Pandemic Planning for Business

Thanks to Jim Goble, National City Corporation, for providing the resource material contained in this guide.
CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES OF A PANDEMIC

Source: http://www.pandemicflu.gov/general/whatis.html

- **Potential of Rapid Worldwide Spread**
  - Planning should assume that the entire population would be susceptible.
  - Countries might, through measures, delay the arrival of the virus, but not stop it.

- **Health Care Systems Overloaded**
  - Most people have little or no immunity to a pandemic virus. A substantial percentage of the population will require some form of medical care.
  - Nations would unlikely have the staff, facilities, equipment and hospital beds needed to cope with large numbers of people who suddenly fall ill.
  - Past pandemics have spread globally in two and sometimes three waves.

- **Medical Supplies Inadequate**
  - Need for vaccine / antiviral drugs likely to outstrip supply.
  - This need will also likely be inadequate early in a pandemic.
  - A pandemic can create a shortage of hospital beds, ventilators and other supplies. Surge capacity at non-traditional sites, such as schools, may be created to cope with the demand.
  - Difficult decisions will need to be made regarding who gets drugs and vaccines.

- **Economic and Social Disruptions**
  - Restricted travel, closings of schools and business, and cancellations of events could have a major impact on communities and their citizens.
  - Care for family members and fear of exposure can result in significant absenteeism.
PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- Worldwide Impact – rapid spread to USA (3-8 weeks).
- Pandemic wave could last 6-8 weeks; subsequent waves could occur if virus mutates.
- 25 – 35% Infection Rate (1.5 – 2 days before symptoms).
- 25 – 40% absenteeism could occur (employee sickness, family sickness/death, fear, home deployment).
- Up to 2% mortality rate.
- Supply chain (materials and services) disruptions likely.
- Probability still unknown for the H5N1 virus mutation.
- Probability is high for a future pandemic.
- Impact is high >> Risk is high.

RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Employee health impacts
- Educate workforce on facts, general health prevention, our readiness
- Prevention of avian flu strain spread
- Cleaning contracts
- Personal hygiene
- Develop strategies to minimize impact from human to human contact
- Customer contact
- Employee contact
- Service provider contact
- Develop strategies to minimize impact from human contact with materials
- Mail
- Workflow

Employee health care
- Revised policies
- Family care responsibilities
- Fear of contracting flu
- Civil unrest

Minimize impacts to Business Services
- Strategies for services from Business Partner
- Strategies for Global supply change disruption
- Strategies for service reductions and absenteeism
**PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

*It may be most appropriate for response activities to be aligned with pandemic phases.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of a Pandemic*</th>
<th>Focus of Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3 - Pandemic Alert</strong> – Pandemic is possible and preparedness plans should be reviewed and updated where necessary. <em>(Current Phase)</em></td>
<td>Establish a plan; Educate the organization; Understand next steps; Gain management commitment; <strong>personal hygiene</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 4 - Pre-Pandemic</strong> – Localized outbreaks of the disease occur with human-to-human transmission</td>
<td>Prepare for imminent activities; Execute preventative actions; Confirm resources for near term activities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 5 - Pandemic Outbreak</strong> – General outbreaks with human to human transmission will occur causing a reduced level of service</td>
<td>Implement restrictive practices; implement medical care activities; prepare for high absenteeism</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 6 - Maximum Disruption Period</strong> – Maximum disruption to business will occur causing a greater reduction service levels.</td>
<td>Crisis Management; Support most critical services; Support affected employee base; Restore impacted services</td>
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*World Health Organization Phase Definitions*

*Examples of phase dependent response activities follow.*
Phase 3 – Pandemic Alert Activities

Objective: Establish a plan; Educate personnel within the organization; Understand next steps; Gain management commitment

- Disseminate information to employees about your pandemic preparedness and response plan.
- Develop strategies for prevention in customer contact areas.
- Determine what near term HR policy changes may be required (To be at the end of each phase for the subsequent phase).
- Identify community resources for obtaining counter-measures (e.g. vaccines and antivirals).
- Identify sources for general health education and contacts. Local contacts aligned to the larger population areas and key critical areas.
- Obtain Pandemic Preparedness statement from all vendors providing critical services.
- Identify critical suppliers and validate their preparedness plans.
- Establish policies for restricting travel to affected geographic areas (consider both domestic and international sites).
- Determine preventive care procedures.
- Develop policies for social distancing (no meetings, personal spacing…).

Phase 4 – Pre-Pandemic Activities

Objectives: Prepare for imminent activities; Execute preventative actions; Confirm resources for near term activities

- Provide cleaning supplies and janitorial practices within facilities.
- Prepare document to be shared with vendors and corporate customers who need to know our plans.
- Determine proactive preventative care that can be offered to employees.
- Establish policies for employees who have been exposed to pandemic influenza, are suspected to be ill, or become ill at the worksite (e.g. infection control response, immediate mandatory sick leave).
- Establish policies for flexible worksite (e.g. telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts).
- Establish policies for preventing influenza spread at the worksite (e.g. promoting respiratory hygiene/ cough etiquette, and prompt exclusion of people with influenza symptoms).
- Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact among employees and with customers.
- Identify critical suppliers and validate their preparedness plans.
- Identify essential critical functions required to maintain business operations by location and function during a pandemic.
- Identify essential employees and other critical inputs (e.g. raw materials, suppliers, subcontractor services/ products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations.
- Identify roles that could be executed from alternate locations, identify technology related additional needs.
- Identify workloads that could be moved to off shifts.
- Develop visitor and delivery restriction policy.
- Establish policies for evacuating employees working in or near an affected area, and guidance for employees returning.
- Develop plans for adequate critical infrastructure to support increased levels of remote access.
- Implement strategies for delivery of mail, packages and equipment.
Implement strategies for prevention in customer contact areas.
Implement revised policy for required vs optional attendance at work.
Implement what near term HR policy changes may be required.

Phase 5 – Pandemic Outbreak Activities
Objectives: Implement restrictive practices; implement medical care activities; prepare for high absenteeism
- Implement and enforce policies changes.
- Implement strategies for work force replacement.
- Implement prevention policies for work locations. Include use of hand sanitizers, masks and gloves.
- Develop plans for work locations, sequestering and activation of backup facilities.
- Identify alternate workforce options.
- Implement adjusted policies for impacted area.

Phase 6 – Maximum Disruption Activities
Objectives: Crisis Management; Support most critical services; Support affected employee base; Restore impacted services
- Implement screening stations and post signage.
- Implement plans to close non-critical common areas such as cafeterias.
- Train and prepare ancillary workforce (e.g. contractors, employee in other job titles/descriptions, retirees).
- Adjust work process to maximize ability of work at home staff.
- Non-critical functions need to be put on hold and all available staff needs to be redirected to areas affected by high absenteeism.
- Reduce the number of open, active sales/service locations and consolidate staff.
Organizing for Plan Activation: Incident Leadership Model
PEOPLE

Team to Lead Situations
- Skills/Services Needed
  (Facility, Security, Media, Finance/Insurance, Information Technology, Leadership, Human Resources, etc.)
- Representation from business units

Contact Information for All Employees
- Email, home, cell, emergency contacts, etc.

COMMUNICATIONS

Employees
- Call trees
- Wallet Card
- Status Line
- Protocol: Call manager or Hear from manager

Customers & Vendors
- Daily status/conference call, email, voicemail, direct calls, call tree, websites, etc.
- Protocols and workarounds
ASSESSMENT

Status of Employees
- Daily call tree, escalation to manager, email, etc.
- Able to work, sick or caring for others.

Status of Key Products & Services
- Red, Yellow, Green
- Items to sustain:
  - Supplies
  - Staffing (& skills)
  - Vendors

Impact to Departments
- Directly impacted
- Indirectly impacted
- No impact – can be a resource

COORDINATION & INTERDEPENDENCIES

Team
- Command Center / Conference Calls
- Customer Speaking Points
- Status (Staff, Products & Services, Supplies)
- Issues/Needs

Departments
- Vendor/Suppliers
- Customers
- Other Internal Departments

Employees
- Call Trees
- Status from Managers
- Status Line
- Website

RECOVERY

Your Detailed Plans!
- Know what people and resources are available
- Have Workaround / Alternate Procedures
- Have Alternate worksite
- Use Checklists – reduces redundancy, increases consistency