

COVID-19 Business Planning Checklist

CAMBRIDGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Coronavirus Business Planning:

It is critical that businesses plan for the worst, we don't anticipate that at this point, but preparing is job #1. PLEASE IF YOU ARE IN THE RETAIL BUSINESS SPACE, and an employee shows signs of cough or illness please send them home and ask them to not return to work until they have been tested for COVID-19. They should call Region of **Waterloo Public Health at 519-575-4400**.

We anticipate weeks not months of this, however we need to think beyond that because there will also be a recovery period. Hopefully some of these ideas will help in your planning to ensure business continuity and recovery.

Continuity Planning:

- Identify staff members who can accurately assess how your company functions, both internally and externally. Determine which employees, materials, procedures and equipment are essential to keep the business operating and which functions are critical to survival and recovery. Include emergency payroll, expedited financial decision making and accounting systems to track and document costs in the event of an unexpected business incident and assign each task to a staff member who will be responsible for that function for the duration of the event.
- Establish procedures for succession of management including at least one person who is working remotely, if possible. Practice worst case scenario planning- it is very possible someone from your leadership team will be unavailable; plan for contingency if that person serves a critical role.
- KEEP YOUR EMPLOYEES informed and involved in emergency planning, advise them of the risks facing the business and their employment.

Dealing with Clients and Service:

- Compile a list of your key customers and establish a plan to serve them for the duration. Since it is impossible at this time to know long that will be, plan for as long as you can.

Suppliers, Vendors, Contractors

- Identify key suppliers, vendors, contractors, banks and any other businesses you must interact with on a daily basis. If there are any that serve a critical role, consider developing a professional relationship with more than one company in case they are compromised and cannot service your needs. A disaster that shuts down a key supplier or vendor can be devastating to your business.

Quarantine and Premises

- If any of your employees are identified as having even casual contact with anyone known to have Coronavirus, your facility may be involuntarily shut down. Plan what you will do if your building, plant or office is not accessible. Define crisis management procedures and individual responsibilities in advance. Talk with your staff or co-workers and frequently review and practice what you intend to do during and after an emergency. Again **Region of Waterloo Public Health number is 519-575-4400.**

Communications and Emergency Planning for Employees:

- Your employees are your most valuable asset. Open lines of communication are essential before, during and after any incident. Include preparedness information and virus updates in newsletters, on company intranet, periodic employee emails and other internal communications tools.
- Crisis Communication Plan: Detail how your organization plans to communicate with employees, local authorities (identify point of contact for emergency services and first responders), customers and others for the duration of the event. Give employees information on how you will communicate when and how to report to work following the incident.
- Make sure senior management has all relevant information and identify who will communicate updates to the public. Inform clients/customers if you anticipate delays in service (and communicate clearly how and when products will be delivered, or services rendered). It is also important to communicate with local, state and federal authorities what emergency assistance is needed for you to continue essential business activity.
- If you are able to provide assistance to the community, communicate with officials and first responders what your company is prepared to do to help in the recovery effort.
- Check with your IT provider to ensure key employees have the right tools to work remotely:

- VPN Access (to access server)
- Printer/Scanner/Fax or e-Fax
- Monitor(s)
- Keyboard and mouse

Meetings and Conferences:

At this time, business leaders and management teams should consider postponing non-essential meetings and conferences. It is important to stay vigilant with updates; as we have seen, circumstances change quickly.

Travel – National and International:

- CEASE ALL TRAVEL PLANS
- Any staff who have travelled **SHOULD** be self-isolated for at least 14 days after return whether experiencing symptoms or not.

Facilities, Buildings, Property and Insurance:

- This is a good time to review your business insurance coverage and understand your deductibles, if applicable. Consider how you will pay creditors and employees. If you are the business owner or principal, you should also plan how you will provide for your own income. Finally, find out what records your insurance provider will want to see after an incident and store them in a safe place.
- Determine who will be in charge of the premises in the event you need to close suddenly. Consider the ways in which people, products, supplies and other things get into and leave your building or facility; make sure all entrances and exits are secure. Identify machinery, computers, custom parts or other essential equipment needed to keep the business up and running – and what (if anything) needs to be moved in the event the building will be closed for any length of time.

Business Recovery:

The Federal Government is due to release information on assisting business. We know, SMALL businesses will be the quickest and hardest hit and we are encouraging the Federal Government to concentrate speedy efforts in this direction first.

Note – Cyber criminals usually kick into high gear during a crisis, emergency or other event. Remind employees to stay vigilant and delete any unsolicited “COVID-19” updates they receive – and never open any attachments.

EMPLOYEE TIPS:

- Have automatic deposit set up for payroll and set up online payments for bills and utilities. After a crisis hits, it is important you can access company payroll.
- Check internet access to make sure you will be able to log in to your company’s intranet to work from home, access banking and other key functions.
- Know what to do if your business is closed for an extended period and how to obtain information.
- Have a plan for childcare if your child’s school, nursery or daycare should need to temporarily shut down.
- Beware of online scams or solicitations; never send money to anyone unless you know the organization or group. If you are not sure, don’t take action.
- Stay calm - most people who become infected experience only mild illness and recover, but it can be more severe for a small percentage including the elderly or people with underlying medical issues; most will make a full recovery.

COMMON SENSE PRECAUTIONS:

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.

- Whenever possible, maintain at least 6 feet between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early- Call your doctor at the first sign you are not getting better or have any fever. CALL PUBLIC HEALTH IMMEDIATELY - 519-575-4400**
- Walk-in visits are limited at all area hospitals – call ahead.
- Stay home if you are sick!