
COVID-19 SOCIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST FOR BUSINESS

Businesses around the world are doing all they can to address the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to protecting their staff and customers, they are also redeploying their assets and supply chains to contribute to relief efforts. The Social Purpose Institute produced this checklist of COVID-19 Social Responses as a resource for businesses seeking to play their part. The checklist is based upon a global scan of how businesses, especially social purpose businesses, are responding. Please contact us at engage@socialpurpose.ca if you have suggestions for initiatives we should add to this list. Together we can limit the human, health and economic impacts of the pandemic and foster stronger and more resilient communities and businesses after this is behind us.

Social Purpose Business in the COVID Era

Social purpose companies lead with their purpose to navigate these turbulent times. They are expected to succeed in the aftermath as their values and business models will be more important than ever to customers and stakeholders in future. [Contact us](#) to learn more.

The following list does not include charitable contributions or direct measures to support customers, which are of primary importance.

How to use the Checklist

Gather a group of employees together to review the following ideas and brainstorm solutions that make sense for your business. Most of the ideas below leverage a company's assets, resources and relationships. As you consider this list, identify the assets and capacities of your company that can be repurposed to address a coronavirus issue in your community or broader society.

Checklist

Employees

- Adopt remote work measures
- Offer paid sick leave and emergency COVID-19-related paid leave
- Support employee health and safety, provide dependent care support and hazard pay
- Top-up government wage subsidy
- Offer financial assistance to employees
- Provide continued pay for hourly employees
- Minimize job loss, e.g. shorter workweek, job/shift-sharing, hire employees of another business
- Loan employees to other organizations to help with capacity or expertise, e.g. employees with design, engineering, and health care expertise to increase production of medical equipment
- Offer incentives to employees who buy from local, independent small businesses

Products and Services

- Donate products / provide services for free or at cost
- Innovate and invent new products and services to address societal COVID response needs

Production and Supply Chains

- Redirect production to society's emergency needs (e.g. health supplies and medical equipment)
- Partner with other companies and competitors to increase production capacity for medical equipment and health supplies

Customer Engagement

- Encourage customer donations (e.g. matched giving programs, fund-raising campaigns)
- Help customers get involved with relief efforts
- Provide flexible refund and redemption policies

Logistics and Transportation

- Use logistics and transportation services to deliver medical supplies and equipment to frontline health workers
- Offer free deliveries to let customers stay home

Media and Technology

- Use media channels to provide information, safety, and prevention tips and resources
- Provide free access to technology
- Donate advertising space to governments and NGOs for public service announcements
- Provide researchers free access to high-performance computing resources
- Donate marketing and advertising spend to non-profits, relief organizations and community groups

Surplus Capacity

- Dedicate portion of parking lots for mobile testing centres
- Donate surplus capacity (e.g. space, rooms, etc.)
- Redirect surplus raw materials (e.g. food, fabric) to organizations facing shortages

Financial Support

- Provide cashflow relief and early payments to small suppliers to help them with financial liquidity
- Extend credit to small-scale retail customers
- Provide payment relief options to customers

Addressing Negative Human Responses

- Challenge price gouging on essential goods
- Introduce measures to limit hoarding
- Combat misinformation and fake news

Collaboration and Advocacy

- Join other companies in collective responses for greater impact
- Advocate via industry associations and directly to government for recovery strategies that accelerate a sustainable future

Target Recipients

Companies are helping the following groups in their COVID Social Response:

- Vulnerable people
- Frontline health care workers
- Small businesses
- Employees
- Researchers
- Schools, teachers, students
- Suppliers
- Customers
- Governments
- NGOs and community groups

The [Social Purpose Institute at the United Way of the Lower Mainland](https://socialpurpose.ca/) is creating a social purpose business movement in Canada and beyond. It offers services to support business leaders, company boards, investors, industry associations and chambers of commerce to advance social purpose in business. Contact us to learn more and join the movement. <https://socialpurpose.ca/>