

BROAD OVERVIEW

As Governors begin to ease restrictions on the economy, businesses are going to have to decide when and how they are going to reopen. Most health experts agree COVID-19 is unlikely to be a short-term problem, and as there is no vaccine, the signal to reopen may be unclear. Businesses will have to deal with this uncertainty by managing what will most likely be new regulations, ongoing management and phased stages of opening.

It is important that businesses not only understand the current regulations from local and state agencies, but, more importantly, understand their company, their employees, and their customers. Businesses will need to think strategically about how to re-open, as opposed to just simply opening their doors and resuming regular business.

If you have been following our previous toolkits, you have had the chance to strategize about your business's future. We have been encouraging businesses to look at cash flow ([Crisis Toolkit](#)), strategic planning ([Hibernation Toolkit](#)), and tools for resiliency ([Resiliency Guide](#)). We hope that all of this planning has helped you as you start to reopen during this new normal. If you have not been using these tools, I encourage you to download them. Our goal with this toolkit is to build on those previous published.

As you look to reboot your business you should both look at what you are required to do (state, local, and federal regulations) and what will make your business a success. In the next section, we will discuss how and where you can find the regulations and guidelines for your state and local municipalities, as well as the CDC, OSHA and US Chamber resources. Of course, your local economic development organization is here to help you navigate it all!

Again, refer to our Crisis and Hibernation toolkits that can help you determine what strategies will work for your business. Planning, marketing, and successful implementation is essential, since we expect to be dealing with an uncertain economy over at least the next 18 months. Creating and implementing a strategy that supports your business goals allows you to start taking control again. Governor Whitmer's Executive Order 2020-59 now allows [retail establishments](#) to provide [curbside pickup and delivery](#). In addition to the actions, you can take to prepare for a full reopening, consider adding these services as part of your ramp up strategy.

As you begin your preparation to reopen your business, think of it in terms [The Safe Six](#) by Cushman and Wakefield. Engage your team and ask them to be accountable for action steps required to restart. [Here](#) is a checklist that can be updated to meet your individual needs

REGULATORY

What is required to reopen and to stay on top of changes?

When seeking to understand state, local, and federal regulations it is important to use reliable sources. This will help you respond to changing regulation and avoid misinformation. Since we are all short on time and energy here are a few strategies for keeping informed:

- Follow agency Facebook pages based on your industry
- Assign an employee to check your sources daily

It can be tempting to avoid health officials; however, those agencies can help you create an environment where employees and customers feel safe and want to patronize your business. Check if your area is doing, or is willing to set up, a “Seal of Approval” system for businesses who comply with health and safety protocol.

News and information is coming fast and changing. It is essential to keep up to date and have a plan to respond to changes in guidance and regulations. You cannot plan for everything, but the more you plan, the better able you will be to adapt to what comes next.

- Regulatory agencies within the state/local region:
 - [State of Michigan](#)
 - [Health Department](#)
 - [County of Dickinson](#)
- Guidance in Reopening Michigan:
 - [CDC Guidelines](#)
 - [Executive Order 2020-59](#)
 - [OSHA](#)

INSTILL SAFETY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

These are difficult and scary times for all of us and phasing in the restart of your business is no different. We do know that the health and safety of you, your employees and customers are a top priority and while following the guidelines and regulations is necessary, you need to instill confidence that your business is a safe environment to all that enter.

As we think about getting back to work, consider what safety controls need to be implemented to protect employees and customers. [OSHA](#) has guidelines on preparing workplaces for COVID-19, and it is a good starting point.

From an administrative standpoint, what policies need to be put in place to minimize exposure to COVID-19? Examples might include reminding sick workers to stay at home. Establishing shifts to reduce the total number of employees in your facility at any time to ensure employees can maintain social distancing standards, providing information regarding use and care of PPE, having customers and employees answer questionnaires regarding whether they have traveled or have a fever.

It is important to clearly communicate your safety requirements, protocols and expectations to your staff to ensure everyone stays safe and prevents the spread of COVID-19. This can be done by regular employee trainings and updates. Customer guidelines should be shared using appropriate signage.

On the next page, we have listed several action steps you can take now to prepare to reopen in the near future. Securing the necessary supplies should be a priority as they will be in high demand.

Prepping your workspace:

Environmental cleaning

- Deep cleaning should be done prior to reopening
- Those who are cleaning should:
 - Wear gloves
 - Clean surfaces with soap and water if dirty before disinfecting
 - Use EPA-registered household disinfectant, diluted bleach, or alcohol solutions
- Follow [CDC guidelines](#) for detailed information

Safety and Hygiene

- Provide hand sanitization for employees and customers
- Provide required PPE equipment in accordance with your state and local regulations
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, phones, desks, keypads) can be wiped down by employees before each use; provide no-touch trash bins
- Face coverings* should be worn by employees and patrons in accordance with CDC's recommendations, especially when difficult to maintain 6-foot distance
 - Click [here](#) for what kind of mask is recommended, the proper way to wear them and what fabrics to use
- Actively encourage employees to stay home if sick
- Follow social distancing guidelines
 - In establishments where customers wait in a line, non-household customers should remain physically distanced.
 - Does it make sense to install physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards, do you need to install a drive-through window, or increase ventilation?
- Discourage workers from sharing resources or other work tools and equipment, when possible
- Encourage customers to call for a reservation or appointment, consider using an online wait listing application
- Revisit your business operations to minimize external touchpoints

Signage

- Provide signage at each public entrance to inform all employees and customers that they should:
 - Avoid entering if they have a cough, fever, or feel generally unwell
 - Maintain a minimum of 6 foot distance
 - Sneeze/cough into a cloth or tissue
 - Do not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact
- Face coverings* should be worn by employees and patrons in accordance with CDC's recommendations, especially when difficult to maintain 6-foot distance. Click [here](#) for what kind of mask is recommended, the proper way to wear them and what fabrics to use

* CDC is advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.

- Sample signage can be found here:
 - [Lakeshore Advantage](#)
 - [SBAM](#)

Prepare Your Workspace

- Cubicles should have dividers when people are working in 3 feet of one another
- Avoid face to face desk layouts
- Meeting rooms should be organized to hold no more than 10 chairs with the appropriate spacing and 10 employees at a time. Sitting or standing positions should not exceed the minimum distance required
- Arrange meetings over two or three shifts if needed to reduce the number of people in the office at any given point in time
- Consider using Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams or other virtual meeting apps
- Minimize use of paper documents that need to be shared
- Consider [self-screening](#) of employees and customers/patients
Please note: this is a general workplace-screening format and may not meet requirements of specific industries such as healthcare and food service
- Mark off six-feet of space
- Use rope and stanchions to set up a queue
- Create a system for one-way pedestrian traffic patterns
- Consider using plexiglass barriers where applicable

Prepare for Cashless Transactions

If your business is in retail, food service, or other industries that require a product or service charge, you might want to think about how you can accept completely cashless payments.

- Apple Pay
- Paying online
- Paperless receipts
- Ability to have customers swipe/insert their own card

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

As businesses make the decision to open, the COVID ecosystem will shape marketing. This will provide challenges and opportunities. Each business is unique and will function differently within this ecosystem. A few may be able to continue in a similar vein as they had before. Others may need to completely rebrand themselves. Here is a webinar's [slide deck](#) recorded at the beginning of the crisis. Many of the same tools and lessons apply, including questions businesses should ask as they assess marketing.

This crisis has forced many businesses to communicate more openly and directly with their customers. Hopefully, this has caused you to review your marketing. If not, now is a good time, since you are will likely need to change your strategy.

Focus on your core business and remember you are trying to solve a customer-facing problem. (If customer-facing is a new term to you, like it was to me, consult our [Hibernation Toolkit](#)).

Think about your customer with the following mindset:

- What makes your business particularly valuable during COVID-19?
 - Focus on the positive and what makes you great
 - How do you shine in the time of COVID-19?
- How to draw customers back in
 - Focus on your core strengths
 - What has the crisis helped you learn about your business and customers?
- Promotional ideas
 - What have people been missing? What appeals to customers now that can be safely done?
 - Can you provide something unique? Can you collaborate with another business and package an idea?
- What have you learned during this crisis?
 - Keep blend of services including delivery, curbside, etc.
 - How were you able to engage more during the crisis and how can you keep that going?
 - Collaborate with other businesses and associations
- Who are your existing customers? Who could they be?
- Where are your existing customers? Where could they be?
- What are the existing problems and potential new problems consumers are facing?
 - Having kids full time and home-schooling
 - What is the problem and do you have a solution?
- Innovation Equation: Problem + Solution = Opportunity
Example: Hotel with a campground...now becomes a campground with a hotel.
New customer, new source of revenue.

Check out [Corona Virus Battleplan- Marketing through the Crisis](#)

HUMAN RESOURCES/MANAGEMENT

As companies and states begin to open up, the COVID-19 emergency will continue affecting the work and personal lives of Michiganders throughout our state. For Baraga County, our [COVID-19 Resources](#) webpage is being regularly updated to share information. Please bookmark this page and check back often.

Employees and customers will have very different ways of dealing with the changing regulations. Remember to be aware of the differences. Some things to keep in mind.

- Employees who feel vulnerable need to be and feel safe to be productive
- Employees need to understand the “why” for the regulations
 - Remember everyone is listening to different sources and may have different views about the seriousness of the virus and their own health risk
 - Make it about the value of the community and staying productive

- Encourage empathy from everyone
- Everyone is dealing with more than usual so encourage kindness
- As you bring back employees make sure to spend time onboarding
- Train staff to comply with regulations (see Section on *Prepping Your Workspace* above)
 - Depending on company size, it may be wise to have a person or committee to regulate this
 - Make sure to spend extra time and energy on education and training it will pay off in the long run
- Regulations continue to change so make sure you keep up on these and educate your employees
 - The Michigan Department of Labor is closely following the changing dynamics and policies at the state and federal level. The link to our [State of Michigan Resources](#) will be regularly updated to share updated information. Please bookmark this page and check back often.

You will likely have different staffing needs and may need to change how your organization is structured. This can be a good time to take note of who is stepping up and reward them. Take note of who may be struggling and provide them additional training or reassignment.

- Make sure you are following employment requirements in Michigan, and within the letter of the [new labor laws under the CARES Act](#).

FINANCIAL/REPORTING

I am guessing that 2020 has not started out the way your budget planned for? What an understatement! Perhaps you have taken on additional debt in the form of loans or grants. Maybe you have deferred tax payments or are considering a tax credit. No matter what has transpired, now is the time to revisit and revise.

Review your business plan and make adjustments

- Have you cut expenses?
- What changes have you seen in revenue?
- Did you establish a new product or service line?
- Based on reopening requirements, how will your monthly sales figures change?

Manage loan/grant requirements

- Review your loan or grant documents for reporting requirements
- Make sure to follow requirements for any loan forgiveness provisions

Call upon your BAIL team (Banker, Accountant, Insurance provider, Lawyer) for assistance

Monitor your financials closely and make adjustments as needed to stay on track

Now is not the time to “go it alone”. Leverage the support of others, including your local economic development organization, and do not be afraid to ask for help.

INDUSTRY SPECIFICS

[Real Estate](#)

[Schools, Universities, and Childcare](#)

[Employers](#)

[Restaurants and Hotels](#)

[Farmer's Markets](#)

[Long-term Care Facilities](#)

[Medical Professionals, Dental and Pharmacy](#)

[Nursing, Home Health, Hospice, Dialysis Care](#)

[Emergency Medical Services](#)

ADDITIONAL LINKS AND RESOURCES

[Corona Virus Battle plan- Marketing through the Crisis](#)

[Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center- Webinar](#)

[OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)

[MAGNA Smart Start Playbook](#)

[LEAR Safe Work Playbook](#)

[Ten Steps All Workplaces Can Take to Reduce Risk of Exposure to Coronavirus](#)

[Employee Rights](#)

[Recovery Readiness: A How-To Guide for Reopening Your Workplace](#)

[Small Business Owner's Guide to Getting Back to Work Safely](#)

- Be vigilant about things changing as this is a fluid situation. Check out the [CDC](#), [OSHA](#) and [Health Department](#) websites that will be updated regularly.

* Disclaimer:

The document is made available to you for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal, financial, safety, or medical advice. To obtain the most current guidelines for health and safety related to COVID-19, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control, the Federal Government, and your state and local authorities.

Share Great Ideas

If you have implemented a great idea that is working for your business, or heard of one, please share it with us so we can spread the concept to other businesses in the Upper Peninsula.

If you need help applying them to your business or are looking for other generalized business help, please contact Lois Ellis at lois.ellis@daeda.org or 906.360.4653.

