



HAMILTON HISTORIC MAIN STREET  
103 1/2 N. RICE STREET HAMILTON, TX 76531

## BUSINESS GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Here is a list of business growth ideas discussed through Main Street America, Texas Main Street, and further research. These opportunities can work for multiple industries in short and long-term planning.

- **Create an Online Presence**—If you do not have a Facebook page or a webpage, now may be a great time to consider one...or update the one that you have.
  - **Facebook Page**—A free way to be online with options to promote your page at cost (click [here](#)).
  - **Create a website**—There are a ton of online free tutorials and vary based on the platform you choose. Most website hosts have a monthly cost. (Click [here](#) to learn more.) Below are some popular options:
    - **Vistaprint**—Offering a free trial and then \$3.74 a month for hosting. The site also offers postcards, business cards, photos, and a variety of other marketing tools that can match your website.
    - **Godaddy**—Offering \$11.99 for the first year with Office 365, email, and web hosting, along with free tools and advice.
    - **Wix**—Offering free website building with upgrades available.
    - **Weebly**—Offers a website or online store, currently offering a free custom domain for one year.
  - **Grow with Google**—Free tools and resources to help you learn remote work. Google is also offering a 14-day free trial for GSuite (click [here](#)) which offers email, online chats, virtual meetings, document creations, website building, cloud storage, and multiple users and devices.
- **Develop Online Shopping**—For retail, there is a myriad of options to sell products online, whether on your own website or sites:
  - **Shopify**—Offering a 90-day free trial.
  - **Facebook Marketplace**—Buy and sell in your local community, mainly for the public, but can sell anything from appliances to land.
  - **Amazon**—Can sell online for \$39.99 a month.
  - **Online Shopping List Services**—Remember online shopping does not mean you have to ship everything but instead can offer to pick up or deliver so people can grab and go.
- **Sell Online Courses**—On your website, you can also offer and sell courses.
  - **Kajabi**—Offering a 14-day free trial to create, market, and sell courses, subscriptions, and digital products.
  - **Learning Revolution**—discusses 15+ Different platforms to create and sell online courses.
- **Post Online Videos or Virtual Tours**—These have public free access to help you gain more consumer engagement. YouTube will even start paying you if your online presence grows large enough.
  - **Facebook Live**—Can connect and engage your audience.
  - **LinkedIn Live**—Can complete an application to broadcast live videos.
  - **YouTube**—Can create a [YouTube video](#) (one-time post) or [YouTube channel](#) (a channel for your business)
- **Conduct Virtual Meetings**—This would be great for any professional service, whether for large meeting groups or just one-on-one appointments. Most platforms offer a phone conference option for those who are not computer savvy too.
  - **Zoom**—Offers a free version for unlimited one-on-one meetings up to 40 minutes each session. Unlimited time is offered in the next-up package at \$14.99 a month.
  - **BlueJeans**—Offer three types of trials. Cheapest plan hosts up to 50 participants in one meeting, plus unlimited group or one-on-one meetings and five hours of recordings.
  - **GoToMeeting**—Offering a 14-day free trial to host meetings up to 250 people. The cheapest plan is now offered at \$12 a month for up to 150 participants.



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- **Modernize Payment Options**—Do you accept debit/credit card payments? How about PayPal, Apple Pay, or Square?
  - **Credit Card Processing Companies**—Read this [article](#) for some popular options.
  - **PayPal**—Can send money or shop using PayPal and can be added to most websites as an option. It also offers business loans.
  - **Apple Pay**—operates on Apple devices in stores, text messages, apps, or websites. For consumers, stores a digital version of debit/credit cards on phones. For merchants, offered through a point-of-sale terminal at no additional fee from Apple.
  - **Square**—A new type of point of sale that offers to sell online, a terminal, contactless or chip transactions, a stand, a register, or a magstripe (attaches to a cell phone) versions.
- **Offer Gift Cards/Certificates**—Gift Certificates are a great idea for customers to buy now and use later. Are you offering this just in-store or a digital version?
  - **GiftFly**—Offers business owners a way to create, sell and market their own eGift cards. Offers promotions and fundraisers too. This is free for merchants and has a processing fee of 2.70% plus \$0.30 per card transaction.
  - **GiftUp**—Offers online gift cards at no monthly fees or setup costs but has 3.49% transaction fees or alternative packages.
  - **More Ideas**—Read this [article](#) for 10 more platform ideas.
- **Provide Special Hours or Appointments**—Offering Senior Hours or By Appointment Only opportunities. This can be used during times of health safety concerns and targeted consumer sale opportunities.
- **Show Off Clean Facilities**—Especially during public health concerns, this is a strength that businesses can brag about. Clean facilities can show you have set a priority for your consumers and can market cleanliness as a strength.
- **Market Locally Sourced Products**—Do you offer local products? Market them! The benefits are that you most likely have your products faster and may have less product handling.
- **Share Future Plans and Business Changes**—As you respond to community or business changes, don't forget to share your plans with your customers to keep them engaged and anticipating new products or services.
- **Review Business Interruption Insurance**—Before life events affect your business, consider Business Interruption Insurance. Contact your insurance agent for more information.
- **Consider Crowdfunding**—Some industries are finding success with Crowdfunding to gain capital for a new or growing business. Here is a [website](#) explaining the Top 35 Crowdfunding Sites in 2019.
- **Ask SBA for Assistance**—Please review the [website](#) for information, eligibility, and applications on funding, business guides, federal contracts, learning, and local assistance availability.
- **Participate in Continuous Learning**—Always look for new opportunities. Look for professional associations in your industry to keep up with current news, regulations, and certifications to strengthen your business. General business ideas are also available with organizations such as (but not limited to) the list below:
  - **SBA**—Although most turn to SBA for financing, the program has a great Learning Center that can help you manage and grow your business.
  - **SBDC**—America's SBDC can direct you to online tutorials or your local SBDC center. SBDC offers free business consulting through universities, colleges, economic development agencies and private partners.
  - **SCORE**—A network of volunteer and business mentors that helps businesses start and grow. There is a library of online resources, webinars, and mentoring available for free. Click [here](#) for more.