

# Post-Pandemic Planning

## *Office Reoccupation Considerations*

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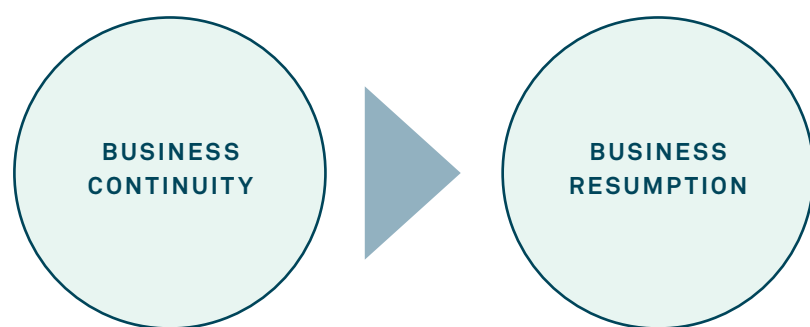
Countries and organizations worldwide are becoming accustomed to a new reality in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions prescribed to contain the pandemic are forcing organizations to consider an array of future work strategies to protect the wellbeing and safety of employees, clients, vendors and other stakeholders. Like many other organizations, CIBC Mellon is prepared to continue to carry out business and client service activities in a majority-remote working stance for an extended period<sup>1</sup>.

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1. For CIBC Mellon's current status, refer to [www.cibcmellon.com/covid19](http://www.cibcmellon.com/covid19)

Public Health authorities continue to monitor the progression and spread of COVID-19, and revise their guidance concerning requirements and considerations for businesses looking to reoccupy or re-open their facilities and offices. As authorities reevaluate their guidelines, organizations and their employees must navigate dissimilar challenges, variations in consumer demands, regulatory changes, technology interruptions, a uncertain market and business environment. Businesses need ways to recover as they undergo a resiliency test while redefining normalcy in preparation for a return-to-office in a post-pandemic world.

As a trusted asset servicing provider administering more than C\$2 trillion of assets held on behalf of banks, pension plans, investment funds, corporations and other institutional investors, CIBC Mellon understands the importance of resiliency for our employees and our clients. Similar to businesses globally, we are preparing for a sustainable, conservative, and risk-mitigated return to office. We are pleased to share several considerations to assist clients in their assessments and planning.



#### **FROM BUSINESS CONTINUITY TO BUSINESS RESUMPTION**

Careful and thoughtful planning captured in a Business Resumption Plan can help an organization more effectively coordinate and potentially even accelerate recovery efforts. A Business Resumption Plan identifies necessary and desired services, facilitates timely and effective resumption activation protocols, and determines resource and supporting facility requirements of space, proximity and function. Typically, an organization's existing strategic planning framework can be put into service to create a Business Resumption Plan.

Creating a resumption plan may also provide a valuable shared forum for discussion – or maybe even be a requirement imposed by landlords, regulators, Boards or other stakeholders before the reoccupation of your offices.

We recommend utilizing the 5 P's of the Strategy listed in Preparing Your Business for a Post-Pandemic World<sup>2</sup>, a Harvard Business Review publication. **These 5 P's include:**

- **Plan:** An essential element in the strategy formulation process that iterates various bounce-back options for the organization.
- **Position:** An aspect of strategy that allows organizations to explore their place within the new environment and develop a competitive advantage.
- **Perspective:** A strategy relies heavily on its culture. Organizational behaviour and thought processes lend an opportunity to decide what position it will take.
- **Preparedness:** Projects need support, both financial and oversight. The ability to make quality decisions, along with the availability of resources, will determine future successes.
- **Projects:** Business endeavours that organizations undertake to reach their future state. Projects breathe life into an organization's strategy.



**SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO CAPTURING PLANS FOR A RETURN TO PHYSICAL OFFICES:**

1. How are you defining, documenting, and approving your business resumption plan?
2. How will you monitor and adhere to the requirements and guidance of your local health and government authorities?
3. What are the potential impacts to your organization's culture, identity and employee experience—for example, by a sustained move to remote working or by the choices you make amid business resumption – and how will you manage that change?
4. How will your organization retain a competitive advantage or deliver your core value to stakeholders? Will your stance change as a result of new opportunities or threats?
5. How will your organization undertake new projects, and how prepared is it to manage the projects virtually? What projects or efforts will be suspended, cancelled or substantially revised?

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2. <https://hbr.org/2020/04/preparing-your-business-for-a-post-pandemic-world#:~:text=The%20management%20theorist%20Henry%20Mintzberg,pattern%2C%20position%2C%20and%20perspective>



## Plan

### ASSET-BASED APPROACH TO PLANNING


The COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on attitudes, expectations and outlooks among markets, businesses and employees. Organizations continue to face challenges posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic, including the still-unknown economic damage, and a shifting landscape of global relief and reform efforts by governments and central banks.

To focus our efforts at CIBC Mellon, we have adopted an asset-based outlook plan to more effectively utilize our corporate assets across a wide array of possible financial and non-financial scenarios. An asset-based approach<sup>3</sup> was first introduced within the context of community development and is underpinned by communities identifying and mapping available assets. This asset-based approach has since been adopted by businesses and has been used to develop sustainable business resumption strategies driven by the organizations. Utilizing assets to their full potential positions an organization to better serve clients and stakeholders in the current and the post-pandemic environment.

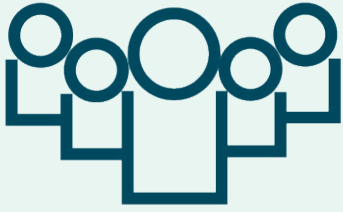
Adopting a sustainable strategy begins with identifying an organization's "engines of actions," such as individual talents, available capital, systems, and leadership capacity. Next, interdependencies are mapped out within each engine of actions. Ernst & Young's (EY) publication titled, Optimize Your Organization's High-Value Asset Identification Capability, suggests a simultaneous "top-down" and "bottom-up" approach to mapping these interdependencies. A "top-down" approach utilizes an enterprise-wide perspective on an organization to identify business processes, systems, technology assets, physical assets and more – then working through the assets being protected and backed up. Alternatively, a "bottom-up" approach scans the enterprise through the various business units and departments, tracing information flows to identify dependencies.

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3. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244017706712>



With the interdependencies mapped, the organization may revert to the 5 P's of strategy identified above to guide their sustainable future state planning.



**A Business Resumption Plan** identifies vital, necessary and desired services, facilitates timely and effective resumption activation protocols, and determines resource and supporting facility requirements of space, proximity and function.

#### **PLANNING: PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE**

We anticipate a different employee experience in a post-pandemic world – from increased remote work to reconfigured facilities, including updated health and safety policies that are in compliance with the public health guidelines.

CIBC Mellon has placed a significant focus on the experience and engagement of our employee base – in particular, to capture and understand critical areas of employee concern and attitude – and in turn, working to identify solutions that resonate with our team. We are working to keep the lines of communication open, and to communicate often to all levels of the organization.

Depending on their scale, organizations may choose to engage employees via personal touchpoints such as one-on-one check-ins, direct communication through managers/senior executives, employee surveys and more. Understanding the portion of your employee base that is keen to return to the office versus the portion eager to remain at home should be an integral part of any planning efforts.

CIBC Mellon also recognizes the importance of ongoing and regular feedback. Rather than a single point in time, we have been capturing employee feedback as we move through various planning phases, allowing employees to provide their input on an ongoing basis via MyIdeas, our internal ideation platform, and across multiple surveys. Additional communication strategies utilized at CIBC Mellon include weekly calls within various departments and organization-wide employee calls where our senior executives offer their insights on various topics, such as industry trends and their impact on our business. For urgent communications, particularly outside business hours, we employ our enterprise critical communications platform, enabling two-way communication via automated delivery of email, recorded phone messages and text messages for employees to confirm receipt or affirm their status among several available options.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES

1. How are you capturing feedback?
2. What and when will you communicate?
3. What is the approval process for communication in pandemic events?
4. What will be the frequency of communication, and what channels will be utilized?
5. How will you communicate change within your organization?
6. How does the organization manage communication in the event of a technological breakdown?

Our Business Resumption Plan, similar to our Business Continuity Plan is a document comprised of various scenarios and response models generated by our employees. The plan follows the recommendations and guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO), Public Health Agency of Canada and orders issued by municipal governments. **Furthermore, our Business Recovery Plans considers the following four components:**



STAFF



SPACES



SYSTEMS



SUPPLIES



CIBC Mellon has placed a significant focus on the experience and engagement of our employee base – in particular, to capture and understand critical areas of employee concern and attitude – and in turn, working to identify solutions that resonate with our team.

We encourage organizations considering their return-to-office strategy to utilize the four S's mentioned above to establish safety and employee security. The journey back to the office may begin with organizational leaders considering a phased-in criterion-driven approach which accounts for regulatory directives, employee roles, and employee sentiment. Benefits of a phased-in approach are multifold, including maintaining physical distancing rules and reducing the burden on your cleaning and sanitation crew in managing routine, or enhanced office cleaning and disinfection. Furthermore, this includes split work and limiting the number of team members from a singular department which may further mitigate operational risk.

Enhanced physical distancing guidelines, including marking workstations as off-limits, prohibiting the use of smaller confined spaces such as boardrooms and meeting areas while limiting meeting room occupants, or requiring masks or personal protective equipment (PPE) in certain spaces, may be considered. Other spatial considerations for organizations may include restricting access between various floors, arrow markings to manage traffic to and from washrooms and kitchenettes, and wherever possible to collaborate with their landlords, to designate entrance areas, elevator flows, and stairwell access in case of emergency.

Planning considerations for return-to-office will be incomplete without addressing the need for a thorough inventory check, ensuring proper sanitation supplies like soaps, sanitizers, masks and PPE are readily available. Based on guidelines provided by the World Health Organization and Public Health Agency of Canada, hand sanitizer stations must be readily available at all entry-points and stocked periodically. Face masks usage is also recommended or required in areas where physical distancing is not possible.

**THE RETURN-TO-OFFICE PREPARATION MAY DIFFER BASED ON INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC MANDATES PROVIDED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNING BODIES; HOWEVER, THE GENERAL GUIDELINES TO MINIMIZE THE TRANSMISSION REMAIN THE SAME. THESE GENERAL GUIDELINES INCLUDE:**



Work from  
home in case  
of illness



Physical and  
other means  
of distancing



Hand  
washing



Proper  
respiratory  
etiquette



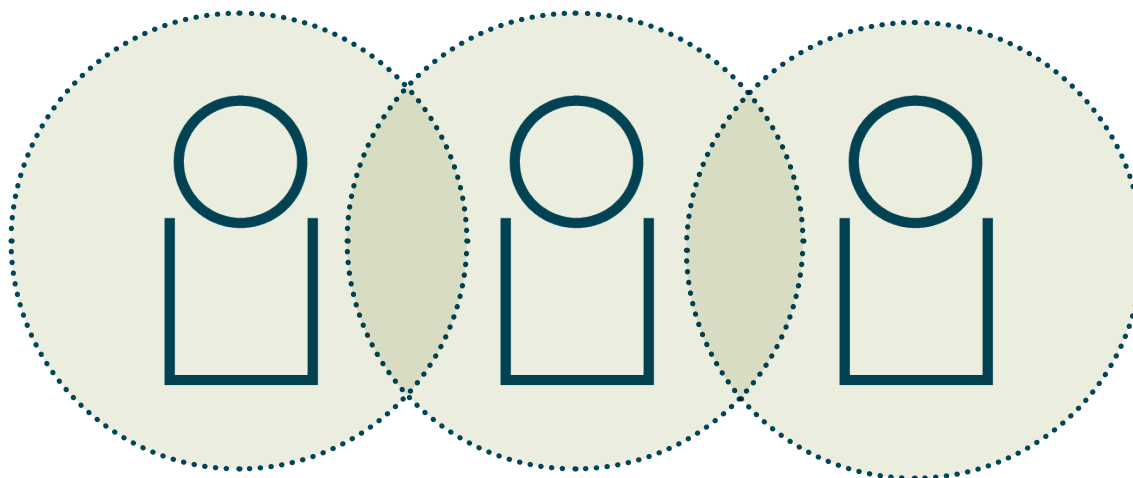
Maintaining  
hygiene  
measures for  
high-touch  
surfaces



While organizations move forward with a risk-mitigated return-to-office strategy, organizations are considering ways of further implementing modes of communication to prepare their employees returning to work, and those who are staying at home. Third-party communication tools may come of additional value should organizations encounter roadblocks to their return-to-office plans.

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER AS YOU PREPARE YOUR FACILITIES FOR EMPLOYEES' RETURN:**

1. Are there local or city requirements to which you must adhere?
2. What is the current layout of your office? Can physical distancing measures be achieved through a reconfiguration of workstations?
3. How will your organization reduce crowding in gathering areas such as lunchrooms and boardrooms?
4. Does your organization have appropriate floor markings or directional signage?
5. How will your organization control and monitor access points? Does this require reconfiguration of your security systems?
6. Does your organization have the ability to reduce frequent touchpoints by installing automated doors and lighting? Are these changes feasible?
7. Does the workplace have restricted entry points and exits that force people to be near and/or pass through high-touch areas (e.g., fingerprint entry, doors and elevators)?
8. Will other building evacuation plans need to be revisited to address the changes to access points? How will these changes be communicated to the employees accessing the site?
9. What enhancements have your landlords performed in advance of your return to give assurance of a safe environment? (e.g., HVAC and filter enhancements, water testing, common area cleaning, visitor management, etc.)



## Preparedness:

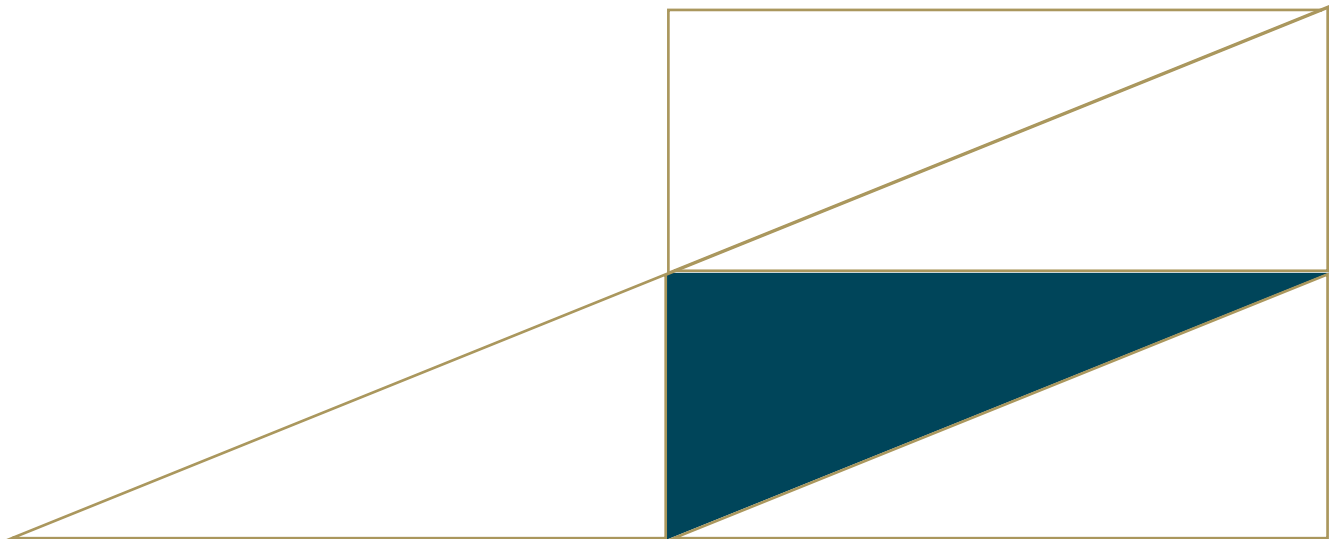
At CIBC Mellon, preparation for a gradual return-to-office includes a focus on workplace design, controlling access points and preparing employees. Adhering to municipal guidelines, we are preparing our facilities by implementing and adapting to enhanced cleaning protocols. Pre-return inspections and mechanical checks will also be completed before building reoccupation.

**We recommend that organizations engage their landlords when identifying dedicated entry and exit points. Landlords may need to enforce restrictions on elevator usage and manage bottlenecks effectively.**

As organizations consider their workplace design, recognizing office traffic patterns and embedding protocols for safety is crucial in risk mitigation. Installing plexiglass barriers may be ideal in the reception areas to reduce the spread. Contactless entry points and clean desks policies may also be applied to minimize touchpoints. A pandemic management protocol developed by Forrester<sup>4</sup> offers guidance to rethinking and managing your physical space.

Preparing for a return-to-office also requires a thorough employee readiness plan. The employee readiness plan tackles strategies and tactics to mitigate employee health and safety concerns. Future uncertainties are shared by employees and organizations alike.

Employees have anxieties about the future of their organizations, their industries' future prospects, and its impact on their livelihoods. Organizations should focus on their employees' experiences from a work-life balance perspective to help employees through the turbulent, stressful and unpredictable return to the office. Organizations may also benefit from understanding how the pandemic has impacted employee connection to the organization's culture. Working to strengthen employee's morale before can boost recovery programs upon returning to the physical workplace. Successful businesses thrive on motivated workforces, as such leaders should consider investing efforts to rebuild or enhance employee morale and engagement.



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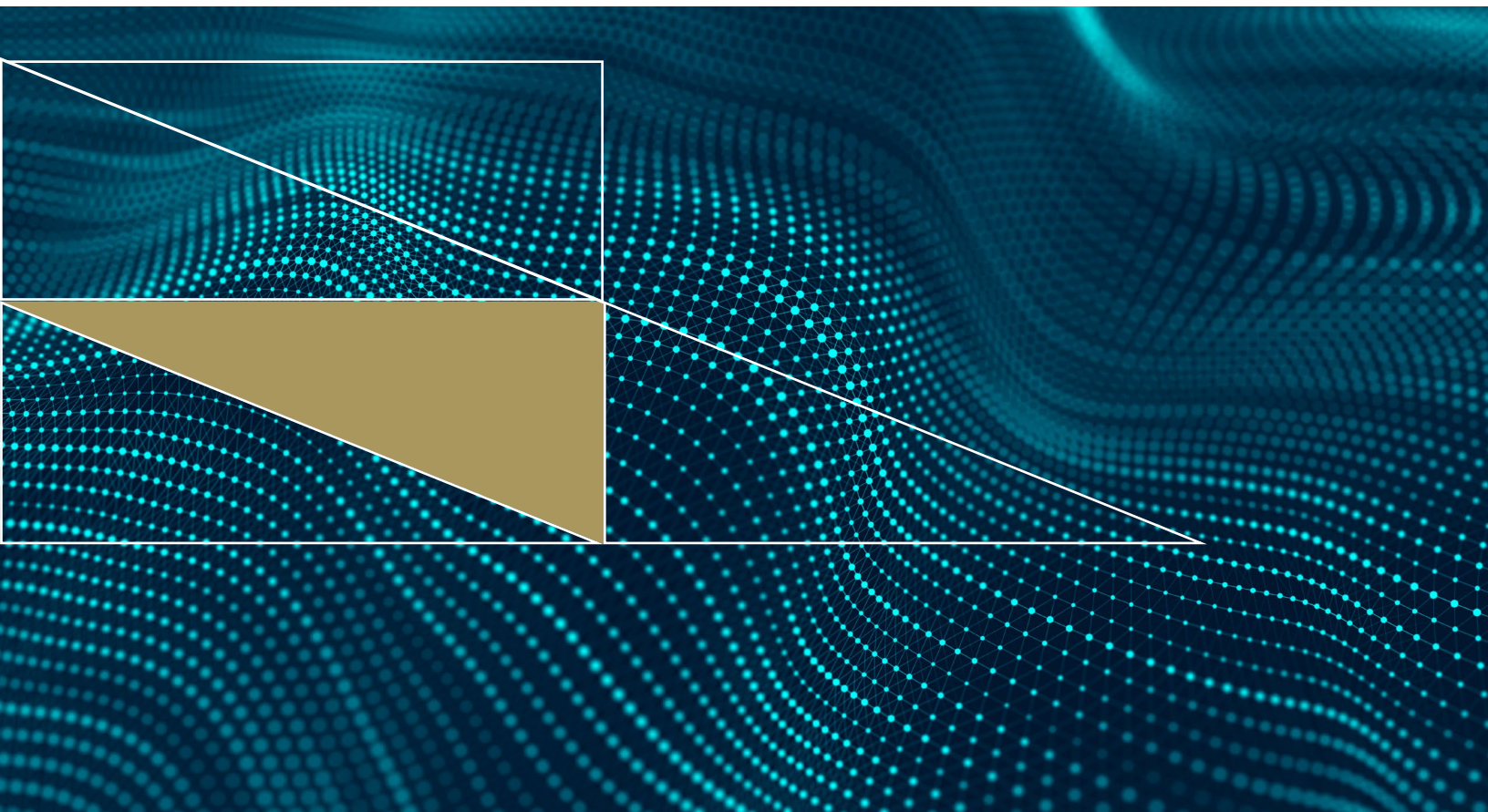
4. <https://go.forrester.com/blogs/managing-your-company-through-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING EMPLOYEES AND BUILDING FOR A RETURN-TO-OFFICE:**

1. What are your landlords' or facility managers' expectations or requirements?
2. How will you determine your return-to-office date?
3. What is the right capacity at which to reoccupy?
4. What will you consider (e.g. service enhancements/risk mitigation/restarting essential physical tasks), what changes need to be made to the physical workspace?
5. Will appropriate training be provided to employees in preparing them for re-entry, including training on any infection prevention policies and protocols put in place or the use of PPE, where applicable?
6. What communications should go out to employees in advance of re-opening to ensure they are notified of changes and have an opportunity to ask questions before re-attending?

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR LANDLORD:**

1. Are there any key regulatory or legal requirements to which we need to address together?
2. Will your landlord complete an in-depth cleaning process in advance of employees' return?
3. How will the cleaning schedule and procedures be implemented once employees are back in the workplace?
4. How will spaces with proximity, such as stairwells, elevator banks and escalators, be managed to facilitate the movement of people while ensuring physical distancing?
5. How will your landlord communicate with you in the event of other tenants' exposure?
6. Has the landlord conduct HVAC sterilization to improve air circulation and ventilation in the workplace?



## Perspective:

Most organizations have worked to respond quickly and effectively to the demands of COVID-19. A survey by the Institute for Public Relations and Peppercomm<sup>5</sup> concluded positively, with 93 per cent of respondents saying their company was effectively handling the current pandemic. Another 89 per cent reported that their company was keeping employees well informed. During the pandemic, positive employee satisfaction is half the victory, and winning the next half depends heavily on managing employees' stressors and reimagining their role within the organization. Understanding employees' attitudes and perspectives will help inform effective change management strategies.

Effective change management strategies begin with employees understanding what the workplace will be like upon their return. Expectations in terms of new workstations and common space use may need to be continually communicated with periodic feedback management. Reinforcing messages about changes designed to help keep employees safe can ease anxiety. Repetition will help employees acknowledge and retain messages and information. To name a few, consider signage that communicates key messages in high traffic areas such as main entrances and restroom facilities.

Realigning employees with an organizations' vision and values is also essential in building employee morale. As rapid changes in conduct occur, organizations must find ways to connect those messages to the corporate vision. Understanding the "why" is a great way to reinforce the "what."

Reliable channels of internal communication are necessary for a successful transition of returning employees. Discussions should aim to address the details of the change and anticipate employee questions, anxieties and concerns. At CIBC Mellon, we have deployed a wide range of communication channels and materials— email, employee portals, text messages, video, virtual live events, a weekly employee Q&A, to manage information flow, while employees work from home. Upon their return-to-office, we will continue to utilize the above channels and digital graphics, posters, and employee packages to increase employee engagement and manage apprehensions.



### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:

1. How are your organizational leaders communicating known and unknown challenges?
2. Who is responsible for ensuring appropriate communication? How frequently will communications occur?
3. How will your organization gather and assess employee feedback?
4. Does your organization utilize rewards and recognition platforms to build employee morale? Is your organization prepared to use rewards and recognition as an engagement tool?
5. How will your organization bridge the communication gap between various teams?
6. What communication tools and technologies are available within your organization?



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5. <https://www.peppercomm.com/survey-on-internal-communications-and-covid-19/>

## Position:

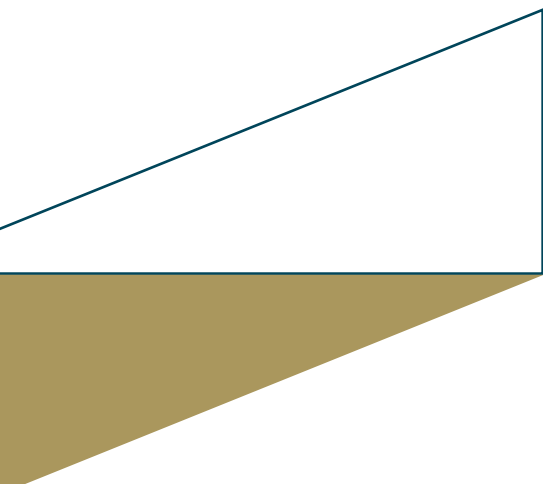
Strategic planning dictates that as organizations prepare for day one of their return and beyond, they must reanalyze their strengths and successes and focus on advancing those to become resilient. Assessment and evaluation of various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, can aid in the formulation of the corresponding strategies, plans, and countermeasures.

As we have seen within our operations and in conversations with many clients, digital business models are here to stay. From contactless ordering and delivery models to subscription business models, the post-pandemic environment will see digital acceleration as a key priority. Businesses have had to innovate themselves to provide continuous availability, workforce mobility, and flexible access to computing and storage for both planned and unplanned events. Indeed, many clients' success in moving their clients and unitholders from physical mail to electronic processes for the receipt of services outsourced to CIBC Mellon has accelerated rapidly.

With digital business models stems the need to collect and analyze data to inform major business decisions. Organizations may find themselves in the market for accurate and rapid forecasting tools as they plan for all possible business scenarios. The desire to strengthen an organization's core competencies while reducing cost has seen a re-emergence of outsourcing processes to providers with suitable scale, focus and resiliency.

**At CIBC Mellon, our global enterprise offers an array of solutions across the investment and operations lifecycle for asset managers, pension plan sponsors, insurance companies and other institutional investors.**

As evidenced throughout the pandemic, the need for timely data has never been more crucial for organizations as they prepare to respond to business challenges and embrace investment opportunities. Across our global enterprise, we have seen clients accelerate their data, analytics and technology approaches, including revisiting decisions about their technology needs for functions performed in-house as well as the array of activities outsourced to service providers. The pandemic has created new challenges, but it has also accelerated the urgency as institutional investors advance their technology and digitization strategies.

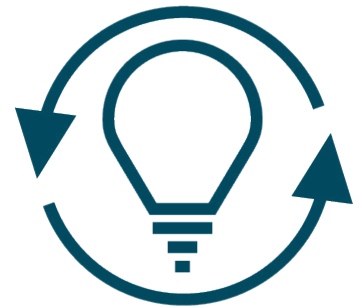




## Projects:

The ongoing developments during the pandemic have been a catalyst for rapid change - the desire to pursue projects that spur innovation is evident.

At CIBC Mellon, we are committed to continuous improvement. In collaboration with our clients and working across our global enterprise, we seek to enhance further accuracy, operational efficiency and leverage ideas to build business solutions in collaboration with our clients. Undertaking innovation amid a global crisis is no simple feat; it requires careful strategic planning and a deep understanding of an organizations' future state requirements. We recommend that businesses continue to monitor their opportunities and threat landscape and make resiliency a priority as they adapt to technological advancements.



### LOOKING AHEAD

Re-opening scenarios across all organizations require a thoughtful, deliberate approach – as well as feedback from relevant stakeholders to help mitigate the threat of further outbreaks. Organizations may need to adapt their current strategies against the backdrop of their business needs and appropriate public health directions and occupational health and safety considerations in the absence of a one-size-fits-all approach.

### WE ENCOURAGE ORGANIZATIONS TO CONSIDER THESE FOUR QUESTIONS<sup>6</sup> WHEN PLANNING FOR A RETURN-TO-OFFICE:

1. How will you develop, maintain and report on your business resumption planning efforts?
2. What will you communicate with your employees, and how will you gather and manage their feedback?
3. What processes, functions or activities will need to be digitized?
4. How will your business change? Are there functions or services you may wish to transition to a provider?

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6. <https://hbr.org/2020/04/preparing-your-business-for-a-post-pandemic-world#:~:text=The%20management%20theorist%20Henry%20Mintzberg,position%2C%20and%20perspective>

Check out our Industry Perspectives Podcast titled [Considerations for Planning a Return to Office](#) featuring Kevin Kondo, Assistant Vice President, Enterprise Security and Muna Al-Joulani, Vice President, HR Relationship Management and Employee Experience.

CIBC MELLON

## *Industry Perspectives*

## Additional Resources

These global and regional resources can help guide reoccupation strategies and proper safety considerations:

- [World Health Organization – Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19](#)
- [CDC – Resources for Businesses and Employers](#)
  - [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
  - [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [Public Health Ontario – Physical Distancing](#)
- [Public Health Ontario – How to Wash your Hands](#)
- [When and How to Wear a Mask – Recommendations for the General Public](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings](#)
- [Public Health Ontario's guideline on how to self-monitor](#)
- [Public Health Ontario's guideline on how to appropriately wash hands](#)



## For more information

CIBC Mellon will continue to update its status at

[www.cibcmellon.com/covid19](http://www.cibcmellon.com/covid19).

Please contact your relationship manager if you would like more information about CIBC Mellon's business continuity or business resumption efforts.

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