



THE FEEL-GOOD FACTOR

REASONS FOR BUSINESSES TO BE POSITIVE

The Coronavirus has been a difficult time for the majority of us, and there has been a lot of negative press surrounding the crisis. However, there have been positives that have come about during the pandemic, including customers shopping more locally; people pulling together to help one another or the vulnerable individuals in our communities; and reduced pollution in many areas, including Venice's waters which have become the cleanest in years. And, there are good outcomes that businesses can find during the outbreak.

DRIVING CHANGE

Sales of electric cars have been growing in recent years, and according to global supplier for car manufacturers Jato Dynamics, in April, electric and hybrid cars accounted for 17% of sales across all European markets, including the UK. This is an increase of 10% on the 7% of all European car sales in April 2019.

If you're thinking about switching your business' cars to electric vehicles, now is the time. As of April, there is a zero percent tax on Benefit

in Kind (BIK) payments for company car drivers with electric vehicles. This will then increase to only 1% from April 2021 and 2% in 2022.

POUNDS FOR PEDAL POWER

From cars to the good old-fashioned bicycle. The Government has announced that from June, up to half a million £50 vouchers will be provided to the public to go towards the cost of bike repairs. If your people are able to, or have been thinking about, cycling to work the scheme could help them get their bike in good working order. More details of how people can apply are set to be released soon; when the initiative is off the ground, you or your staff will be able to search for participating cycle shops on the Energy Saving Trust website and apply for a voucher.

LEADERS SEEN IN A GOOD LIGHT

One of the main things that has been highlighted during the COVID-19 outbreak has been the importance of staying connected. A survey conducted by the Institute of Internal Communication found that 76% of respondents feel the

crisis has positively impacted trust in business leaders. The study also found that 92% of respondents found videos and video conference calls an effective way of communicating. To keep your people up-to-date and the conversation going, you may want to consider regular business-wide conference calls from your leadership team.

EMPLOYEES WELCOME FLEXIBILITY

While many offices and businesses are opening their doors again, the latest ONS survey has shown that 38% of people are still working from home. Recruitment firm, Tiger Recruitment, has also conducted a survey during the Coronavirus, which found that 87% of participants said working from home has had a positive impact on how they work, with 52% saying they benefited from more flexibility in their role.

Meanwhile, the CIPD's Health and Wellbeing 2020 Report found that 78% of employees who currently don't have flexible working would like to have the option.

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NOW'S THE TIME TO REVIEW YOUR BUSINESS INSURANCE

It's evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked major change across the commercial landscape, meaning that many businesses have been forced to adapt in order to survive.

Despite many businesses across the nation having been given the green light to reopen their doors, many aspects we once considered 'normal' will remain different for some time to come and perhaps, irreversibly.

With this in mind, it's important that as a business owner, you take the time to speak to your insurer or broker to ensure that your current business insurance policy is still relevant.

If you've reduced your cover in reaction to a temporary period of closure, it's essential that you reinstate this back to a suitable level prior to opening up for business. You will also need to consider the changes that you've made to your current operation in order to adjust your cover to match your current requirements.

PREPARING AGAINST FUTURE WAVES OF CORONAVIRUS

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most of us had never experienced anything comparable before, which meant that preparing for such an event wasn't a high priority. While pandemic insurance has been available in past, it wasn't something that many businesses would have opted for due to the perceived low level of risk and high premiums.

In recent weeks, we have seen some countries battling to contain new incidents of infections

rising in localised areas. While we've come a long way in terms of track and trace methods, medical developments and protecting the NHS from overcrowding, these measures seemingly allow us to better handle a second wave rather than to prevent one. Even though it's hoped that any future outbreaks can be handled by region, rather than by putting restrictions on the entire nation, this could still cause significant disruption to many businesses in the coming months and even years.

So, what is the insurance industry doing to help businesses better equip themselves against future pandemic-related incidents? In a bid to develop a long-term solution, British Insurance Brokers' Association (Biba) has recently backed a concept named 'Pandemic Re', which has seen top insurance bosses work with government-backed terrorism reinsurance fund Pool Re to develop a similar cover for pandemics. This aims to provide mass support to businesses who have experienced interruption as a consequence of the pandemic, without putting excess strain on the insurers.

Want to know more about what you can do to safeguard your business both now and in the future? Make sure to get in touch with your insurer or broker as soon as possible.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CYBER SECURITY

What do Easy Jet, T Mobile and Honda have in common? They have all been subject to cyber-attacks during or just before the Coronavirus pandemic.

And, it's not just the big companies that are at risk, cyber criminals are also targeting SMEs. A study at the University of Maryland found there is a hacker attack on average every 39 seconds. With many people still working from home and others now returning to offices and factories, the threat of being hacked is very real.

TYPES OF CYBER THREATS

- **Phishing emails** are where hackers try to con you by sending you an email from a company or individual known to you. Their aim is usually to get you to click on a link, which takes you to page where they will ask for personal or account information. If you're not expecting an email from someone that contains a request to click on a link, it is always worth calling them to see if the email is legitimate.
- **Ransomware** is a type of malicious software designed to deny access to a computer system or data until a ransom is paid. Attachments are often sent in phishing emails, asking you to download the file; once downloaded, the hackers take over the victim's machine.
- **Man-in-the-middle (MitM) or hijack attacks** are like a virtual eavesdropping. A hacker will intercept communications between two parties; they then send or alter communications from one person to another, so both parties believe them to be genuine exchanges. For example, you could be sending account details to a client for them to make a payment but, in a MitM attack, a hacker would interrupt this and send the customer their account details for them to pay the money into.
- **Denial-of-Service (DoS) attacks** shut networks or websites down, so that the users that need to access the site cannot do so. Hackers do this by flooding the system with traffic or by sending information that crashes it. They can cost businesses time and money to sort out, and in some instances, hackers may try to extort a company for money to get the system back up and running.

CYBER AND WORKING FROM HOME

A study by OpenVPN revealed that 90% of IT professionals believe remote workers are not secure. This could be because environments are not controlled when employees are using their own WiFi connections, as they don't have the security of

office-based networks. They may also be using their own personal devices to access work files or information instead of ones that are set up with company policies and security.

If you haven't already, you might want to think about implementing a Virtual Private Network (VPN) server for your business; they provide a secure connection between your employees' computer and company files and drives. What this then does is prevents criminals from spying on or hacking into any messages, documents or data.

CYBER AND RETURNING TO WORK

If you're opening your doors once more, now that Government guidelines are allowing businesses to start up again, it is wise to do a thorough scan and check of your networks and devices. If your system hasn't been monitored regularly while your premises were shut, hackers could have compromised it or breached your people's or company's passwords, simply lying in wait for you to return to instigate a ransomware or DoS attack.

GET CYBER COVER

According to RSA, 52% of businesses think they have cyber cover, but in reality less than 10% actually do. During these unprecedented times, criminals have seen this as a window of opportunity, making companies more vulnerable than ever before. As your broker, we want to help you, your people and business stay protected at all times. Just as you would insure your building and machinery, it's equally vital that you have cyber insurance.

- Avoid clicking webpage links in any emails that relate to the coronavirus. Report these to your IT team and go to the relevant website independently.
- Make sure your password hasn't already been breached and encourage your staff to do the same. You can check your password using this link: haveibeenpwned.com/passwords
- Only visit trusted websites, don't visit sites from businesses you've never heard of. Check the spelling of website names or, better still, access them via your 'favourites'.
- Be very careful where payments and donations are concerned – if you're unsure then visit the website directly and only donate to reputable sources.
- Accessing organisational data or your work email from a personal device comes with a high risk. With this in mind, reiterate to your people that using personal devices should be avoided.



HOW TO KEEP YOUR WORKPLACE HEALTHY AND HYGIENIC

If you've reopened the doors of your business or are gearing up to start your operations up again, the health and hygiene of your people and workplace will no doubt be high in your mind. Offices and working environments can be a breeding ground for germs, bacteria and viruses, and making sure they are clean has never been so crucial.

The COVID-19 pandemic has understandably caused stress for many people, and the thought of going back to work could be making some of your people feel anxious. It's equally as important to make sure you're looking after your employees' wellbeing as well.

We've put together our top tips for how you can keep your staff happy and healthy and protect them from the Coronavirus.

ASSESS THE RISKS

As an employer, it is your duty to protect your people. Prior to reopening, the HSE advises carrying out a risk assessment to identify where any hot spots that the virus could be transmitted are. You also want to ensure that your waste management has been reviewed, as measures for managing potentially contaminated waste will need to be taken into account.

DO A DEEP CLEAN

Once you've carried out your risk assessment, before you welcome your staff back, it's time to do a deep clean of all the areas and facilities in your office or factory, including any heating and air conditioning units.

GET A ROUTINE IN PLACE

Don't forget that COVID-19 can stay on surfaces for up to 72 hours. The HSE states that you need to make sure surfaces are kept clean, so now you've done a deep disinfect, it's important to implement a regular cleaning routine based on good practice, which is at least once a day. As part of this, it's worth identifying the areas and equipment in your workplace that will be in continuous use, including desks and workstations; door and cupboard handles; chairs; light switches; phones; computers, mice and keyboards; touchscreens; lift buttons; and bannisters on stairs to ensure these places remain hygienic. Implementing a disinfecting routine

can help to eliminate the spread of the virus; this may need to be carried out throughout the working day or in-between shifts.

In shared areas, such as kitchens and staff canteens, special considerations may be needed in terms of hygiene and cleaning. You may want to consider closing these areas off to avoid cross contamination.

ESTABLISH A SOCIAL DISTANCE FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Remember, don't just think about spaces where COVID-19 could be spread, such as communal areas, work situations, such as your production line, also need to be considered. You may need to re-evaluate your workspace to ensure it is social distance friendly, and your people are kept one metre apart at all times. The HSE suggests using screens to create a physical barrier between your employees, as well as having them work side-by-side rather than face-to-face.

The HSE also advises staggering arrival and departure times, so that people are not using entry and exit points at the same time. You might also want to consider implementing rotas or shifts to limit the amount of people in your workplace at any given time. Placing stickers or tape on the floor one metre apart and signs around the workplace can act as a reminder for your employees to comply with social distancing rules.



ALL HANDS ON DECK

It's likely that your staff are used to washing their hands for 20 seconds (or to the tune of Happy Birthday in their head) by now. However, there are things that the HSE advises you can do to create a good hygiene practice in your workplace:

- **Provide handwashing and drying facilities, so employees can wash their hands as they arrive and leave work (provide hand sanitiser where this is not possible)**
- **Strategically place hand sanitiser in high-volume areas in addition to bathrooms**
- **Provide hand sanitiser nearby for people getting in and out of vehicles or handling deliveries, if they are unable to wash their hands**
- **Set clear guidance for the use and cleaning of toilets, showers and changing facilities to make sure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible**
- **If equipment like tools or vehicles are shared, then clean them after each use**
- **Put up posters that remind your staff of the importance of washing their hands (The HSE and WHO both have guides on hand washing that you can print out).**

You might also want to think about encouraging your staff to pitch in and help with keeping everything clean on a regular basis.

CREATE A TALKING CULTURE

As well as ensuring your people are following your hygiene protocols, it's just as important to make sure you're looking after their mental health. Create a culture where your staff feel they can talk to their managers or colleagues if they're struggling. You could look at carrying out one-to-ones with members of staff as they return, so they know they can express their concerns.

Some of your people may feel uncomfortable speaking about how they feel and may want to stay anonymous. You might want to consider adopting an employee assistance programme where your staff can access third-party impartial advice and guidance.

For more information on health and hygiene in the workplace, we'd advise visiting the HSE website on www.hse.gov.uk.

DISCLAIMER: Please note, this article is not a comprehensive list of all the practices and processes you need to implement. It is for guidance only.