

27 Practical Ideas to Help Keep Your Organization Up and Running During the Pandemic

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Businesses are now formulating and re-formulating plans to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. In this connection, we put together a checklist of practical actions that your organization may find helpful in keeping your business up and running. Some of the 27 action items you may already have done, or are in the process of doing, but there may be others that you had not considered. We are being told that we are in “unprecedented territory.” While that is the case, if we stay focused on the facts and data, listen to the guidance of the experts and our leaders, plan ahead and most importantly work together.

Information Technology

1. Hold VPN training workshops for workforce remote connectivity.
2. Distribute user guides to staff to refresh awareness of tools and technology and how to access them.
3. Stress test the network and systems by having all personnel work from home on a specific business day to determine the adequacy of existing capacity, response time, etc.; alert cloud service providers.
4. Disseminate to staff the IT contact “who to call” list for assistance, including off hours coverage in the event an employee’s home Internet service is slow and they work at night or over the weekend.
5. Confirm the network location of vital records and document files, such as employee and vendor lists, contracts, facility blueprints and leases; consider digitizing important documents so they are accessible.

Facilities

6. Place hand sanitizers in common areas, conference rooms, rest rooms, water fountains, kitchens, fax machines and copiers; encourage wiping down the area after every use and have extra wipes on-hand.
7. Isolate individuals who seem sick (or may have been exposed to an ill family member residing in the same household); restrict access to that office/area until the desk, phone, and cabinets can be properly disinfected. (Healthcare professionals have warned that a person can be asymptomatic for 14 days.)
8. Split the staff into multiple physical locations to minimize the chance of spread if somebody is infected. Bear in mind the 6’ “social distancing” metric.
9. Leverage web-based conferencing to limit on-premises visitors and face-to-face meetings.
10. Take inventory of critical supplies and identify alternate vendors if the primary ones are closed or short of stock; determine what standby agreements have to be in place to do business with them.
11. Have a supply of personal protection equipment available, such as N-95 masks.

12. Prepare to enforce office closures; pre-identify alternate work sites that allow for social distancing.
13. Defer non-critical renovation and repairs performed by outside contractors in areas where staff work.

General

14. Consider 14 days of self-isolation at home after an overseas trip and before returning to the office.
15. Designate who to call for a health emergency/question (e.g., State or County DOH, 911, local hospital).
16. Discourage in-person meetings with 10+ attendees.
17. Restrict all non-essential travel by air or train, including conferences.
18. Determine how to communicate to employees – including those who may not have computers or cell phones – to keep them aware of building closings, health and safety measures, who to contact, etc.
19. Assign responsibility for notifying the Board and other stakeholders, customers, the media, visitors and residents, NYS and NYC agencies, key suppliers and insurance carriers of the situation and status affecting the respective group or entity.
20. Consider overtime and the use of temporary staff in case of higher rates of absence due to employee illness, inability to safely travel to work, school closings, etc.; address collective bargaining provisions.
21. Ensure management understands the order of succession and delegation of authority if certain executives or Board members are unavailable for an extended period.
22. Verify that the employee roster is current and complete and includes work sites and shifts, home and email addresses, home and cell phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc.
23. Revisit Human Resource policies and the granting of exceptions (e.g., permission to work from home, use accrued sick days or personal time off or go negative).
24. Project at least 90-day financial requirements, anticipated delays in revenue and impact, meeting payroll and other financial obligations, etc.
25. Revisit cash management practices, lines of credit, ability to access online banking, payroll, benefit and pension systems, substituting wires instead of generating checks or handling cash, etc.
26. Contact your key service providers to understand their action plan.
27. Develop a task force to monitor the COVID-19 situation on a daily basis from CDC and WHO websites, governmental directives and local health department guidance.

Contact Us

If you have questions or need assistance with your organization's preparation and response to this viral pandemic, you can reach out to Larry Baye, Risk Advisory Principal (lbye@pkfod.com) or Mark Bednarz, Risk Advisory Partner (mbednarz@pkfod.com) who will be pleased to assist you.

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