

# HOW TO REVIEW A VENDOR'S

# PANDEMIC PLAN

## What Is a Pandemic Plan?

A pandemic plan is an active document which lists the strategies, procedures, preventative measures as well as any corresponding implementation guidelines an organization will take should a global health crisis occur.

When it comes to your vendors, this serves as a roadmap which communicates how they plan to continue business services under the constrict of a pandemic scenario.



## WHY A VENDOR'S PANDEMIC PLAN IS IMPORTANT

The absence of necessary infrastructure and planning for critical situations, such as an influenza outbreak, can lead to a cascade of failures, resulting in a breakdown of processes and an interruption of supplies and services. Knowing your vendors (especially your high-risk and critical vendors) have a pandemic plan is an important puzzle piece within your own pandemic planning and crucial for protecting your employees, customers and overall business operations.

**Knowing your vendors have a pandemic plan in place protects you against several hazards, including:**

- Unprepared Vendors.** This could lead to the vendor flying by the seat of their pants in order to resume uptime, which can put you in a compromised position if you're relying on them for your own operations to resume.
- Data Loss.** Unprepared (or unprotected) vendors may lose, and not be able to recover, some of your organization and customer data.
- Operational Delays.** This could mean your organization's operations are interfered with for longer than anticipated or longer than the downtime allotted for in your own business continuity, disaster recovery and pandemic plans.
- Reputational Hits.** Your organization's reputation could be at risk due to the vendor's failure to implement comprehensive, well-developed plans. Your customers, and even the media, will think it's your organization who isn't prepared! Remember, they can't see behind the scenes.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PANDEMIC PLAN

**What should you look for? A strong pandemic plan will include 5 major components:**



### Preventative Program(s)

#### *Why is this needed?*

Reduces the likelihood that the vendor's operations will be significantly affected by a pandemic event, including the following:

- Communicating and coordinating with critical service providers and suppliers
- Monitoring of potential outbreaks
- Providing appropriate hygiene training and tools to employees
- Educating employees



### Documented Strategies

#### *How does this function?*

Provides for scaling the vendor's pandemic efforts so they are consistent with the effects of a particular stage of a pandemic outbreak, such as the 6 intervals described by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Investigation
- Acceleration
- Recognition
- Deceleration
- Initiation
- Preparation



### Comprehensive Framework of Facilities, Systems and Procedures

#### *What does this look like?*

Provides the vendor the capability to continue its critical operations in the event large numbers of the staff are unavailable for prolonged periods.



### Testing Programs

#### *What does this do?*

Ensures that the vendor's pandemic planning practices and capabilities are effective and will allow critical operations to continue.



### Oversight Programs

#### *What does this add?*

Ensures the vendor is performing ongoing review and updates to the pandemic plan so that policies, standards and procedures include up-to-date, relevant information at all times.

## NEXT STEPS FOR YOU

- 1 Verify your vendor has a pandemic plan.** Determine whether a formal, written plan exists, meets your organization's needs and covers critical components that are needed to ensure operations continue. If the vendor becomes unavailable, will your services operate normally?
- 2 Determine if the plan includes contingencies or mass absenteeism following disease control guidelines.** How will the vendor continue operations without key personnel? What happens if a vendor must shut down operations altogether? It's important to understand the processes your vendors have in place should the absolute worst-case scenario occur.
- 3 Check their relocation plans.** Confirm they're acceptable and verify the vendor has a secondary office facility or remote work capabilities. This includes things like assets, equipment, building relocations, remote access strategy, contract third-party office space and more. Ask yourself questions like the following:

- ✓ Can other locations handle the load?
- ✓ Is their office recovery space within another building?
- ✓ Is the secondary location always ready?
- ✓ Do they have established remote work policies and procedures?



**It's critical that both an organization's and vendor's pandemic plans are kept as a current component of the larger business continuity plan. Hold your third-party vendors accountable. Pandemic plans help keep business operations sustainable, and more importantly, keep your teams and customers safe.**



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