

COVID-19

COVID-19 continues to spread around the world. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel and organizations should start planning the “return to normal.”

The following guidelines build on the ones already published.

Coordination

- Ensure you and your teams get appropriate rest;
- Keep a record of developments and actions;
- Identify trigger points and a timeline to resume operations, including guidance from authorities;
- Build a plan of action to resume operations;
- Perform a debrief with key players and produce a post-mortem report;
- Ensure that identified actions are implemented and that response plans are adjusted and ready for a next wave.

Business Continuity

- Determine, if activities have been stopped, in which order and within which timeframe they must be resumed;
- If you have to return to the office, establish in which order it must be accomplished and whether these actions should be staggered;
- For each activity, evaluate if workload will increase when resuming normal operations, organize how the backlog will be cleared and determine if additional resources are required;
- Contact your key suppliers to validate their resumption plan and speed of operations to assess the impacts on your supply chain;
- Demobilize recovery site(s), review information security protocols and determine if remote accesses will be withdrawn (ability to work from home).

Building and Assets

- Establish what work area adjustments are required to respect social distancing and hygiene requirements;
- Assess if buildings are ready for reoccupation after low occupancy from a health and safety perspective (e.g.: ventilation, cleaning);
- Determine the policy regarding equipment that employees were allowed to bring home and confirm on-premise availability;
- Establish if visitors will be allowed;
- Communicate protocols that remain in place regarding cleaning, isolation and resending employees with symptoms home.

Operational Resilience and Finance

- Consider how the “new normal” can allow you to differentiate yourself from your competitors;
- Examine possible opportunities resulting from your new operational reality, including further integration of remote work and digitalization;
- Analyze financial impacts, record all expenses incurred, perform forecasts and ensure sufficient cash flow is available;
- Claim financial relief you may get from governments;
- Process any insurance claim, if applicable.

Human Resources and Communications

- Determine what percentage of staff is ready to perform their normal business functions (i.e. healthy vs sick, available to work vs taking care of loved ones or appointed to other duties);
- Review HR policies regarding employees who have had extra work due to the situation and offer psychological support;
- Consider how to recreate “esprit de corps” if employees have been temporarily laid off;
- Plan recruitment if employees do not return after being laid off;
- Inform all your stakeholders of your resumption plan;
- Communicate appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures;
- Maintain quarantine protocols in case of symptoms.

Corporate Travel Policy

- Consider allowing visits to clients/partners and clarify protocols;
- Determine criteria to permit travel.

Resilient businesses are characterized by three aspects:

1. They are pragmatic, face reality and do not fall victim to excessive optimism;
2. They possess strong value systems that infuse an environment with meaning and offer ways to interpret and shape events;
3. They are resourceful and know how to use their strengths to develop new solutions to the unusual situations they encounter.

Coutu L.D., “How resilience works,” *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 80, no. 5, 2002, p. 46-55.

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