Grant Thornton

COVID-19 business checklist

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The questions in this checklist are designed to help businesses develop their response plan for COVID-19. This type of planning is critical and often doesn't feel urgent until it is.

If don't have one already, this checklist can help you start to build a disaster response plan for your organisation to use now and in the future. Please contact us to further discuss how we can help with your organisation's specific requirements.

This checklist is not intended to be exhaustive or to replace official advice provided by the Australian Government.

Our COVID-19 microsite details available government support for affected businesses as well as practical advice and links to World Health Organisation, and State and Federal Government sites for key updates.

Supply chain

	Are your suppliers impacted by supply chain or manufacturing disruption caused by COVID–19, either directly or indirectly?
	How dependent is your business on these suppliers? Is there an alternative supplier with product available?
	Have you checked your contractual obligations with your suppliers? Are you required to purchase certain quantities? Do you have exemption clauses for instances such as this?
	Have you communicated with your suppliers about how COVID–19 will impact your operations and how you expect any issues to be managed?
	Do your contracts explore the possibility of suppliers undertaking a forced closure?
	Do you have contingency plans in place if your supplier stops operations? Are there local or regional alternatives?
	Do you prepay your suppliers, and is there an ability to renegotiate terms?
	Have you considered the levels of stock you are buying? Is your stock perishable? Can you buy in bulk?

Customers

	Are your customers aware of the origin of your goods and/or the potential impact disruption caused by COVID-19 may have on your product or service availability?
	Do you rely on a physical retail space for sales, and what proportion of sales require direct customer contact?
	Can you tailor your business to meet the needs of a remote customer? Is this an opportunity to grow?
	Are your customers directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19 disruption? How will this impact their buying pattern?
	Are you proactively communicating with clients to understand and manage their expectations?
	Have you checked your contractual obligations with your customers?
	Could your debtor's terms be shortened or altered to better manage your cash flows?
	Are you dependent on a limited number of customers? What are the consequences if they shut down?
	Can you mitigate a downturn in spending with strategic advertising campaigns?
	Can you provide additional reassurance over supply compared to your competitors?

Staff

- Have you enacted basic sanitation procedures such as hand and respiratory hygiene information at the entrance to your workplace, and in highly visible internal work areas? Does this information include instructions about self-quarantine if a team member is unwell?
- Has any staff communication about quarantine expectations been distributed? Does this information include criteria, duration and return to work procedures?
- Do your team members know how you will manage different scenarios during their time off in quarantine? For example, when they are sick, not sick but are not able to work, able to work from home?
- What is your current staff situation in terms of levels of resource and capability? Do you have a plan in place to maintain operations if a portion of the staff are quarantined – either self-imposed or mandatory?
- Are you monitoring the Department of Health website for updates, and are you sharing relevant information with your staff?
- If your staff are required to travel, can these interactions be managed through alternative means such as video-conferencing?
- Are you currently monitoring your employees' leave balances? What is your ability to fund extended leave periods?
- Have you checked your contractual obligations with your staff against your organisation's leave policy? Have you considered potential and temporary changes to these policies?
- If key staff and/or contractors become ill, will this have a major impact on your operations? Is there a succession plan in place for these roles? For example, this could include handover instructions, system/process training required in advance, etc.
- If your business can operate remotely, are there processes and procedures in place to ensure quality is maintained and operations can continue?
- Are there any roles you have identified that cannot be performed remotely? Have you considered any health & safety implications of working remotely; for example, the availability of IT equipment, suitable home office space etc.
- Have you drafted a communication plan for staff, clients, suppliers and other key stakeholders in the event of a mandatory closedown?

Technology

- Has your organisation deployed technology to support remote working?
- Do your staff have the hardware and software required to achieve this?
- Does your network, hardware and applications have appropriate security in place for remote working e.g. encryption, multi factor authentication?
- Can your IT infrastructure handle the increased number of remote connections if the majority of your organisation has to work remotely?
- Will the speed of your IT infrastructure provide a suitable work experience for your organisation?
- Have you considered the security implications of a flexible working environment?
- Will the speed of your IT infrastructure provide a suitable work experience for your organisation?
- Do you have a Business Continuity Plan and an Incident Response Plan? Are they up to date?
- How will your staff deal with IT or systems issues when working remotely? Do they have an updated communications plan and process to address this? How will your IT teams deliver on site support if it is required?
- Have you spoken to your outsourced IT vendors, managed service providers and other relevant third parties regarding their readiness and availability about the potential impact from COVID-19? How will your IT teams deliver on site support if it is required?

Governance

- What are your current messages to the business regarding their preparation, management and response to COVID-19?
- Do you have a contingency plan for those who may fall ill at your workplace?
- Who are the key people that can decide to continue operations?
- Are you documenting regular board meeting minutes regarding decisions, with evidence of decisions?
- Have there been changes in your organisation's risk profile? Have you reviewed your risk profile and developed an action plan to record, address, mitigate and manage the risk?
- What impact will the COVID-19 have on your insurance policies?
- Who else needs to be notified – who are the key stakeholders that are affected?

Financial

- Do you calculate projected cashflow regularly, and do you understand the cashflow requirements of your business on a weekly and monthly basis?
- Do you understand your working capital requirements – are you reviewing debtors, work in progress and creditors regularly?
- Have you calculated how long your business can survive a mandatory shutdown period?
- If you rely on regular funding during your normal course of operations, have you spoken to your bank about your situation and requirements?
- What are your obligations to the bank, specifically around debt covenants?
- Have you spoken to your insurance provider? Does your business interruption cover COVID-19 interruptions, and to what extent?
- Do you have back-up plans if your business partners shut down or are affected; specifically, what happens if your IT or payroll service can't operate normally?
- Do you understand the cost of continuing to operate with less staff/customers compared to the cost of completely shutting down for a period?

Regulatory

- Do you have an active channel for health authority information to be followed?
- Have you considered any potential tax relief by way of instalment arrangement relating to COVID-19?
- Who are the key people in your business aware of legislation? Are these processes and requirements documented?
- In terms of your key compliance staff, do you have a succession plan if one or the whole team become ill or is quarantined? What impact does this have on your regulated deliverables?
- Have you considered the ATO's offering to those affected by COVID-19? It is offering tax relief and income assistance to people affected by the downturn in business.

Need more information?

With specialists across business risk, business continuity, performance improvement, workforce, tax, compliance, supply chain and restructuring, we are here to help. This may be an assessment of your risk and cash flow, identifying alternative suppliers, or preparation for meetings with suppliers, banks or the ATO to access additional support or extensions.

Speak to the experts

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