ADVICE FOR ORGANISATIONS
BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING FOR COVID-19

Resilient Organisations has prepared this document for organisations to provide a structure for refreshing business continuity plans (BCPs) for COVID-19. If you require further assistance, please contact us.

Communication

Good communication is essential in all phases of an event, from risk reduction to recovery. We have put communications first as it is frequently overlooked as staff become focused on other aspects of operational delivery. Some communication will be organisation-wide, while some may be specific to parts of the organisation.

- What messages do we need to give to staff?
- What do we need to tell the public and customers?
- What do we need to communicate with suppliers and potential response and recovery partners?
- Do we have the systems in place to enable rapid communication? For example, do we have the necessary contact information for all staff and external partners readily available?

In thinking about communication, some basic components are:
- What has happened / is expected to happen?
- What you know or don't know?
- What you are doing?
- What do you want them to do?

Phase 1: Avoid or reduce impact

What do we know and what do we need to know about the virus and reducing risk? The Ministry of Health is a key source for guidance.

How do we reduce the impact on staff?
- Protective measures – surface cleaning, hand-washing, respiratory hygiene etc.
- Reducing exposure from travel, mass gatherings, etc.
- Dealing with staff illness - what are our 'stay-away' rules.
- Do we have staff who are more vulnerable? Are there extra measures we can take to keep those staff safe?
- What messages do we give to customers and how can we adjust our services to reduce risk of spreading the virus among customers and staff?

Phase 2: Business Continuity Planning

Critical processes

- What are our critical processes and how may these be affected?
- Who is needed to maintain these services? Who else could fill those roles if staff are absent?
- What other resources (physical, financial, or expertise) are needed and how may these be affected?
- What critical services may be affected due to suppliers, contractors or staff unavailability or the inability to supply critical components/spares etc. Are we adequately prepared for supply chain disruption?
- How might it affect demand for our services? Are there areas where demand may increase (such as Contact Centre?) or decrease? What are the financial implications of this?
- What else will impact on our ability to maintain services?

BC arrangements

- What are our planned business workarounds for the processes and impacts identified above? What is in our existing BCPs? What is missing and/or could be improved to respond better.
- Have we got the necessary components in place to put our BCPs into practice? For example, do all staff have the necessary access, equipment, and skills to work from home, if needed? Do we have suitable personal protection equipment (PPE) available for staff? Do we have or can we get stocks of critical spares? Have backup staff been trained and/or is there sufficient guidance on what to do? Do we have or can we obtain the financial resources we need to keep operating?
- How can we help staff work from home if schools are shut?
- At what point do we close or reduce some services?
- How could we adapt? Can staff be re-deployed from non-essential or less urgent services to high priority tasks? What training may they need to do this? Is this training necessary in advance?
- What other partners, internal or external, could help us (considering how they may also be affected)?
- What services will we rely on from other partners or contractors? What are their response plans? This may apply to a wide range of contractors or partners, internally and externally.

Recovery

- What is needed to aid the recovery or restoration of services?
- What is needed to support staff, especially if they have experienced the loss of someone close?
- What issues may come up for staff if they are returning to work?
- To what extent does the organisation need to adjust its services to support its staff and community to recover?

Final thought

Things rarely return to business as usual after a crisis. When thinking about response and recovery, keep in mind changing customer demands. Adaptability is a key part of resilience.

About Resilient Organisations

Resilient Organisations is a research and consulting group who combine business, engineering and social science backgrounds to create innovative solutions to risk and resilience problems as well as highlight opportunities inherent in challenge and crisis. We are based in New Zealand but have worked with clients, funders and collaborators in Australia, America, Canada, United Kingdom and Asia.

RESILIENT ORGANISATIONS

- Are world leading resilience specialists.
- Have been working with organisations on resilience issues for 14+ years.
- Can effectively integrate the technical and social/organisational aspects of resilience.
- Are skilled at building engagement – from Board level to operational teams.

Resilient ORGANISATIONS
www.resorgs.org.nz

Richard Ball
+64 (0)27 208 3532
richard.ball@resorgs.org.nz

Tracy Hatton
+64 (0)21 160 7707
tracy.hatton@resorgs.org.nz