



BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING CHECKLIST

COVID-19 RESPONSE



IMMEDIATE

Do your staff, leaders, and customers know what's expected of them? If you haven't already done so, consider these critical communication and planning steps.

- Business Necessities:** Check with local, regional, and/or licensing authorities to see if your business is being requested – or forced – to close immediately.
- Plan:** If your business is allowed to remain open, determine a point at which you would adjust hours, change the way you operate, or close. For example, the declaration of a local emergency, recommendations by a licensing body to close, or a public call to avoid crowds.
- Refine Plan:** Start or refine your Business Continuity Plan. It should consider the technology, people, and workflows that are critical for your business to function as circumstances change. For now, this document should address the immediate future.
- External Communication:** Be sure to let customers know your plan, and inform staff of how the business might change. This could include:
 - updating your online business listings;
 - sharing new hours, or closure information on social media;
 - emailing customers; and updating your website with the latest information on your business.
- Internal Communication:** Share the latest information on COVID-19 prevention with your team. Ensure that all staff know to stay home and self-isolate if they feel ill.
- Accommodate:** Check with staff to ensure accommodations are made for those with weakened immune systems or those who live with others who have weakened immune systems.



IMMEDIATE

The upcoming days are critical in ensuring you're on the right footing for ever-changing circumstances. Consider these steps.

- Utilize Feedback:** Survey employees to determine if they have suitable tools to work from home (headphones, a computer, software, and high-speed internet access).
- Remote Work Plan:** Develop a remote work plan for yourself and employees. Provide at-home guidelines, which include IT security measures (such as locking computers when away, and educating them on COVID-19 phishing scams), and expectations on the proper use of company assets. It can also include best-practices, such as 'attending all regular meetings and maintaining regular hours'. Can't work remotely? Consider adopting new ways of doing business to prevent the spread, such as delivery/pick-up options, or moving your services to a remote offering (such as restaurants adjusting to provide delivery, or gyms providing online, guided classes or equipment rentals).
- Teleconferencing & Videoconferencing:** Purchase/procure remote conferencing software, such as Zoom, Cisco WebEx, or Google Hangouts if necessary. Make sure your team has access to phones, even if it means a VOIP service.
- Security:** Develop a cyber security plan to ensure your data is safe and software is up to date. If possible, implement two-factor authentication using smart cards or security keys.
- Accommodate:** Be patient as your staff adapts to a new way of working. Try to let them work out the kinks while providing good guidance.



ONGOING

Now that you have the critical items in order, it's time to think longer term and prepare for the future.

- ❑ **Be Transparent:** Continue to check in with staff on a regular basis (daily, if possible), and maintain your regular business cadences to the best of your abilities.
 - ❑ Ask staff how they're feeling about their remote work situation, if applicable. Listen with empathy and be ready to respond to concerns.
- ❑ **Plan:** Complete your Business Continuity Plan. The plan should cover the mandate of the company, the critical functions of the organization, a prioritized list of critical services or products and a plan for their ongoing delivery or rapid recovery. It should also address roles and responsibilities for staff and leaders, as well as internal and external impacts of the business disruption.
- ❑ **Evaluate:** Start evaluating staff planning, and identifying the best course of action to ensure your business is protected. Research local government resources and reliefs that are available to your business. Consider schedule reduction, role adjustments, and lay-offs as you see necessary.
 - ❑ In the event your business is closed, contact your building lessor and see if flexible rent payment or deferral is possible. Discuss their expectations moving forward.
- ❑ **E-Commerce:** If e-commerce or delivery services are possible, set up your digital storefront and publicize to customers.
- ❑ **#SupportLocal:** Use the #SupportLocal hashtag to encourage clients and patrons to support you.



ONGOING

This interruption may continue for a while. Are you prepared for the next few months?

- Communicate:** Meet daily or weekly with your key stakeholders and evaluate the ongoing plan. Make adjustments as the situation changes.
- Plan:** Refine your business delivery future. This could mean evaluating a temporary or permanent closure, but it may mean finding a more permanent e-commerce solution, or running advertising campaigns to encourage your local community to invest in your offerings.
- #SupportLocal:** Remember: We're all in this together. #SupportLocal



COMMUNICATION

It's essential that the public is aware of changes you're making to your business so they can continue to support you.

- ❑ **Business Communication:** Update your website to include a notice explaining your response to the current pandemic. We recommend having this appear on whatever page the user enters the site, each time they re-enter the site.
 - ❑ Update this message as needed.
- ❑ **Auto-Response:** Utilize Facebook Messenger and Instagram direct messages.
 - ❑ Set up automated responses to help answer frequently asked questions, or to let customers know you're away. Make sure they know when/if they can expect a response.
- ❑ **Social Media:** Use Facebook and Instagram stories to interact with your customers.
 - ❑ Highlight new offerings, post questions/polls, and encourage engagement.
 - ❑ Pin a notice at the top of your Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter pages to let customers know of any updates to business operations such as changes in hours or adjustments to services.
- ❑ **Business Hours:** Update your hours of operation on Google My Business, Facebook, and your Website.
 - ❑ Make adjustments as necessary.
- ❑ **Newsletters:** Start a client newsletter or email to update customers by using a free platform such as MailChimp.
- ❑ **Promote:** Create an online campaign to promote gift card deals, delivery/curbside pickup, or other promotions you have available.