

BROAD OVERVIEW

Whether it's a pandemic, an economic downturn or a personal crisis, sometimes your business needs to recalibrate. This could include hibernation and eventually restart of the business.

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 restart, as opposed to just simply opening their doors and resuming regular business as before.

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 these resources can assist you should the need arise. 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. Creating and implementing a strategy that supports your business goals allows you to start taking control again.

[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. Remember, what we have learned from our recent COVID crisis.

News and information comes 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 Baraga](#)
 - [OSHA](#)

INSTALL SAFETY AND CONFIDENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

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.

The Pandemic has kept us mindful of how important health and safety is. From an administrative standpoint, what policies need to be put in place to minimize exposure to health risks, 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, and developing remote work options.

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

On the following page, we have listed several action steps you can take now to prepare to reopen in the near future.

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
- Actively encourage employees to stay home if sick
- Follow social distancing guidelines
- Encourage customers to call for a reservation or appointment, consider using an online wait listing application
- Revisit your business operations to minimize external touchpoints
- Consider remote work options for employees.

Signage

- Provide signage at each public entrance to inform all employees and customers of any requirements.
- Face coverings should be worn by employees and patrons in accordance with CDC's recommendations based on your industry's requirements.
 - 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
 - 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

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 you restart, there will provide challenges and opportunities. Each business is unique and will function differently within this new 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.

Our recent 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?
 - Focus on the positive and what makes you great
 - How do you shine during this new normal?
- How to draw customers back in
 - Focus on your core strengths
 - What has the downturn helped you learn about your business and customers?
- Promotional ideas
 - What have people been missing? What appeals to customers now?
 - Can you provide something unique? Can you collaborate with another business and package an idea?
- What have you learned during your downturn or hibernation?
 - 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?
 - Remote work, school closures, lack of childcare.
 - 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.

HUMAN RESOURCES/MANAGEMENT

Some things to keep in mind regarding employees:

- 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
- 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

A crisis or downturn affects your budget. 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

You never need 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

[Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center- Webinar](#)

[MAGNA Smart Start Playbook](#)

[LEAR Safe Work Playbook](#)

[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.

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 Mary Myers at mary@baragacounty.org or 231.409.9065