren't aware of your needs and often it's just a matter of asking. Also, make sure there's signage properly directing your customers to parking spaces.

The Village will issue temporary sign permits for most projects.

- There are three types of temporary business signs that can be installed to assist customers: driveway signs, alternate business access signs and directional signs. Driveway signs help tell motorists where to turn, since construction can make it difficult for motorists to find your driveway. The business provides and installs these signs.

Directional signs

- They are used where the alternate business sign is not an available option. They're used to direct motorists using a side street toward your business. The business provides and installs these signs.

Create a friendly rapport with construction workers.

- While the on-site construction workers aren't the appropriate people to contact about concerns, it can only improve the situation if you create a friendly rapport with them. This said, it's important to emphasize that construction workers are following instructions from their supervisors, and communicating concerns to supervisors and project leaders is the best way to get results. To this end, know who those supervisors are and keep their contact information close at hand. The Village will provide this information in the months leading up to the project.



ONCE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS - CONTINUED

Keep the project manager's contact information close at hand.

- The Village will provide this information to you ahead of time at your request/

Provide directions and access information for your employees.

- Don't let them make the area more congested. Depending on the number of people you employ, you might consider offer an agreed-upon location.

Consider alternate means of getting your message out,

- Utilize Craigslist or Facebook, if decreased traffic has made your signage ineffective.

Contact suppliers to provide directions.

- Find out when they'll be delivering, and talk with the project contractor to reschedule construction around your driveway at that time.

Keep on message.

- Consider keeping a script next to your phone, so that you and your employees have quick and easy directions to provide to customers. Make sure all your employees know what to say and how to say it.

Stay informed!

- Attend all public meetings—those held by the Village, business or neighborhood associations, or others—relating to the construction project to voice concerns, get ideas and hear the latest news. Be sure to open all correspondence from the Village.

Extend business hours.

- Consider staying open later in the evening after construction crews are finished for the day. Be flexible to accommodate customer demands and other perceived needs. Make the construction work for you. If you've been considering a remodel for your business, why not do it during the construction period? Use this slower period to get things done that you haven't had time to address.

Deliver products to your customers.

- To reach customers unable or unwilling to navigate the construction area, Susan Bulgrin, owner of two Culver's restaurants in Wisconsin, initiated a catering business. She brought Culver's to her customers and she credits this as one method that helped her business endure construction.

Creative Promotions.

Businesses have come up with lots of creative ways to make the construction period fun for customers.

- Ask a construction worker to sit outside of your business during the lunch break and talk to kids and families about the ongoing project. The trucks are big draw for kids. Used prize drawings to attract customers. Do something above and

beyond what you would usually do in your business to attract customers.

Consider pooling advertising resources with other businesses.

- In the construction zone let the public know you're still open for business. If you're part of a business association, consider agreeing to increase dues temporarily so the organization can do district-wide marketing. Then you, as a business owner trying to keep staffing lean, won't have to spend as many resources on it.

Be positive.

- Encourage and generate a positive, healthy environment to support your staff and ensure retention of valued employees.

INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS:

Hold events prior to construction start-up to draw attention to the area.

- Hold special promotions like free hot dogs and pop.
- Print placemat advertisements.
- Plan hard-hat promotions; some in the form of sales, some as giveaways.
- Sell hard-hat lunches to go.
- Schedule a grand finale! Work with the Village to help plan a ribbon cutting ceremony, street dance, t-shirts, prizes, etc.

