



PRACTICAL STEPS TO HELP BUSINESSES RECOVER AND LEARN FROM COVID-19

While organizations are concentrating on looking after their staff and responding to the current crisis, leaders need to look to the future and start planning for their recovery now. The timing of the recovery phase will be dictated by national governments, and organizations should be guided by the laws and regulations of the relevant jurisdictions in which they work.

This document was developed to provide a decision-making framework for senior executives as they consider how to both restart work and recover their organization's business from the COVID-19 crisis. It also advises leaders on how they should review and learn from the organization's performance during the crisis and prepare themselves best to manage future crises.

Advice is based on decades of extensive experience from the Constellis Crisis Response team. It has been structured with reference to the crisis management framework from the British Standard on Crisis Management (BS 11200:2014).

RECOVER

ADVICE FOR THE RECOVERY PHASE

The human dimension: Above all else, successful recovery will demand positive leadership. Managers should not underestimate the vital role of the human dimension in their recovery plans. They must convince their workers, partners, shareholders and the general public that they have a vision and a plan that will work, while also showing they understand the magnitude of the impact of the crisis on individuals and families. Managers will need to do more than manage – they will need to lead.

Decision-making: The situation is complex, with widely varying consequences across all sectors and with many unknowns. Leaders should discard unevidenced assumptions and search for facts, but be unafraid to make the best recovery decisions possible on limited information. Crucially, leaders should be willing to admit to uncertainty and be ready to change course according to the facts. Internal and external stakeholders will understand uncertainty in these circumstances. Over-confidence is unlikely to be convincing.

Communication: Communication is key in the recovery phase. The organization should simultaneously convey clear messages to different audiences – customers, employees, partners, shareholders and the general public – and stay well-tuned to feedback. Communications should display a sense of purpose combined with transparency and flexibility.

Crisis management advisers can be useful for organizations in the recovery phase of the crisis, providing an experienced and objective lens and challenging 'groupthink'.

FOUR KEY STEPS DURING THE RECOVERY PHASE

Executive leadership should use the time during recovery to:

1. Make an assessment of factors affecting how to recover and restart work. The organization should work on a number of scenarios for different possible outcomes. Leaders should be objective and unafraid to make stark decisions; a long, staggered disruption might require a complete re-imagining of the business model.
2. Establish a broad vision for recovery that is achievable, clear and positive, but allows for flexibility in the face of current uncertainty and changing circumstances.
3. Establish recovery teams and workstreams, reporting to the CEO or a Crisis Management Team (CMT), that cover important issues. Both technical and human issues should be addressed.
4. Develop, and when restrictions are lifted, execute a recovery plan coordinated by the CEO or nominated leader, adapting to circumstances as necessary. Leaders provide coordination and direction, based upon data and recommendations from the teams and workstreams.

Key factors during the recovery phase

Human	Technical	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition: A formal ceremony – e.g., in recognition of the hardship faced by staff and their families and of the invaluable service of emergency workers. • Support: Financial, counselling etc. – to individual staff and families particularly affected during the crisis. • Communication: An explanation of steps taken by senior management during the response to the crisis. • Future state: Clear and cogent explanation of vision and plan going forward. • Feedback: Ensure staff and partners are frequently and clearly kept informed, and ensure that their views are collected and taken into consideration by decision-makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational: Operational changes and new ways of working, such as more working from home. • Financial plans/projections: How will you finance recovery activities? • Supply chain issues: What is possible, where? • Technology/IT: Support in re-starting activity; move to new technology/IT solutions where appropriate. • Legal/regulatory: Alignment with changing legal/regulatory directives (potentially in different jurisdictions); contract issues. • Marketing and sales: What do clients want? How do you support them? • Human resources: Ensure retention of key staff in what might become a dynamic labour market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real estate/facilities: Support re-start. Are new/different facilities needed? • Insurance/risk management: Insurance coverage for losses sustained during crisis and re-considering coverage for future crises. • External communications: With customers, shareholders, media, professional bodies, governments and regulators.

Review and Learn

Planning and executing the recovery phase will take first priority. However, senior executives should keep the context in mind. COVID-19 is not the first pandemic (consider previous pandemics : SARS, MERS, H1N1) and it will not be the last. Other crises of differing scales will also occur, whether they are medical, economic, environmental, technical, social or political. Truly resilient organizations should evaluate their performance, identify and plug gaps, and learn from the experience in order to position themselves better to deal with future crises.

Organizations should start a structured review process within a month of the start of the recovery phase to ensure that vital memory is not lost. Ideally, this should be facilitated by an experienced crisis management adviser in order to ensure a robust, structured, and effective process.

Conclusion

Businesses need to be ready to move quickly into the recovery phase as soon as government policy allows. This requires executive leadership teams to begin preparations now.

Constellis can provide the tools you need to restart your business, such as disinfection and testing, as well as the expert guidance and advice needed to support your organization through the difficult months ahead. Our advisors can help you recover and learn from this major disruption event, providing a flexible, integrated approach to recovery and a practiced, objective lens that does not share organizational assumptions and can help you learn from this experience so that you are better prepared to deal with future crises.

About Constellis

The Constellis advisory team is diverse and has extensive experience advising teams and organizations through major crises worldwide. We understand the uniquely personal and human aspects of crisis and risk management and are supported by the worldwide reach, breadth of services and capacity of Constellis.

Constellis protects critical priorities safely and efficiently around the world. Operating in 30 countries and based in the Washington D.C. area, our 22,000 Constellis employees bring unparalleled dedication and passion for creating a safer world and upholding the highest standards of compliance, quality and integrity. As a leading global provider of risk management, security, humanitarian, training and operational support services, Constellis's forward thinking solutions include a range of synergistic services, including background investigations, social intelligence tools, advanced training, logistics and life support, UAS and K9 services, and crisis response and mitigation. Constellis is fiercely committed to the success of our customers and other partners.

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For more information on Constellis's Crisis and Risk Services, see <https://constellis.com/what-we-do/risk-management>