ERM Tool
Building Organizational Resilience: Preparing to Navigate a Potential Viral Outbreak

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TOOL

While pathogens are constantly alive and active in the world, our immune systems and other preventative measures help restrain them from continually turning into viruses that create large-scale devastating impacts on communities and societies. Having lived through the COVID-19 pandemic, most everyone hopes to never experience a similar viral event anytime soon.

Some view pandemic-scale disruptions as "100-year events," but scientists remind us that viruses can emerge and trigger catastrophic outcomes at any moment. Business leaders who build organizational resilience BEFORE a widespread pandemic-like event strengthen their ability to successfully navigate the unfolding challenges.

HOW TO USE

Any organization's leaders can use this tool to pinpoint opportunities to improve preparedness to navigate a disruptive viral event. The tool is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: Review of Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Part 2: Considering Impacts to Your Organization from a Viral Outbreak
- Part 3: Enhancing Your Organization's Surveillance Capabilities

Each part of the tool includes a number of questions business leaders may want to consider to build their organization's ability to withstand a viral outbreak affecting animal or plant life. Thinking about responses to each question BEFORE an outbreak positions the organization to proactively navigate the effects of a viral outbreak.

PART 1: REVIEW OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Look back at your organization's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, using the following questions to identify lessons learned. Use the middle column to document answers to each question and use the far-right column to identify action steps for your organization to take to enhance its resilience if a similar event occurs.

Part 1: Review of Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic		
Questions for Consideration	**Items Identified in Response to Question**	**Action Steps: What next steps should we take to improve our resilience?**
1. What are the 2-3 most valuable lessons our management team learned from the COVID-19 experience? What should we do to better incorporate them into how we do business today?		
2. What were the biggest organizational vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic? How do we ensure we are no longer subject to those vulnerabilities?		
3. What processes or activities worked well as our organization navigated COVID-19? What should we do to make those processes or activities more sustainable?		
4. Which of these processes or activities identified in #3 are no longer a part of our organization's ongoing operations? Which should be reinstated?		
5. To what extent are we prepared for a similar pandemic event, should one occur within the next two or three years? What else should we do to develop our resilience?		
6. What processes or activities need to be improved to build our organization's resilience for a sudden disruption triggered by a large-scale pandemic? What next steps are needed to make these improvements?		

PART 2: CONSIDERING IMPACTS OF VIRAL OUTBREAKS ON YOUR ORGANIZATION

Viral outbreaks can affect people, animals or plant life that are important to your organization. Part 2 of this tool includes several questions designed to prompt business leaders to increase an organization's resilience to a large-scale viral event. Section A includes questions to help you consider impacts to the organization's key people. Section B includes questions to guide consideration of impacts to the organization's supply chain.

Part 2: Considering Impacts of Viral Outbreaks on Your Organization Section A: Impact to Our Key People		
Questions for Consideration	**Items Identified in Response to Question**	**Action Steps: What next steps should we take to improve our resilience?**
1. How might our organization's culture be pressuring employees to come to work when they don't feel well and are in a potentially contagious stage of an illness? What should we do to reduce that pressure?		
2. What aspects of our personnel policies, including our sick leave policy, may inadvertently encourage employees to come to work when they are contagious? What changes might be necessary?		

Strengthening Our Playbooks to Support Key People

	Employees	Customers	Suppliers	Partners	Others
3. What actions might we need to take to strengthen our playbooks to allow us to engage with and support people key to our organization who are impacted by a large-scale pandemic event? For example, what can we do now to strengthen our ability during a large-scale pandemic to:					
a. Communicate regularly with key people?					
b. Provide access to resources, systems and data needed to maintain ongoing operations with them?					
c. Help address their critical needs to be able to support them?					
d. Arrange for the physical delivery of goods or services necessary for them to provide critical services to our organization?					

e. Identify backup people, in the event the key player is unable to engage with our organization for an extended period of time?				
f. Other considerations:				

Part 2: Considering Impacts of Viral Outbreaks on Your Organization Section B: Impact to Our Supply Chain		
Questions for Consideration	**Items Identified in Response to Question**	**Action Steps: What next steps should we take to improve our resilience?**
Viral Outbreak Affecting Animals		
1. What animal-based products are critical inputs to our business? What action steps do we need to take to ensure we have a good understanding of the relevance of animal-based products to our business?		
2. How might a viral outbreak affecting the animals identified in #1 above *directly* impact our core business (e.g., a virus affecting cattle directly impacts entities in the restaurant or grocery industry)? What action steps could we take now to mitigate that potential impact?		
3. How might a viral outbreak affecting the animals identified in #1 above *indirectly* impact our core business (e.g., a virus impacting chickens may cause the price of eggs to increase for businesses that purchase premade bakery items from a vendor)? What action steps could we take now to reduce that potential impact?		
4. How might a viral outbreak affecting a particular animal directly impact key customers, suppliers or other key partners in our region? What economic challenges might that pose for our organization and others in our area (e.g., a viral outbreak affecting birds who migrate to our area of the country create large-scale concerns for the health and safety of our geographic region)? What action steps could we take now to reduce the potential impact?		

Part 2: Considering Impacts of Viral Outbreaks on Your Organization Section B: Impact to Our Supply Chain *continued*		
Questions for Consideration	**Items Identified in Response to Question**	**Action Steps: What next steps should we take to improve our resilience?**
Viral Outbreak Affecting Plants		
5. What plant-based products are a critical inputs to our business? What action steps do we need to take to ensure we have a good understanding of the relevance of plant-based products to our business?		
6. How might a viral outbreak affecting the plants identified in #4 above <u>directly</u> impact our core business (e.g., a virus affecting pine trees directly impacts lumber for entities in the construction industry)? What action steps could we take now to reduce that potential impact?		
7. How might a viral outbreak affecting the plants identified in #4 above *<u>indirectly</u>* impact our core business (e.g., a virus impacting cotton may affect the production of clothing for entities in the apparel industry)? What action steps could we take now to reduce that potential impact?		
8. How might a viral outbreak affecting a particular plant *<u>directly</u>* impact key customers, suppliers or other key partners in our region? What economic challenges might that create for our organization and other kinds of organizations in our area (e.g., a viral outbreak affecting different agriculture crops grown in our area of the country create large-scale concerns for the health and safety of our region of the country)? What action steps could we take now to reduce the potential impact?		

PART 3: ENHANCING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SURVEILLANCE TECHNIQUES

Virologists engage in ongoing surveillance activities to monitor indicators that an emerging pathogen may be lead to a significant virus-triggered event. The goal of surveillance is to keep an eye on emerging signals that might suggest viruses are emerging.

The concept of surveillance has applications that extend well beyond activities to monitor the potential of a virus. Surveillance of multiple sources of potential business disruptions, such as emerging economic trends, geopolitical shifts and competitor moves, can position the leadership team to address emerging risks before they occur. For example, businesses that proactively monitor anticipated shifts in customer demographics are in a better position to proactively prepare for changes in customer market conditions.

Part 3: Enhancing Your Organization's Surveillance Techniques		
Questions for Consideration	**Items Identified in Response to Question**	**Action Steps: What next steps should we take to improve our resilience?**
1. What ongoing activities does our organization's leadership team use to surveil emerging risks that could significantly impact our business? What actions can we take to strengthen our surveillance of emerging risks of all types?		
2. How often does our leadership team engage in structured discussions about insights provided by our surveillance of emerging risks? What actions can we take to improve these conversations?		
3. Who leads our organization's surveillance of emerging risks? What actions can we take to strengthen that leader's efforts?		