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Best Practice: Reducing Business Risk from COVID-19/Coronavirus

List of countermeasures to reduce the impact of a pandemic on organisations

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“Health systems around the world are not ready!”

– Dr. Mike Ryan, Head of WHO Emergency Health Programme

About the Author

Lars Hilse works as an information security strategist for governments, and the private sector. For over two decades he was a member of a voluntary fire department, and acted as a battalion chief. During the course of his duty he was exposed to epidemic/pandemic trainings and methodologies.

About this Document

The risks of a pandemic are addressed in most responsible protocols in information security. This document is **a condensed list of countermeasures** to reduce the impact of a pandemic on an organisation all-together. It has been influenced by international best practice from a multitude of sources both practical, and theoretical.

Enabling Remote Work

Utmost priority is to prevent the virus from getting in **//** Amongst others, this can be achieved by complicating the spread in office spaces **//** All staff with remote work access need to stay clear of coworkers **//** Enabling a majority of staff to work remotely ASAP has highest priority

Establishing Crisis Management Teams

The crisis management team is responsible for activating/deactivating the pandemic protocol **//** They also oversee the correct execution of the protocol during until protocol deactivation, and return to normal operations **//** Members should be representatives from executive level, work-/health safety, purchase, IT, asset management, union reps

Determining Core Business and Key Personnel

Determination limitation of business processes **//** Define criteria to business reestablishment after pandemic **//** Which processes may under no circumstances be interrupted; what is necessary to achieve this **//** Define core processes, key personnel, infrastructure personnel **//** Personnel for social aspects; social obligations **//** Remote work > Which staff can work from home

Cooperations w/ Business Partners

Determining which products/services from partners are indispensable **//** Researching alternative providers of same/similar products/services **//** Determining which products/services the company has to provide to its clients **//** Agreements with contract staffers to temporarily replace infected workers

Determining Business Units which can temporarily be shut down

Certain business units, which are not (as) profitable can be shut down temporarily **//** The risk of contamination by a resource in these BU is proportionately higher than closing the business unit down temporarily **//** Staff, which thereby becomes available is then integrated into more critical business units

Staff Care

Appoint crisis manager > coordinates measures concerning staff // Staff has to receive health advice, and looked after // Key personnel is to be isolated, and receives special attention in care, and prevention // Instituting a communication service > relays information between remote workers, and the company // Motivation in particular of key personnel // Medical officer leads efforts like vaccination, enlist additional medical staff, re-enlisting retired personnel with medical training, etc.

Protection of the Business

Securing delivery/storage of critical resources **//** Factory/workplace security has to be upheld **//** Facility management has to be ensured **//** Ample supply of food, and safe drinking water **//** Ensuring trash collection, energy, functioning public transport and public health system **//** Assuming disruption in social life

Establishing Contact to Institutions outside of the Organisation

Energy suppliers, etc. **//** Establishing contacts to chambers of commerce **//** Creating a pandemic network w/ neighbouring businesses, the community, etc. to exchange information, collective procurement of supplies, etc.

Organising Care for Employees Abroad

Establishing contact with embassies/consulates **//** Premature recalling of employees abroad **//** Preparation for the pandemic in offices abroad **//** Organising backhaul of employees that have fallen ill, etc.

Planning and procurement of medical- and sanitary/hygienic materials

Calculation of necessary materials // Researching correct materials // Respirators/masks // Gloves // Goggles // Further personal protection gear // Cleaning and disinfecting materials // Medication (antivirals, etc.) // Vaccination plans // Determining how materials are distributed // Establishing hygiene plans // Hand hygiene protocol // Paper towels to clean nose // Thermometers to measure temperature // Negotiating cost transfer with health insurances et al. // Procurement of antivirals through pharmacy/manufacturer // Seek permission to store within organisation

Internal Information Policy

Development of a communication policy incl. crisis communication **//** When is the communication protocol activated **//** Role of the pandemic/crisis manager **//** Review possible multichannel delivery to employees to make information universally accessible **//** Pre-pandemic information delivery **//** Information policy during the pandemic, and after the pandemic is over **//** Educating staff about hygiene standards, and protocols **//** Information about medical treatment facilities, protocol when symptomatic, etc.

Preparatory Medical Planning

Determining a medical practitioner (medical lead) **//** Planning and tasking of the organisations medical service **//** Planning required personnel **//** Acquiring additional personnel **//** Staffing reviews **//** Staff training in pandemic, hygienic principles, own responsibilities **//** Pandemic trainings **//** Determining lock-out of infected staff **//** Creating protocol if staff shows symptoms at the workplace **//** Prevention protocol through antivirals

Maintaining Minimal Operations

Crisis manager activates emergency response plan > informs organisations leadership, and staff **//** Activation of external staff, and resources **//** Adjustment of production **//** Shift of production to other sites **//** Activation of remote work **//** Adjusting communication to employees **//** Reduce personal contact of staff **//** Closing of uncritical business units **//** Data backups **//** Allday security for all sites **//** Deactivation of unnecessary staff **//** Reactivation of former staff **//** Install staff pickup service to avoid public transport

Organisational Measures for Employees

Activation of key personnel **//** Supply of catering services, drinks, and food on site to avoid employees leaving site to eat **//** Supply enough personal protection gear **//** Advice on the correct usage of sanitary facilities **//** Continue use of air conditioning **//** Proper cleaning of the workplace **//** Personal hygiene training **//** Avoiding contact with other staff **//** Correct behaviour upon symptoms

External Information

Acquire continuous reports from government **//** Keep informed about therapeutica or vaccinations becoming available **//** Cooperate with pandemic network **//** Maintaining contact with customers **//** Acquire information about potential involvement into organisational sovereignty **//** Reporting infected staff.

Medical Measures

Limiting site access **//** Controlling movement of employees on site **//** Controlling personal meetings **//** Asking staff for their wellbeing upon arrival on site **//** If infection is suspected, lockout and sent to medical practitioner **//** Decontaminating everything infected staff has come into contact with **//** Secure usage of public places/interaction with customers **//** Separating entrance and exit **//** Provide staff with medication, and medical advice, personal hygiene advice, recommend vaccination (if available)

Measures for Staff Abroad/Relatives

Retaining contact to unplanned absentees, deactivated employees **//** Provide information about domestic protective measures and behaviour **//** Offer support to relatives of infected staff **//** Supporting next-of-kin upon death of staff **//** If relative infected > offer housing for staff **//** Limiting travel to infection hotspots **//** Provide information about the condition in the home country of staff

Returning to Normal Operations

When the pandemic is over the crisis management team will restore conventional operations in the organisation by rolling back all previously mentioned measures in reverse order.

Contact Information

If you have further questions, and/or need assistance in implementing measures for the safety of your organisation please reach out now.

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