My name is Paul Hamaty, with RAND Strategic Solutions. Right now, many of us might have extra time on our hands, so it's the perfect time to think about how to be better prepared for the future. These are my thoughts on what businesses can do now to prepare for their COVID-19 post-crisis assessment.

I realize that every business is in different circumstances with respect to the items I am going to cover today, and that's perfectly fine. I want to provide some key take away points that any business will find helpful in dealing with a crisis situation.

GETTING AHEAD OF THE COVID-19 POST-CRISIS ASSESSMENT

WHAT SHOULD YOUR BUSINESS BE DOING?

SLIDES 1-5 – no talking points

KEY POINTS – SLIDE 6

- **BE PREPARED FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY!** Unfortunately, a similar scenario may very well happen in the future. The precedent has been set.

- **KEY ISSUES**
  - What were the key occurrences/items/issues that caught you completely off-guard?
  - Write them down before you forget.
  - *Do you know why this happened?*
  - *What will you do to prevent this in the future?*

- **EMPLOYEES**
  - *Please remember that during an emergency, your people are your most valuable asset, and they play a vital role in helping the organization get through the crisis event. So with that in mind, ...*
  - Did your employees know what processes to follow when the extraordinary occurred?
  - Did you have updated, written procedures to address these kinds of circumstances?
  - And equally important, did they know where to find these procedures?

- **TELECOMMUTING – SLIDE 7**
  - How seamless was that transition?
  - Was your equipment and operating software up to date for this?
  - *Were staff well trained and comfortable with working from home?*
  - *Did you routinely have staff work from home prior to this event?*

- o *Did you have the appropriate equipment for your employees to use at home?*

- **COMPARISON**
  - o What are the similarities/differences between this situation with COVID-19 and previous events such as H1N1, SARS, MERS, Ebola, hurricanes, etc.?
  - o What were the lessons learned? Jot these down.
  - o *How do you plan to address those differences for the future?*
  - o *Did you leverage your previous experiences to address any similarities with this situation?*

- **RESOURCES**
  - o What resources did you tap into, both financial and operational?
    - ▪ Financial
      - *SBA loans and other programs*
      - *State or Federal relief*
      - *Foundations*
      - *Reserve/capital funds*
      - *Lines of credit*
    - ▪ Operational
      - *Partnerships/"Buddy" systems*
      - *Peers*
      - *Temporary workers (e.g., healthcare)*
  - o Did you know where to easily find these resources?

- **DISASTER RESPONSE – SLIDE 8**
  - o Accountability - *Who is in charge and responsible for managing the overall crisis response?*
  - o Did you need to be more proactive?
  - o Assess the timing of when you activated your disaster response program.

- **DISASTER RECOVERY/BUSINESS RESUMPTION PLANS**
  - o Based on this event, what gaps did you find in this plan? Items that were not addressed?
  - o Were you well-prepared to operate under disaster response mode (non-normal operations) for this long?
  - o *How do you plan to close those gaps?*
    - ▪ *At the end of the day, every business, regardless of size, needs some form of disaster recovery and business resumption plans.*

- **CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN**
  - o When did you first initiate crisis communications?

- How often did you communicate to employees, customers, stakeholders, etc.?
- *Was your crisis communication plan up to date and sufficient for this event?*
- *How do you plan to close those gaps?*

- **SOCIAL DISTANCING – SLIDE 9**
  - Did you observe social distancing at your workplace with respect to employees, customers, visitors, etc.?
  - What could you have done better to physically support your employees during this time of social distancing?
    - For example, if you were able to remain onsite, did you move workstations or cubicles 6 feet apart?
  - What safeguards/precautions did you take to support your clients/customers?
  Example from small business owner – filling orders and placing outside

- **ISOLATION**
  - How did you and your employees deal with the isolation aspect of COVID-19?
  - What measures/activities did you put in place to reduce the feeling of isolation?
  - How did you make use of virtual technology to stay in touch?
  - Did you contact each and every employee daily?
  - What could you have done differently to better support your employees (and clients) from an emotional standpoint? E.g., ZOOM

- **RETURN TO NORMAL OPERATIONS**
  - How smooth was your return to normal operations?
  - Assuming businesses will resume normal operations at different points in time, how did that impact your operations?
    - *What were the impacts?*
    - *What did you do to close those gaps?*

ACTION ITEMS – SLIDE 10
- **Update** your disaster recovery, business continuity, and crisis communications plans.
  You may find it beneficial to meet with your crisis response team, department heads, and other key stakeholders to reassess your organization's potential vulnerabilities and determine how well your plans covered those situations.
  Some things to consider:
  - Are roles/responsibilities clearly defined for each person in the plan?
  - Identify who has emergency powers.
  - Revisit lines of succession and delegation of authority. Should you take more horizonal approach to this? Empowerment
  - Again, how do you communicate through this? "Calling trees", ZOOM, etc.

I want to pause here and take a couple of minutes to talk about your IT systems and data backup. While COVID-19 probably did not impact you from an IT standpoint, it's still something to consider for the future.

- *As you know, many businesses usually have a separate IT disaster recovery plan that would address, among many things, your Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO).*
- *Knowing and defining your RTO and RPO is critical to help you reduce the amount of damage your business might experience during an IT failure.*
    - *Recovery Time Objective (RTO) refers to the maximum amount of time it takes to get your IT systems and networks working again after an emergency (thinking forward).*
    - *Recovery Point Objective (RPO), on the other hand, refers to the amount of data you can lose after an emergency (thinking backward). In other words, determine an acceptable restore point.*

- **Assess** your business resumption process.
    - How quickly were you able to resume normal operations?
    - Did this resumption go smoothly?
    - *Interconnected with your disaster recovery, business continuity, and crisis communications plans*

- **Update** telecommuting, disaster response, and crisis communications policies and procedures.
    - Were these procedures all up to date?
    - Were staff familiar with them?
    - Did staff know where to find copies of them?
    - *Sidebar: a thorough review of all your policies and procedures should be undertaken annually.*

- **Update** your risk profile and risk mitigation plan.
    - What new risks were identified?
    - What new mitigation plans need to be put in place?

- **SLIDE 11 - Review** supply chain and supplier diversity arrangements.
    - Where did this break down?
    - What were the critical items that became unavailable?
    - Was a component or product in the supply chain only available from one vendor or one location?

These action items I just mentioned are more operations oriented. Now let's move to more intellectual capital related items.

- **Perform** tabletop exercises after you've completed your post-crisis assessment.
  - Walk through and have a robust discussion regarding a similar circumstance
  - Perform tabletops at least once a year

- **Schedule** mock emergency situations to test your plans, systems, and responses.
  - Different from a tabletop exercise which is largely discussion and planning whereas this simulates an actual crisis
  - Initiate these emergency situations as if there were a crisis
  - Limit how broadly you publish when you're going to do this – element of surprise

- **Undertake** a scenario planning exercise to challenge your company to think outside the box.
  - Scenario planning is making assumptions on what the future may look like and how your business environment will change over time, largely looking at factors you cannot control and over which you have only minimal influence. To do this, you will define a range of future "realities" of what might happen. You then look at that future reality and assess whether or not you are prepared to operate, survive, and thrive should that play out.

(Additional notes on next page)
As I was working on this presentation, a few observations came to mind that I think are worth noting.
1. The current situation in which we find ourselves is unprecedented in recent times, and we should engage in dialogue to better understand the ramifications.
2. The unknown and unusual always brings new risks. Six months ago, who would have honestly thought that here, in the United States, we'd be dealing shortages of critical medical supplies while trying to combat a deadly virus? So here are some potential risks that come to my mind:
   a. When we think of human capital risk, it usually stems from inside the company in terms of high turnover or loss of institutional knowledge. We may now see human capital risks that arise due to these new external environmental circumstances. For example, not only a decrease in employee morale, but a decrease in family and social morale due to isolation, not work environment. That's a new wrinkle, in my opinion.
   b. From an operational standpoint, I mentioned the importance of an IT disaster recovery plan, so let's take that a step further: what if the internet were to be unavailable for an extended period of time? And before you laugh at me, just think about it for second. Is it really that far out of the realm of possibilities?

    c.   Another potential operational risk that strikes me as relevant is a widespread shortage and long-term unavailability of products critical to your business during a crisis. This goes beyond our usual supply chain and supplier diversity arrangements as we still see shortages and unavailability of certain products 3 months after the initial COVID-19 diagnosis in the United States. The fact that there are still shortages of test kits, N95 masks, and ventilators proves we are in extraordinary times.

3.   I think most reasonable people would agree that we were not prepared for this nor did we account for this in our risk mitigation plans. I would challenge you to take some time and reflect on what we've covered today and how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting your operations, your strategic plans, your risk profiles, and the way you should be doing business in the future.

Before I open it up for questions and answers, let me thank the Palm Beach North Chamber of Commerce for the opportunity to present this virtual education seminar and share my thoughts and expertise with you so that we all can manage through COVID-19 and be a step ahead of the recovery so when we get back on our feet, we can thrive.