



**PROJECT**  
RESCUERS



## **Your business is your biggest project right now. Get your business back on track from COVID-19.**

Welcome to this page!

First of all, all change is scary. Please know whatever feelings you are experiencing is a normal response to this unexpected event. COVID-19 requires all of us to change our regular patterns in our day-to-day lives as well as shift our mindsets in how we see ourselves interacting with one another.

I have developed this guide drawing on two main approaches; one from Project Rescuers and the other from the healthcare system.

In Project Rescuers, I apply a 4-step process: diagnostic, intervention, prototype and execution to help projects get back on track. I am applying the same methodology to provide some steps for you to use to help your business stay on track.

In healthcare, when there is a major event such as a pandemic, the system triages what is most important and needs immediate attention and then prioritizes using these criteria.

These approaches can work for you too.

# DIAGNOSTIC

## What's going on with me?

We are currently in a crisis. A crisis is described by James and Gilliland (2005) as events or situations perceived as intolerably difficult that exceed an individual's resources and coping mechanisms.

There are three phases to a crisis. In the initial phase of the crisis, people may experience feelings of anxiety, despair, hopelessness, shock, and disbelief. Conversely, they may present as calm, subdued or withdrawn. These may seem like familiar feelings and it is okay to feel this way.

In the second phase, people are attempting to regain mastery by engaging in routine activities. This phase may look different from person to person as people process the initial event differently. You may see this through the different actions people around you are taking around going outside, shopping and socializing. Psychologists have attributed toilet paper hoarding as a response to some people feeling out of control and responding to these feelings by grasping onto something tangible.<sup>1</sup>

The last phase occurs when people try to make sense of what has happened. This involves the process of reconciling the underlying assumptions and beliefs around the works with our own experience. Often people will go through these stages in a back and forth process. Feelings of blame and guilt are common in this phase.<sup>2</sup> Recognize that you are processing what is happening and that there are myriad feelings that will come up as a result.

I think as a society we may be moving into the second phase as we grapple with creating a new normal for ourselves, families and our businesses.

So now you have an understanding as to why you are feeling and acting in certain ways towards the COVID-19 situation.

*The next question is: How do I keep my business moving forward?*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://psychcentral.com/blog/panic-buying-the-psychology-of-hoarding-toilet-paper-beans-soup/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-assets/14229\\_book\\_item\\_14229.pdf](https://us.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-assets/14229_book_item_14229.pdf)

## What do I do next?

The COVID-19 situation has also created some very real fears about the economy and the impact of this on our businesses.

### Take care of yourself so you may help others.

As the leader of your business, you need to take care of yourself first. Understanding what you can and cannot control is important. To help with the feelings of anxiety, take the following steps:

- Follow BC PHO rules for hand washing and social distancing to keep you and your family safe. Assess your risk for contracting COVID-19. More [here](#).
- Use the [guidelines](#) for explaining COVID-19 to your children.
- Stay connected with your family and friends. Reach out to community networks via [Zoom](#) and other similar platforms.
- Reach out for [mental health support](#). Everyone has a different response to crisis situations. This is informed by our past experiences and our own sense of vulnerability. If you are not a talker or sharing kind of person, consider just allowing yourself to think about things that are worrying you. Write them down and consider some responses: What would you say to someone who shared those concerns with you? More on anxiety tips [here](#) and crisis psychology [here](#).
- Connect with folks you do like to talk to. You may find just connecting alleviates some of the worry.
- Develop and stick to a routine. Wake up, exercise, set out goals for the day and follow the plan. You may find [this article](#) helpful.
- Be brave and prepared to step outside your 'normal' in this difficult time. You might experience a [crisitunity!](#)

### Attend to the business issues.

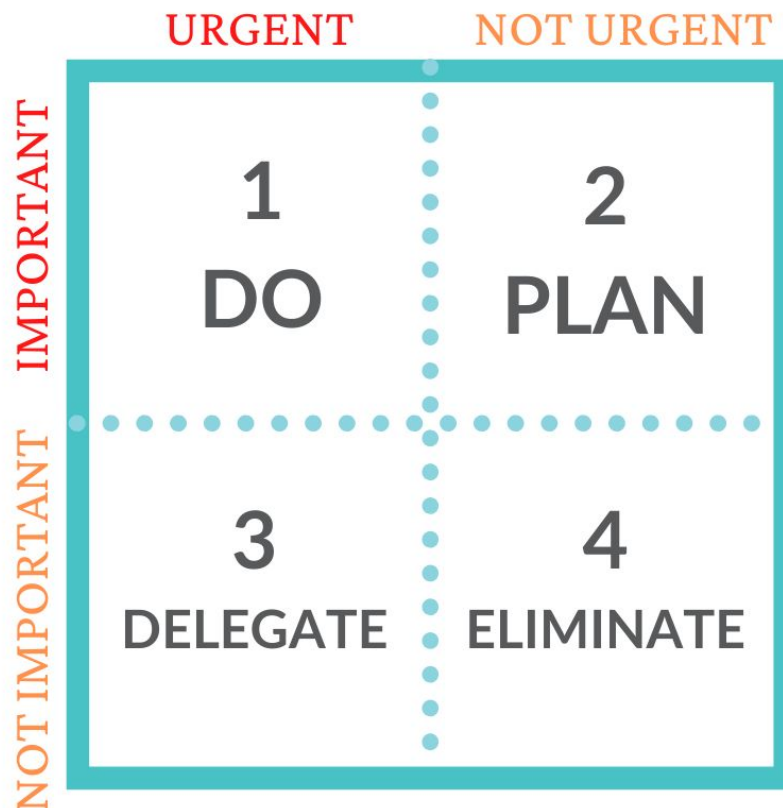
This can be hard to face all the issues pending but you can do it. You are not alone. Lots of folks are in the same boat. Follow this helpful process:

- Identify what the most important concern is for you right now.
  - Start with the most critical issues. If it is cash flow for example, connect with resources that are likely to help.
  - Connect with groups like [Canadian Federation for Independent Businesses](#).
- Determine what can be planned for.
- Identify what can be delegated.
- What can be eliminated?
- Check out [this link](#) for Canada's economic response plan.

## Attend to your staff.

- Repeat the first step with your team.
  - Acknowledge their fear and uncertainty.
  - Encourage compliance with PHO recommendations.
  - Support connections with family and friends
  - Encourage mental health support services.
- Set a routine with your team.
  - Daily morning check in.
  - Triage.
  - Assigned tasks.
  - Check in at the end of the day.
  - Make to do lists.
  - Repeat.

You may find the [Eisenhower Matrix](#) helpful:



## INTERVENTION

### Stakeholder Engagement Plan (click [here](#) for our template)

This is part of your change management plan. Your business has undergone a rapid change, one that is resulting in a new way forward now and maybe in the future. This change ought to be communicated with your internal and external stakeholders.

- Create a list of your internal and external stakeholders. These are the folks that interact with your business at any point. The list includes all employees at all levels, customers, suppliers, creditors, unions, professional organizations, and any group that can support your business.
- Determine how they support your business:
  - Directly? Ex. supply services, influencers etc.
- Engagement Matrix:
  - Keep informed.
  - Consult as needed.
  - Engage and address their concerns.
  - Involve extensively.
- Plan for Engagement:
  - When?
  - Why?
  - How?

### Communication Engagement Plan (click [here](#) for our template)

The communication plan is the second part of your change management plan. Connecting often, clearly and with intent with your stakeholders is essential to moving your business forward.

- Identify your audience.
- Identify your key messages.
- Communication goals for each audience.
- Determine:
  - Content
  - Timing
  - Delivery methods
  - Frequency
  - Sender
- Material
  - Who will develop it?
  - Who will review/approve it?
- Develop a calendar for your communication plan.
- Organize a Receiver:
  - Who will respond to communication replies?
  - How does the response align with your company's culture and brand?



## Strategy (click [here](#) for our template)

Your business uses a specific set of methods and plans that enable you to execute on your offering and get your product to market. Some aspects of your strategy may need to be revised now that your offering is primarily in an online format.

If the strategy map is a new concept to you, no problem; [this link](#) will help you through it. You may not have a solid answer for every section, but the map will help you set your thinking in the right direction.

I am happy to go over this process with you in the 1-1 call.

## CONCLUSION

Times are uncertain right now, however; you can manage aspects of your business in a way that enables you to move forward in building your offering and your client-base. Following the triage method by tending to these areas that need the most attention and making a plan for the next important area is a step in the right direction. Determining what you can delegate and eliminate will help you focus and work more efficiently. Tending to the most important stakeholder group, your employees, will ensure you are well positioned to take advantage of new market opportunities the COVID-19 crisis will surely bring.

### Payment options:

I believe we are all in this COVID-19 crisis together and, as a community, we are all interconnected. I have created payment plan options that I believe enable shared growth and development within the business community.

- 1) Pay market value
- 2) Pay what you can
- 3) Group Membership
- 4) Payment Plan
- 5) IOU

I look forward to working with you!



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