

Navigating the New Normal: How Does it Look for Your Company?

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WE ARE NOW well into the pandemic era and are reshaping our lives and our businesses accordingly. Every day we deal with unprecedented challenges. Yet, as disrupting as these problems may be, the 3PL and trucking companies that manage the crisis effectively have an opportunity to emerge from it stronger and more dynamic than before. The fact is, COVID-19 is providing rare opportunities for innovation, growth and improvement.

At this point, it is important to look at what we have learned and think about how we can benefit from our recent experiences. Although the coronavirus has affected every 3PL and trucking company differently, the following ideas can be useful to all.

Lay the groundwork for when we get the all-clear. Will your new methods continue, or will they revert to their former states? Some of the new processes may simply be stopgaps, but others are likely to be genuine

improvements that should be kept. An easily overlooked question after the pandemic has passed: What will be the costs of returning to past methods?

Accept that at least some of your company's goals, methods, and priorities will have changed, and may or may not change back. Substantial realignments are in the cards. The new landscape is causing us to see job assignments, core business objectives, and even corporate missions in a new light.

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Unquestionably, 3PL and trucking companies should be prepared to make changes to their business models. Re-examine everything about your company's activities, with all previous methods and procedures open to challenge.

A comprehensive business continuity plan is essential. Such a plan documents preventive strategies and work-around processes to counter threats to all departments and IT systems, supporting the company's ongoing operations both before, during, and after a disaster.

Put your people first. Their well-being is paramount. Take special care to support employees who, along with their family members, may be suffering from COVID-19. Be mindful of possible outbreaks in remote workers' homes, and understand that with so many employees working in isolation, new customs and habits will emerge spontaneously.

Ask staff and management in all departments and workgroups what they have learned so far. Find out which established business processes work well now and which do not. What has changed and why? Decide which recent changes are working and keep them going, and be quick to drop ones that are not.

Listen to the people in the trenches and not just management and key staff. Hands-on workers understand your company's operations in deep detail and can be counted on to come up with improvements both great and small.

Support your remote workforce. Major vendors like Microsoft and trusted sources such as LinkedIn are moving quickly to provide useful online tutorials covering subjects such as VPN, available

devices, versioning, and strategies for meetings. With working remotely having become mainstream for 3PL and trucking companies, evaluation of each worker's abilities takes on a new value. This can lead to a productive realignment of responsibilities.

Keep up with new products and services for remote workers. These include sophisticated video telephony solutions as well as new workstation gadgets, dashboards, performance-enhancement tools, software and more.

Learn from your experiences, good and bad. Take note of potential modifications and always be open to new ideas. You'll find your growing understanding of the new landscape to be a gold mine of information.

Evaluate existing security measures and identify potential improvements. Vital safeguards such as Cybersecurity, Data Backup, Disaster Recovery Solutions, and DR/BC Planning may need to be enhanced. This is particularly important because remote workplaces are more vulnerable to malware attacks than established office ecosystems. In addition, remote workers' data/files may not be backed up.

Be sure to bolster your security with a resilient, feature-rich file-sharing package. Collaborative file-sharing and backup solutions can deliver enterprise protection for remote workers by backing up content each time they save their work. Endpoints are protected because users can roll back to previous versions when their systems are under attack.

If you do not already have a Disaster Recovery failover location, it is

important that you develop one. With such a site in place, you can continue production with minimal interruptions.

Fresh ideas can improve 3PL and trucking companies' agility. Even minor improvements contribute to operational speed and efficiency. Also, with more employees working remotely, you may be able to reduce your office space without diminishing your business.

Focus on the future. The novel coronavirus underscores the need for 3PL and trucking companies to continuously improve processes in preparation for unforeseen events. Take time to anticipate future obstacles and determine which could be caused by the pandemic, or by unrelated events that could impact operations.

Keep an eye out for new vertical markets. Seek out niche sectors that are becoming better potential customers for you because of the pandemic.

Take care to keep employees, customers, vendors, strategic partners, and the trade press well-informed about your company's activities. In this rapidly evolving business environment, people need to know what 3PL and trucking companies offer, how your business is handling the current situation, and how you expect to move forward. 🍌

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