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Threat Assessment and Disaster Behavioral Health Services

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COVID-19 | *Business / Leadership*

What You Need to Know Before Reopening

Developing a Strong Business Post-Crisis Plan

Wow, what happened? It took years to build your success if you are like most small business owners, and the COVID-19 pandemic felt like it hit overnight, leaving you with shuttered windows and locked doors. A recent survey showed 43% of America's small businesses shut down with an overall reduced employee count by 40%. However, you are still here, and now you need to take action. It's time to restrategize, reopen, and thrive in the post-pandemic business world. Deciding to reopen depends on your research - will there be a demand for your product, and will customers return. You may take advantage of a new need for your product line in the "new normal" landscape.

You, your customers, and employees will have individual reactions to the pandemic and beliefs about safety in the marketplace and work. You may have lost employees to other jobs and will need to consider recruitment and training. As a business owner, you might think you can manage all the work yourself, yet this may not be a good idea. Your unique talents as the leader are valuable for revitalizing your business plan. If you have found a sure prospect for reopening and the ability to work within health guidelines and edicts, your success will require some engineering, education, and training for your customers and your employees.

Engineering will include learning the new requirements for your workplace. You can get

these requirements or suggestions from your trade association, licensing bureau, chamber of commerce, state government health agency, or the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It is not a good plan to get information from the media - other than gaining direction to a source.

Your customers will have various beliefs about returning to your business. In a kind and caring way, post your safe and healthy workplace procedures on social media, e-mail campaigns, entrances, places of contact with employees, and critical points such as bathrooms and break areas. Take time to talk with customers listening to their concerns. Refer them to the information that you have made available, but by all means, avoid arguing yet be firm in adherence to your established safe practices and guidelines provided by regulatory requirements. While one bad online review can cost your business, positive comments about your concern for customer well-being will enhance your standing with customers.

You will need to check a few more boxes concerning your employees as you gear up for reopening. You may find it necessary to update the procedures in your human resources department. You may need to change functions that align with workplace regulations and safety suggestions. You, or your HR department, need to contact worksite and health insurance carriers to see if there are policy changes. Become familiar with available employee assistance programs (EAP) and behavioral health provisions in those programs to support your employees. The varied experiences that employees bring back to the workplace may help or hinder progress toward a "new normal" workplace. Another focal area is to have suicide prevention and threat assessment protocols in place. As you prepare to reopen your business, listen and respond with resources that will enhance your employees' overall confidence.

To address the subjects noted above will require training and consultation. One proven professional source is Bolante.NET. The experts and instructors at Bolante.NET specialize in customized training for your organization's unique needs.

Finally, leading a strong team produces strong business results.

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After gaining his doctorate at George Fox University, Lundblad's primary professional interest has been in diagnostic assessments. Since retiring from his private practice in Oregon, he has assisted in various disaster behavioral health efforts. This work has included instructing Psychological First Aid, conference and program planning, and working on research and grant initiatives at Bolante.NET.