

# A Pandemic Business Checklist

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- **First, don't panic.** Calm, cool, collective thoughts; this checklist will help. Read it completely before taking action, then act, DON'T over think. Communication is one area that needs to occur quickly in any panic situation.
- **Don't argue with facts.** The fact of a pandemic is fact, not hearsay. This means that yes, other factors make this situation seem stupid or silly. The fact is the news, the politicians, even local and global leaders will do things that don't make logical sense, yet they still do what they do, likely to make the matters worse, not better. The situation will change, the rules will change, learn the new rules and play your business game based on the new rules.
- **Put your personal care first.** Be sure you are healthy; physically, mentally, and financially. This is critical as you are the driver of your bus. You can't help others if you are challenged in these areas. This is a very big area and without minimizing the importance be sure this is done before working on the other items.
- **Understand your supply chain.** You have a full supply chain, from acquisition to distribution to consider, let's start with distribution.
- **Does your distribution model need to be changed?** With this pandemic or other supply chain issues you might need to change the way you distribute (or sell or deliver)? Do you need to deliver the product/service in a different model? Will your customer buy the product the same way? Don't wait for the customer to find alternative sources. By the way, don't try to argue with the logic of the situation – if the situation is global panic or global recession, you won't win the argument regardless of irrationality.
- **Getting your product/inventory.** Do you have to find product someplace different than your prior sources? In many situations the primary source for product or inventory no longer can provide the quantity or timely delivery. This may be an opportunity to make a change that was already needed.

- **Operationally what is the weakest link?** If you step back (and up to 30,000 feet), look at your entire operation, where is the greatest point of single failure? For some it will be sales, others it is creating the widget (product or service), and others it is getting the team to do the work. Can technology or another solution eliminate or minimize this greatest single point of failure?
- **Finance challenge or opportunity?** In some cases, you may have the ability to leverage debt at a lower cost, meaning this pandemic could be very beneficial. Re-financing debt at a lower cost is a frequent opportunity that can be a huge benefit. A decrease in cash flow that comes from slow payments (higher accounts receivable) might mean a greater use of borrowed capital. A disaster/pandemic or other type of “emergency” as defined by local or national governments frequently frees up large amounts of cash to keep economies stable. Whether a hurricane, tornado, floods, fires, or a pandemic, look for finance to be an opportunity that occurs rarely yet is a clear opportunity if you are prepared.”
- **Your team’s morale is crucial!** Given the situation is likely “dire” in the eyes of the news media, communicating your business changes to the team becomes critical. Without communication the F.U.D. Factor kicks in (fear, uncertainty, and doubt), which means panic can escalate. In this case, no news from the leadership is news itself – not good news either.
- **You had better keep selling, and you better keep marketing.** People will still buy product and services. There will be taxes due, and restaurants open, and travel happening. Those who market and sell better than their competition will be the winner long term. This is an opportunity to take customers from the competition. You might want to change your marketing messaging to help customers continue to do business with you. You might want to help your customers understand now is even a great opportunity to do business with you. Are there opportunities due to the situation that allow you to increase your marketing and sales efforts? Look for the silver lining – I suspect there are several!

*This article is meant to be a simple checklist to review and consider during times of challenges, specifically for the Covid19 Pandemic which is affecting global operations in 2020. The document is not all-inclusive with many areas of business not addressed. Additional discussions should occur with all areas of a business including human resources regarding the actual situation occurring in your business and with your team.*

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