

TOP LINE

Clearly, the closure of business cannot be sustained indefinitely. Yes - governments and companies must find a way to 're-boot' but, as we see around the world, additional waves of infection are forcing further local or national lockdowns. Therefore, to retain any degree of compliance from employees, or the population at large, governments and companies must ensure their re-boot strategies are robust enough to sustain further shutdowns. Cutting government cheques or financing employee furloughs is a short-term strategy to stave off the worst effects of a shut down. It cannot be repeated or sustained indefinitely, and this is where companies must plan innovatively to keep themselves and, in turn, their interdependent economies afloat.

Governments who fall short of a workable plan will [lose citizen compliance](#) and potentially broaden and deepen the pandemic through public, crowded displays of defiance. Companies who fall short of such a plan, and who constantly start and stop operations, will lose skilled staff who will leave for organizations who can offer them a long-term future.

Questions to Consider:

Is the company's business strategy still valid? How has our market changed, and how will it look in 6-12 months' time? How must we adapt as a business if we are to operate effectively in such a market? How can we keep our employees safe yet continue to serve our target market? What are the new Risks that must be managed as our business model evolves? What must we do to simplify our supply chains yet not remain dependent on a sole supplier for our essential items? How can we protect our business against increased exposure to cyber threats?

COVID-19: THE HIGHLIGHTS

Second, and third surges of COVID-19 infections have manifested across the world. Serbia has re-imposed a national lockdown after a near complete reopening. This new restriction on citizen liberty, coupled with the renewed fears of economic collapse has led to mass demonstrations in the capital, Belgrade. We can expect to see more examples of this as more countries reimpose lockdown conditions and where they can no longer sustain citizens and businesses through the public purse.

Questions to Consider:

How will the political landscape shift as traditional, capitalist business models struggle in the face of reduced profitability and the average family income is significantly reduced while the costs of living remain high? Will

politicians become further entrenched in a defensive posture and, if so, how will that manifest and what will be the second and third order events that will happen as a result? Will we see an evolving political class supported by a wave of public antipathy towards a real or perceived imbalance of wealth or privileges? How will business evolve and flourish in such an environment? How might traditional, pyramidal business structures become flatter and more collaborative with its employees?

BEYOND THE NOISE: The 'New Normal'

One thing that business leaders have identified during the lockdown period is that remote working is a realistic option for many of their employees. The benefits of this are many and include, amongst many others : a reduction in the need for expensive business premises and supporting infrastructure; a more flexible workforce; a larger hiring pool of potential talent available due to flexible working patterns. Given the potential legal exposure to business by enforcing a return to 'traditional' working practices, there is significant financial and HR benefit to maintaining a remote workforce, where applicable. It does however, come with additional risks that should be addressed. Namely, HR needs to work with managers and employees to define measurable and achievable productivity standards, and CSOs and CISOs need to harmonize and even merge their structures to protect the business from the myriad of new cyber threats that it will be exposed to. Where corporations may have previously had to harden their IT infrastructure in a relatively small number of facilities, each home worker now represents an 'office location', with a node of potential vulnerability that must be addressed. Otherwise businesses may find themselves paralyzed through targeted attacks on IT infrastructure that may be simply malicious or more criminal in nature.

Questions to Consider:

How must IT policy and training be adapted to sustain the increase in remote working? How regularly – and to what 'depth' - must we 'test' our structures, using third party professionals if we are to remain compliant and retain the confidence of our client base?

TRUSTED RESOURCES: for numbers & guidance

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center

[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic

[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Please contact Secure Source International at info@securesource.com to schedule a leadership roundtable with our intelligence and security experts to dive into these topics and discuss security and safety related best-practices.