PTDA Community Conversation Summary: COVID-19
April 6-8, 2020

Logistics/Operations:

- Trucking companies were not delivering – calling companies to make sure they will be open to receive the packages. Customers are limiting when they receive packages, so you need to get into that window.
- Shipments get refused by a customer because policy where truck drivers must sign health affidavit and driver wouldn’t sign so had to make other plans.
- Any product that comes from New Orleans, or the driver of the product comes through there will sit in quarantine for 14 days.
- Blind receiving. Driver must unload the product himself, leave it on the ground/dock, driver leaves and then employees come out to disinfect it before taking it into the warehouse.
- Trying to isolate branches so employees not going back and forth and exposing more than one facility
- Have tables outside; sign that says curbside only with a phone number; talk via phone or outside at a distance; employee wears gloves to handle the product
- Manufacturing lead times have been slower. If you need something special, specific or technical, it takes a little longer because the customer service person needs to call and check with the factory floor, etc. and they may be on a different schedule.
- UPS no longer guaranteeing shipments.

Employee Sick and/or Positive test in facility

- Once someone tests positive at a branch location– employees in contact were quarantined for 14 days. Disinfecting entire facility and all employees get tested
- Decontaminate just the area of the DC where there was a positive diagnosis as practice social distancing, this avoids having to shut down the entire facility.
- If a person is sick (not necessarily diagnosed) - quarantine for 14 days and only come back if cleared by medical professionals. Conduct investigation – determine list of people who had contact with person during exposure period. Conduct a comprehensive cleaning. After these items have been completed, re-open within 24 hours. Contacted employees will be quarantined for 14 days and then will be monitored.
- Has a doctor contracted with a company, doesn’t cost anything for employees to access. Therefore company can encourage employees to see doctor if feeling at all ill. If employee has a temp 99.5 or above, must see a doctor.

Workforce

Sales

- Outside sales trying to touchbase via email/video calls; direct people to their website
• Internal training with outside sales teaching about product and application to give inside sales a better understanding of where products go
• Cross-train employees
• Trying to encourage sales to do more blog writing/social media
• Our VP of Sales downloaded all of the training seminars and pushed it out to the salespeople. Doing a lot of training and webinars, much of the material coming from PTDA.
• Reached out to main manufacturers to do virtual product training
• Sales people only visiting those that request it, but salespeople not required to visit if they are not comfortable.
• Find the things you have been putting off for a while, whether it be training, filing, CRM updates, etc. Time to start knocking down that list.
• Weekly webinar (with video) between upper management and all outside sales in each region.
  o Check in on how they are doing on an individual basis, health-wise as well as how their family is doing.
  o These webinars offer a platform for questions and voice any needs they have (perhaps their area is out of toilet paper, company can ship some)

Employees in the Facility

• Masks for employees that can’t work from home
• Purchased safety barriers/dividers
• All employees are on a 3-day rotating schedule, so they are at home for a couple of days, then come into the office. Need to have someone here to receive goods and ship out the orders. Our repair business has slowed down the most because of our rotating schedule.

Employee engagement/morale

• Daily trivia contest via email
• Weekly call with each location – do Q&A – try to keep it upbeat, increase communication; give update and then talk about how important their service is to their customers (to inspire) and how their job is still really important.
• Admitting that you feel the same fear so they don’t feel alone sometimes is helpful. Ask what you can do to help them.
• Insurance provider has a counseling service that employees can call.
• 401K provider did a webinar to give them some info about financial services. They were given a phone and email they could use to connect with them directly with questions. Helped people feel better.
• Pushing out on Youtube channels to employees. Marketing department interviewing different department heads and push out via text that takes them to Youtube site to hear the interviews on what they are doing. Well received.

Management
Projects that have been started that will continue:
• ACH payments
• Video conferencing
• Better communication overall
• Customers getting into a better habit of explaining the part/product so we can help serve them better.
• Uncovered issues like the need for CRM
• Possibly restructure sales team to follow PTDA Voice of the End Customer report recommendations
• Allowing people to work from home more
• Check emergency systems/procedures more regularly as so many people working from home really tested limits
• More transparency
• Sharing same message to various locations at the same time

Keep in touch with your local counties so you have access to re-entry information if needed. Other Local resources:
• A lot of local business forums, weekly calls with those groups to strategize.
• Small Business Association calls as well.

Accounting/Finances
• Contact your car insurance provider for a discount since your salespeople are not out driving.
• Most invoicing done electronically now so this hasn’t been a huge transition. From accts receivable and so many customers have gone to ACH payments, this has been least impacted area.
• Challenges in reaching accounts payable contacts at customers who aren’t set up to work remotely to obtain payment or check on payment status.
• Some customers asking for extended terms on invoices. Have received letters from several large distributors and OEMS requiring additional 60-day terms.
  o Looking at financial impact of this in the long term when multiple customers are requesting.
  o Determine if the customer has a financial need for extended term or just taking advantage of the opportunity.

Customers
• Uptick in marijuana industry
• In a few industries, the orders we had inhouse have been put on hold indefinitely.
• Taking longer to service the customer. Can’t walk in with the product, so more of a hands-off process.
• Customers were initially sending essential business letters and our inside and outside salespeople have sent as many emails as possible to our customers to let them know we are open.
• Refineries, wastewater treatment, etc. We know our products are essential. We service with knowledge and inventory and both are a struggle because you feel the need to be there but can’t expose our employees or customers.
• Being smaller is your competitive advantage as you can be flexible enough to adapt and change as you go. Larger members struggle more because they have issues that cross from state to state.
• Provided letters to all our employees to prove they are essential should they get stopped.
• Dropbox, OneDrive, etc. Every letter we received has been saved here and everyone can access if they need it. More salespeople calling in to meat plants and they are requiring us to come in.
• Virtual meetings are changing the sales approach; relationship selling is on hold right now
• Any face to face meetings have to be for a critical reason.
• Days of the cold call will forever be changed.
• Maintain contact, use calls, emails, video. Many businesses that are functioning are not at full capacity; fewer lines; less staff.
• Email marketing is important to hopefully help with this.
• Distributors are trying to use this time to soak up training. Training is an opportunity to do a sales call with those don’t normally have a lot of contact with. Utilizing outside sales force for this to keep them busy.
• Paying attention to people who are accessing website using SEO. Jumping on leads. Have had some good success connecting and some follow up.