

6 Phases to Guide Your COVID-19 Planning and Response



Businesses have had to adjust very quickly to the global health crisis. It's imperative to provide context to help successfully navigate these uncharted waters. This guide illustrates the different phases of needs and planning efforts during the COVID-19 crisis. Identifying which phase your business is currently in will help you develop guidelines and ongoing response efforts for your team and your customers.



■ **SMB** ■ **SMB Customers**

Phase 1: The Crisis Emerges

SMB: Prioritize your employee safety. Provide clear direction. Reduce panic. Communicate policies and plan for work from home (WFH). Establish a single source of truth and centralized information hub.

SMB Customers: Reduce panic, and ensure confidence in your support and service. Determine your customers' WFH needs, and challenges, and inform them how you can help. Shift to virtual events/meetings.

Phase 2: Employee Safety to Working from Home

SMB: Be informative and transparent with your team. Provide support with manager trainings. Develop resources on WFH security recommendations, productivity, ergonomics, and economic impacts on business.

SMB Customers: Visible leadership and forward-looking guidance is critical. Offer updated intelligence with tangible online resources and 1:1 consultations. Assist customers, and be a calming and guiding voice during this shift. Remind customers that this is temporary.

Phase 3: Work From Home to Low Tide

SMB: Take care of your team, and be empathetic to what they may be experiencing. Address human needs by providing mental health resources, grief counseling, and bereavement leave policies.

SMB Customers: Assess customers' financial impact. Do they need financial relief? Have they themselves experienced layoffs, furloughs, or reduced hours? Check in continuously and provide information on financial relief options such as government funding programs, bank loans, and more.

Phase 4: Clarity on Returning to Work

SMB: Prioritize employee safety. Determine if you will need to extend WFH beyond the government guidelines. Prepare to secure multiple working environments, ready new office policies on PTO, WFH, spending, etc. Set expectations now.

SMB Customers: Be a leader for your customers with guidelines and resources for getting back to work. Learn about potential restrictions they may be experiencing and utilize this to formulate a long term plan to serve their needs.

Phase 5: Return to Work

SMB: Be optimistic. State clearly all new policies on office safety, WFH, childcare, travel, and spending upon return. Be ready to pivot quickly to create new policies.

SMB Customers: Reassess product and service offerings added or removed during the WFH period. Evaluate existing purchase history and contracts to make sure they align with revised plans. Ensure you have ongoing open communication to address any questions and concerns as your customers transition back to work in the office.

Phase 6: Recovery/A New Normal

SMB: Assess what worked and what didn't, think about accelerated performance in the new norm, and focus on setting new goals. Re-evaluate the state of the business and begin to focus on 2021 planning. Are there ways to further diversify your business should a similar crisis arise in the future?

SMB Customers: Create "lessons learned" materials should another crisis emerge in the future. Evaluate which product and services were deemed essential during the WFH period and what you could you have done differently to better support your customers.



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