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COVID-19 (Novel Corona Virus) Human Recourses Management Support for small business Last update March 31, 2020

- **Economic Support for Businesses:**

As part of the Government's Economic Response Plan there are many resources available to you to reduce the financial impact on your business. Please review these resources here : <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>
Whether you have already had to layoff, or reduce your employees, there are different programs the government has put to support you.

- **Remote Work**

Whether you and your team are working remotely this is a new landscape for many. Some tips include:

1. Keep a routine as much as possible. It will keep you and others accountable, alert and engaged.
2. Honour and stick to scheduled meetings online
3. Bring humour to online meetings
4. Don't make meetings online too long, keep it to an hour or less. Give whatever you can in advance for review
5. People miss on the informal culture and chain of communication that kept them in the know in a physical workplace, make sure that you have a way to communicate regularly and keeping everyone aware of what the business is doing during this time.
6. Be understanding that a lot of families are home too, so while most people try to remove disruptions during online meetings, these could happen with lots of families home
7. Try to manage teams through objectives rather than by presence online. What that means is to have a list of deliverables by end of week for example, versus being online all day. Trust your teams to manage their schedules to deliver while they manage their life during this time.



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8. Keep a Q&A hour every week, where everyone can come online and ask questions and get cross collaborative feedback.
9. Provide guidelines on remote work, but let your employees give feedback on what is working and what is not. As long as there are clear deliverables your team will pitch ideas
10. Consider if this is something you can integrate in future even with no remote work. Watch what you are learning from this as the team operates remotely.

Lots of resources and articles can be found on the topic but here is one we especially appreciate <https://hbr.org/2020/03/15-questions-about-remote-work-answered>

- **Review your Human Resources Practices:**

We know this is a phase and we are all hopeful to come out of this sooner rather than later. In the meantime, when business is slower, this may be a good time to review some of your internal operations and processes and invest some time now to build what will bring you back strong and ready. Human resources are probably one of the more complicated aspects of running a small business. The complexities of working with people don't fit nicely on a spreadsheet. Yet HR is incredibly important; employee salaries and benefits make up a huge chunk of your operating expenses. Your employees are one of your greatest assets. You must protect and manage that asset.

1. **Health and Safety Practices:** as a small business with employees, you have an obligation to health and safety and now may be a good time to review the existing/needed programs your business has. The Occupational Health and Safety Act has a listing of all the requirements from business to be in compliance, a good starting point is here <https://www.ontario.ca/page/health-and-safety-small-businesses>



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2. Foundations of Human Resources Management: in this update we will focus on three starting issues to review:

- A) Get familiar with the Employment Standards. This covers the basic Statutory rights of employees and how as business owner you are to protect these rights. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/your-guide-employment-standards-act-0>
- B) Employee Handbook, in addition to employment standards, every workplace has its own set of rules, practices and expectations of their employees. If you have not already done so, it would be a good practice and time now to document those formal or informal workplace practices into an employee handbook, it provides clarity, opportunity to orient new staff and ensures consistency and fairness to staff. It is also a tool by which you can enable your front-line staff to make more informed decisions using a clear guide in their day to day operations.
Employee Handbooks should be written in simple, plain language that everyone can understand, that does not leave room for multiple interpretations and that should provide a consistent approach to human resources issues.
- C) Performance Management: Do you have a way by which you can assess your team's performance? Do you have a practice that would enable you to mindfully and carefully review pay and development to your teams? Great employees want and need feedback that is relevant, timely and constructive, do you have a method in place to do so that you can retain your best, manage your not so great performers?

Should you need help with implementation, review or just talking through some of these , please reach out to Maha Zaki contactus@consulcoach.ca