

COVID-19 Action Plan for Business Owners

10 Recommendations for Protecting Your Business



March 23, 2020

At HBE, we are hearing from many of our business clients who are being confronted by complex issues they've never seen before due to COVID-19. As a small business, we are also facing many of the same challenges. However, in the past several weeks, we have learned that one positive outcome from this situation has been the opportunity we have all been given to learn from each other. With that in mind, we'd like to share the following 10 recommendations for protecting your business in the coming weeks.

10 Recommendations for Protecting Your Business

1. **Stay calm and don't panic.** Business owners and leaders must remain composed, in control, and make well thought-out decisions.
2. **Maintain and control your cash flow.** What changes can be made to limit expenses? Defer 2019 and first quarter 2020 estimated income tax payments to July 15. Take advantage of [tax credits](#) for employee sick leave or FMLA leave due to COVID-19.
3. **Stay connected to your team.** Create a plan that maximizes your ability to "stay in place" with your team until such time that you can reopen and begin recovering. This may include maximizing unemployment benefits, working from home, rotating partial work schedules, or paying out paid time off (earned, unearned, or advances). Keep lines of communication open with your employees.
4. **Talk to your lenders.** Ask if you are an "impacted business." As an impacted business, you may be eligible for SBA-backed loans (see below) or a period of interest only on your conventional loans. We expect the options to be expanding. Consider talking to your business lender about interest-only payments, lines of credit, or other options to increase access to short-term capital.
5. **Talk to your vendors about working together for short-term financing.**
6. **Stay in contact with your customers.** Find ways to keep them engaged with your business so that you are "top of mind" when your doors reopen. Use email campaigns, social media, your website, and updates on your exterior signage.
7. **Assess your long-term marketing plan.** Consider using this time as an opportunity to strengthen what you do to market your business. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, you will want to be more attractive than ever to your customers.
8. **Be aware of scams.** According to the FTC, scammers are taking advantage of the fears surrounding COVID-19. Make sure you are taking [steps to protect yourself and your business](#).
9. **If you aren't IN, be ON.** If you can't work IN your business, consider how you might work ON your business. Things to think about may include:
 - o **People.** Consider long-term changes in your staffing.

- **Process.** Consider implementing changes in how your business processes its product or service.
 - **Product.** Determine if you should add, delete, or change your products, services, or menu.
 - Make changes to your business model.
 - Implement a budget to improve your business once some normalcy returns.
 - Perform deferred maintenance on your facility.
 - Work on your marketing plan.
10. **Don't go it alone.** Consult your HBE advisor for help with important decisions or to act as a sounding board. Beyond tax planning and return preparation, our firm offers a wide array of specialized services to help our clients effectively navigate this time of uncertainty.

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans

Small businesses owners in Nebraska and several other states are now eligible to apply for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs). Any small business owner affected by COVID-19 since the beginning of January 2020 is eligible to apply. Although the application is straight-forward, it does require a high level of detail that some business owners may not have readily on-hand. If you are considering submitting an [EIDLs loan application](#), we strongly encourage you to contact your banker, attorney, or CPA for assistance.

For additional SBA business guidance and loan resources, please [click here](#).

We are Here to Help

While we have implemented workplace adjustments to align with recommendations for physical distancing, please know that our team continues to work hard for you every day and we stand ready to help. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything we can do to support you and your business during this unprecedented time.