

# NIMBLE CONTINUITY PLANNING

## Leveraging Existing Response Plans to Tackle COVID-19

By Jay Millen, Matt Comyns & Courtney Day

While the world continues to face the uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, corporate, academic, and government leaders are examining the long-range questions “*what’s next?*” and “*how do we respond?*” If your organization doesn’t yet have a pandemic response and recovery plan in place, it may be a critical time to take what is in place as a cyberattack or natural disaster response and recovery plan and leverage it as a foundation upon which to build a pandemic response and recovery plan.

Many of the elements that are essential to returning to normal operations – understanding the degree of impact, inventorying capability to respond and recover, and executing recovery actions – may be present in your existing response and recovery plans.

While they may require significant modification in some cases, they can offer a material head start on getting back to business as we progress through the downward curve to zero and potential re-emergence of the virus in 6 to 18 months.

We have taken two generic cyberattack or natural disaster response and recovery plans as a potential template for a pandemic response and recovery plan for accelerating and implementing with minor modifications in time-based order.

## **Initial Evaluation and Inventory**

### **1. Analyze the initial impact on the business in its current state:**

- Team meetings (virtual or in person) using video conferencing apps
- Catalog facilities and operations directly impacted, e.g., employees diagnosed with COVID-19 by facility and those who have been verified to have had no direct exposure
- Facilities and operations that shut down during pandemic
- Facilities and operations that remained open during pandemic
- Evaluate customer impact
- Supply chain impact
- Leadership and managerial COVID-19 diagnosis

## **Achieving a Degree of Operational Capability**

### **2. Recovery planning**

- Team meetings (virtual or in person) using video conferencing apps
- Isolation of team members and facilities directly impacted
- COVID-19 deep cleaning plan by facility and operation
- Identification and kickoff of response teams at higher level and by facility
- Developing a timeline for implementation and potential recurrence in 6 to 18 months
- Screening questions for all team members and suppliers serving facilities
- Social distancing plan in start-up of facilities and operations
- Daily deep cleaning of work stations and supplies required

### **3. Ramp-up planning**

- 1-2-3 shift decisions
- Modified work hours in non-production or customer-facing roles
- Job sharing to maintain income levels
- Supply chain inventory and pressure testing with understanding of delivery times and order placement protocols
- Team meetings (virtual or in person) using video conferencing apps to discuss current state and ramp-up

## Preparedness Planning for Recurrence

### 4. Steady state operations and potential recurrence (i.e., the question around the potential for another cyberattack or hurricane is not if, but when)

- Building the “new normal” plan and recurrence response
- Pressure testing and running “drill” for notification, response, mobilization, and containment

This is only a starting point to stimulate thinking in this area. Hopefully, it provides a foundational framework to begin planning and execution for the potential next generation of COVID-19.

## WHAT NEXT?

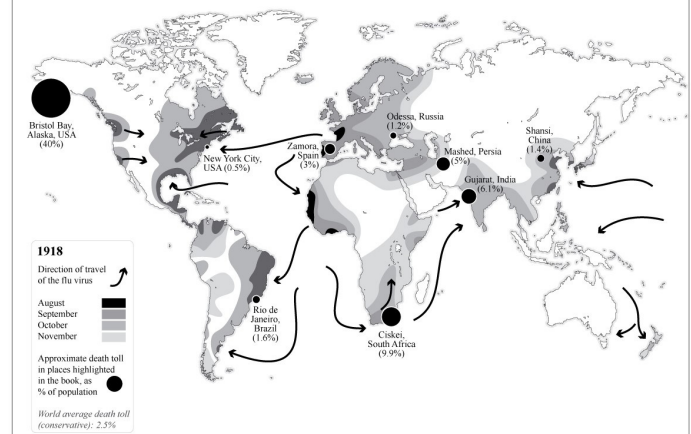
The last global pandemic of this scale occurred with the Spanish Flu of 1918-19. An estimated one third of the world population was infected with the 1918 flu virus, resulting in at least 50 million deaths worldwide.

There were three different waves of illness during the pandemic, starting in March 1918 and subsiding by summer of 1919. The spread was tracked specifically to ocean-going freight and WWI Troop carriers traveling to continental Europe, South America, and the United States (see Pale Rider, Laura Spinney, 2017 Public Affairs).

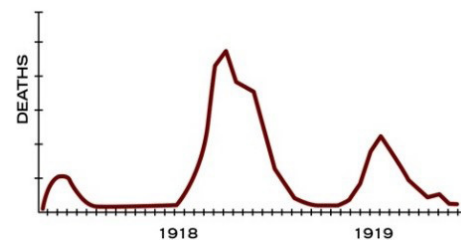
The pandemic peaked in the U.S. during the second wave in the late 1918 – roughly six months after the initial occurrence. This highly fatal second wave was responsible for the majority of the U.S. deaths attributed to the pandemic.

With history as a guide, we must consider preparedness for a second and possibly third wave of the utmost importance. Given the 1918-19 spread, the time for leaders to

Global spread of the Spanish flu: second wave, late 1918



Source: Pale Rider, Laura Spinney, 2017, and Nigel Hawtin, Hachette Book Group



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD)

prepare for the possibility of a similar recurrence with COVID-19 is now. Establishing a critical staffing and supply plan, emergency communications and operations center structure, and ramp-down/ramp-up plans will be essential to blunting the impact of additional waves. Again, taking the cyberattack or natural disaster response and recovery plan as a foundation for pandemic planning is critical.

Specific to pandemic response, organizations need to be thoughtful about repurposing staff, logistics, and manufacturing capabilities to critical needs in fighting the war on COVID-19. How we will feed, provision, and clothe front line healthcare workers will be the first level of support that all organizations need to consider. Fulfilling the needs of the general population at the second level will also be critical should additional waves become a reality. Isolation and social-distancing requirements, along with the use of enhanced personal protective equipment (PPE), may become the norm, and being prepared for such a scenario requires thoughtful planning today. The third level will be maintaining critical infrastructure with manufacturing, supply chain, and food production essential to all societies.

The magnitude of the impact on the workforce, dependents, and families is of a scale not seen since WWII, and reflecting on the planning and execution required for national and global mobilization is a critical part of our preparedness.

## STAYING THE COURSE

Leaders must consider the holistic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their leadership teams, their workforce, and their families when reviewing the current situation and future scenarios. Identifying current leaders and selecting new leaders who are most effective in dealing with uncertainty and complexity is a critical factor in organizational resilience moving forward.

There are a number of low-cost assessment tools available online and remotely that CEOs, Board Chairs, and leaders across the spectrum should consider deploying broadly now instead of solely during the hiring process. As organizations morph and change, this capability will be paramount in recovering and growing the business, organizational mission, or capability as we forge ahead.

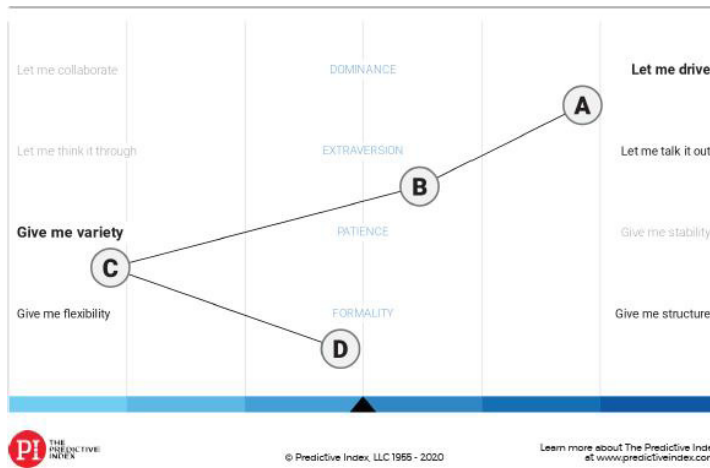
We would like to bring your attention to two benchmark instruments that can identify leadership capability in dealing with uncertainty and complexity that Caldwell has used extensively, both in assessing leadership team fit and individual capability with both new hires and existing teams.

They are The Predictive Index's Behavioral and Job Assessments, developed by PI and administered by Caldwell Analytics, and the Leadership Styles Indicator, developed by Somerville Partners and administered by NeoPsych Associates. They are validated tools that take from 7 to 45 minutes to administer online, Sample outputs as follow are relatively easy to interpret:

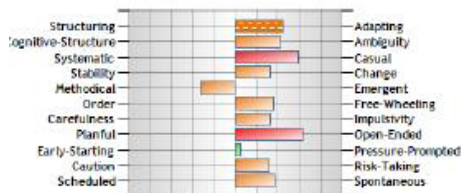


### Captain

A Captain is a problem solver who likes change and innovation while controlling the big picture.



### Flexible Collaborator



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The importance of being prepared and understanding the leadership capabilities of your team under stress cannot be overstated. The organization will prosper or flounder in times of crisis based on its leadership team's ability to communicate in a positive and transparent manner, plan thoughtfully and with contingencies, and lead by example by rolling up their sleeves in challenging times.

Plan for the recovery now, the recurrence that will potentially occur, and the resilience required to survive the next as yet unwritten chapter in our economic, social, and personal histories.

## ADDITIONAL READING AND REFERENCES

Recommended reading on how the US won the logistics and supply chain fight of WWII includes:

***The Arsenal of Democracy: FDR, Detroit, and an Epic Quest to Arm an America at War*** by A.J. Baime, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2014

***Freedom's Forge: How American Business Produced Victory in World War II***, by Arthur Hermann, Penguin Random House, 2012

***Mobilizing America: Robert P. Patterson and the War Effort, 1940-1945***, by Dr. Keith Eiler, Cornell University Press, 1997

***An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present: Writing the Victory Plan of 1941*** by Charles Kirkpatrick, Center of Military History United States Army, 1992

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**JAY MILLEN** is the managing partner of Caldwell's CEO & Board Practice and leads our Charleston office team. Working with publicly-traded and privately-held companies, Jay assists clients in senior-level recruitment and in the development of board and CEO succession plans as well as industry specific leaders at all levels in the natural resources and manufacturing sectors.



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