

Mindset Consulting

Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations Plan

Updated March 2020

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I. Introduction

Organizations across the Nation perform essential functions and services that may be adversely affected in the event of a pandemic. Since the threat to an organization's continuity of operations is great during a pandemic outbreak; it is important for organizations, in particular Mindset Consulting, to have a Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations plan in place to ensure it can carry out its essential functions and services. While organizations may be forced to suspend some operations due to the severity of a pandemic outbreak, an effective Continuity of Operations Plan can assist an organization in its efforts to remain operational, as well as strengthen the ability to resume operations.

II. Purpose / Objectives

This plan provides guidance to Mindset Consulting and may serve as the plan for maintaining essential functions and services during an influenza pandemic. This guidance neither replaces nor supersedes any current, approved Mindset Consulting Business Continuity Plan; rather it supplements it, bridging the gap between the traditional, all-hazards continuity planning and the specialized continuity planning required for a pandemic by addressing additional considerations, challenges, and elements specific to the dynamic nature of a pandemic.

This guidance stresses that essential functions can be maintained during a pandemic outbreak through mitigation strategies, such as social distancing, increased hygiene, the vaccination of employees and their families, and similar approaches. Influenza may not, in itself, require a traditional continuity response, such as partial or full relocation of the organization's essential functions, although this response may be concurrently necessary due to other circumstances.

This document delineates our policies and procedures for responding to and recovering from a pandemic outbreak that disables company staff and negatively impacts the firm's ability to provide client services as usual. It includes process-level plans for addressing people issues and maintaining the firm's ability to provide business as usual. This document summarizes our recommended procedures. In the event of an actual pandemic situation, modifications to this document may be made to ensure physical safety of our people, our systems and our data.

Our mission is to protect staff from the impact of a pandemic illness, ensure information system uptime, data integrity and availability and overall business resilience.

The principal objective of the Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operation Plan is to develop, test and document a well-structured and easily understood plan which will help Mindset Consulting recover as quickly and effectively as possible from an outbreak, which could reduce available staff needed to support the firm's business operations.

Additional objectives include the following:

- The need to ensure that all employees fully understand their duties in implementing such a plan
- The need to ensure that pandemic operational policies are adhered to within all planned activities
- The need to ensure that proposed contingency arrangements are cost-effective
- Pandemic recovery needs applicable to all customers, vendors and others

III. Concept of Operations

Mindset Consulting will monitor the severity of the pandemic and establish continuity activation triggers to address the unique nature of the pandemic threat. The Pandemic Influenza Continuity Plan will be implemented as needed to support the continued performance of essential functions.

Key trigger issues at Mindset Consulting that would lead to activation of the pandemic plan are:

- Escalating loss of staff due to illness
- Client policies regarding travel and telecommuting
- State and Local Government closing schools
- Local Government recommending Shelter in Place
- Inability to adequately handle business operations

Pandemics are potentially disruptive situations which can occur at any time and affect normal business processes. Fortunately, the level of awareness of pandemics is higher now. By keeping a close eye on alerts and messages from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), state and local emergency organizations, and local media reports, sufficient advance warnings should be possible. The focus here is on the level of business disruption which could arise from a pandemic.

Pandemic outbreaks have been assessed as follows:

Probability: 1=Very High, 5=Very Low

Impact: 1=Total destruction, 5=Minor annoyance

When a pandemic outbreak begins affecting company employees, the Pandemic Response Team (PRT) must be activated. The PRT will then decide the extent to which the Pandemic Plan must be invoked. All employees must be issued a Quick Reference communication containing PRT contact details to be used in the event of a severe outbreak.

A. Pandemic Recovery Team

The team will be contacted and assembled by the CEO, Gavin Quinn. Team responsibilities are to:

- Assess the evolving situation and determine what impact might be to the business
- Respond quickly as the impact of a pandemic is felt, contact appropriate medical and emergency service
- Decide which elements of the pandemic plan should be activated
- Establish and manage a pandemic support team to preserve and protect vital business operations and facilitate the return to normal operation
- Ensure employees and external organizations are notified, assign responsibilities and activities as required
- Arrange to track status of employees calling in sick
- Contact individual departments regularly to assess impact of loss of staff, if any
- Determine what level of backup staff will be needed
- Brief key senior management on pandemic status regularly
- Notify appropriate emergency organizations, e.g., hospitals, clinics of situation
- Maintain regular contact with affected staff to assess their condition
- Contact other relevant organizations, including key customers, and brief them on the situation
- Monitor operation of IT infrastructure and systems to ensure they operate as usual
- Coordinate activities with other relevant teams, e.g., technology disaster recovery team, business continuity team, first responders, etc.
- Determine when affected staff may be able to return to work, or continue working from home

- Based on staff return to work, estimate the continued duration of and need for the pandemic response plan

B. Emergency Alert, Escalation and Pandemic Plan Activation

This policy and procedure has been established to ensure that in the event of a pandemic outbreak or crisis, personnel will have a clear understanding of who should be contacted. Procedures have been addressed to ensure that communications can be quickly established while activating the pandemic response and business resilience plans.

The pandemic recovery plan will rely principally on key members of management and staff who will provide the management and technical skills necessary to achieve and maintain uninterrupted business operations during the pandemic. Suppliers of critical goods and services, and other key supply chain organizations, must be regularly contacted to determine how the pandemic is affecting their ability to deliver goods and services. Alternate suppliers may need to be contacted to provide backup resources.

1. Emergency Alert

The Pandemic Response Team is responsible for activating the Pandemic Plan when it is clear that the pandemic is affecting staff and, in turn, Mindset Consulting's ability to maintain normal business operations.

2. Pandemic Procedures for Management

Members of the management team will maintain a copy of the names and contact numbers of each employee in their departments. In addition, the management team members will have a copy of the company's Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations Plan on file in their homes.

3. Contact with Employees

Human Resources will serve as the primary point of contact for employees who experience symptoms, and/or who have family members with the virus. In coordination with HR, business unit managers will serve as focal points for their departments, while designated employees within departments will contact other employees to determine their health status and ability to remain at work. Their findings will be reported to both their managers and HR management. Employees who cannot reach HR staff or other members of their team are advised to contact a member of the PRT.

4. Backup Staff

In a pandemic it is essential that all critical business functions are backed up in case assigned staff cannot perform their duties due to illness. Cross-training of employees within departments is highly recommended, and an inventory of all staff and their primary and backup skills should be maintained by HR and department management. If a manager or staff member designated to contact other staff members is unavailable due to illness, the designated backup staff member will perform notification duties.

5. Recorded Messages / Updates

For the latest information on the pandemic and the organization's response, the most up-to-date information will be posted on Slack by a member of the Pandemic Response Team.

6. Personnel and Family Notification

If the pandemic escalates to the point where an employee's immediate family may be affected, it will be necessary to notify family members quickly.

7. Medical Resources for Staff

Ensure that there are primary and alternate sources of medical supplies, such as face filter masks, disinfecting hand cleaners and wipes and latex gloves.

C. Media

Assigned staff will coordinate with the media, working according to guidelines that have been previously approved and issued for dealing with post-disaster communications.

Our current media team is:

- Amy Lund
- Gavin Quinn

Only the media team is permitted direct contact with the media; anyone else contacted should refer callers or in-person media representatives to the media team. Any media contacts should be referred to the HR department.

D. Insurance

As part of the company's pandemic recovery planning, a number of insurance policies have been put in place. These include errors and omissions, directors & officers liability, general liability, and business interruption insurance.

If insurance-related assistance is required following an emergency out of normal business hours, please contact Pam Johnson or Peter Brasket.

E. Financial and Legal Issues

The Pandemic Response Team shall prepare an initial assessment and estimate of the impact of the pandemic on the company's financial affairs. The assessment should include:

- Loss of revenue
- Need for emergency cash

The immediate financial needs of the company must be addressed. These can include:

- Cash flow position
- Temporary borrowing capability
- Availability of company credit cards to pay for supplies and services required during and after the pandemic
- State or Federal grant or loan programs for affected small businesses

F. Legal Actions

Mindset Consulting's Pandemic Response Team and Legal Counsel will jointly review the aftermath of the pandemic and decide whether there may be legal actions resulting from the event; in particular, the possibility of claims or lawsuits against Mindset Consulting.

G. Pandemic Plan Exercising

Pandemic recovery plan exercises are an essential part of the plan development process. In a pandemic exercise no one passes or fails; everyone who participates learns what needs to be improved and how the improvements can be implemented. Pandemic plan exercising ensures that all teams are familiar with their assignments and, more importantly, are confident in their capabilities.

IV. Continuity Planning

All organization personnel are to be informed regarding protective actions and/or modifications related to this plan. Messaging and risk communications during an emerging infectious disease or pandemic will be conducted by Gavin Quinn and other members of the Senior Leadership Team. Guidance and instructions on established infection control measures such as social distancing and telework policies will be provided to assist in limiting the spread of influenza at the primary and alternate worksites.

Within the workplace, social distancing measures could take the form of: modifying the frequency and type of face-to-face employee encounters (e.g., placing moratoriums on hand-shaking, substituting teleconferences for face-to-face meetings, staggering breaks, posting infection control guidelines); establishing flexible work hours or worksite, (e.g., telecommuting); promoting social distancing between employees and customers to maintain three-foot spatial separation between individuals; and implementing strategies that request and enable employees with influenza to stay home at the first sign of symptoms.

Managers are encouraged to communicate with their employees, particularly any who are in harm's way. The messages should follow Gavin Quinn's message, should echo that message's themes, and should be in the same voice employees' associate with their leader.

Frequent, daily contact is important to keep employees informed about developments in the organization's response, impacts on the workforce, and to reassure employees that the organization is continuing to function as usual.

Planners and the Pandemic Response Team should include deliberate methods to measure, monitor, and adjust actions to changing conditions and improved protection strategies.

- Implement a formal worker and workplace protection strategy with metrics for assessing worker conformance and workplace cleanliness.
- Monitor and periodically test protection methods.
- Track and implement changes in approved or recommended protection measures.
- Pre-position material and equipment onsite.
- Ensure essential personnel are at the primary worksite.
- Reaffirm that essential suppliers have their material and personnel on-hand and are able to respond and support as planned.
- Coordinate with local public health and emergency response points of contact to ensure open, adequate communications.

Component-specific risk assessments that identify actual control band designations for all personnel and/or positions will be conducted initially and periodically thereafter. These assessments are kept as part of the action plan documentation.

It is necessary for the Pandemic Influenza Continuity Plan updating process to be properly structured and controlled. Whenever changes are made to the plan they are to be fully tested and appropriate amendments should be made to the training materials. This will involve the use of formalized change control procedures under the control of the CEO.

V. Pandemic Planning Assumptions

The following assumptions were used in the development of Pandemic Influenza Continuity of Operations Plan.

A. National Strategy for Pandemic Assumptions:

- Susceptibility to the pandemic influenza virus will be universal.
- Efficient and sustained person-to-person transmission signals an imminent pandemic.
- The clinical disease attack rate will likely be 30 percent or higher in the overall population during the pandemic. Illness rates will be highest among school-aged children (about 40 percent) and decline with age. Among working adults, an average of 20 percent will become ill during a community outbreak.
- Some persons will become infected but not develop clinically significant symptoms. Asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic individuals can transmit infection and develop immunity to subsequent infection.
- While the number of patients seeking medical care cannot be predicted with certainty, during previous pandemics about half of those who become ill sought care. With the availability of effective antiviral drugs for treatment, this proportion may be higher in the next pandemic.
- Rates of serious illness, hospitalization, and deaths will depend on the virulence of the pandemic virus and differ by an order of magnitude between more and less severe scenarios. Risk groups for severe and fatal infection cannot be predicted with certainty but are likely to include infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with chronic or immunosuppressive medical conditions.
- Rates of absenteeism will depend on the severity of the pandemic. In a severe pandemic, absenteeism attributable to illness, the need to care for ill family members and fear of infection may reach 40 percent during the peak weeks of a community outbreak, with lower rates of absenteeism during the weeks before and after the peak. Certain public health measures (closing organizations, quarantining household contacts of infected individuals, “snow days”) are likely to increase rates of absenteeism.
- The typical incubation period (interval between infection and onset of symptoms) for influenza is approximately two days.
- Persons who become ill may shed virus and can transmit infection for up to one day before the onset of symptoms. Viral shedding and the risk of transmission will be greatest during the first two days of illness. Children usually shed the greatest amount of virus and therefore are likely to post the greatest risk for transmission.
- On average, infected persons will transmit infection to approximately two other people.
- A pandemic outbreak in any given community will last about six to eight weeks for each wave of the pandemic.
- Multiple waves (periods during which community outbreaks occur across the country) of illness could occur with each wave lasting two-three months. Historically, the largest waves have occurred in the fall and winter, but the seasonality of a pandemic cannot be predicted with certainty.

B. Organizational Assumptions

- Organizations will be provided with guidance and/or direction by Federal, State and Local governments regarding current influenza pandemic status in its area.
- Organizations will have actionable plans and procedures to assist in the ability to remain operational during a pandemic. Plans and procedures may include social distancing protocols, telecommuting and temporary suspension of some nonessential activities.
- Mindset Consulting] will review its continuity communications programs to ensure they are fully capable of supporting pandemic and other related emergencies, and give full consideration to supporting social distancing operations, including telework and other virtual office options.
- Mindset Consulting -controlled buildings will be accessible, but right of entry may be limited.
- Essential functions, operations, and support requirements will continue to be people dependent. However, human interactions may be remote or virtual, resulting in the employment of appropriate teleworking and other approved social distancing protocols.

- Travel restrictions, such as limitations on mass transit, implemented at the Federal, State, and Local levels may affect the ability of some staff to report to work.
- Additional funding will be budgeted for the acquisition of additional equipment required for a possible surge in teleworking capabilities.

VI. Pandemic Response

A. Pandemic Coordinator and Pandemic Response Team

The Mindset Consulting Pandemic Influenza Coordinator (currently Pam Johnson) will oversee a Pandemic Response Team (PRT) to anticipate the impacts of a pandemic on Mindset Consulting and to assist with developing strategies to manage the effects of an influenza outbreak. The PRT includes representatives of all relevant stakeholders.

The Mindset Consulting PRT includes the following:

1. Gavin Quinn, Chief Executive Officer
2. Peter Brasket, Lead Director
3. Luke VanEpern, SVP Sales and Customer Experience
4. Pam Johnson, Controller / Director of Finance
5. Naveen Rokkam, VP of Strategic Accounts
6. Amy Lund, Marketing Director
7. Peggy Anderstrom, Human Resources

B. Risk Communications

Mindset Consulting will develop influenza pandemic risk communications procedures for communicating with all internal and external stakeholders. This includes the use of existing notification rosters with names, emails and telephone numbers. These rosters are maintained and updated by Human Capital.

VII. Elements of a Viable Pandemic Influenza Continuity Capability

The Elements of a Viable Continuity Capability address the 10 traditional elements of continuity within the context of a pandemic influenza outbreak.

A. Essential Functions

Given the expected duration and potential multiple waves of pandemic outbreaks, organizations must review the process involved in carrying out essential functions and services in order to develop plans that mitigate the effects of the pandemic while simultaneously allowing the continuation of operations which support essential functions. Mindset Consulting has identified essential functions and services needed to sustain its mission and operations during a pandemic. Mindset Consulting's Essential Functions are Sales, Finance, Recruiting, Human Resources and Operations.

B. Orders of Succession

Since influenza pandemic may affect regions of the United States differently in terms of timing, severity, and duration, Mindset Consulting has identified orders of succession that are at least three deep per position while considering dispersing successors to various geographically separated locations, as appropriate. These are included in the Appendix.

C. Delegations of Authority

At the height of a pandemic wave, absenteeism may be significant, as such, Mindset Consulting has established delegations of authority that are at least three deep to take into account the expected rate of absenteeism and regional nature of the outbreak to help assure continuity of operations over an extended time period. The Mindset Consulting Delegations of Authority for senior leadership are included in the Appendix.

D. Continuity Facilities

The traditional use of continuity facilities to maintain essential functions and services may not be a viable option during a pandemic. Rather, safe work practices, which include social distancing and transmission interventions, reduce the likelihood of contacts with other people that could lead to disease transmission. [insert organization name] has developed preventative practices such as social distancing procedures, hygiene etiquette, and cancellation of organizations non-essential activities to reduce the spread of the pandemic.

E. Continuity Communications

According to the National Strategy Implementation Guidance, workplace risk can be minimized through implementation of systems and technologies that facilitate communication without person-to-person contact. Mindset Consulting has identified communication systems needed to perform essential functions. These include the use of email and Slack Messaging.

F. Essential Records Management

Mindset Consulting shall identify, protect, and ensure the ready availability of electronic and hardcopy documents, references, records, and information systems needed to support essential functions during a pandemic outbreak. Mindset Consulting has identified systems, databases, and files that are needed to ensure essential functions remain operational. The Essential Records plan for pandemic influenza is included in the Appendix.

G. Human Resources

Although a pandemic influenza outbreak may not directly affect the physical infrastructure of an organization, a pandemic will ultimately threaten all operations by its impact on an organization's human resources. The health threat to personnel is the primary threat to maintaining essential functions and services during a pandemic outbreak. Mindset Consulting has established plans to protect the entire employee population and their families, with additional guidance for key personnel should a pandemic influenza outbreak occur.

H. Test, Training and Exercises

Testing, training, and exercising are essential to assessing, demonstrating, and improving an organization's ability to maintain its essential functions and services. The organization conducts annual tests, training, and exercises to ensure sustainable social distancing techniques, and to assess the impacts of reduced staff on the performance of essential functions. The organization conducts continuity exercises to examine the impacts of pandemic influenza on performing essential functions, and to familiarize personnel with their responsibilities. The organization has identified resources and trained continuity personnel, needed to perform essential functions.

I. Devolution of Control and Direction

Devolution is the process of transferring operational control of one or more essential functions to a predetermined responsible party or parties. Pandemic outbreaks will occur at different times, have variable durations, and may differ in the severity; therefore, full or partial devolution of essential functions may be necessary to continue essential functions and services. Mindset Consulting has established plans

and procedures for devolution, which identifies how it will transfer operations, if pandemic influenza renders leadership and essential staff incapable or unavailable.

J. Reconstitution

Reconstitution is the process whereby an organization has regained the capability and physical resources necessary to return to normal (pre-disaster) operations. The objective during reconstitution is to effectively manage, control, and, with safety in mind, expedite the return to normal operations. Mindset Consulting has developed reconstitution plans and procedures, in conjunction with local public health authorities, to ensure facilities/buildings are safe to return. The organization's reconstitution plan should consider the possibility that not all employees may be able to return to work at the time of reconstitution and that it may be necessary to hire temporary or permanent workers in order to complete the reconstitution process.

VIII. Conclusion

Maintaining Mindset Consulting essential functions and services in the event of pandemic influenza requires additional considerations beyond traditional continuity planning. Unlike other hazards that necessitate the relocation of staff performing essential functions to an alternate operating facility, an influenza pandemic may not directly affect the physical infrastructure of the organization. As such, a traditional "continuity activation" may not be required during a pandemic influenza outbreak.

However, a pandemic outbreak threatens an organization's human resources by removing essential personnel from the workplace for extended periods of time. Accordingly, the Mindset Consulting's continuity plan addresses the threat of a pandemic influenza outbreak. Continuity Plans for maintaining essential functions and services in a pandemic influenza should include implementing procedures such as social distancing, infection control, personal hygiene, and cross-training (to ease personnel absenteeism in a critical skill set). Protecting the health and safety of employees and contractors must be the focused goal of the organization in order to enable the ability of the organization to continue to operate effectively and to perform essential functions and provide essential services during a pandemic outbreak.

Copies of this plan, electronic and hard copies will be stored in secure locations to be defined by Mindset Consulting. Each member of the leadership team will be issued a copy of this plan to be filed at home. Each member of the Pandemic Recovery Team will be issued a copy of this plan. A master protected copy will be stored on specific resources established for this purpose.

Appendix

Websites used in the development of this plan.

- http://www.fema.gov/about/org/ncp/pan_inf.shtm - Link to FEMA's Pandemic Influenza Continuity Template
- https://alertfind.com/pandemic-planning_templates/ - Link to additional planning materials
- www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/ - Link to information on pandemic definitions
- <https://searchdisasterrecover.techtarget.com> - Link to additional planning materials
- https://osha.gov/publications/influenza_pandemic.html - Link to additional resources
- <http://www.opm.gov/pandemic/index.asp> - Links to policies on leave, pay, hiring, alternative work arrangements and other critical human capital issues in relation to pandemic influenza.
- <http://www.pandemicflu.gov> - pandemic influenza related information (e.g., signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission, developing individual and family plans, etc.).
- <http://www.flu.gov/planning-preparedness/federal/index.html#> Pandemic influenza related information for Federal Government agencies to use for planning and preparedness. Links to other federal government agencies.