



March 20, 2020

## **PREPARING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY FOR COVID -19**

In preparation for Covid-19 and the impact it will have on our business community the St. Kitts Nevis Chamber of Industry and Commerce wishes to provide some recommendations to help your business in planning. Preparedness over panic is key!

We urge businesses to review the following and take the necessary precautions where needed:

### **1. Restructuring of your workplace and workforce:**

- Consider adjusting your workforce in the form of staggered working hours, a shift system, or working from home.
- Schedule staff on vacation so human resources are in place when the economy bounces back.
- Reduce your opening hours to accommodate decline in economic activity.
- Try to have employees positioned 4 feet apart in work settings.

### **2. Reduce Unnecessary Operational Expenses:**

Evaluate your current business expenses and brainstorm ways to reduce your expenditure. Identify which expenses are not essential to your operation and temporarily suspend or terminate them.

- Reduce usage of utilities like electricity and water to save on costs.
- Engage employees in other tasks that are usually contracted from outside (i.e. cleaning/landscaping ...)

### **3. Leverage Technology:**

- Dependent on your business model consider the option of setting up your business to accommodate employees working from home.
- To reduce face to face meetings in a group setting conduct video conferencing using various online platforms.

### **4. Healthy and Safety in the workplace :**

- For all businesses ensure that sanitizing stations are made available to staff and customers, staff lunchrooms, and restrooms.
- Routine practice of disinfecting common areas and workspaces is key.
- Ensure anyone feeling ill or showing symptoms of being ill stays home and contacts their medical provider.
- Promoting corporate and individual compliance to the health and safety requirements must be emphasized.
- Washing hands for 20 seconds frequently in all work settings is a must.
- Use nonphysical greetings and avoid hand shaking. Maintain social distancing.

## 5. **Education and Information Dissemination to Management and Employees** -

- Set up a reliable system for smooth and steady flow of information through the workplace. E.g. set up WhatsApp group to provide regular updates, email and telephone.
- Establish protocols for sick employees and advise them who to contact if they will not be at work.
- Encourage employees to only rely on news from credible sources. If it does not come from an official and credible source, it is not to be shared.
- Discourage your employees from sharing “fake news”. Fake news will be the source of fear and panic which is not needed at this time.
- Practice tuning into your trusted local radio and TV broadcast to keep up to date daily.

As you set in motion to prepare your business for the economic effects of Covid-19 the SKNCIC encourages Owners, Managers and Supervisors to be mindful of their leadership role. Whilst we plan for change in our work environment it is extremely important we do so with calm and order. Communication is key between all stakeholders and we encourage collaboration amongst our Membership. Managing your resources at this time is crucial. We all need to play our part during this time to ensure ourselves, our families and our business is prepared.

On behalf of the St. Kitts Nevis Chamber of Industry and Commerce we encourage you to  
“Be Informed, Be Prepared, Be Smart, Be Safe”.