



CORE
BUSINESS CONSULTANTS

6 Steps to Managing your Professional Services Firm through COVID-19

This checklist will help you and your practice management to better navigate the impacts of COVID-19 on your firm. Take this opportunity to review and recalibrate every aspect of your business.

STEP 1. Determine your business strategy

- Decide if your offices will stay open, if you can have staff work from home or use a combination of the two. Reduced office hours may also be an option.
- Split staff and directors into isolated teams to minimise disruptions, and the spread of the virus, in case a staff member contracts the virus and is unable to work.
- How can you pivot your business – create new products, change distribution channels?
- What IT systems do you need to ensure staff can efficiently access information and files without compromising security.

STEP 2. Stay up to date and seek professional advice

- You won't always have the expertise or the time to navigate these present changes. Work closely with your business consultant on changes and your needs to effect the change. Work with your financial adviser so you are aware of any government entitlements for your business and gauge your financial position regularly. Be across your productivity and finance reporting.
- Subscribe to a limited number of reputable sources such as Government websites www.australia.gov.au or www.ato.gov.au rather than rely on hearsay or social media. Your professional or business association, may also have updates.
- Register with the Tax Office for JobKeeper if you expect your turnover to decrease by more than 30%. Visit www.ato.gov.au

STEP 3. Be transparent and communicative with your staff and clients

- Be consultative and empathetic in your approach to staff. They are fearful too. You may not have all the answers but they'll appreciate knowing where they stand and what their employment future may hold.
- Schedule regular online meetings, phone calls with remote staff to continue productivity and look after your staff.
- Continue workplace social aspects online. Coffee catch-ups or Friday afternoon drinks via Zoom (or a similar platform) gives some normality in uncertain times.

STEP 4. Cover yourself

- Have correct hygiene and distancing rules in place if your offices remain open.
- Know what entitlements your staff are eligible for and any legislative changes affecting entitlements especially around stand downs and any terminations.

- Put policies and guidelines in place in the following areas to ensure work areas are safe and productive and that your business is protected.
 - sick leave and other leave – including the need for staff to NOT **come**^[CE1] into a work environment if they have symptoms or contact with someone with symptoms of COVID-19
 - working from home (including protecting company information/IT)
 - social media
 - mental health and wellbeing/employee assistance programs
- If you haven't got an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) make sure staff know they can talk to you or to helplines including Lifeline (131114).
- Take the time to look after your own physical and mental health. Spend time with immediate family and find your one way/activity to release tension and find balance. Diarise that activity.

STEP 5. Keep marketing

- Don't let your marketing lag even though you may feel it inappropriate in this current climate, or you don't have time. Keep your brand in front of your clients and potential clients.
- Your marketing content will require discretion and be sympathetic to the current crisis. Provide information and offers that can help your clients.
- Tell your clients what you are doing and how you are still serving them. Place signage on your physical workplace, post on social media and your website, add a message to your email signature and send a newsletter to your database.
- Educate your staff in handling stressed and emotional clients in certain circumstances and reassuring them accordingly.

STEP 6. Plan for 'normality' to return

- This may not mean going back to what you used to do pre-COVID-19. That paradigm of professional services firms may actually become a thing of the past, in part at least. A new mindset and ways of working and delivering services are emerging and you just may find it's a much-improved version of you and your business.
- Make sure you remain informed on what changes you need to make as restrictions are lifted. In that way you will be able to move before your competition and anticipate staff and client questions and issues.

Core Business Consultants is here to help

Core Business Consultants can assist your practice with:

- ✓ business strategy
- ✓ All HR needs but especially changes in legislation pertinent to COVID-19
- ✓ policy and procedure development
- ✓ operations review and change management
- ✓ temporary expertise to assist or cover administration or practice manager absences.

We are available after hours calls and offer a **free** initial consultation to new clients.

Call, email or message us now. Together, we will get through this!