IT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

GROUP PROJECT

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**RETAIL**

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**Introduction**

This document is intended to consolidate practical guidance that is available on how to manage business continuity of the retail sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. It addresses risks to both workers and the public. It draws from multiple sources available across the internet. This document also specifies requirements to implement, maintain, and improve a retailers’ ability to protect against, prepare for, respond to and recover from COVID-19 related disruptions if/when they arise.

**1. Physical Environment**

Employees should typically be supplied the following information.

**Signs and symptoms of COVID-19:**

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

* + - Cough,
    - Difficulty in breathing,
    - Fever (38.0°C [100.4° F] or greater using an oral thermometer). Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

**How COVID-19 is spread:**

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

* Infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs.
* It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching contaminated surfaces (e.g., doorknob) or shaking hands then touching own face).
* Cleaning routines and hygiene controls (including respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, handwashing and physical distancing).
* Use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and medical equipment (e.g., thermometers, disposable gloves, masks, and disinfectants) as relevant.
* **Restricted Movement Advice:**
  + Familiarising key staff with the COVID-19 plan.
  + The COVID-19 plan and procedures should: a. be specific regarding the immediate steps that are to be taken during a disruption; b. be flexible to respond to the changing internal and external conditions of a disruption; c. focus on the impact of incidents that potentially lead to disruption; d. be effective in minimizing the impact through the implementation of appropriate solutions; e. assign roles and responsibilities for tasks within them. Cross-training workers and establish covering arrangements to minimise disruptions.

**2. Limits on Minimum Spacing/Distancing**

Introduction of physical distancing measures should be implemented across all spaces within retail business types, including entrance of store, points of sale, shop floor, warehouse, delivery area etc.

**Each space should achieve the following:**

• keeping a distance of 2 metres between individuals.

• avoid making close contact with people (i.e., do not shake hands).

• reducing time spent in close proximity with others.

**3. Hardware and/or Software Requirements**

One of the best ways for small to medium sized businesses to survive during these strange times is to have their business operate in an online environment while their physical stores are closed. Since online shopping has become extremely popular in recent years, this is now thankfully much easier than in the past.

To operate your business from home you will need some hardware and software. The first bit of hardware you will need is a desktop of some kind whether that be a PC or a laptop. I would suggest that the business operator buys a powerful one that will provide some longevity, as we do not know how long this pandemic will last and this will be their base of operations for the foreseeable future. They will be answering emails, managing orders and taking video and audio calls from this machine.

Since this is geared towards small to medium sized businesses that will be moving online for the foreseeable future, I suggest that they use a software such as Shopify which is a cloud-based solution that will move their store online. This is a great all in one method for operating an online store that costs a monthly fee ranging from $29 a month, $79 a month and $299 a month. When you use a software like Shopify your website is hosted on their servers eliminating the need for you to go find and purchase a server. They offer simple design methods to make your business website look unique and popular payment methods such as Apple Pay, Google Pay and PayPal.

This method also offers simple methods of scalability whether you would like to scale your store up or down you just change your monthly subscription. You do not have to worry about and of the hosting it is all done for you. Another benefit of using Shopify is that security is already implemented for you and they are compliant with the highest security standards when it comes to processing card transactions which is level 1 PCI DSS.

**4. IT Technical Support & Training for Staff**

It is important for staff to know how to use the website in the event of incoming orders so that the needs of the customer can be tended to. There are different things that staff should be aware of such as verifying payment and having the right address and Eircode for the right products. It would be good so online orders can be managed. They should also be available to respond to customers in the event that they bring any of their concerns to the attention of the staff. For the customers' use, it's important that a website is not too complicated or too complex for use in regard to online orders.

**5. Risk Assessment**

1. Business Impact analysis and risk assessment is a key element in any business continuity plan, as well as in the management of COVID-19. Business analysis enables the retail store to assess the impact one or more COVID-19 cases would have on the supply of its products and services. This enables the retailer to prioritize the resumption of activities

**Notable Risks:**

1. Should an employer provide face masks/coverings, surgical masks or respirators?

1. Should the Health and Safety Authority be notified if an employee contracts COVID-19?
2. Advice to employers around Manual Handling Training.
3. Advice on Health Surveillance.
4. First Aid Recertification.
5. Advice on the use of Hand Sanitisers.
6. Can a business open/remain open?
7. Work related stress during COVID-19.
8. Temperature screening requirements for workplaces.
9. Close contacts in the workplace.
10. Contact tracing log requirements.
11. Procedures for the workplace if a worker is confirmed as COVID-19 positive.
12. Advice on cleaning and waste disposal in the workplace.
13. Travelling for essential business or work purposes.

Many big companies have already recognised the need to identify and manage the risks but how can small businesses do such a thing? Managers of retail stores have to significantly adjust the process of the business and to adapt their ways of working over different levels of lockdown. This can either be a permanent or temporary change for some small retail businesses. Small businesses cannot just focus on crisis management. They must be able to proactively identify and manage new risks and opportunities.

Retail outlets can re-evaluate their ‘red lines’ in how the process of sales can be carried out. After looking at the statistics they can then get an idea on how they can better improve their business processes due to COVID-19. Using this they may or may not perform a scenario analysis using their employees. This can be a great way to see how they can prevent risks from happening within the store. For example, is everyone allowed in the store? What square feet is the store? How many people can be in the store? Does this include or exclude the employees? All these questions must have an answer to them. Of course, a lot of factors have to be dealt with, but this also depends on what kind of retail store they are.

As mentioned above, small businesses should determine if reporting is frequent enough to support timely responses to changes in risks. Key risk indicators (KRI) and key control indicators (KCI) should be reviewed in light of the above assessments (processes, statistics, etc) to ensure they are providing relevant and timely information to their customers.

**6. Feasibility Analysis**

As COVID-19 has impacted the globe, small businesses across the world have been impacted tremendously by this outbreak. Retailers see a large demand for supplies such as essential goods, food, water, and other basic human necessities. This caused many small businesses to change the way they handle things and as a result people have to wait longer to get these ‘supplies’. As COVID-19 denatured the way us humans shop like now we must wear a mask before entering the store and we may or may not have to book or get our goods delivered to us.

People must now wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and the HSE have outlined the correct use of PPE. This is how we must operate in these circumstances as countries go into different levels of lockdown. So, how do we implement a way for people to adapt to these levels?

While you enter stores, you might realise that there are hand sanitizer dispensers to apply to your hands or wipe down anything you may be holding - this is to ensure that you are cleansed before entering the store and as you touch items and put it back.

Everyone must wear a mask before entering in any retail building, people must not make unnecessary trips (abide by your countries rules of distancing, currently in Ireland, you are not allowed to leave 5km away from your home) Whilst in store during a certain level of lockdown for example level 4 or 5 - you are not allowed to buy certain items in retail stores for example toys. Small businesses have tape over the section and if a person does pick it up, they are not allowed to sell this item. During the levels 1-3 for lockdown, clothing stores have closed their ‘Try On’ areas and say if you do try on a jacket, they monitor you so they can clean it afterwards using steam.

**Business Case**

**The Project**

* In the midst of a global pandemic, many businesses were forced to close due to COVID-19 restrictions and government guidelines (Only businesses classified as essential would be allowed to stay open).
* Our goal and aim with this project are to investigate the necessary requirements for a better, safer and more practical environment for a business to operate under all levels of covid-19 restrictions.

**The History**

* On the 12th of March 2020, it was announced that Ireland was to go into Lockdown for the foreseeable future until the COVID-19 virus could be controlled.
* Businesses had to close or put their staff working from home where possible.
* By June 8th, the government introduced a phase implementation system, by which bit by bit different businesses would be allowed to reopen.
* By October, businesses were open, but the number of cases began to increase.
* Decisions regarding lockdowns were different in each county.
* This resulted in a decision being made to put the entire country under a strict Level 5 lockdown in order to decrease the number of new cases.
* This lockdown is due to last until the 1st of December, so with the possible easing of restrictions or in the event of an extension of level 5 restrictions.

**Limitations**

* The number of staff and customers allowed on a premise at one time while also practicing good use of COVID restrictions including a minimum social distance of 2 meters and the constant use of face masks by everyone on the premises.
* Possible travel restrictions could prevent people from coming to a premise.
* A possible lack of resources to reduce the spread of infection (e.g., hand sanitizer,  face masks)

**Approach**

* In bullet points list what is needed to complete the project.
* Mandatory Testing for all staff to be on the premises
* A possible rotation system for staff to limit the number of people on the premises
* A practice of enforcing the use of face masks to be used by customers and staff on the premises.
* A cloud system where people can order products online and have the option to collect it in store or use a possible delivery service.

**Benefits**

* People will have the opportunity to come to work knowing that precautions are being taken to reduce the spread of infection.
* People can still get products that they might need and hopefully in a reasonable amount of time if they choose an online delivery service.

**A business can still operate while hopefully minimizing the spread of the virus and keeping everyone’s safety in mind while doing so. Diagram

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We Nathan Keogh, Richard Bermingham, Patrick O’Mahony, and Sabri Mert Halici certify that this material which we now submit for assessment, is entirely our own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent.

We understand that our project documentation may be stored in the library at CIT and may be referenced by others in the future.

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