



COO Forum Members Share Response to COVID-19

Business Impact – Company Plans and Strategies

Peer support and learning from other Chief Operating Officers is at the forefront of everything we do at the Chief Operating Officer Business Forum® (COO Forum®). The COO Forum conducted a 90-minute *Special Coronavirus Remote Zoom Meeting* including COO Forum Members who shared what they were doing at their companies in response to COVID-19.

This is a fast-moving and uncertain time and I find it extremely worthwhile to share what many COOs and Second-in-Command Executives are working on and thinking about in this narrow area.

COO Forum members will continue the discussion in our private *COOeForum* powered by Mighty Networks to help one another to become more responsive and discuss issues they are facing in their geographic area.

As the CEO of the COO Forum, I welcome you to share this summary with anyone you believe would benefit from it. A PDF document is posted for download on our website www.cooforum.org.

It is with extreme gratitude to our member COOs and Chapter Directors for their support and contributions toward this important topic.

The COO Forum has been serving the Second-in-Command Executive since 2004 and is the largest professional development and peer-to-peer organization serving the Chief Operating Officer with 40 chapters globally.

Sincere regards,

Bill

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MEETING SUMMARY

CURRENT EFFORTS

What are you doing now in your workplace?

- Most following [CDC guidelines](#)
- Reinforcing that if sick, stay home
- Following procedures used during H1N1.
- Some companies using a 3-day medical release requirement for employees who get sick.
- Some companies are building rules in support of hourly employees.
- Implemented plan to provide hourly employees up to 30-day pay which will then be deducted from future earnings.
- Concern in San Francisco because it is a Port of Entry.
- Reaching out to contacts around the globe for input on status there.
- Ready to be nimble to respond quickly to react.
- Some clients requesting focus on different work due to delays in other work areas impacted by supply or labor.

Workplace hygiene

- Deep cleaning of offices, common spaces and providing disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer and tissues.
- Sick employees should stay home. Not limited to Coronavirus, but any illness or if taking care of someone who is ill or if family members sick.
- Employees with compromised immune systems may self-quarantine.
- Employees asked to self-quarantine if they have traveled to affected areas.

Communicating to employees

- Communication is vital; requires balance without panic.
- Reinforce company plans with employees.
- Provide employees with documentation on what to do if they become sick.

Travel, tradeshow and meetings

- International travel has been reduced, if not cancelled in many companies.
- Allowing employees to decide if they want to travel.
- One company has stopped all travel.
- Large events are still going forward while others cancelled, so a mixed approach. Heightened concern overall.

- Contingency management team: collect all concerns and prepared communication plan, stating the obvious that if they or a family member is sick to stay home. About 95% of company works remotely and everyone tested to see that they could log into the system that they were prepared for a mandatory remote workforce.
- Lean on CDC guidelines regarding travel. Prohibiting business travel.
- Concern about how not attending trade shows will affect business.
- Working on contingency plans if trade show is cancelled.
- Employees who attend client meetings required to submit exposure risk questionnaire.

Remote workforce options and challenges

- Contingency plans for remote work and for the critical positions.
- Setting up employees to work remotely by providing needed equipment.
- Many are testing of remote work system now to insure it works so IT departments not hit with multiple issues.
- If remote work system is shut down, how will they communicate and who will correct it.
- Eat lunch separately, reduce size of meetings, lighten load on elevators.
- Companies with government contracts are having to renegotiate contracts that previously did not allow for remote work solutions.
- Rescheduling in-person meetings to phone calls, yet some clients still want face-to-face.

Manufacturing, supply chain delays and impact

- Supply chain delays with most companies.
- Manufacturing what they can now in preparation if their location is affected. Same approach that was done with tariff issues.
- China having great impact with supply chain delays.
- Balancing act with delays with products, pushouts of customers, or an increase in those products needed to fight the virus.
- Building ahead in manufacturing in the event your area becomes critical allowing to ride the wave a bit better.
- Receive products and materials from various sources; employees have concerns regarding how long the virus is viable on different surfaces.

Changes in employee lives and activities in contingency planning

- If schools closed for two-weeks and employee must take care of children, who will take over work for them.
- Looking at hiring subcontractors to assist if onsite employees are unable to work.
- Contingency plan if unable to produce documents at one office that they can be produced in another office location.
- Concerns with work that is time-sensitive and how to ensure it is done.
- Social distancing for employees that must be in the workplace
- Employees working on alternate days.

- Addressing clients concerns regarding business continuity.
- Increasing hourly staff's sick leave time and implementing wellness program.

Miscellaneous Remarks

- Netherlands has consolidated public broadcasting which helps eliminate confusion over what is happening and reduces anxiety.
- Working with clients on strategy on economic issues if people are not spending and companies cannot pay loans.
- Luxury travel business has lost 50-70% of business.
- Concerns in India has to do with the population density and availability of infrastructure.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

- Everyone looks to COO for answers.
- Calm in the storm. If COO is calm everyone else will be calm.
- COO needs to gather the right people and teams to monitor and execute.
- Ensure that Executive level is not a bottleneck.
- Up to COO to set tenor of how things get done.
- COO always the one to take the vision and make it reality.
- Execution on how to keep business going.
- Set standard performance.
- Deal with emotions.
- Test assumptions to make sure you have continuity.
- Balance and calm.
- Addressing making people feel better.
- COO is the quarterback who gets the right people to the table but needs to guide them because they do not see things the same way COO sees them.

IMPORTANT LINKS

- [CDC Guidelines](#)
- [Lead Your Business through Coronavirus Crisis](#)
- [COVID-19: Implications on Business](#)
- [COVID-19: Advice for the Public](#)
- [The Global Macroeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 Seven Scenarios](#)

FOR MORE SUPPORT

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