



GLOBAL COMPACT AGAINST COVID-19

A GUIDE FOR CEO'S AND LEADERS

How to lead in the Covid-19 crisis



Global Compact
Network Brazil

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The moment to act against the pandemic is now. As a leader, you have an essential role in this struggle, acting in a responsible, supportive and flexible way in the face of the challenges brought by the current crisis.

The COVID-19 outbreak, caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, has changed in a very meaningful way people's daily lives around the world. The rapid spread of the virus represents a major challenge to the governments, health systems and companies - and the prospect that the proliferation of COVID-19 is yet to reach its most acute phase in Brazil makes it crucial the need to act in order to reduce its contagion capacity.

Companies are at the heart of these efforts – both because they are directly affected by the consequences of COVID-19, that have been causing troubles in the supply, distribution and consumption chains, and because of their responsibility to limit the risks of contagion among its employees, clients and others. Furthermore, they are also vulnerable to the probable mid-term consequences that will be caused by the pandemic – such as a possible global economic downturn.

The purpose of this summarised Guide for CEOs and Leaders from the Global Compact Network Brazil is to reinforce some of the crucial cautions so that companies can overcome this difficult moment with minimal negative impacts on their teams and their operations. It also pursues to warn the main leaders about the responsibility of their organizations towards society, that can live a highly critical situation in the coming months. These measures must always be in accordance with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, which mark the fundamental issues in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

The coming weeks and months will be crucial for the world to overcome the obstacles brought by COVID-19 – and it will only be possible if we help each other. Between people, between companies or between governments, solidarity is an essential concept for us to protect each other.

Work environment

- To reduce the spread of COVID-19, people should stay in their homes. Therefore, companies and organizations can develop policies for employees, interns and outsourced employees. Ensuring non-presential ways in which they can continue to pursue their activities, such as home office, is an efficient measure that can be helpful at the moment.
- The employees awareness about the ways of transmission, dissemination, as well as hygiene and behaviour guidelines is essential.
- For employees who cannot work remotely, hygiene of workplaces shall be guaranteed, with the cleaning of surfaces that can harbour the virus and facilitate the contagion, and access to products like alcohol gel and protective masks. A particular care must be taken concerning collective equipments, such as doorknobs, telephones and machines. Besides that, these employees shall receive the necessary hygiene and behaviour guidelines about new ways to do their job, avoiding contagion.
- Regular contact between managers and their teams are useful to keep the teams properly informed and to avoid rumors or fake news.
- The company must observe the psychological impact of the situation on the employees and offer support measures.
- Employees that have symptoms of COVID-19, who work in areas where it is not possible to do their work from their home office, must stay at home, resting. The same applies to employees who need to help their relatives.
- Measures such as reduction in working hours and granting paid time off to employees in high risk groups (the elderly or people with chronic diseases) should be encouraged.
- In line with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, the measures aimed at the employees must be adopted without any discrimination by race, color, social origin, gender, etc.
- Employees business trips must be canceled, opting for secluded operation alternatives.
- In case of anticipation of days off or concession of vacation, it is necessary that employees are not harmed financially - which can leave them in a vulnerable situation during the pandemic. However challenging, the efforts of the company to reduce the economic impact due to COVID-19 should not be done at the expense of workers' rights.

Meetings

- Face to face meetings must be avoided, in order to restrict the spread of the virus, not only because of the contact among participants in the meeting place, but also because of the need to move, which increases the chances of contamination. Video conferencing options and other types of communication technology should be encouraged.
- The impacts of the spread of COVID-19 on various activities have increased people's degree of uncertainty regarding previously scheduled appointments. It is important to keep in touch with the participants through online meetings, keeping them updated on whether they will have a meeting or not.
- More complex events, such as workshops, training or classes, can also be performed in the virtual environment, without affecting the content to be shared and in a safe way for all the people involved.

Planning

- It is necessary for the company to establish a business continuity planning in a scenario defined by the spread of COVID-19. This planning should consider ways to reduce activity in enabling environments regarding the contagion of employees, clients and other.
- Likewise, it is important to establish a way to guarantee the centralization of the decisions, by creating a crisis committee or risk management. Therefore, it will be possible to assess the situation daily, and take the necessary measures quickly.
- Whether the company has an administrative or advisory council, it must constantly analyze the matter, through weekly or fortnightly meetings.
- Flexibility is the keyword in this period. The company must be prepared to respond, in a fast and efficient way, to the situations that may appear over time.
- It is also important to analyze the impact that the reduction of the company's activities will have on its financial sustainability, and pursue ways to deal with this issue - renegotiating contracts or loans, for example.
- The liquidity is fundamental to maintain the business. Stress tests, based on some created scenarios, are necessary to evaluate the required measures in each situation.
- Depending on the company's activity, the continuity of its operations might be essential to serve people during the crisis - in the case of, for example, food supply and medical care.
- Contingency plans must consider beyond profit, the financial sustainability and the social role of the company - maintaining jobs, avoiding the increase in prices of products and services that support the community.

Responsibility for the value chain

- The value chain is an essential item for the business continuity of any organization. Thus, in its action plan, consider this stakeholder when defining and prioritizing the actions that will be carried out.
- Evaluate the impact of the containment measures and figure out how your company can support the smaller ones, contributing for the permanence of the operations of these companies for the moment.
- Analyze the needs of your main suppliers and the kind of support that could be relevant and meaningful at this time.

Responsibility to society

Aware of the importance of acting in this critical moment, companies from diverse sectors are looking for ways to contribute to society in the fight against COVID-19:

- In Brazil, Ambev has announced the donation of 500 thousand alcohol gel bottles for public hospitals. The company will use its own beer production line, and will provide the bottling of PET bottles and the distribution logistics.
- GPA (Grupo Pão de Açúcar) started offering, from 6 to 7 o'clock, exclusive service for people over 60 years old.

- In The USA, biotech and pharmaceutical companies are working with health authorities of the country in the vaccine development and other products to fight COVID-19.
- Google has announced that it will allow free access to some of the features it offers for conference calls, while Microsoft is offering a six months trial license for Microsoft Teams.
- Starbucks has established a policy which allows that any employee who was infected with the virus or has been exposed to anyone infected, will have the right to 14 days of full remuneration during their isolation period.
- In Italy, one of the countries most affected by COVID-19, Giorgio Armani, an Italian luxury fashion house, has donated US\$ 1,43 million to hospitals and civil protection actions.
- Other companies have chosen to contribute to funds, like the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP), which adds information about activities and resources necessary to healthcare organizations around the world - including the World Health Organization.

Corporate communication

- The company must be as clear as possible, favoring brief and fact-based messages.
- The communication of the company must cover all its target public: employees, outsourced, suppliers, customers, investors, shareholders, etc. It is important to approach the subjects related to each one of them, so interaction and contribution can be possible, allowing an exchange of information and perceptions about the matter and its possible consequences.
- Communication must be focused, in order to avoid the eventual spread of incorrect or partial information.
- It is always necessary to communicate what the company has been effectively doing to contain the spread of COVID-19, to establish homogeneity of information and reassure the different stakeholders.

Organizations involved in combating COVID-19

- Oswaldo Cruz Foundation: portal.fiocruz.br/
- Johns Hopkins University - Global Monitoring: gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6
- Brazilian Ministry of Health - The Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP): plataforma.saude.gov.br/novocoronavirus/
- Brazilian Ministry of Health: coronavirus.saude.gov.br/
- United Nations (UN) – USA: un.org/en/coronavirus
- World Health Organization (WHO): who.int/countries/usa/en/
- Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO): paho.org/hq/index.php?lang=en
- Brazilian Health System (UNA-SUS): unasus.gov.br/especial/covid19
- VHL Regional Portal: bvsalud.org/en/



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