

RE-EMERGENCE GUIDE

BUILDING SMALL BUSINESS RESILIENCE



In partnership with



RESILIENCE FIRST



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FACEBOOK

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Resilience First is a not-for-profit membership organisation which has the aim of advancing resilience in business communities and societies.



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CONTENTS

Introduction to Business Resilience and Re-Emergence	Page 4
Re-emergence	Page 5
Eight pillars to business resilience	Page 6
Purpose and Instructions	Page 7 - 9
Destination and SMART Goals	Page 10 - 11
Prepare	Page 12 - 13
People	Page 14 - 15
Process	Page 16 - 17
Patrons	Page 18 - 19
Profits	Page 20 - 21
Place	Page 22 - 23
Promotion	Page 24 - 25
Practice	Page 26
Goalsetting Worksheet	Page 27
Resources	Page 28

INTRODUCTIONS TO BUSINESS RESILIENCE AND RE-EMERGENCE



Re-emergence

/rēə'mərj(ə)ns/ | noun

- 1. The process of coming out of something you have entered*
- 2. To enter a state of being seen or known again*

Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our society, communities, small and micro-businesses, the path towards reopening businesses may seem daunting. But you are not alone. Let's build together, plan together, and prepare together.

If you are an owner or manager of a small business, operate a business with no more than 5-10 employees or are a start-up, you might consider this guide as a first step in your journey to building business resilience. In this guide, we'll share some strategies and considerations around business recovery and resilience that may be helpful. Use the Key Priority questions to begin thinking about your business' resilience needs.

Times of change can also be opportunities to evolve and optimise capabilities, create more effective operating models, develop a strong culture of trust and transparency, engage with your customers, and prepare for the next disruption.

This guide is based on a guide created by Facebook's Global Resiliency practitioners and industry experts in crisis management, business continuity, emergency preparedness, and business recovery. Resilience First has adapted the guide for use within the UK market but its central themes are relevant to SMEs globally and can be adopted in other markets.

Eight pillars to business resilience

Emergence will require simplifying your focus so you can make steady progress.

Consider building resilience for your business through the lens of these eight pillars: prepare, people, process, patrons, profits, place, promotion, and practice.

Each of the eight pillars consists of an overarching goal, a checklist of key considerations, and an opportunity to reflect and create action items.

-
- 1. Prepare** – Commit some time, resources and ownership to go through the stages in this guide, to openly and honestly review your business preparedness so you can respond in the best way.

 - 2. People** – Keep your workforce supported and engaged. They are your most critical and valuable supporters.

 - 3. Process** – Adjust to the changing demands of your business operations. Identify what needs to be adjusted to help your business thrive post recovery.

 - 4. Patrons** – Stay connected to your customers by keeping them informed and engaged. Reflect on customer feedback and adapt to new customer behaviours.

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- 5. Profits** – Think about how you can keep your business profitable. Consider your cashflow and adjust the business plan and supply chain, as needed.

 - 6. Place** – Think about any vulnerabilities associated with your physical business environment. Consider any physical security risks specific to your business in tandem with any wider socio-economic risks specific to your geographic location.

 - 7. Promotion** – Seek out promotional assistance to increase your business presence so you are well positioned to move forward.

 - 8. Practice** – Make reviewing your resilience a business-as-usual activity and feed back into any previous actions you have taken.

PURPOSE AND INSTRUCTIONS



This guide provides considerations focused on the following areas:



Prepare

Understand the risks to your business and be ready to build back better.



People

Keep your workforce supported and engaged.



Process

Adjust to the changing demands of your business operations.



Patrons

Know your customers and engage your community.



Profits

Re-evaluate your business model and manage your finances.



Place

Be aware of risks to your business which stem from its physical environment.



Promotion

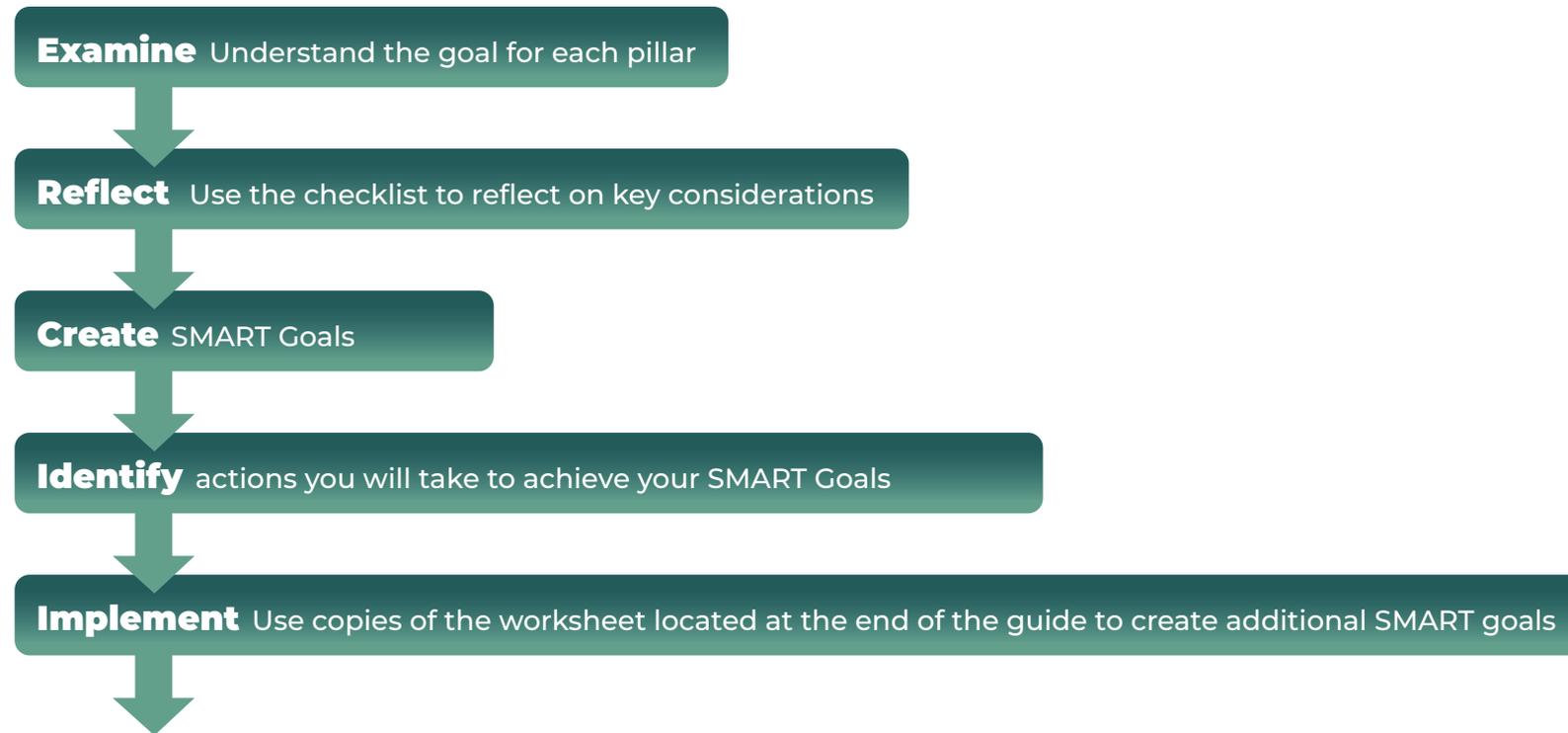
Awareness of promotional opportunities for your business.



Practice

Strengthen your competitive edge through continual monitoring, evaluation and implementation.

Follow these instructions to work towards business re-emergence:



DESTINATION AND SMART GOALS



Destination Goal is the over-arching key goal set for each pillar.

SMART Goal setting which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound, is an effective process for setting and achieving your business goals. Applying the SMART grid to your goals will help you to create more specific, achievable targets for your business, and to measure your progress toward them.

Specific: Goals must be specific in order to be useful. If you don't define what you want to get to, then you can't ever know if you've gotten there.

Question: What needs to be done?

Measurable: It is important to quantify what it is that you want to achieve.

Question: Can it be measured?

Achievable: Goals must be set out with a realistic vision in mind.

Question: Can it be done?

Relevant: Is your goal relevant to your overall business strategy?

Question: Should it be done?

Time-bound: Place a timeline on everything you do or else it's just not going to get done.

Question: When will it be done?

Keep in mind:

- ▶ Include your team members in the process of making your company goals.
- ▶ Be flexible and prepared to adjust goals when necessary.
- ▶ Don't set unachievable goals; it could lead to team frustration.

PREPARE



Prepare to strengthen your business to help it prosper.

Goal

Grow your understanding of how to build back better.

Key Considerations

- ▶ What information do I need to make an informed recovery plan?
- ▶ Who should take ownership of this process?
- ▶ What have we done in the past?



The Scouts and Brownies have the right idea – preparation is key. Whether it's earning your cooking badge or setting up and growing your business, preparation and planning are time well spent. Business owners will generally plan well for the good times, but the test of true successful preparation is when trading conditions are difficult, and re-emergence needs to be carefully considered.

Take the example of a business in the wine distribution trade which delivered largely to City centre restaurants and bars. Rather than drowning their sorrows in the contents of their cellar, they took stock and planned what would lead to the best outcome on the basis that working from home (hybrid working) was likely to continue for the foreseeable future, thanks to the pandemic. They involved all stakeholders in their business planning so that tough decisions would be understood by staff and key suppliers, and they appointed a person with decision-making authority to oversee the implementation of the plan. As a result, they emerged with a clear view of where they were going and how they intended to get there. Only time will tell if setting up a wine home-delivery service and online wine-tasting sessions was the right decision, but their re-emergence plan will put them in the best possible place to achieve success.

Key Priorities

What information do I need?

- ▶ Do you know who the key people are to help keep the business running?
- ▶ Have you engaged with staff/co-managers/stakeholders about recovery planning?
- ▶ Have you defined supply chain and production risks and what you could do to mitigate those risks?

Who should take ownership of this process?

- ▶ Does this person have a vested interest in the success of the business?
- ▶ Does this person have the resources and access they need to make key decisions to help rebuild the business?
- ▶ What support will I/they need?

What have we done in the past?

- ▶ Has your business done any previous business continuity planning? Can you pick up where it left off?
- ▶ Have you conducted any previous risk and vulnerability assessments?
- ▶ Has there been any developments/changes to your business since you last conducted/thought of conducting a recovery assessment?

PEOPLE



Keep your workforce supported and engaged

Goal

Your people are your greatest supporters. By supporting and engaging with your workforce, you may influence their productivity, motivation, attendance, and retention.

Key Considerations

- ▶ What health and safety actions should be considered?
- ▶ Have you communicated honestly and often about changes and updates to your business?
- ▶ What steps have you taken to create a culture of open communication and trust?



In difficult times businesses often have to take hard decisions. Although these decisions will never be universally popular, it is important to have the buy-in of as many employees as possible. They will feel supported and engaged if you communicate with them regularly and clearly and explain the rationale behind difficult decisions. Although some will only consider their own interests, most will accept with good grace, decisions which seem to be aimed at ensuring the long-term survival and prosperity of the organisation. They will understand that this is the best way of safeguarding the livelihoods of the majority. Encourage your workers to provide feedback on proposals: surveys can demonstrate that views have been taken into account before any final decision is taken. This will increase the level of engagement.

Being as supportive as possible in uncertain times not only makes for a happier workforce but also provides better protection as employment litigation often turns on whether or not people have been treated fairly. (Have you complied with the implied term of trust and confidence?). You may need to ask people to make a financial sacrifice in order to ensure that no-one has to be made redundant, or to lay out plans for a different way of working than usual. The best approach when informing and consulting with staff is to try to see things from their point of view and to communicate as openly as you possibly can.

Key Priorities

What health and safety actions should be considered?

- ▶ What safety guidelines and actions has the local public health agency published? How will these guidelines be communicated to your workforce?
- ▶ Do you have the personal protective equipment necessary for your workforce, such as gloves, masks, plexiglass shields?
- ▶ Can you direct your workforce to resources that will champion wellness, including mental health?
- ▶ Can you consider policy revisions such as adjusting benefits for remote work, sick leave, or emergency family leave to support new demands on employees?

Have you communicated honestly and often about changes and updates to your business?

- ▶ Have you been transparent with your workforce on the current state of the business?
- ▶ Do you provide regular updates on your expectations and priorities?
- ▶ Have you shared your short and long-term business recovery goals with your workforce?

What steps have you taken to create a culture of open communication and trust?

- ▶ Do you have regular meetings with your employees to discuss how they are handling the situation and the resources they might need to be successful?
- ▶ Have you considered asking your workforce to brainstorm new ideas, innovations, and creative solutions to adjust your products or services?
- ▶ Have you created mechanisms to receive constructive feedback?
- ▶ Have you considered ways to recognise your employees for their contributions?

PROCESS

Adjust to the changing demands of your business operations

Goal

Examine and adapt your business operations to help run your business as effectively as possible.

Key Considerations

- ▶ Have you evaluated your business operations?
- ▶ Are your IT operating systems secure?
- ▶ What new strategies can you implement to focus on impact in your business processes?
- ▶ What adjustments can be made to your product/service portfolio to meet emerging market trends?





Recent UK health and safety statistics are alarming. Headlines from 2019/20 declaring '1.6 million working people suffering from a work-related illness' and '£16.2 billion estimated cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions' show health and safety should top every workplace agenda. The priority for UK businesses to achieve health and safety compliance is to maintain a proactive and preventative approach. You must avoid the risk of investigation or prosecution for the failure to address and mitigate reasonably foreseeable health and safety risks, especially since this can result in significant fines and potential imprisonment for senior leaders, managers and directors in the worst cases.

But a business is more than premises, protocols and profits. People are vital. Employers and those in control of premises owe legal obligations to employees (as well as contractors and members of the public) to secure their health, safety and welfare. The recent use of hybrid working shows employers implementing policies and procedures to monitor not only employees' physical health and safety but also their mental health and wellbeing. Your employees should be the greatest supporters of your business. To maintain this, you need to create a strong culture of safety, promote good working practices and engage employees in safety discussions and decision-making processes.

Key Priorities

Have you evaluated your business operations?

- ▶ Is it necessary to adjust staffing requirements and hours of operations?
- ▶ Do your current assets e.g. office space, technology, facilities, need to be modified to meet your needs?
- ▶ Have you evaluated your critical inputs e.g. raw materials, suppliers, logistics, required to maintain business operations?
- ▶ Are your key vendors still able to support your business or do you need to identify new ones?

Are your IT operating systems secure?

- ▶ Do you have a cyber security policy?
- ▶ Are your employees aware of your cyber security policy?
- ▶ Would you or your employees benefit from some basic cyber security training?

What new strategies will help you focus on impact?

- ▶ Have you explored ways to streamline and simplify your processes, where necessary?
- ▶ Do you need to update or replace software, hardware or other equipment?
- ▶ Can you leverage and strengthen the use of technology to improve performance?

How can you meet market trends?

- ▶ Is your product still viable? Is there an opportunity to offer a new product or service?
- ▶ Are there creative ways to diversify or re-position your offerings?
- ▶ Have you considered offering the same or similar products and services through an online channel?
- ▶ Have you shared best practices with other businesses in your community?



PATRONS

Know your customers and engage your community

Goal

Take care of your customers and they will take care of you.

Key Considerations

- ▶ Are you staying connected with your customers?
- ▶ Are you engaging with your customers?
- ▶ How can your business adapt to new customer experiences?



All businesses whether big or small will hold and manage some form of customer database, effectively processing personal information about their customers such as their contact details, details of their previous purchases or even more broadly around customer interactions with the business's products/services. This can be a very effective tool for identifying and analysing social trends, building customer loyalty as well as attracting new customers. What can be somewhat trickier, however, is understanding and working out whether your business practices are compliant with applicable data protection and marketing laws such as the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). This is something which is all too important in a time where both the types of personal information being collected by businesses is growing and security hacks are becoming ever more sophisticated.

Take the example of a business which operates online via its website and other social-media platforms such as Instagram. Having an effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in place which is both actively managed on a regular basis, and which supports GDPR compliant features and functionalities, can be a significant step towards achieving overall legal and regulatory compliance. Whilst compliance is important, by practising effective customer data management you can also ensure your business grows in a resilient and sustainable way.

Key Priorities

Are you staying connected with your customers?

- ▶ Have you made it easy for your customers to contact you in a timely manner via email, instant messaging, online orders and bookings?
- ▶ Do you regularly share business updates with your customers?
- ▶ Is your messaging consistent across all social media platforms?

Are you engaging with your customers?

- ▶ Do you monitor and respond to customer feedback and concerns quickly and accurately?
- ▶ Are you leveraging the power of social media to stay connected with your customers, boost customer confidence, and build a vibrant online community?
- ▶ Can you identify ways to support your local community?

How can your business adapt to new customer experiences?

- ▶ Have you evaluated customer feedback and considered adapting your current products and services to their changing needs?
- ▶ Can you expand your customer base to new audiences and markets (e.g., different demographics, new geographic areas etc.)?
- ▶ Have you considered offering incentives to new and existing customers to drive sales?
- ▶ Are you adjusting your marketing strategy to reflect the products and services you are currently offering?

PROFITS

A man with a beard, wearing a brown t-shirt and blue denim overalls, is looking down at a tablet computer. He is standing in what appears to be a shop or a kitchen, with shelves of various items in the background. The lighting is warm and focused on him.

Re-evaluate your business model and manage your finances

Goal

Examine the financial impact to your business.

Key Considerations

- ▶ Do you have a strong understanding of your business finances?
- ▶ What strategies can be considered to control costs?
- ▶ Have you planned for possible future scenarios?



According to the government's own statistics, one of the key issues keeping small business owners awake at night is finance – the funding to start their business and the income needed to keep it running through good times and, especially, through bad times.

There are some simple steps you can take to ensure that you put your business in the best position possible to emerge with a strong upwards profit line. A periodic review of your customer and supplier contracts is a must.

A business selling and servicing bicycles in the UK found their costs outstripping their income and undertook a root-and-branch review of expenditure. As a result, they realised that a key supplier contract was about to expire, and they were able to negotiate favourable new terms. With other contracts (including their landlord) they took the attitude that 'if you don't ask you don't get' and were pleasantly surprised by their ability to renegotiate even binding legal agreements. They very sensibly checked the small print on the contracts for the terms governing variations to ensure the newly negotiated terms were properly incorporated. Not surprisingly, that business has thrived during the last year and the support shown by the landlords and the suppliers has been well repaid by having a long and lucrative association on both sides.

Key Priorities

Do you have a strong understanding of your business' finances?

- ▶ Have you created realistic short- and long-term financial forecasts?
- ▶ Have you assessed lost or delayed sales and income, increased expenses, regulatory fines, and contractual penalties?
- ▶ Have you developed new growth strategies?
- ▶ Will your business need to invest additional resources and capabilities based on new or changing demands?

What strategies can be considered to control costs?

- ▶ Have you considered renegotiating your supplier contracts?
- ▶ Have you collected outstanding debts and offered creative payment plan options?
- ▶ Did you check invoices for over-charges?
- ▶ Can you adjust your contracts and interest rates for your business loans?

Have you planned for possible future scenarios?

- ▶ What scenarios are most probable knowing what you know now?
- ▶ What does back to 'normal' mean for your business?
Ask yourself: What must we start doing? What must we pause?
What must we stop doing?
- ▶ Have you monitored opportunities to apply for national, state, and local business loans and grants?

PLACE

Be aware of risks to your business which stem from its physical environment

Goal

Examine location related risks to your business.

Key Considerations

- ▶ Is your place of business secure?
- ▶ Is your business a target for crime?
- ▶ Are there socio-economic conditions in your area making it difficult to operate?
- ▶ Are there any climate/environmental risks to your business you should be aware of?



Properties are often one of the biggest assets that businesses own, but this last year has shown how they can quickly turn into a source of instability. Inflexible leases can be a particular issue. Long leases provide certainty but if circumstances change you might find yourselves tied to properties that no longer suit your needs, often with rents increasing over time. Widespread homeworking over the course of the pandemic has caused many organisations to reassess their property needs.

The good news is that the market had already begun changing to accommodate new ways of working. Serviced offices are often available for leases with much shorter terms than traditional offices. Co-working spaces offer a flexible alternative so that you can quickly get access to additional space as your business grows but are not committed long term if your needs change. There's also an increasing shift towards turnover rents (particularly in the retail sector) so that rents can go up and down in line with how the business is performing. Break clauses can offer a way out of leases that you no longer need.

Effective business planning will always be critical but building some flexibility in at the start can go a long way to ensuring that property assets are a source of resilience for your business – rather than a risk!

Key Priorities

Is your place of business secure?

- ▶ Do you have physical security systems such as alarms and surveillance installed?
- ▶ Have you considered the physical security risks of having fewer staff on-site? Due to lockdowns, remote working, etc.
- ▶ Is your place safe for your staff and customers according to the latest official advice?

Is your business a target for crime?

- ▶ Do you monitor local crime reports? Are there any trends targeting small businesses?
- ▶ Do you engage with your local police force to understand threat levels to businesses in your locality?
- ▶ Can you take proactive steps to secure your business from crime?

Are there socio-economic conditions in your area making it difficult to operate?

- ▶ Is your business impacted by high levels of unemployment and financial hardship in your area?
- ▶ Can you adjust your pricing/affordability according to the economic climate you operate in?

Are there any climate/environmental risks to your business you should be aware of?

- ▶ Is your region affected by adverse seasonal weather conditions? Are there any steps you can take in advance?
- ▶ Can you engage with your local council/environment agency to understand the climate related risks in your area? e.g. Flood Risk, Heavy Rainfall/Snowfall, High levels of pollution, etc.

A photograph of three people in a workshop or kitchen setting. A man with glasses and a woman are smiling and looking at each other, while a third person is leaning in from the right, also smiling. They appear to be celebrating or working together on a project. The background shows shelves with various items, suggesting a creative or craft-based environment.

PROMOTION

Maintain awareness of promotional opportunities for your business

Goal

Build your business presence.

Key Considerations

- ▶ How does my business increase its customer base?
- ▶ Are there promotional resources I can use at little to no cost?
- ▶ What are your traditional promotional methods? Do they drive custom? Do they need to change?



Although John Lewis is the most famous example of staff ownership of a business, employee ownership schemes are not just for large organisations. In fact, a number of schemes are designed specifically with small and growing businesses in mind, such as the tax efficient EMI share option scheme. A business will need to take proper accounting and legal advice before embarking on a share ownership or profit-sharing scheme but creating a more focused workforce which has a strong sense of ownership of the business is money well spent.

There are various types of incentive schemes which can give staff a stake in the business. What will be right for you will depend on a number of factors such as the size of your workforce and your ownership structure. If you have certain key members of staff with valuable skills then aligning them closely with your business by giving them a stake in it will keep them motivated and less likely to be enticed away by competitors.

A bonus scheme for all your staff, which is based on a percentage of the profit that you make, will create a cohesive sense of pulling together and a workplace culture aligned with your business goals. These are all crucial to business resilience at a time when businesses are beginning to emerge from some difficult trading conditions and starting to take advantage of promotional opportunities.

Key Priorities

How does my business increase its customer base?

- ▶ Can you empower your staff to take ownership of driving your business' promotional activities? e.g. Profit share incentives, Sales bonuses etc.
- ▶ Are there any operational issues such as security, web design etc. which your business could outsource to a contractor allowing you to focus on promoting your enterprise?
- ▶ Do you have a network of businesses in your local community with whom you can cross-promote your products and services?

Are there promotional resources I can use at little to no cost?

- ▶ Are there opportunities to take advantage of free online or social media advertising spaces (Credits for free Facebook ads)?
- ▶ Are there business grants available to businesses of your size which could be used on promotional campaigns?
- ▶ Endorsements/Sponsorship – are there opportunities within your area to connect to organisations with a fan base? e.g. local sports teams etc.

What are your business' traditional promotional methods? Do they drive custom? Do they need to change?

- ▶ Consider using a 'how did you hear about us' form on purchase orders to diagnose what existing advertising or promotional activities are driving your custom? If you are paying for promotional placements that are not driving custom, change them.
- ▶ Do you have a repeat customer base? Or do you rely on word of mouth? Consider inviting loyal customers to write an online review (virtual word of mouth)?

PRACTICE

Making assessing your resilience a business-as-usual activity will help you retain a competitive advantage. There are no key priorities or goal setting requirements here, because the above questions should provide you with the groundwork you need. This section acts as a simple reminder that the resilience process does not end with filling out the worksheet.

Why?

Businesses which make a habit of assessing their strengths and weaknesses in good times, and bad, normally do better than those that do not. Developing resilience is not a process you go through to achieve an end goal per se, rather it is the commitment to regularly go through the process of an open and honest self-assessment that will yield rewards in surviving and thriving.

When?

There is no golden rule to follow as to how often to do a self-assessment, however you should not wait until you are faced with a crisis to do these checks. What is important is that you implement this as a standard practice to be done on a re-occurring basis. Depending on your scale you could review your resilience on a quarterly, bi-annual or annual basis. You should also give accountability for this process and provide the necessary support.

How?

This guide has been developed to allow you to own your recovery journey. The eight pillars, with associated goals and key priorities, will act as a launch pad to understanding your business resilience. The worksheet template below is to aid you in beginning that journey.

Goalsetting Worksheet Template

Print off eight copies of this Worksheet and fill in your Goals for each Priority or use as guidance to create your own worksheet.

What is your P **end-goal?** What are you trying to achieve? The destination goal will help you identify your long-term goal.

What are your P **goals?** What are you trying to accomplish?

Remember SMART goals. (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound)

Specific:

Measurable:

Achievable:

Relevant:

Time-bound:

What actions do you need to take to achieve your P

SMART goals?

RESOURCES

KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES FOR SMEs

- ▶ Resilience First, Knowledge Hub: <https://www.resiliencefirst.org/our-work/knowledge-hub>

AVAILABLE FACEBOOK RESOURCES FOR SMEs

- ▶ Facebook for Small business: <https://www.facebook.com/business/small-business>

UK GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

- ▶ Regional UK Business Support: <https://www.gov.uk/business-support-helpline>
- ▶ Regional Financial Business Support: <https://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support>
- ▶ COVID-19 Financial Support for Business: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- ▶ Recovery Loan Scheme for Business: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recovery-loan-scheme>
- ▶ General Government Business Support COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>
- ▶ NCSC – Cyber Security Small Business Guide: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/cyber-security-small-business-guide>

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