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Scott Alvord

Another View

## Essential checklist for business owners



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many business owners ask me this question. Many employees also don't know. Hopefully you've checked and hopefully you've told them.

Do you already know what will be expected of your business sector when you open? For most business sectors, it won't be business as usual. There will be heavy restrictions placed on each sector in the first stage they are opening. Waiting until the last minute will find you sorely unprepared and will either delay your opening or possibly get you closed back down again. The county website has the details with customized checklists for each sector.

Do you have protocols worked out for your business? In most cases, they'll be required. The county has sample protocols for you to use and customize. I know a lot of staff in our city and the county worked hard on these protocols. You'll definitely want to know them well ahead of time so you can open quickly when it's time.

Do you have modified signage ready for your business about physical spacing requirements and other protocols that are required for your staff and guests? There are numerous great printing companies that are ready to serve you - but you better plan ahead because those who didn't prepare will be waiting in a long queue. The county has pre-designed signage you can use too.

Do you have PPE (personal protective equipment) required for your staff? This usually includes hand sanitizer and masks and possibly face shields in some cases. These are still in short supply and at each stage, they will become locally scarce as the unprepared rush to get them. Do you have yours ordered already? Thanks to a donation by Adventist Health, the Roseville Volunteer Force can help you with some masks for your business to hold you over until your order comes in. You did order a good supply, right?

Are you in touch with your staff? Don't expect to notify them only a few days out that they are supposed to show up for work. What if they used their time off to find a different job? What if they are not wanting to come back this soon? Do you have enough staff ready for when it's estimated that your sector will open up? Do you need to start doing some interviews? Should you give a few of your key employees a phone call so they know your intentions? They're going to ask you some questions about how they handle unemployment, etc. Do you have a state website link for them?

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and you might be able to help them out too.

Is your marketing ready to go? You can't expect your customers to know when you open back up for business if you don't tell them. Do you have all of your graphics, ads, specials and whatever else your entrepreneurial spirit has been dreaming of during these months of shutdown ready to go? Early bird gets the worm! Get an edge on the competition by being ready to hit the ground running! If you don't grab your customers back, someone might beat you to it.

Do you have the opening checklist ready? Things like starting up the supply deliveries again, setting the thermostats for operating hours again (you did remember to turn them off or down while you were gone, right?), reprogramming the security system, moving furniture and other stuff to accommodate the new distancing requirements (you can go do that ahead of time), and all those other little things you discontinued to go into a temporary mothball status.

< business consultant who works with businesses frequently, I can tell you that business owners who think about these things ahead of time tend to be the most successful business owners in their sectors, even when difficult things are happening in spite of them. Those who do not prepare tend to be the most stressed-out owners and, honestly, tend to complain the loudest about what is happening "to" them.

If you remember the fun, excitement and challenge of opening your business for the first time, you can experience a taste of that again if you plan ahead. You've got this!

*Scott Alvord holds an MBA-MCA degree from Sacramento State University and serves on the Roseville City Council. In his spare time, he runs Advanced Development Concepts, is an adjunct business professor at William Jessup University, and chairs the Placer County Economic Development Board.*