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May 20, 2020

Many businesses are looking to reopen now as the restrictions lift. It can be exciting and nerve-racking to reopen during a world pandemic and all the guidelines you must follow to ensure your people and customers are safe.

March 13, 2020 is when my journey began on guiding my organization of 115 through the pandemic. I would like to share my experience over the last 10 weeks in hopes to help others navigate the physical and mental safety of your organization.

Government regulations are changing daily therefore before implementing any of the below recommendations please be sure to check your Government websites and follow the direction of your local authorities.

### **Create a COVID Review Team:**

This is not a one man's show. You need to expand and include your top executive team or leaders with reviewing certain Government materials that reflect your decisions and messaging for your organization. Strategic communication is key. Responsibilities include:

- Meeting 1x or 2x a week to review weekly messaging,
- Creating a Contingency plan. What are the various levels of operations based on Government regulations,
- Creating a Policy that reflects our messaging and stance. Each province has its own guidelines on what to include. For BC: Methods on practicing good personal hygiene, Managing social interactions within organization, Forms of communication, Safety for our team, Basic transmission facts of virus and links to Government webpages for most up-to-date information.

### **Create a COVID Response Team:**

Again, you need to involve your organization with helping translate the message of the new normal. I have used our safety committee. Responsibilities include:

- Print out posters: [Government of Canada](#),
- Translate our messages,
- Provide feedback on the behaviors and actions of people. We use this feedback to help identify the weak areas of our messaging and focus on enhancing our policies or other material to close the gap.

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## **Communication + Transparency = Key**

Think about how you can get your urgent messages out to your entire organization. In this case we used email. Things were rapidly changing therefore we started a weekly email to our team. Do not forget to be transparent with your communications, be real. This email is reviewed by our review team before it is sent out and outlines:

- All emails have a standard agenda: What bodies of Government, local authorities we monitor and base our actions on, Current Actions, Government Resources, Our Resources, Your Responsibilities. Have all resources hyper linked in the email,
- We have our own resources online portal, where you can find any materials that we used and all our email updates, government posters/links, our policies etc. We have also created our own online questionnaire form where anyone from our organization can send us an anonymous question which we will respond to. We also have a physical wall dedicated in the organization for all updates,
- Increase awareness on mental health initiatives. A good practice is to always include a Government resources in your weekly email. Also guide your communications in a more positive tone.

## **Safety for our people**

- Customer Facility Response Policy: all external visitors must sign-in and answer COVID related health questions,
- Attendance Daily Record Policy: all employees are required to sign-in to ensure we know how many people are in one space,
- Cleaning and Disinfection Protocol: detailed cleaning procedures and who is responsible for certain areas. All cleaning products are kept in common areas,
- Homeowner Service Appointment Protocol: safety procedures during external work.

## **How to get all this done?**

Here are some helpful resources I have found:

1. Because Government messaging is changing frequently, I only watch the news 1-2 days before I write my email draft. Resources I look at: [Government of Canada](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control](#), [BC Response to COVID-19](#), [World Health Organization](#) .
2. Resources for creating your policies: [BC Restart Plan](#), [Canada COVID App](#), [Non Medical masks & sewing directions by Canada](#), [Cleaning and disinfecting BCDC](#).

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3. Mental Health Resources: [Tips for taking care of yourself](#), [Stress & Anxiety Management during COVID](#), [BC Here2Talk for Post Secondary Students](#), [Free online digital mental health program](#).

The best way to get through this is to have a reliable team and delegate your tasks. Research in smart ways and subscribe to email updates from Government bodies. Ask many questions because you are not only one thinking about them and most importantly share what you've learned in hopes it helps others feel more confident.

Feel free to reach out and ask questions or just chat about your journey. I have many more resources and links that I can share depending on what you are looking for.

Also, I'd like to take a moment to thank everyone going to work daily. Whether you are a medical care professional, front-line personnel, organizational leaders, and everyone in between, thank you for showing up daily and doing everything in your power to reduce the risk of transmission.

Take care and stay healthy,

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