



BUSINESS RESPONSE PLAN

Response planning is critical in adapting business operations to changing conditions in the business market and establishing a resilient business plan. These 4 steps are intended to assist you and your business through the current pandemic crisis.

1. Review

In reviewing the steps in the business response plan, consider how your business is impacted over the next 2-3 months. Complete a review of the expenses that are necessary to your business. Review opportunities to either remove, reduce or defer expenses. This is all about preserving cash flow. Some common examples include:

- Snow removal
- Vendors (software, POS systems etc.)
- Adjust monthly tax billing to yearly
- Utilities (SaskPower, SaskEnergy)
- Suppliers
- Garbage Removal

An additional operating expense that should be reviewed, if not already, is staffing. The Federal government has provided detailed information regarding supports for workers that have been laid off or have reduced workloads. While employment insurance is one option for laid off workers, other options for business include work sharing and wage subsidies. Additional information regarding these supports can be found here: [Federal Economic Response Plan](#)

2. Communicate

Business owners should be communicating with their landlords and lending institutions (if applicable). Understand the options that are available to you, and engage with your landlords and lending institutions with a plan. Here are some options for these conversations:

A. With your landlord:

- Rent Reduction: reducing a portion or all of applicable rent, operating expenses or both.
- Rent Deferral: deferring a portion of rent to a later date as a lump sum or across the term of the lease.
- Rent Abatement: forgiving a portion of the rent.
- Loan Conversion: rather than abating past due rent, a landlord may agree to convert the past due rent into a loan, payable over time. This would require additional financing measures such as a promissory note.
- Application of Deposit: if the landlord holds a deposit, this amount could be credited against current obligations.
- Subletting: bringing in a new tenant to help reduce or eliminate rent obligations.

B. With your lending institution:

Canada's major lending institutions are stepping up to help support small businesses, their clients. Most of them are offering to tailor approaches to their client's needs, including offering:

- Low to no interest business loans
- Deferrals on commercial mortgages
- Deferrals on payments on loans or credit cards
- Removal of interest on loan payments
- Increases to operating line of credit limits
- Waiving of credit card minimum payments
- Waived fees for new enrollments to cash management solutions

C. With your Accountant/Lawyer/Financial Advisor and other professionals that can provide advice.

Remember that these are only options. It is important that your business have a plan for the short and long term, and these discussions and the solutions that come out of them make up only a part of that plan.

3. Educate

Resources available for employees and businesses is changing daily. It is imperative that you stay up to date with what is available to you. Below are two links that provide a comprehensive listing of resources available for your business. Both sets of information are updated as new information is available:

Prairie Sky Chamber has a concise list of links for business: <https://www.prairieskychamber.ca/>

4. Adapt

The ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic is forcing businesses to adapt. There are examples throughout the community of businesses that are shifting their mindset and business models to reach their markets. Some examples of this include:

- **Renting out of equipment.** This option has become common among gym, fitness studios and recreational service providers.
- **Take-out/Delivery option.** While most common with restaurants, a variety of businesses in the retail sector are adopting take-out/delivery options.
- **Pickup/Delivery:** This option is more common with service-based businesses such as automotive shops. This includes a no interaction process where the business picks up the vehicle and drops it off.
- **Video streaming online.** Service providers who are unable to distance accordingly, have adopted online delivery methods to provide their customers with valuable content. Common examples of this include online fitness, cooking and education classes.
- **Gift Certificates.** If you haven't already instituted a gift card program, now is a great time to do so. Another option is to look at providing a "bonded" style gift certificate, that has an initial cost that increases once the gift certificate is redeemed. (i.e. \$75 today, for \$100 worth of product/service at a later date).
- **Drive Thru option:** Not just an option for restaurants. If you can maintain proper social distancing and even offer payment beforehand (online, over the phone) this is a quick and viable option.

If you're doing something a little different that is working well for your business then share it with us! Our group is committed to sharing positive stories of businesses that are adapting through the "Love what's Local" social media channels.

The Regional Business Task Force is a collaborative effort in between the Cities of Warman, Martensville and the Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce, in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, with representatives from local administration, public office and the business community.

