Principles to Guide the Return to Work, Play, and Spectate

Preparing for Full Capacity Sport and Entertainment Venue Operations
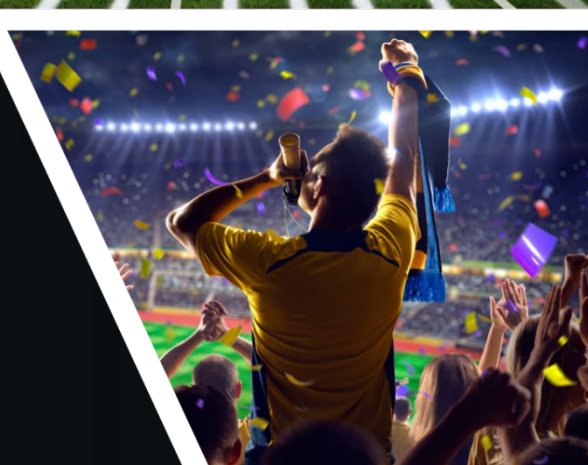
Health

Safety

Security

Service

IIFX
INNOVATION INSTITUTE
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FAN EXPERIENCE

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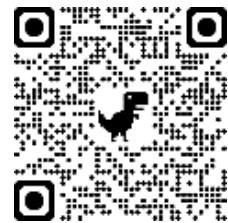
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TASK FORCE

Formed in April 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Return to Work, Play, and Spectate Task Force** recognized early the risks posed and opportunities available to the sports and entertainment industry. Task force members included a cross-section of thought leaders, technical experts, medical experts, technologists, futurists, lawyers, insurance experts, and representatives from:

- Entertainment
- Professional Sports
- Intercollegiate Athletics
- Interscholastic Athletics
- Endurance Events
- Amusement and Theme Parks
- Parades and Festivals

Revenue generation is at a standstill through the first quarter of 2021, because of acute response measures taken by governments around the world to slow the spread of the virus and prevent their national health services from being overwhelmed. The sports and entertainment, hospitality, and transportation industries were financially devastated. According to the Sports Business Journal, the acute response measures cost the sports and entertainment industry more than $11 billion and tens of thousands of jobs in 2020. Although the first quarter of 2021 has been on a similar path, the growing prevalence of vaccines brings the probability of a return of sports and entertainment events in the United States and the United Kingdom as early as the second quarter of 2021. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns pandemic conditions will exist in most of the world through 2022.

Mission

By leveraging the knowledge and experience of thought leaders in the sports, entertainment, and safety and security industries, and to identify key learnings, questions, and decisions that are made during the "Great Wait" to safely return to work, play and spectate. All of these will help to make informed and innovative recommendations to guide these industries forward.

Task Force Professionals

Each member of the Task Force brings insights to collectively cross-pollinate a set of overall issues, concerns, and strategies. These Return to Work, Play, and Spectate strategies provide a foundation and a framework to address the
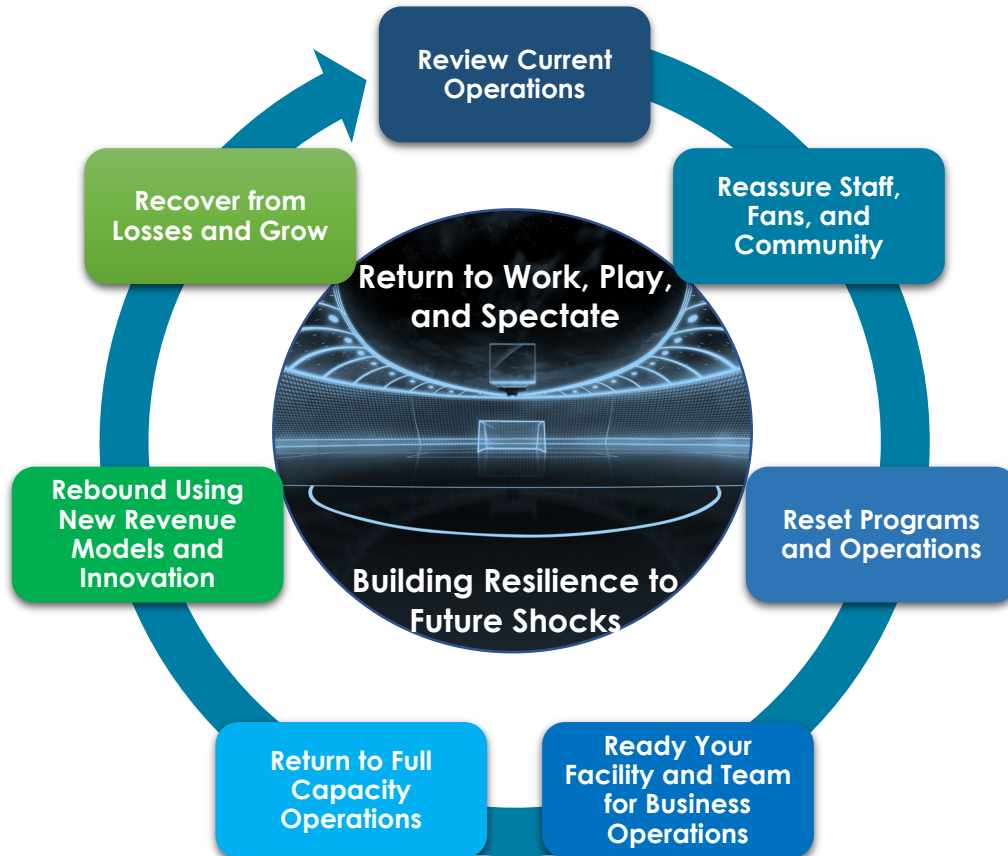
Figure 1 - Framework for a Return to Work, Play, and Spectate

pandemic's impact on venues and events and recommend strategies to help stadia, arenas, theaters, greenfield sites, and other sports and entertainment venues:

- **Review** current operations plans in the context of health, safety, security posture and threats.

- **Reassure** Staff, Fans, talent, and the Community that the venue leadership, staff, and vendors have implemented appropriate measures to protect the health, safety, and security of all those who enter the venue.

- **Reset** programs and operations to conform with the health, safety, security, and service requirements within the current ecosystem.

- **Ready** your event operations plan(s) for renewed business operations. This includes people, processes, and technologies to provide and assure health,

safety, security, and service. Build relationships with public health authorities to gain their buy-in early in the planning process. Ensure staff are trained and equipped to operate in the environment and near fans for an extended period under COVID-19 conditions.

- **Return** to full capacity operations as soon as conditions permit. Local conditions and federal, state, and local public health directives will affect all reopening decisions.

- **Rebound** using new revenue models and innovative processes and technologies while building resilience against future shocks.

- **Recover** from losses incurred during the Acute Response Phase (i.e., lockdown) and grow beyond where you were in January 2020.

The task force's principles, questions, and considerations are based on discussions with public health experts, including from the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and state and local public health authorities. Safety and security organizations must regularly consult applicable state and local public health agencies as well as federal and state OSHA guidelines.

Figure 2 -The Great Wait was Defined During Phase 1 of the Return to Work, Play, and Spectate Task Force
Credit: Toffler Associates and the Innovation Institute for Fan Experience

To help inform their deliberations since April 2020, the RTWPS Task Force reviewed the following critical areas:

This publication of principles is the first of many products from the RTWPS Task Force.

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ABOUT IIFX

The Innovation Institute for Fan Experience was established early in 2020 with the intent of building a global alliance to lead the NEXT great leap in fan experience — one steeped in health, safety, security, and service. We are bound together by passion and the incomparable skills of visionary thought leaders throughout the international community. Along with our technical and subject matter experts, we are innovating new ways to change the world's sports and entertainment fan experience for the better.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The world has learned that a low-probability, high consequence incident is possible, highly disruptive, and devastating. Since January 2020, our world has been altered by an insidious virus and its cascading impacts; the human and financial costs are crushing.   It has changed how we live, work, and play in ways most could never anticipate or imagine. Just as 9/11 brought lasting changes to our society and the security landscape, so too is this pandemic fundamentally altering our perception of "normal".

The pandemic has not spared the sports and entertainment industry. Since March 2020, all mass gatherings, including sports and entertainment events, have been effectively cancelled. According to the Sports Business Journal, the pandemic cost the sports industry in 2020**, more than $11 billion; more than 198 million fans** were unable to attend sports events**, and 20,636 events were cancelled.** The entertainment industry's losses were **more than $8 billion,** with live entertainment and festivals around the world effectively shut down.

Though professional and intercollegiate sports have continued to play under strict COVID-19 protocols, most fans watch sports and entertainment from home. **Capacity limitations, social distancing, and extreme measures to contain the spread of disease and preserve health systems mean traditional revenue generation models cannot sustain the sports and entertainment industry.** Job losses at venues, sports and entertainment organizations, and throughout the supply chain will grow in 2021. More than a year of working or remaining at home and very generous unemployment benefits have created a very competitive job market for the fall 2021 sports and entertainment seasons. However, the advent of vaccines and the effective use of preventative measures like masks, hand sanitizers, handwashing, and testing, create a path to return to work, play, and spectate.

Who is This Publication For?

This publication is designed for people who **operate sports and entertainment venues, produce and manage sports and entertainment events, and the executives, managers, supervisors, and staff who create conditions for an outstanding fan and spectator experience**. This report is designed to help the audience understand the process, protocols and procedures that they must adhere to open up to a full capacity, or risk economic viability.

What capacity level can your venue attain and manage now?

0%   20%   50%   75%   100%

What must you do to get to 100% capacity?
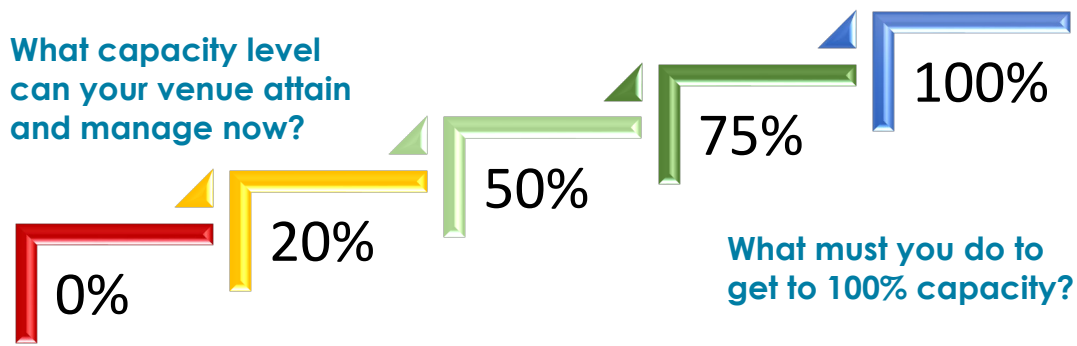
Figure 3 - What Capacity Level are You Ready for Today?

Purpose

In April 2020, the **Innovation Institute for Fan Experience (IIFX)** with **Toffler Associates** invited 98 diverse industry thought leaders, skilled practitioners, and subject matter experts to form a **Return to Work, Play, and Spectate (RTWPS) Task Force**, to **analyze how sports and entertainment management, operations, health, safety, and security, and service will be altered to best adapt and reimagine operations in the wake of the pandemic.** The publication is not exclusively about COVID-19, though no one can ignore its implications for the sports and entertainment industry. The publication is designed to enable organizations to self-assess, inspire confidence in staff and fans, resume operations at full capacity as quickly as conditions permit, and to think critically about their readiness and resilience as they enhance their long-term health, safety, security, and service posture.

Task Force

The Task Force was comprised of a cross-section of sports and entertainment industry stakeholders and subject matter experts representing **entertainment**, **professional sports**, **intercollegiate athletics**, **interscholastic athletics**, **endurance events**, **amusement and theme parks**, **parades and festivals**, **engineering**, **medical**, **legal**, **architectural**, **insurance**, and **technology professionals**. Task Force members were mostly from the United States, however, the Task Force reviewed sports and entertainment activities, practices, and guidance from around the world. The mission of the RTWPS Task Force was to identify the key learnings, questions, and decisions that must be made during the "Great Wait" to safely return to work, play, and spectate.

The "Great Wait" is defined as a two-year period of discovery that is marked by the distribution of vaccines and therapies, and increased testing of the population. As the risk horizon associated with the pandemic was unknown in April 2020, the Task Force analysis continued throughout the year. New findings and new information about the COVID-19 virus was incorporated into Task Force discussions as it became available. The Task Force members revised planning assumptions, shared experiences, and considered the pandemic's effect on the

Figure 4 - RTWPS Task Force Vision of the COVID and Post-COVID Period
Source: Toffler Associates and the RTWPS Task Force

sports and entertainment industry. By the Task Force's definition, **the world is in this "Great Wait" period. Testing has improved around the world, and as of December 2020, vaccines became available.** At the end of this period, when vaccines are widely distributed throughout the 251 countries and territories the United Nations recognizes and pandemic conditions end, the Task Force envisions it will take some years before the world collectively recognizes a "Novel Normal."

Task Force members brought their unique insight and experiences to **collectively cross-pollinate core issues and concerns, and explore strategies** to enhance health, safety, security, and service throughout the sports and entertainment industry **that could help the industry prepare to reopen.** These return to work, play, and spectate strategies are the platform for forging common principles and a framework for a series of questions and considerations for the sports and entertainment industry to address the impact of the pandemic on venue operations and events. These questions and considerations can help industry organizations ask good questions and challenge their assumptions as they develop policies and procedures to address COVID-19 and venue and event operations and management in the post-pandemic period.

Methodology

The Return to Work, Play and Spectate Task Force followed a systematic process to help bound the evolving challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It mirrors a risk assessment process in that it establishes the context for the environment first and then defines principles that can help organizations navigate their way through the pandemic and the extreme measures employed to slow the spread of COVID-19. Organizations can use the **discontinuous moment** the pandemic has created as a forced strategic pause to critically review current programs, baseline new requirements imposed by the pandemic, adapt existing policies, processes, and procedures to the current and future environment, add new technology, and develop new revenue models. Well-developed programs that comport to the principles can help build long-term resilience against future shocks.
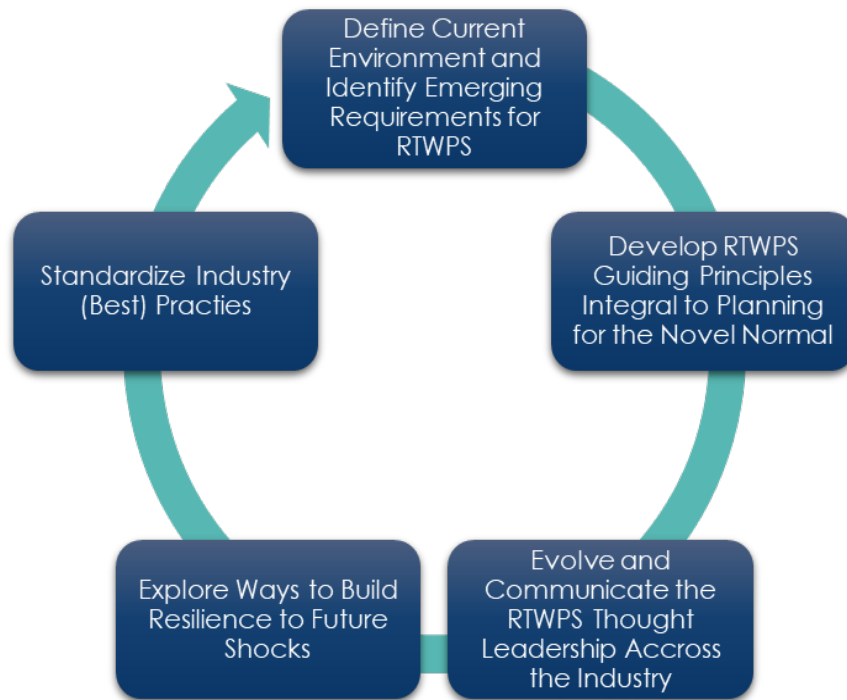
Figure 5 - RTWPS Methodology

Principles, Questions, and Considerations

The principles, questions, and considerations in this document are rooted in the most current medical knowledge about COVID-19, preventative measures, and public health guidance available as of the date of publication. The medical-related questions and guidance is derived from discussions with **health experts,**

and guidelines issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA), medical schools, health care organizations, and guidance provided by various state and local public health agencies. The questions and considerations herein are also informed by sports and entertainment industry thought leaders, practitioners, and subject matter experts; they reflect the consensus of the RTWPS Task Force members.

Principles

The principles related to the Return to Work, Play, and Spectate are organized around **Partnerships**, **People**, **Policy**, and **Platforms**. These essential learnings, or principles, can be implemented into sports and entertainment industry event planning to help create a safer and more enjoyable environment in the post-pandemic era.

Partnerships

Partnerships are an important part of resilience, including preparing for and responding to a business disruption, such as COVID-19. Partners may include your supply chain for goods and services, staff and employees, government agencies, unions, health care system, utilities and risk/insurance providers, to name but a few. The adage,

Figure 6-Framework for the Core Principles

"you are only as strong as the weakest link in the chain" well summarizes your dependency on your partners and the many interdependencies they have on one another to help your enterprise achieve its business goals. Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

☐ Events may require the additional support from private medical services to ensure public safety staffed.

☐ Return to work, play, and spectate starts with the digital journey in the homes of talent, staff, and fans therefore events may need support from other entities to carry the message of what to expect.

☐ Events are now the social experiment that can unlock the new behaviors and activities that are (un)acceptable in the Novel Normal and leveraging organizations that can track and measure this is vital for the industry's future.

There are many lessons that have been learned to date, and more to come. These learnings form the basic principles, and the considerations and questions throughout the publication that sports and entertainment organizations need to ask as they prepare their venues, staff, and fans for reopening.

People

People are the core of the sports and entertainment industry. The industry exists for the fans. Staff and fans must be confident that their health, safety, and security are the top priorities for executives and managers at sports and entertainment venues before they return. Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

☐ New skillsets and personnel will be needed, possibly at a greater number than before, to safely deliver on the event experience.

☐ Organizations who invest in both training and education for its workforce will create a competitive advantage for bringing stakeholders back to venues.

☐ Creating alignment among talent, staff, and spectators is achieved through transparency and agility in the RTWPS strategy.

Policy

Policy is a set of rules or guidelines for organizations and staff to guide decision making, actions, and to achieve compliance with health, safety, security, and service goals. Policies in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic have been affected by guidance from international, federal, state, and local governments and health agencies. Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

- [ ] Creating alignment among talent, staff, and spectators is achieved through transparency and agility in the RTWPS strategy.

- [ ] Venues need to work hand-in-hand with local and state institutions to understand the new, varying requirements that exist to hold and plan an event.

- [ ] All activities within venues and associated standard operating procedures must be reevaluated to accommodate new environment.

Platforms

Technology affects how people communicate, learn, think, interact, and experience life. It can be a force multiplier, extending your organization's reach, helping your staff provide high quality service, and enhancing health, safety, security, and service for fans. Technology can create memory-making experiences. Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

- [ ] "Snake oil" salespeople exist, so it is important to fully understand technology requirements.

- [ ] Technology must be adaptive and responsive to the needs of the environment and stakeholders.

- [ ] Technology without communication to set stakeholder expectations is a waste of time and money.

A Note About this Guide

Nothing in this guide is prescriptive. These principles, questions, and considerations can be used in whole or in part to help organizations think systematically, review their plans, reassure staff and fans, reset their operations and revenue models, and ready themselves to return to operations. Some, or even all, of the information contained in this document may not be applicable to all organizations in the sports and entertainment industry. The Task Force members and IIFX strongly recommend that before implementing any of the ideas contained herein you carefully evaluate, and consult with outside legal

Review	Reassure	Reset	Readiness	Return	Rebound	Recover

counsel as appropriate, about the legality, applicability, and potential efficacy of this information for your organization.

Whether sports and entertainment venues open with limited capacities or at 100%, venue and event managers must provide for the health, safety, security, and service for their staff, vendors, key stakeholders, and fans. A successful return can lead to a rebound to an organization's position in January 2020, enabling the organization to grow.

While this publication addresses elements of management, operations, health, safety, security, and service, organizations should consult applicable state and local public health agencies, as well as federal and state OSHA guidelines. The principles, questions, and considerations are intended to help sports and entertainment industry organizations address the circumstances under which they may safely resume operations.

The world's knowledge regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies continues to evolve and the RTWPS Task Force guidance is based on the most recent thinking, public health guidance, and practices. However, as the sports and entertainment industry strives to transition from lockdown to return to work, play and spectate, we recognize that the period of transition may be extended to address critical issues, so flexibility and thoughtful planning is essential. As

Figure 7 - RTWPS Task Force Promoting Health and Safety at Sports and Entertainment Events
Source: Toffler Associates and the RTWPS Task Force

circumstances change, and public health agencies issue new guidance, the protocols under which sporting, and entertainment events occur may be adjusted. This flexible framework will be modified based on the feedback from the Task Force, sports and entertainment officials, leading safety organizations, and public health professionals and experts. The Task Force's intent is to continue its efforts to identify opportunities for improvement and advance all innovation of new solutions as new information is presented.

Discontinuity Opportunity

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the sports and entertainment industry a unique opportunity to use this enforced *strategic pause* to make bold changes to health, safety, security, service, revenue generation, business operations, staff composition and professional development, and the overall fan experience.

When restrictions are eased and normal operations may resume, will your organization pick up from the point where it paused, or will you take the leap to a better place?

The Rock Family in Cleveland, Ohio is using what they refer to as a "discontinuous moment" brought by the pandemic to take the next great leap in health, safety, security, service and the fan experience for their sports and entertainment businesses. They have no plans to just "resume" operations where they left off in March 2020, they will reopen with so many new offerings. To take full advantage of this discontinuity opportunity to:

...and be bold!

Figure 8 - Framework for a Return to Work, Play, and Spectate

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERM	DESCRIPTION
1st Party	Conformity assessment activity performed by a person or organization that **provides** the product or service being assessed. [ISO 17000]
2nd Party	Conformity assessment activity performed by a person or organization that has a **"user" interest** in the product or service being assessed. [ISO 17000]
3rd Party	Conformity assessment activity **performed by a person or body independent** of the person or organization that provides the product or service being assessed. [ISO 17000]
Antigen	Any substance that can stimulate the production of antibodies and combine specifically with them.
Communication and Consultation	Repeating processes to provide, share or obtain information and to engage with stakeholders about the management of risk. [ISO Guide 73:2009]
Consequence	Outcome of an event that can have positive or negative effects on objectives. [ISO Guide 73:2009]
Control	Any measure applied to modify risk, including processes, policies, technology, or other device. [ISO Guide 73:2009]
Cleaning	To make something free of dirt, marks, or mess by washing, wiping, sweeping, or brushing.
Close Contacts	Someone who spends 15 minutes or more within six feet of a person with COVID-19 over a period of 24 hours. [CDC]
Compliance	State of being in accordance with established standards, guidelines, industry regulations, government legislation, etc.

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Confidence	A belief in oneself, the conviction that one can meet challenges and succeed – the willingness to act accordingly [psychologytoday.com]
COVID-19	An infectious disease caused by a new (novel) coronavirus. This virus has spread throughout the world. It is thought to spread primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. [World Health Organization]
Crowd Control	The restriction or limitation of group behavior. Crowd Control measures may be risk treatments that are part of a crowd management plan or occur as an unplanned reaction to a group problem.
Crowd Management	The systematic planning for, and supervision of, the orderly movement and assembly of people during ingress, circulation, and egress of a space.
Crowd Risk	Includes hazards and threats to crowds that are a common component of almost every special event.
Disinfection	Process used to destroy viruses, bacteria, and fungi on surfaces such as countertops, door handles, etc.
Frontier	An outer limit that marks the farthest extent of a border or boundary.
Hazard	Any force of nature or system failure which is likely to cause damage or danger.
Incident	An unplanned action or potentially dangerous situation that occurs during or related to an planned event.
Likelihood	The chance of something happening withing a defined period.
Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)	A technique for rapidly producing many copies of a fragment of DNA for diagnostic or research purposes. Sometimes referred to as the "gold standard" for diagnostic testing.

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Probability	In the context of risk management, it is the measurement of the likelihood a particular hazard or threat will occur.
Rapid Testing	A type of diagnostic test that normally measures viral antigens, which tell your body to produce antibodies to a viral infection. Antigen tests can deliver results as fast as 15-minutes for COVID-19 testing, though they can produce "false negative results" (a person has the disease but it is not detected by the test) in people who are asymptomatic (presenting no symptoms of illness).
Risk	The effect of uncertainty on objectives. [ISO Guide 73:2009]. The likelihood based on available data or information that an incident will occur in a particular place.
Risk Assessment	A systematic process of identifying risks based on criteria (recognizing and describing risks), analyzing the risk (level of risk), and evaluating it to determine how to treat (people, process, or technology) or mitigate the effects of risk by accepting, transferring, sharing, or reducing risk.
Risk Management	Coordinated activities to direct and control an organization regarding risk. [ISO 31000:2018]

Loss Prevention – Any measure that reduces the probability or frequency of a loss. Unlike Risk Avoidance, it does not eliminate all chance of loss. Generally, loss prevention measures are actions taken before a loss occurs to break the sequence of events that leads to the loss.

Loss Reduction – Measures taken to reduce the severity of losses. Loss reduction can include both pre-loss measures (applied before a loss occurs), or post-loss measure (applied after the loss occurs).

Risk Avoidance – Eliminating risk by not performing an activity that my carry risk. Risk avoidance is not always |

TERM	DESCRIPTION
	feasible or practical. It should be considered when the risks associated with the activity outweigh the benefits from the activity. **Risk Retention** – Planned acceptance of losses by deductibles, deliberate noninsurance, and loss-sensitive plans where some, but not all, risk is consciously retained rather than transferred. **Risk Transfer** – A risk management strategy that involves the contractual shifting of a risk from one party to another, most commonly done through insurance.
Risk Mitigation	Steps taken to reduce the potential consequences of risk – may include accepting, transferring, sharing, or reducing risk.
Risk Treatment	A process to modify risk using well-trained people, defined processes, and technology.
Sanitation	Removing visible contamination and debris to lower the number of germs on a surface such as a countertop, door handle, etc.
Stakeholder	A person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity. [ISO Guide 73:2009]
Strategy	A framework for making decisions or a plan that describes ways to use available resources (means) to achieve a desired end (ends) while mitigating risk.
Trust	Confidence in the honesty and integrity of a person or action.
Vulnerability	A weakness that can be exploited. There are different types of vulnerabilities – physical, economic, social, and environmental. Vulnerability can be a measure of susceptibility to a particular hazard or a threat.

INTRODUCTION

Who Should Use This Publication?

This publication is designed for sports and entertainment industry professionals, including venue managers, producers and event managers, risk management teams, and key stakeholders in the health, safety, security, and service sectors that enable sports and entertainment industry operations. All should use it to help prepare the way for the industry to return to work, play and spectate, and to inspire confidence in staff and fans as they prepare to return.

Purpose

The purpose of this book is to help the sports and entertainment industry return to work, play, and spectate.

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the SARS-CoV-2 virus, better known as COVID-19, was now a pandemic. By the end of March 2020, mass gatherings around the world were cancelled to halt the spread of the disease. Other extreme measures, including lockdowns of whole countries slowed, but did not eliminate the threat posed by the virus.
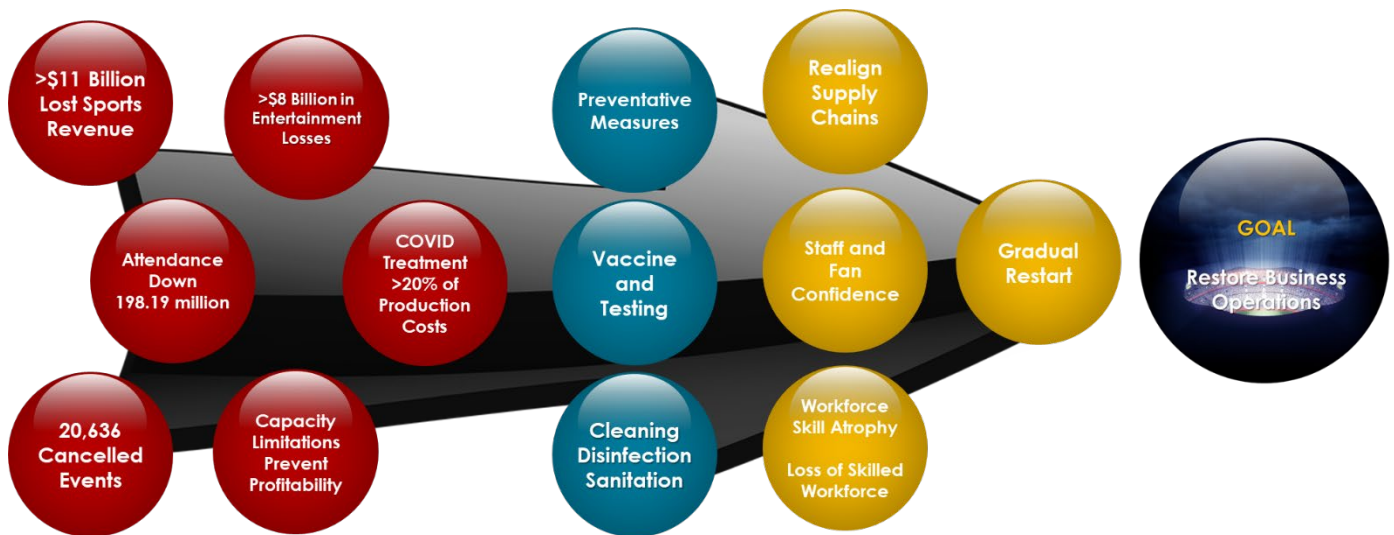
Figure 9 - From the Red to Reopening
Source: RTWPS Task Force and Sports Business Journal

As of April 2021, more than 130 million infections around the world had been confirmed with more than 2.5 million deaths. In the United States, more than 31

million have been infected and of these, more than 560,000 have died. While infection rates fall, the world faces future COVID seasons, much like the flu.

The financial damage to the sports and entertainment industry is unprecedented – the cancellation of the 2020 NCAA March Madness Tournament cost more than $600 million. Although some sports and entertainment events continue to occur, social distancing requirements and capacity limitations make them unprofitable under pre-pandemic economic models.

Preventative measures, including masks, hand washing, better cleaning and sanitation methods, distancing, and fewer people in venues helped curtail the spread of COVID-19. Better testing programs and the increasing availability of multiple vaccines has made it possible to envision an end to the pandemic. At the time of publication, the United States has received hundreds of millions of doses of vaccine, and almost 40% of the US population has received at least one dose of vaccine.

These numbers change every day. The CDC provides a COVID Data Tracker that is updated daily. The tracker provides forecasts, community and state profiles, and a pandemic vulnerability index that can help provide context for your location.

At the time of publication, anyone above the age of 16 is eligible to be vaccinated. The fall sports and entertainment season will be completely different than a year ago, with more people attending more live events.

How We Begin

The path to reopening **starts with a good, core team** comprised of all **key stakeholders** and with **effective people with the requisite skills** to manage the crisis. Reopening during a pandemic requires partnerships with public health agencies and effective medical experts who can help with planning, coordination, and testing and implementing operational plans and policies.

How Disease Outbreaks Affect the Sports and Entertainment Industry

☐ **Local Health Departments** can override operational decision making. While local public health agencies act to prevent the spread of disease, their "one-size-fits-all" approach may indicate a lack of knowledge and understanding about how sports and entertainment venues and events operate. Build a good partnership with Public Health now because they are a key stakeholder in almost all mass gatherings.

☐ **Operations** – COVID-19 is close to a worst-case scenario in that almost all sports and entertainment events were cancelled early in the pandemic. The initial shutdown halted almost all operations. As more was learned, venues could open for some sports and entertainment events under controlled conditions, including limits on capacity, services, and activities.

☐ **Staff**

> ☐ **Demographics and Risk Factors** – Whether Influenza, Hepatitis, Norovirus, or COVID-19, every disease outbreak can interrupt operations in different ways, but it is people who get sick. Age, co-morbidities, compromised immune systems, and a host of other factors can conspire to disrupt or even shutdown business operations. They also present unique challenges that may affect different segments of your staff and fan base.
>
> > ☐ **Age – COVID-19** disproportionately affects people above the age of 65.
> >
> > ☐ **Chronic illness or other co–morbidities** – people with certain health conditions such as chronic heart disease, respiratory disease, COPD, and diabetes comprise a statistically significant portion of deaths from COVID-19.
> >
> > ☐ **Mental Health** – disease outbreaks create all kinds of stress for staff and fans. People who have good coping skills and good health may weather the storm caused by epidemics and pandemics, while others are more fragile and need assistance and guidance. Parents can easily be overwhelmed when their children are not coping well with the pandemic and may experience mental health challenges.
> >
> > Keep an eye on your staff as their needs may not always be visible. Poor mental health and the stress of the pandemic can be even more debilitating than severe cases of influenza and COVID-19. Remember, wellness depends not just on good physical health, but good mental health too.

☐ **Absenteeism** – Unplanned, health-related absenteeism rates for the COVID-19 pandemic appear to have peaked in March – April 2020. The CDC reports health-related absenteeism can cost the economy more than $225 billion each year. Most absenteeism results from minor illness, stress and mental health issues, musculoskeletal issues, non-work-related injuries and accidents, and home and family responsibilities.   Rises in absenteeism and chronic absenteeism are indicators that your staff may need help.

☐ **Lack of Confidence** – While confidence refers to how strongly a person believes in something, including their abilities, a lack of confidence shows uncertainty. This may manifest itself as indecisiveness, tentativeness, avoiding certain tasks, and more.

The pandemic has presented the sports and entertainment industry a unique challenge: *do their staff and fans believe they can exercise control over their performance under COVID-19 conditions*? This is self-efficacy. A person with a strong self-efficacy is motivated, believe that their health and safety are priorities for their leaders, and that they are equipped to operate within an environment and can accomplish their work.

☐ **Skill Atrophy** – March 2021 marked a year since mass gatherings routinely occurred. Capacity limitations have reduced staff contact with fans, while medical protocols and social distancing requirements have changed how crowds are managed throughout their journey from their homes to the event and then returning home. Staff furloughs have resulted in experienced staff leaving the profession, while events with limited capacity do not require a full staff. Over time, the lack of practical experience erodes skills, making it more challenging for staff to be confident when serving large numbers of fans under COVID-19 conditions.

☐ **Revenue Generation Slows and Stops**

According to the Sports Business Journal, the pandemic caused the **cancellation of 20,636 sporting events** in United States. More than **198 million ticket holders were unable to attend these events**. Add to that the millions of tickets sold to concerts, theater events, festivals, and so on, and the losses grow. The tangible and intangible costs to sponsors was enormous. So, for now, the sports and entertainment industry must honor

the purchased tickets and find creative ways to sell sponsorships while it contends with:

- ☐ Ticket Sales
- ☐ Cancellation Fees
- ☐ Refunds
- ☐ Loss of Sponsors
- ☐ New Sponsors
- ☐ New Revenue Generation Options

☐ **Supply Chain**

The United States and other nations are conditioned to highly responsive and flexible supply chains. Just-in-Time logistics allows for lean organizational and supply management, better control over merchandise and food with expiry dates, and it provides assurance that the most appealing products are almost always available. The pandemic disrupted portions of the supply chain, causing ripple effects that resulted in cancelled orders, favored suppliers reprioritizing their lines of business, and many suppliers shutting down operations.

Even when product is available, shipping companies may not be able to deliver the product quickly as they too are feeling the effects of the pandemic. Staff challenges and a lack of transportation assets can be problematic; they are exacerbated by lack of transport as transport companies pursue more lucrative contracts. The supply chain the sports and entertainment industry relies on has faced:

- ☐ Disruption

  - ☐ Lack of Raw Materials to create products can be felt across entire supply chain. Your finished product from your favored vendor may depend on numerous suppliers from different points on the globe. All it takes is one to shutdown and your product may not be finished and delivered when you need it.

  - ☐ Suppliers shut down operations or realign lines of business to other opportunities to remain open. They may not be able to serve as a source for contracted third party vendors and the venues.

☐ Transportation companies closed, lack employees, or are diverted by higher priority deliveries or lucrative contracts. This happens because:

☐ Priority is given to medical equipment, food stocks, and health care supplies.

☐ Potential for greater revenue.

☐ Government takes greater share of available transportation resources and available supplies.

☐ Supplier No Longer Available

☐ On-hand stock – spoilage and rotation

☐ Continuity of Business Plan

Business continuity plans are designed to help organizations manage through shocks and disruptions. One of the things learned from the pandemic is that highly improbable, high consequence incidents do occur and the business plan and the crisis management team may be inadequate. For epidemics and pandemic disease, many business continuity plans projected short-term disruptions and planned for only a small percentage of staff to be unavailable to support sports and entertainment events. COVID-19 overwhelmed the best business continuity plans.

Most businesses did not envision government-imposed extreme measures like business shutdowns and lockdowns of entire cities and downs. Many found they did not have people with a background in public health, medical protocols, and medical compliance. Businesses learned that the public health system did not always understand the implications of their directives on different businesses, and the sports and entertainment industry learned that the local public health authorities could shut down their operations for almost any reason.

Preventative measures, including masks, hand washing, and filtering air are now an essential part of daily business operations. The implementation of social distancing has had a uniquely negative impact on spectator sports model. Most sports and entertainment venues have been limited to host no more than 25% of their full capacity, meaning

business operations and revenue generation are severely curtailed as to be unprofitable. Public health officials learned that a sports and entertainment venue is 100% open with most of its staff present even when it is only 25% full. Thus, capacity restrictions a negative revenue generators. Businesses learned that their insurance did not cover the long-term business disruption wrought by COVID-19.

Business continuity requires a plan that includes long-term shutdowns and limited operations. Now is the time to develop a plan and revise assumptions in existing plans. Business continuity plans should:

☐ Have realistic and flexible assumptions.

☐ Be designed for small or limited disruptions, but also have hedging strategies for longer disruptions.

☐ Be reviewed annually to ensure assumptions, organizational charts, goals, objectives, and resources are current.

☐ Become part of tabletop exercises to ensure leadership, staff, and the crisis management team are prepared to execute the plan. Exercises should consider some contingencies, including:

- ☐ Crisis management team unable to execute plan.

- ☐ Lack of resources.

- ☐ Team members unavailable because of fear, illness, and death.

- ☐ Critical knowledge gaps exist on team (e.g., medical compliance)

- ☐ Total disruption of all business and commerce locally, regionally, nationally, and/or internationally.

COVID-19 Risk Horizon

Risk is about uncertainty, something the COVID-19 virus creates quite effectively. What is known now about COVID-19 is immeasurably greater than what was known in March 2020 when the sports and entertainment industry was closed by extreme measures designed to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Uncertainty does not preclude planning; one of the ways to prepare for the return to work, play and spectate is to use assumptions. Assumptions are things

that planners accept will happen in the absence of proof. Planners must be flexible and modify their assumptions and adapt their plans as more information becomes available. The chart below describes **Assumption-based Event Planning Under Uncertainty**, providing a systematic way to do event planning based on what is known and the use of assumptions.

Early in the pandemic, the limited knowledge about how the virus was spread led planners to assume that it was spread by fomites (objects or materials likely to transmit infection via touch) and by aerosolized droplets from sneezing, coughs, shouting, etc. These assumptions became the basis for changes in cleaning, sanitation, social distancing, and the use of masks to reduce uncertainty about how to prevent the disease from spreading.

More than a year later, we know that COVID-19 is airborne, spread by aerosolized droplets from mucus and saliva. Thus, planners should review their assumptions and adapt their plans accordingly. New knowledge, new technologies, and the proliferation of new vaccines helps reduce uncertainty, fundamentally

Figure 10 - Assumption-based Event Planning Under Uncertainty
Source: Event Risk Management Solutions (Peter Ashwin) – An IIFX Affiliate

changing the risk horizon, making it easier to plan for the return to work, play, and spectate.

The uncertainty about when the pandemic will end and whether there will be other variants that will negate current preventative measures and the effects of vaccines, means that the risk horizon for the sports and entertainment industry remains uncertain. The figure below was developed in March 2020 and updated in late 2020 by Peter Ashwin, the founder of Event Risk Management Solutions (ERMS), and an IIFX affiliate. ERMS is a consulting practice committed to enhancing the organizational resilience of event organizing committees and host cities through innovative risk management practices, operational readiness programs and the provision of integrated security solutions.

The COVID-19 Risk Horizon chart shows quarterly projections from the first quarter of 2020 through the fourth quarter of 2021. It provides a summary roadmap in four distinct phases:

- Stabilize and Preserve

- Evolve and Pivot

- Reset – Restart – Reopen

- Recover and Rebound (2021-2022)
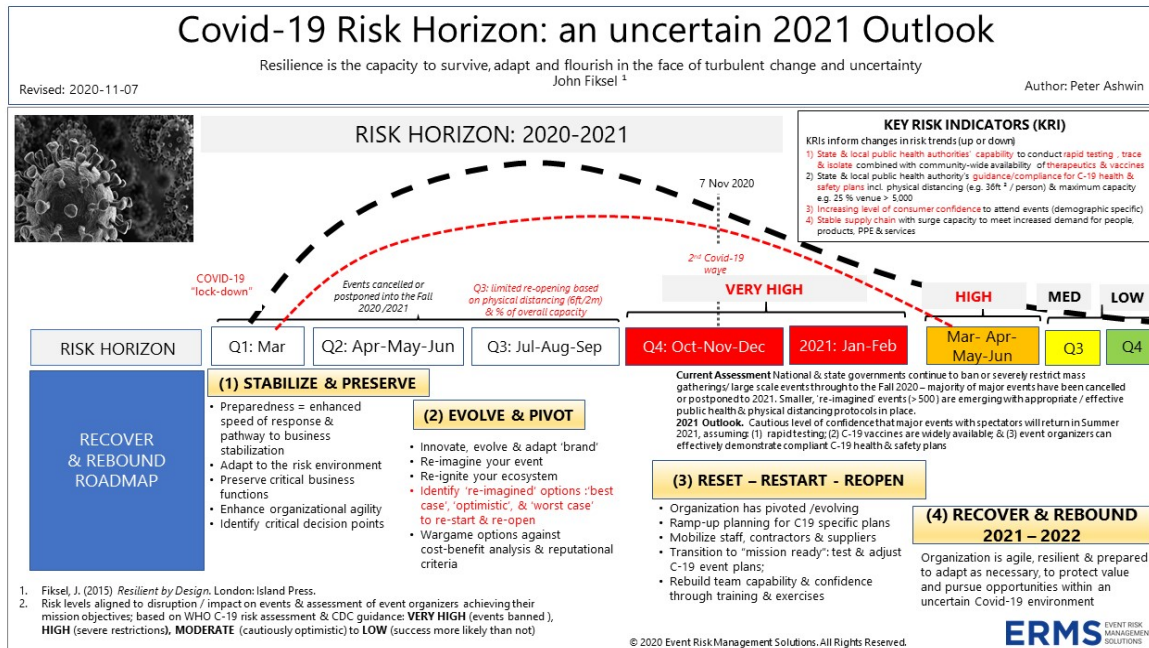
Figure 11 - COVID 19 Risk Horizon - An Uncertain 2021 Outlook as of April 2021
Source: Event Risk Management Solutions (Peter Ashwin) – An IIFX Affiliate

Key Risk Indicators (KRI) provide a means to examine trends that can show recovery is occurring, or conversely, that regression is taking place. These can be adapted for use by planning teams at sports and entertainment venues, production teams, and key stakeholders. As the risk horizon with COVID-19 remains in flux, assumptions must be updated, and new information analyzed to try to clarify the risk horizon.

The Fan Gets a Vote

Fans are the core of sports and entertainment events. It is their passion, energy, attendance, and spending that support the talent, staff, and vendors. The pandemic has kept the fans away, but it is what the venues and events offer that will bring them back.

The fans are worried about their health and safety. They have also reconnected with their families in a new way. They may even enjoy the convenience of watching sports and entertainment events from the comfort of their own homes.

There are many factors to consider as you prepare your venue for the return of fans, including:

Figure 12 - KANTAR Sports MONITOR 2021 Fan Engagement Study

- ☐ Are the staff and fans, and their health, safety, and security, the center of your operational planning and event management?

- ☐ Fans were staying home prior to the pandemic for a variety of reasons; the pandemic drove everyone home.

- ☐ The fan has been at home with family over the last year. How do you create a better venue experience for them?

- ☐ How do you build staff confidence, so they are ready for the fans?

- ☐ How do you convince skeptical fans that the service and fan experience will be much greater than any fears they have about health, safety, security, and inconvenience?

- ☐ How can costs change in the post-pandemic era in a way that allows for additional disease transmission mitigation measures without making events unaffordable?

Figure 13 - Percentage of Baby Boomers Staying Away from Sports and entertainment Events Because of COVID-19
Source: McConnell, R. (2021, March). Re-defining Relationships with Fans. KANTAR Sports MONITOR.

RTWPS Guiding Principles

During Phase 1, the Return to Work, Play, and Spectate Task Force identified **four core areas** as an organizing construct and as a means of identifying key principles that drive the sports and entertainment industry. While they appear to be distinct, none are mutually exclusive nor are the questions posed and associated considerations collectively exhaustive. The goal is to help C-Suite executives, managers, supervisors, and staff ask hard questions to determine whether their structure, plans, policies and processes, and people are ready to restart operations, much less full capacity operations.

The primary role of executives is to ensure their staff are organized, trained, equipped, and have the resources they need to ensure the health, safety, and security of staff and fans. While the industry exists for the entertainment of fans and spectators, the size and scale of every event and its unique spectacle requires thoughtful preparation, well-trained people, sensible and executable policies, technology platforms that serve as force multipliers and deliver an exceptional experience, and partnerships with key stakeholders that can help create memory-making events.

Core Principles

This document is organized around **Partnerships**, **People**, **Policy**, and **Platforms**. The RTWPS Task Force determined these areas are crosscutting across every plan and operation at sports and entertainment venues and events.
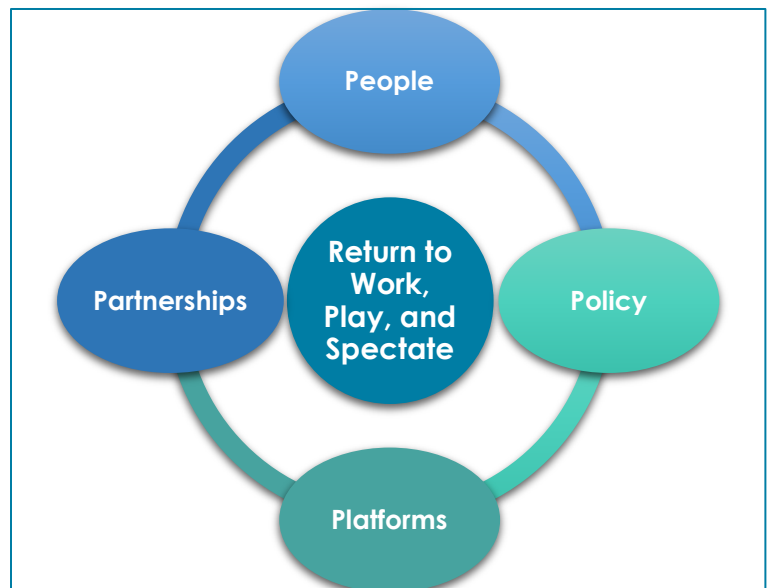
Figure 14-Framework for the Core Principles

What Do We Know Now?

The one thing we know for certain about the pandemic is that what we know today, could change tomorrow. Thus, the RTWPS Task Force recommends organizations build a strong relationship with their state and local public health departments. Modify planning assumptions as new information becomes available and adapt your plans accordingly. Why?

In March 2020, we thought COVID-19 was spread through touch. The CDC and WHO now show that it is spread through aerosolized droplets. Early recommendations from government and healthcare professionals included

handwashing, social distancing, and even temperature taking. Virologists and epidemiologists cast doubt on the efficacy of masks in the early days. Politicians, pundits, and medical experts were unequivocal in the their predictions that vaccines would take more than two years to appear.

Figure 15 - CDC COVID-19 Recommendations

Fast forward to April 2021, and preventative measures emphasize masks, handwashing, and avoiding crowds. Less emphasis is given to social distancing and now the CDC recommends easing up on the cleaning of surfaces, particularly in schools. States are relaxing restrictions, with California announcing 100% reopening in June 2021.

Three vaccines are widely available in the United States and three others are in use around the world. More than 130 million people have been vaccinated in the United States, with the potential for 200 million to be vaccinated by July 2021. As vaccines gain ground and people take basic preventative measures, positivity rates and deaths are falling. Spikes will occur that may require additional measures to contain them, but the long-term outlook is positive for the sports and entertainment industry.

The bottom line: Your best laid plans will change as more information becomes available.

Planning Considerations

Since the onset of COVID-19 in the fall of 2019, scientists have tried to discern how the symptoms of COVID-19 manifest, progress, and when people generate enough virons (entire virus particle) for PCR and Antigen tests to detect and confirm COVID infections. One of the most vexing challenges posed by COVID-19 is the number of people who are asymptomatic carriers of the virus, who unknowingly infect others. According to the CDC, mild symptoms to a severe illness may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

According to a research study from the University of Southern California (USC) of more than 55,000 COVID-19 patients in China, *Modeling the Onset of Symptoms of COVID-19*, published by *Frontiers in Public Health* (August 2020), COVID-19 has symptoms very similar to seasonal influenza, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). These symptoms may include:

- ☐ Fever or chills, Cough
- ☐ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Muscle or body aches
- ☐ Headache

- ☐ New loss of taste or smell
- ☐ Sore throat
- ☐ Congestion or runny nose
- ☐ Nausea or vomiting
- ☐ Diarrhea

Patterns of symptoms can help healthcare providers distinguish between illness types. This list does not include all possible symptoms. The authors noted that unlike influenza, where coughing is normally the first symptom, the order of COVID-19 symptoms was distinct and followed this general order of presentation:
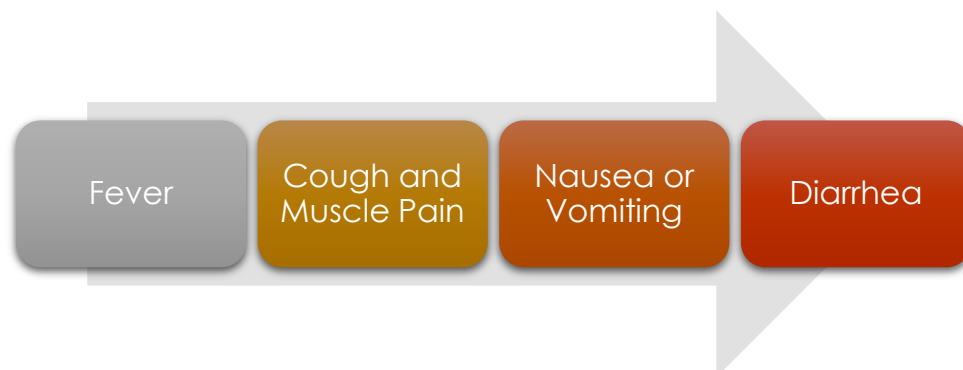
Figure 16 – The General Order of Presentation of COVID-19 Symptoms. NOTE: Not every symptomatic COVID-19 patient will present all of these symptoms.
Source: Frontiers in Public Health

Our knowledge about COVID-19 has grown exponentially since March 2020. We have learned the importance of preventative measures, including masks, distancing, and handwashing, and since December 2020, we know that vaccination can prevent symptomatic COVID to varying degrees of effectiveness and even serious illness and death.

CDC COVID Data Tracker
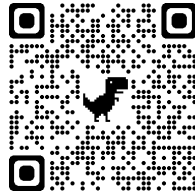
The information below is not prescriptive. It is designed to help planners consider how to do their due diligence as they prepare for reopening.

Most effective for promoting and protecting the health and safety of fans and staff

May require additional methods to protect the health and safety of fans and staff

Least effective at promoting health and safety of fans and staff

Vaccines   (Vaccine Update Video)

Note: Vaccine hesitancy v. Vaccine Enthusiasm continues to evolve. Those who are hesitant to receive the vaccine ("wait and see") has fallen while Vaccine Enthusiasm has grown to 61% of adults in the United States.

Note: On 17 April 2021, Pfizer's CEO announced that booster vaccinations are necessary each year to sustain vaccinated immunity. Moderna has indicated an annual booster vaccination may be necessary

Note: Incentivizing staff to be vaccinated and encouraging fans to do so can speed the way to full capacity operations.

	CoronaVac (Sinovac)	AstraZeneca	Pfizer	Moderna	Johnson & Johnson	Sputnik V	Sinopharm
	China	UK	USA/Germany	USA	USA	Russia	China
Preventing Symptomatic COVID	**56.50%**	**79%**	**95%**	**94%**	**67%**	**92%**	**73%**
Preventing Serious Illness & Death	**84%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
Vaccine	*Two Doses Inactivated COVID Virus*	*Two Dose Viral Vector (weakened cold virus)*	*Two Shot mRNA*	*Two Shot mRNA*	*Single Shot Viral Vector*	*Two Dose Viral Vector*	*Two Doses Inactivated COVID Virus*

Figure 17 - Vaccine Effectiveness Comparison - April 2021

Rapid Testing of Non-Vaccinated Guests/Fans

- Antigen
- Holographic Microscopy
- Hyperspectral Imaging
- Next Generation Technology

Note: The incubation period for COVID-19 is five to six days. COVID-19 may take 72-hours before it is detectable by current testing methods. There are many forms of rapid testing. Antigen tests may report false negatives because the number of virons may be too low to detect.

100% - Within 4 – 12-hours of event start *(Note: Testing effectiveness depends on the type of test and amount of time since exposure. It can take almost a week after exposure to register a positive result)*	🔵
100% - Within 24-hours of event start	🟡
100% - Within 48- 72-hours of event start	⚪
Random Testing	🔴

PCR Testing of Talent and Staff

Note: Considered the "Gold Standard" of diagnostic testing.

Note: PCR testing of staff at the 48- and 24-hour point prior to the start of an event is the current practice for MLB, NBA, and NHL.

100% - Within 24-hours of event start *(Note: Testing effectiveness depends on the type of test and amount of time since exposure. It can take almost a week after exposure to register a positive result)*	⚪
100% - Within 48-hours of event start	⚪
Random Testing	⚪

Health and Safety Signage in all areas related to the event (e.g., transport hubs, parking, ticketing areas, gates, circulation areas, concession areas, lavatories, etc.)	🔵
Social Distancing <u>Before</u> Herd Immunity	🔵
Social Distancing <u>After</u> Herd Immunity *Disclaimer: The goal is to eliminate any social distancing requirement for sports and entertainment events.*	⚪

Well Ventilated Indoor Spaces
(Air Changes per Hour (ACH))

ACH > 3 times/hour in spaces with recirculated air is desirable. Recirculated air should flow through filters with Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values (MERV) ratings of 13 or higher can cleanse the air of 90% of the particles the size of virus-containing aerosols. High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters are designed to exceed the highest MERV rating, removing at least 99.97% of particles smaller than aerosols.

Outdoor Venues

Masks (CDC Video)

The CDC recommends that all adults and children over 2 years wear a mask when going out in public. N95 masks are medical grade masks and are most effective. Any

Hand Sanitizers

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry

Hand Washing Stations   (CDC Video)

Regular handwashing is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others.

Deep Cleaning (Sanitation) and Disinfection

Accountability

May include self-declaration of health status using medical questionnaires.

Also includes the consistent and fair enforcement of Health and Safety Policies and Medical Protocols for all, including Staff, Fans, Talent, Management, Vendors, and C-Suite Executives.

Taking Temperatures

According to the WHO, temperature screening during entry or exit is not an effective way to detect COVID-positive people because the incubation period could be 5 – 6 days.

Benchmarking

The operational shutdown imposed by governments around the world on the sports and entertainment industry **requires changes in policies, protocols, and procedures before reopening can occur**. Sports and entertainment organizations must review their health, safety, security, and service policies to ensure they are complying with new guidance and using best practices to address threats old (i.e., crime, terrorism, fire, active shooter, natural disasters) and new (i.e., cybercrime, data breaches, anti-social behavior (protests), terrorism, disease, etc.). Benchmarking helps organizations compare their practices against other similar organizations and venues to identify performance gaps and seize upon new opportunities to achieve an advantage over competitors.

The time to benchmark where you are, find gaps, and identify and implement solutions is now.

Public Health

☐ [World Health Organization (WHO)](#)

☐ [United States Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC)

☐ [CDC Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)](#)

CDC Information is frequently updated; the RTWPS Task Force recommends routinely accessing the CDC website for any new information and to use other information sources to cue you to new announcements. The CDC produces health information in a variety of ways, including the **Choosing Safer Activities** chart that recognizes changes brought about by the prevalence of vaccinations and the continuing positive effect of preventative measures such as masks, handwashing, and sanitation and disinfection. It shows indoor and outdoor activities and when a vaccinated person and unvaccinated person should be wearing a mask.

Choosing Safer Activities

Unvaccinated People	Your Activity	Fully Vaccinated People
	Outdoor	
(Safest - green, no mask)	Walk, run, roll, or bike outdoors with members of your household	(green, no mask)
(green, no mask)	Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	(green, no mask)
(green, mask)	Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people	(green, no mask)
(Less Safe - yellow, mask)	Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	(green, no mask)
(Least Safe - red, mask)	Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	(green, mask)
	Indoor	
(Less Safe - yellow, mask)	Visit a barber or hair salon	(green, mask)
(yellow, mask)	Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum	(green, mask)
(yellow, mask)	Ride public transport with limited occupancy	(green, mask)
(yellow, mask)	Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households	(green, mask)
(Least Safe - red, mask)	Go to an indoor movie theater	(green, mask)
(red, mask)	Attend a full-capacity worship service	(green, mask)
(red, mask)	Sing in an indoor chorus	(green, mask)
(red, mask)	Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar	(green, mask)
(red, mask)	Participate in an indoor, high intensity exercise class	(Safest - green, mask)

Get a COVID-19 vaccine

Prevention measures not needed

Take prevention measures
Fully vaccinated people: wear a mask
Unvaccinated people: wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and wash your hands

- Safety levels assume the recommended prevention measures are followed, both by the individual and the venue (if applicable).
- CDC cannot provide the specific risk level for every activity in every community. It is important to consider your own personal situation and the risk to you, your family, and your community before venturing out.

Figure 18 - CDC Choosing Safer Activities Chart (April 2021)

☐ [Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)](#)

Figure 19 - OSHA Slow the Spread of COVID-19 at Work

☐ [Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)](#)

☐ [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)](#)

☐ [Harvard Medical School Coronavirus Resource Center](#)

☐ State Department of Health

☐ City and County Health Departments

☐ [National Football League (NFL)](#)

☐ [National Basketball Association (NBA)](#)

☐ [National Hockey League (NHL)](#)

☐ [Major League Baseball (MLB)](#)

☐ [Major League Soccer (MLS)](#)

☐ [Women's National Basketball Association](#)

☐ [International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)](#)

☐ [International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)](#)

☐ [University of Southern Mississippi National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security (NCS4)](#) COVID-19 Considerations for Sport and Entertainment Venues and Events and Best Practices Guides

☐ [International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM)](#)

☐ [Innovation Institute for Fan Experience (IIFX)](#)

☐ Sports and Entertainment Best Practices Working Group, including review of numerous event resumption plans.

☐ Local Economic Growth Corporation

☐ Local Sports, Entertainment, and Business Alliances

Lest We Forget

There are other important things to baseline. The COVID-19 pandemic has been all consuming because it has effectively shutdown the sports and entertainment industry. Most organizations are focused on how to deal with this overwhelming challenge to business operations.   However, when business resumes, all the threats and hazards that dominated safety and security planning before the pandemic, remain.   The malevolent actors who have seemingly gone quiet because of the pandemic have not been idle. They have used this time to plan and are waiting for an opportunity to strike.

☐ Has the organization reviewed the most current national-level threat assessments?

☐ Has the organization reviewed the most current threat assessment from the state Fusion Center?

☐ Does the current risk assessment account for changes in the current threat assessment?

☐ Have all planning assumptions and plans been updated with current threat and hazard assessment information, including:

    ☐ Contingency plans/Incident Management Plans?

    ☐ Counterterrorism Plan?

    ☐ Crowd Management, Crowd Control/Crowd Disorder and Anti-Social Behavior Plans?

        ☐ Do these plans account for the activities associated with social justice groups that can become violent?

        ☐ Have the police explained their continuum of force and its role in deescalating tensions and maintaining order?

    ☐ Fire Safety Plan?

☐ Active Shooter Plan?

☐ Evacuation, Invacuation, and Shelter-in-Place Plans?

☐ Communication Plan?

☐ Medical Plan?

    ☐ Health Safety (COVID-19 and Post-COVID)?

    ☐ Mass Care/Mass Casualty?

    ☐ Staff Wellness?

☐ Traffic Management Plan?

☐ Training and Exercise Plan (Internal and Key Stakeholder)?

    ☐ Annual Training Plan current?

    ☐ Tabletop Exercises?

    ☐ Field Exercises?

    ☐ In-Situ Training?

There is so much that the sports and entertainment industry had prepared for prior to the pandemic. The industry has spent more than a year fighting through the effects of the pandemic and the extreme measures and new compliance policies designed to contain and control COVID-19. The advent of vaccines and a better understanding of COVID-19 and preventative measures makes reopening possible in 2021. So, take advantage of this time to:
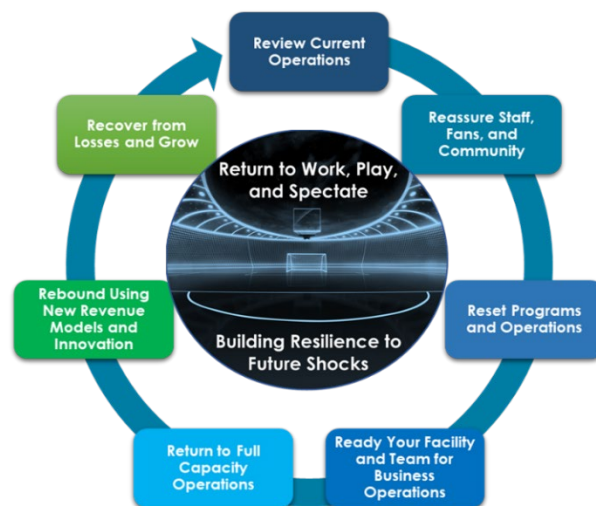
Figure 20 - Framework for a Return to Work, Play, and Spectate

Principles, Questions, and Considerations

The principles, questions, and considerations in this document are rooted in the most current medical knowledge about COVID-19, preventative measures, and public health guidance available as of the date of publication. The medical-related questions and guidance are derived from discussions with health experts, and guidelines issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety Health Administration (OSHA), medical schools, health care organizations, and guidance provided by various state and local public health agencies.

The questions and considerations herein are informed by sports and entertainment industry thought leaders, practitioners, and subject matter experts; they reflect the consensus of the RTWPS Task Force members.
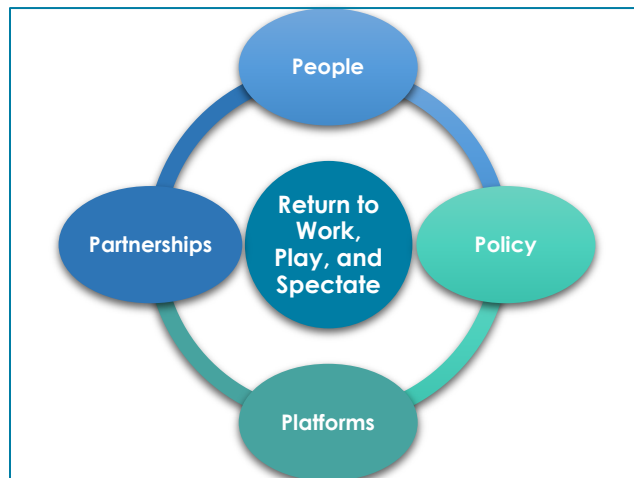
Figure 21-Framework for the Core Principles

Principles

The principles related to the Return to Work, Play, and Spectate are organized around **Partnerships**, **People**, **Policy**, and **Platforms**. These **essential learnings**, or **principles**, can be implemented into sports and entertainment industry event planning to help create a safer and more enjoyable environment in the post-pandemic era.

Partnerships

Partnerships are an important part of resilience, including preparing for and responding to a business disruption, such as COVID-19. Partners may include your supply chain for goods and services, employees, government agencies, unions, health care system, utilities, and risk/insurance providers, to name but a few. The adage, "*you are only as strong as the weakest link in the chain*" well summarizes your dependency on your partners and the many interdependencies they have on one another to help your enterprise achieve its business goal. Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

- [ ] Events may require the additional support from private medical services to ensure public safety staffed.

- [ ] The return to work, play, and spectate starts with the digital journey in the homes of talent, staff, and fans, therefore events may need support from other entities to carry the message of what to expect.

- [ ] Events are now the social experiment that can unlock the new behaviors and activities that are (un)acceptable in the Novel Normal. Leveraging organizations that can track and measure these behaviors and activities is vital for the industry's future.

People

People are the core of the sports and entertainment industry. The industry exists for the fans. Staff and fans must be confident that their health, safety, and security are the top priorities before they return. Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

- [ ] New skillsets and personnel will be needed, possibly at a greater number than before, to safely deliver on the event experience.

- [ ] Organizations who invest in both training and education for its workforce will create a competitive advantage for bringing stakeholders back to venues.

- [ ] Creating alignment among talent, staff, and spectators is achieved through transparency and agility in the RTWPS strategy.

Policy

Policy is a set of rules or guidelines for organizations and staff to guide decision making, actions, and to achieve compliance with health, safety, security, and service goals. **Policies in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic have been affected by guidance from international, federal, state, and local governments and health agencies.** Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

- [ ] Creating alignment among talent, staff, and spectators is achieved through transparency and agility in the RTWPS strategy.

☐ Venues need to work hand-in-hand with local and state institutions to understand the new, varying requirements that exist to hold and plan an event.

☐ All activities within venues and associated standard operating procedures must be reevaluated to accommodate new environment.

Platforms

Technology affects how people communicate, learn, think, interact, and experience life. It can be a force multiplier, extending your organization's reach, helping your staff provide high quality service, and enhancing health, safety, security, and service for fans. Technology can create memory-making experiences. Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

☐ "Snake oil" salespeople exist, so it is important to fully understand your technology requirements.

☐ Technology must be adaptive and responsive to the needs of the environment and key stakeholders.

☐ Technology without communication to set and manage stakeholder expectations is a waste of time and money.

There are many lessons that have been learned to date, and so many more to come. These learnings form the basic principles, and the considerations and questions sports and entertainment organizations should ask as they prepare their venues, staff, and fans for reopening.

A Note About this Guide

The pandemic effectively shut down the sports and entertainment industry. The conditions that existed in the industry in January 2020 are gone, altered not only by the pandemic, but also by new federal, state, and local regulations and public health guidance. There will be no announcement that the world has arrived in the new normal, and in many cases, regulatory changes and guidance will be baked into all future event plans. **Now is the time to reflect on these changes and adapt existing plans and policies so they are functional now and in the post-pandemic era.**

Again, **nothing in this guide is prescriptive.** These principles, questions, and considerations can be used in whole or in part to help organizations think systematically, review their plans, reassure staff and fans, reset their operations and revenue models, and ready themselves to return to operations. Some or all the information contained in this document may not be applicable to all organizations in the sports and entertainment industry. The Task Force members and IIFX strongly recommend that before implementing any of the ideas contained herein you carefully evaluate, and consult with outside legal counsel as appropriate, about the legality, applicability, and potential efficacy of this information in your organization.

*How are you using this **discontinuous moment** to build **partnerships**, hone and develop skills in your **people**, adapt your **policies** to account for new health and safety guidance, and using **platforms** to generate revenue and create memory-making fan experiences?*

Reimagine
Innovate
Reopen

Return to Work, Play, and Spectate

Partnerships

Great endeavors begin with strong partnerships. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the value of having well-established partnerships with key stakeholders. It has also exposed gaps within business operations where new partnerships are needed with non-traditional stakeholders like Public Health. Partnerships are arrangements between parties who agree to cooperate to advance mutual interests. They can help address issues related to current operations and they can be of great assistance when contingencies arise.

Partnerships are an important part of resilience, including preparing for and responding to a business disruption, such as COVID-19. Partners may include your:

☐ Supply Chain for Goods and Services

☐ Staff and Employees

☐ Government agencies

☐ Unions

☐ Medical Services

☐ Utilities

☐ Human Resources

☐ Finance

☐ Risk and Insurance Providers

☐ Law Enforcement

☐ Fire and Ambulance Services

☐ Public Safety

☐ Emergency Management
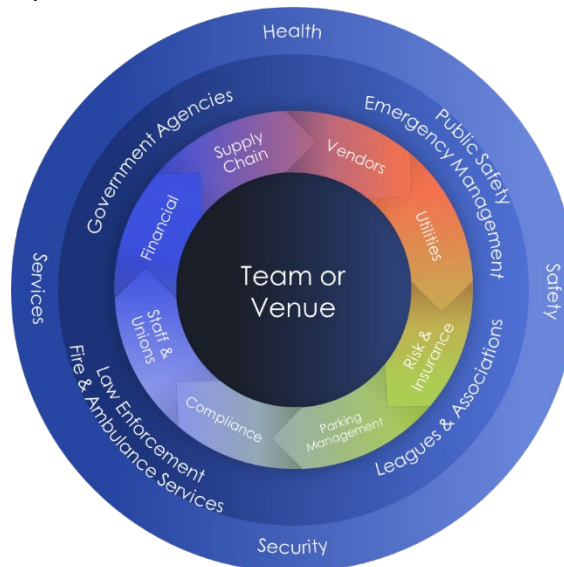
Figure 22 - What is Your Ecosystem? Internal and External Partnerships Have Interdependencies

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are arrangements between parties who agree to cooperate to advance mutual interests. Nurturing partnerships between key stakeholders helps the sports and entertainment industry build resilience in critical health, safety, security, and service functions.

Learnings

Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

☐ *RTWPS events may require the additional support from private medical services to ensure public safety staffed.*

☐ *RTWPS starts with the digital journey in the homes of talent and staff, therefore events may need support from other entities to carry the message of what to expect.*

☐ *Events are now the social experiment that can unlock the new behaviors and activities that are (un)acceptable in the Novel Normal and leveraging organizations that can track and measure that is vital for the industry's future.*

☐ Leagues and Associations, to name but a few.

The adage, *"you are only as strong as the weakest link in the chain"* well summarizes your dependency on your partners and the many interdependencies they have on one another to help your enterprise achieve its business goal.

It is important that every partner is viewed and treated, as such: A Partner. And the question, *"What is your organization doing for your partners to help prepare and train them to help you?"* Treating your **partners as critical members of your ecosystem** requires different thinking to achieve and sustain resiliency.

When considering the role of partnerships in the dynamic sports and entertainment industry, it is important to remember:

☐ Each partnership **must instill confidence and trust** in the talent, staff, vendors, fans, and the community that health, safety, security, and service are top priorities for venue leaders and event managers.

☐ The collaborative efforts of key stakeholders, old and new, must consistently demonstrate a habitual working relationship that is more than equal to any contingency.

☐ Events that occur under challenging circumstances (e.g., pandemic, natural disaster, active shooter, etc.) may require additional support from public health and private medical services to ensure public safety.

☐ The return to work, play, and spectate begins with a 360^0 digital journey that starts in the homes of talent, staff, and fans, and therefore the messaging about events may need support from partners to help communicate and manage expectations.

☐ Events are spectacles and social experiments that can unlock the new behaviors and activities that are (un)acceptable in the emerging normal while

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leveraging partner capabilities to track and measure all that is vital for the industry's future.

Interdependencies

Understanding interdependencies and identifying potential gaps that may result in a disruption threat not only materializing, but causing a larger and longer downtime, which in turn has a greater economic and brand risk impact.

How effective is your core team at managing your crisis and in developing an actionable plan for reopening? Among the many hard lessons the COVID-19 pandemic has taught most organizations is that they cannot afford to have the wrong people at the table making crisis management decisions. Some lack subject matter expertise, or the information needed was not readily available to inform decision making. This was not only true internally for most enterprises, but it was also true for the external ecosystem partner they most relied upon for normal business operations.

Organizational leaders have the new knowledge, so that a strategically focused ecosystem model could provide the foundation for high resilience and minimal disruption in the future. The alternative is to "hope" future disruptions will not happen. But **"hope" is not a strategy**.

Building bridges with partners, old and new, that are continually strengthened with planning, training and exercises, and communications that update and ensure relationship currency, is the fabric that holds the ecosystem intact.

Internal Partners

The initial organizational step is to identify who needs to be at the table or part of the **crisis management team (CMT)** among internal stakeholders. This typically includes

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operational department leaders and a C-Suite representative (e.g., Heads of Facilities, HR, Legal, IT, Procurement, Security, Safety, Marketing and Sales).

COVID-19 has raised important questions about the need for a medical or health officer on the CMT. Adding a fractional medical officer may be a solution for this new requirement, a position that should endure in the post-

Figure 23 - Sample Ecosystem Interdependency Model of Key Stakeholders

pandemic era.

The Operational Department members set the strategy and how to execute operations by working with a C-Suite leader. In the sports and entertainment industry, a General Manager, President or EVP of the organization would normally fill this role. Their responsibilities include providing C-suite guidance, asking probing questions, and reporting to the CEO, Board or Ownership to obtain program approval and funding.

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The CMT evaluates risks that may disrupt operations and implements strategies to identify, prevent, respond, and recover from disruptive risks as effectively and efficiently as possible. After setting their foundation, they graphically build their partner ecosystem to ensure the organization is well-prepared for and responsive to any potential disruption.

It is important that the CMT not start with the current vendor list and then amend it. This approach may result in failure, something that may only be noticed during the disruption or contingency. It is better to start with a clean sheet, identify what is needed in the new normal, and then craft an original ecosystem model.

Once completed, agreed upon, and approved at the C-Suite level, the CMT should then turn its attention to cultivating external partners.

External Partners:

"We just went through COVID-19 and the list of external vendors and government agencies and compliance organizations is endless. How are we supposed to approach this?"

A great comment, and the answer is that without having a well-structured ecosystem and CMT in place to partner with them, the mayhem of external post COVID-19 organizations is both overwhelming and counter-productive.

The CMT's role is to identify all existing partners, ecosystem requirements, and both gaps and redundancies. If there is a clear gap, such as a medical officer that needs to be added to the plan, the CMT recommends ways to close the gap(s). Equally important is to assess whether there are competing demands and redundancies. Consolidation is imperative if two or more current partners are providing the same or similar services.

Among the many external partners to consider for your eco-system model and invitation to the "table" are:

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- [ ] State/Local government agencies:
    - [ ] Who in your organization is responsible for maintaining these relationships and reporting any changes to the executive team?
    - [ ] Are Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) current and in place?
    - [ ] What has changed in terms of compliance policy?
    - [ ] How has the organization incorporated changes in regulatory guidance?
    - [ ] Which government compliance rules will remain post-pandemic?
    - [ ] Who are the new players that you must work with now and post-pandemic?
    - [ ] What information is required by your partners?
    - [ ] What information do you need from your current and new government partners?
    - [ ] Which partnerships will remain post-pandemic?
    - [ ] How will you incorporate new compliance policies and government partners in tabletop and field exercises?
- [ ] Insurance/Risk:
    - [ ] Is your insurance based on a low bid that excludes some or all business disruptions?
    - [ ] Does your insurance exclude business disruptions caused by pandemics?
    - [ ] Have you invited the risk/insurance provider to the table so they can understand your business and risks and you can properly define your coverage needs is imperative?

PARTNERSHIPS

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☐ Law Enforcement, Fire and Ambulance Services:

   ☐ Who in your organization is responsible for maintaining these relationships and reporting any changes to the executive team?

   ☐ Who are the law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management agencies that you need to include?

   ☐ Are Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) current and in place for all law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management agencies?

   ☐ How will you include new agencies in your training, tabletop, and field exercises?

☐ Association/League/Conference:

   ☐ Who in your organization is responsible for maintaining these relationships and reporting any changes to the executive team?

   ☐ Are contracts and/or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) current and in place?

   ☐ What has changed in terms of compliance policy?

   ☐ What are the unique compliance requirements for each?

   ☐ How do you manage conflicting policies?

   ☐ How are you benchmarking against other vendors (i.e., venues, production companies, customers), associations, leagues, and conferences?

PARTNERSHIPS

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□ Which compliance rules will remain post-pandemic?

□ How will you hold your organization and partners accountable for compliance?

□ Vendors: F&B, Custodial, IT, Security, Parking, Maintenance, Electrical, Plumbing, Marketing, Ticketing, Banking/Finance, Promotional.

- □ Who in your organization is responsible for maintaining these relationships and reporting any changes to the executive team?

- □ Have contracts been updated to reflect changes to compliance and the ecosystem?

- □ Do contracts include participation in crisis management planning, tabletop, and field exercises?

- □ Do contracts include training requirements for health, safety, security, and service?

- □ Do the vendors have their own business continuity plans?

  - □ Are they current?

  - □ Do they include participation in crisis management planning, tabletop and field exercises with their clients?

□ Fans/Customers/Guests:

- □ Who in your organization is responsible for maintaining these relationships and reporting any changes to the executive team?

  - □ How are you leveraging fan clubs to help you achieve your health, safety, security, and service goals?

  - □ Do fans have a seat and voice at the crisis management table?

PARTNERSHIPS

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☐ How are you communicating new compliance requirements and health, safety, security and service changes with fans, customers, guests, and talent?

Processes for Building a Successful Operating Model

☐ How have you used a strategic evaluation to identify risks that are likely to disrupt business operations?

☐ How have you identified the departments that are most needed to prevent, manage and recover from those disruptions?

☐ How have you delineated partners' roles, requirements, and instructions to provide redundancy and resilience?

☐ How have tabletop exercises and training programs been adapted to define roles, refine policies and processes, incorporate partners, and work toward resilience?

☐ How are you conducting regular reviews about what has changed including new requirements such as compliance, threat matrix, business environment, and enterprise goals?

☐ How are you using regular audits and reviews of partners to ensure:

  ☐ Your organization is providing the right and effective support?

  ☐ Your partners are well prepared and current with your enterprise requirements?

Principles for Ecosystem Partners

Partnership is a team sport. The participants at the table should be competent, capable, knowledgeable, and experienced so that they can develop and execute a strategy.

PARTNERSHIPS

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- ☐ Begin with a large list and narrow it. This reduces the potential for missing a key partner.

- ☐ Establish an internal Crisis Management Team.

- ☐ An executive or C-suite member should lead the CMT.

- ☐ Identify external partners, clearly define their required roles, and document their information and training needs.

- ☐ Schedule regular training, tabletop exercises, program and member updates, and risk analyses.

  - ☐ Determine what has changed.

  - ☐ Determine what has not changed.

- ☐ Use the ecosystem strategy to build a bridge with partners and establish two-way communications for mutual success.

General Partnership Considerations

Each partnership must instill confidence and trust in the talent, staff, vendors, fans, and the community that health, safety, security, and service are the top priorities for venue leaders and event managers.

- ☐ How do the collaborative efforts of key stakeholders, old and new, demonstrate a habitual working relationship that is more than equal to any contingency?

- ☐ Who are the new internal and external stakeholders?

  - ☐ State Department of Health?

  - ☐ Local Health Department?

  - ☐ Department of Mental Health?

  - ☐ National Alliance on Mental Illness?

PARTNERSHIPS

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- ☐ OSHA?

- ☐ CDC?

- ☐ Other?

☐ Are there new or enhanced positions for:

- ☐ Health?

- ☐ Safety?

- ☐ Medical?

- ☐ Service?

- ☐ Vendors?

- ☐ Compliance?

☐ What outside assistance is required to prepare staff and demonstrate venue commitment to health, safety, security, and service?

☐ How have new, furloughed, and current staff participated in tabletop or field exercises with key partners to expand their knowledge of and develop greater confidence in applying health, safety, and security protocols and policies?

PARTNERSHIPS

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People

PEOPLE

People are the core of the sports and entertainment industry. The industry exists for the fans. Staff and fans must be confident that their health, safety, and security are the top priorities before they return.

Sports and entertainment provide spectacles for fans. Fans must be at the center of every health, safety, security, and service decision. Without fans, there is no revenue.

The pandemic has occurred at a point when large generational changes – Millennials and GenZ are occurring, – and fan expectations are changing. The pandemic is a discontinuous moment, forcing a halt to operations and providing a unique opportunity for the sports and entertainment industry to consider how to entice fans to return, excite their senses, appeal to their core values, and to be a force for positive cultural change. These can all be achieved through programs that are focused on **partnerships, people**, **policy**, and **platforms** (technology). COVID-19 has made fans and staff cautious; consider the figure below:

Learnings

Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

- *New skillsets and personnel will be needed, possibly at a greater number than before, to safely deliver on the event experience.*

- *Organizations who invest in both training and education for its workforce will create a competitive advantage for bringing stakeholders back to venues.*

- *Creating alignment among talent, staff, and spectators is achieved through transparency and agility in the RTWPS strategy.*

74% of Fans are Risk Averse → 20% - 40% of Staff Fear for their Health and Safety → 40% of Fans are Confident Venues are Safe → 80% of Fans Prefer to Watch Sports on Television

Figure 24 - KANTAR Sports MONITOR 2021 Fan Engagement Study

The key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" provide a foundation for considerations and questions for and about **people**.

Executives

C-Suite must routinely demonstrate to the talent, fans, staff, vendors, and community their commitment to health, safety, security, and service.

☐ How are you protecting fans and staff when they are in your venue and throughout their journey?

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☐ How are you communicating the importance of preventative measures to staff, fans, and the local community?

☐ Are you incentivizing vaccination and testing for your staff, fans, and community?

☐ How are you encouraging good health practices?

☐ Are you supporting managers, supervisors, and staff as they apply and enforce policies and protocols?

☐ Are you providing workforce scheduling flexibility?

☐ Are you holding executives, managers, supervisors, and staff accountable to consistently apply, and enforce policies and protocols?

Talent

Talent must be confident that their unique needs are met and must be managed and directed to keep them safe.

☐ How are you managing, directing, and communicating with talent to keep them safe?

☐ How are you, venue staff, event managers, promoters, producers, etc. demonstrating commitment to ensuring the talent's health, safety, and security?

Staff

Staff must be confident that venue and event executive management care about their health,

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safety, and security and that they demonstrate it through action.

- ☐ How are you demonstrating a commitment to the staff's health, safety, and security?

- ☐ Are staff provided training, personal protective equipment, and the tools needed to do their work safely?

- ☐ Does the organizational culture encourage management and staff to hold each other accountable to adhere to health, safety, security, and service policies?

- ☐ Do executives, managers, and supervisors support staff when they hold fans and peers accountable for violating policies and Codes of Conduct?

- ☐ Are staff trained to use the technology necessary to manage the event, conduct operations, and deliver health, safety, and security, service?

- ☐ Are staff trained and confident to manage large crowds effectively and safely under COVID-19 and other stressful conditions?

- ☐ Are the tools and trained staff available to create conditions for a great fan experience?

Workforce

New skillsets and personnel will be needed, possibly at a greater number than before, to safely deliver on the event experience.

- ☐ Are job task analyses and/or work role delineation studies less than 7-years old?

- ☐ Is the training needs analysis current?

PEOPLE

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☐ (If applicable) Have unions been consulted on training needs and requirements?

☐ How are resources allocated to recruit and train new staff, including during competitive staff sourcing periods?

☐ How are resources allocated to maintain the skills of furloughed and current staff?

☐ Are training programs in place to train all staff and furloughed staff on all changes – policies, Codes of Conduct, health, safety, security, and service – prior to reopening or staff performing their first shift?

☐ Are programs in place to professionally develop staff over the long-term?

Invest in Your Workforce

Organizations that invest in both training and education for its workforce will create a competitive advantage for bringing stakeholders back to venues.

☐ Does the organization's return to work, play, and spectate investment strategy align talent, staff, union (if applicable), and spectator needs and requirements?

☐ Are workforce investments well-documented and transparent so they can be integrated into all organizational strategies?

☐ How do training and professional development investments promote agility and flexibility so that the workforce is prepared to adapt to future shocks?

☐ How do investments provide a path for professional development for all staff?

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Fans

Fans must be confident that venue and event management and staff will provide a clean, sanitary, safe, and secure environment.

☐ Are all staff, supervisors, and managers trained, certified, and qualified for their roles?

☐ Have appropriate actions been taken by venue and event management and staff to:

   ☐ Provide a clean, sanitary, safe, and secure environment?

   ☐ Provide for staff and fans' health, safety, and security?

   ☐ Provide the highest level of service that meets fan expectations?

☐ How have health, safety, security, and service actions and expectations been communicated to staff and fans?

☐ Have the Staff Code of Conduct and Fan Code of Conduct been updated to reflect current health, safety, security, and service requirements?

☐ How have the fans been assured that they and the staff are accountable for adhering to their respective Code of Conduct?

Employee Organizational Culture

The environment created by the COVID-19 pandemic requires organizations to prominently feature their health and safety culture in their normal operations.

☐ How are C-Suite executives championing the importance of health and safety in protecting the lives and livelihood of each employee?

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☐ How do you ensure employees understand their role in promoting a healthy and safe environment for talent, fans, staff, and vendors?

☐ Has the organization implemented:

    ☐ A comprehensive infectious disease preparedness and response plan that includes policies to protect staff, fans, talent, and vendors? How does the plan incorporate:

        ☐ Preventative measures?

        ☐ Medical response protocols?

        ☐ Communication process for staff to report illness and status?

        ☐ Documentation of illness, response, and contact tracing (as required)?

    ☐ A collaborative plan with general counsel, unions (as applicable), medical, public health, and other key stakeholders to define employer and staff responsibilities in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and security guidelines? How does this plan address:

        ☐ Processing health and safety claims?

        ☐ Privacy protections (GDPR, HIPAA, CCPA, and other state protections) when reporting illness and conducting contact tracing?

        ☐ Health safety protocols to routinely inspect facilities for potential disease vectors (organisms) and

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areas that can breed and transmit disease?

☐ Processes to monitor and evaluate (social media comments, targeted surveys, etc.) the effectiveness of communication campaigns for staff and fans?

☐ Does the organization have a health safety compliance program that includes:

    ☐ A coordinator and trained (certified) staff to manage programs for talent, staff, fans, and vendors?

    ☐ A standardized risk assessment process before each event?

    ☐ Protocols for staff and talent travel (i.e., plane, bus, hotel, and food) that comports with local public health and industry guidance?

    ☐ Protocols that comport with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other relevant EEOC requirements to provide reasonable accommodations?

    ☐ Medical protocols for any individual on premises who tests positive for COVID-19, including self-isolation, care, and monitoring, contact tracing, and other measures?

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Mental Health Support

- ☐ How does the organization offer mental health support for its staff?

- ☐ How does the organization use resources and initiatives to support the psychological health and safety of staff?

- ☐ Does the ATP include courses that teach staff how to:

    - ☐ Cope and manage stress in the workplace?

    - ☐ Problem solve and analyze situations?

    - ☐ Deescalate confrontational situations?

    - ☐ Work effectively in an environment with multiple visual, auditory, and physical distractions?

    - ☐ Complete tasks in a time sensitive environment?

- ☐ How has the organization establish and maintain relationships with mental health service providers and volunteer organizations like the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)?

Evaluating Staff Confidence

- ☐ How does the organization evaluate each staff members' confidence (self-efficacy) and belief in their ability to perform their role with fans under COVID-19 or similar conditions?

- ☐ Consider an example of a modified **General Self-Efficacy Scale** for staff at sports and entertainment venues *(Adapted from Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995).* Recommend using a scale of 1 – 4 (**1: Not all the time**; **2: Hardly true**; **3: Moderately true**; and **4: Exactly true**). A higher score equates to greater confidence and belief in a staff

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member's ability (self-efficacy) overcome challenges and complete tasks.

- ☐ *I am confident that I have the tools and training I need to successfully and safely complete my work in an environment that brings me close to thousands of people.*

- ☐ *I will be able to complete my tasks while serving in areas with large numbers of people.*

- ☐ *I will achieve the desired outcomes for my role during sports and entertainment events in this venue.*

- ☐ *I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.*

- ☐ *I will successfully overcome many challenges faced during this event.*

- ☐ *Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.*

- ☐ *Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.*

☐ Does the organization have a plan to routinely assess health- and medical-related supply needs?

☐ Does the organization have health safety training programs for staff and vendors (may require contract modification)?

Staff Situational Awareness

It is important the organization knows what is going on within their ecosystem and that their plans, programs, processes, and procedures assure the government, industry, and public that their venue protocols for

PEOPLE

People are the core of the sports and entertainment industry. The industry exists for the fans. Staff and fans must be confident that their health, safety, and security are the top priorities before they return.

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health, safety, security, and service protect and serve the needs of their talent, fans, staff, and vendors.

PEOPLE

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☐ Does the venue have a **communication campaign plan** to routinely educate and inform staff about health, safety, and security protocols?

☐ How does the communications campaign explain the **COVID-19 risk mitigation actions now in place** prior to resumption of business?

☐ What policies are in place to require staff compliance with medical protocols, including written acknowledgement?

☐ How are staff trained on health and safety policy and practices?

☐ How does the (medical) (safety) (security) compliance team develop, implement, and assess effectiveness of and compliance with health, safety, or security policies and protocols at all work centers and sites?

☐ How are work centers and common areas assessed to ensure compliance with COVID-19 related health and safety measures?

☐ What procedures are in place to ensure staff complete all medical screening protocols (e.g., health questionnaire, COVID-19 tests, temperature check, etc.) prior to entering the venue for their work shift or other purposes?

☐ How does the travel policy for staff define and describe appropriate medical travel declarations to assist in contact tracing?

Training

The organization has developed a training plan to train employees on venue procedures, policies and

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code of conduct for safety and legal operations for staff, talent, and patrons.

☐ How does health and safety training cover COVID-19 and other health safety-specific items? Does it include:

    ☐ Preventative Measures, including Personal Protective Equipment, masks, hand washing, hand sanitizers, and physical distancing?

    ☐ Etiquette such as when to shake hands, how to cough and sneeze, and when to use of hand sanitizers, masks, and gloves.

☐ How are staff routinely trained on the Codes of Conduct for staff and fans?

☐ How does the annual training plan (ATP) document skills training for each role?

☐ Does the ATP include protective action training including, active shooter, shelter-in-place, evacuation and invacuation, first aid, mass care/mass casualty, and other relevant health, safety, and security skills?

☐ How does the ATP document new skills and current health, safety, security, and service requirements?

☐ Does the ATP provide for health and safety training to build staff confidence so they can effectively perform their assigned tasks with capacity crowds?

☐ How does the ATP provide for communication, customer service, problem solving, de-escalation techniques, and other power skills?

☐ How does the ATP provide for cybersecurity training including, passwords, phishing?

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☐ How are trained tasks designated as baseline, upskilling, recurring, and specific supervisor and manager tasks and skills?

    ☐ How are tasks designated with criticality, frequency, and methods used to facilitate the transfer and reinforcement of knowledge to the staff?

    ☐ How is the frequency of recurring training determined for discrete tasks appropriate for current and post-COVID needs?

☐ How do training requirements for third party contractors conform with the ATP?

☐ How are training requirements for third party contractors specified in their contracts?

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Policy

People, processes, and technologies have a symbiotic relationship to help create conditions for memory-making sports and entertainment events. The pandemic resulted in extreme measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Federal, state, and local governments enacted policies that constrained activities and mandated behaviors that did not exist before January 2020. As we learned more about the disease, government recommendations became formal regulations, and public health guidance became policy.

Policy is a set of rules or guidelines for organizations and staff to guide decision making, actions, and to achieve compliance with health, safety, security, and service goals and requirements. Policies in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic have been affected by guidance from international, federal, state, and local governments and health agencies.

All existing plans and policies governing sports and entertainment venues and events are affected by the new regulatory landscape and public health guidance. There is no "waiting it out" and resetting operations and policies back to the way it was in January 2020. **All existing policies and associated standard operating procedures should be reevaluated and adapted to the new environment.** These revised and new policies should be documented in your revised plans.

Venues need to work together with local, and state, and Federal authorities; unions and your sanctioning body institutions to understand the new, varying requirements that exist to hold and plan an event. These need to be incorporated into your revised plans and used as a basis for retraining of staff and communicated to talent and spectators.

POLICY

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Learnings

Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

- *Creating alignment among talent, staff, and spectators is achieved through transparency and agility in the RTWPS strategy.*

- *Venues need to work hand-in-hand with local and state institutions to understand the new, varying requirements that exist to hold and plan an event.*

- *All activities within venues and associated standard operating procedures must be reevaluated to accommodate new environment.*

Assessments

- [ ] How have you assessed the current environment and the policy implications resulting from federal, state, local, and public health agencies?

- [ ] How have the pandemic, regulatory changes, and public health guidance affected:

  - [ ] Threat Assessments used for health, safety, and security planning?

  - [ ] Risk Assessments and the risk horizon used for

    - [ ] Planning events?

    - [ ] Prioritizing resources to secure well-trained staff, develop and implement policies and processes, and acquire new technologies?

  - [ ] Crowd management and crowd control policies, including:

    - [ ] Time, Space, and Information practices?

    - [ ] Enforcing Preventative Measures (e.g., masks, social distancing, "no-bags", spaced seating, etc.)?

    - [ ] Ingress, Circulation, and Egress processes and procedures?

      - [ ] How do you communicate these policies to staff and fans?

    - [ ] Access Control processes and procedures?

      - [ ] Medical Screening?

      - [ ] Security Screening

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☐ Contact Tracing?

☐ Vaccinations?

☐ Testing?

☐ Other?

☐ Signage and wayfinding aides?

☐ Social distancing requirements?

☐ Are there any new mandatory reporting, data gathering, and information sharing requirements?

Planning

☐ How do you adjudicate conflicting health safety guidance from leagues, associations, and public health agencies when developing policies and during event planning?

☐ How do you implement new (or remove) outdated federal, state, local, league, association, and/or public health guidance **into** existing policies and plans?

☐ How do you promulgate or communicate new guidance or policies to planners, event staff, and third-party providers?

☐ How have the pandemic, regulatory changes, and public health guidance affected:

☐ Contingency planning for normal, emergency, and COVID-19 conditions?

☐ Traffic Management for normal conditions and under COVID-19 conditions (e.g., social distancing, testing, traffic control points, parking, etc.)

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□ Preparations for mass care/mass casualty contingencies under COVID-19 conditions?

□ How do you include testing and screen for vaccination requirements in risk assessments and event planning?

Health and Safety

□ How have you adapted health and safety policies for:

　□ Staff and Fan Codes of Conduct?

　□ Use of preventative measures for all events and any venue capacity limits?

　□ Staff to enforce new policies related to preventative measures during ingress, the event, and during egress from the venue?

□ How have you trained staff about new policies and their role in enforcing policies?

□ How have you trained and prepared staff to act as brand ambassadors and confidently answer questions about health, safety, security, and service policies?

□ How have you communicated new staff and fan codes of conduct?

Security

□ How have you adapted security policies to comply with health and safety protocols?

□ How are new recertification requirements managed for current and furloughed security staff?

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NOTES

☐ How do you ensure third-party security staffing providers comply with new health safety protocols and health-related reporting and privacy requirements?

☐ How have you trained your security staff to:

    ☐ Appropriately use their personal protective equipment when performing their assigned duties and tasks?

    ☐ Conduct security screenings that comply with current COVID-19 public health guidance?

    ☐ Enforce health and safety policies for talent, staff, and fans?

    ☐ Comply with health reporting requirements for talent, staff, and fans who test positive for COVID-19?

    ☐ Protect the privacy of talent, staff, and fans and to comply with privacy requirements associated with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)?

    ☐ Use touchless ticketing systems and security screening equipment?

    ☐ Deescalate tensions and problem solve issues before they become incident?

    ☐ Provide excellent guest services under COVID-19 conditions?

Service

☐ How have you adapted service policies to comply with health and safety protocols and policies?

☐ How have you trained staff to comply with health and safety protocols and policies?

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NOTES

- ☐ How do you ensure third-party security staffing providers comply with new health safety protocols?
- ☐ How are recertification requirements for staff and third-party food handlers managed?
- ☐ How have you trained concessions staff to use touchless technologies, food service apps, and to comply with sanitation and disinfection requirements?

IT and Cybersecurity

- ☐ How have new health-related privacy requirements been incorporated into IT and cybersecurity policies?
- ☐ How have you ensured your systems and IT policies are compliant with handing sensitive health and privacy data for your staff, fans, vendors, talent, etc.?
- ☐ How have you trained IT and cybersecurity staffs about new health safety and health-related privacy requirements?
- ☐ How are new certification and recertification requirements for current and furloughed IT and cybersecurity staff?
- ☐ How do you ensure third-party service providers comply with new health-related privacy requirements been incorporated into IT and cybersecurity policies?

COVID-19 Testing

- ☐ How have you communicated COVID-19 testing and screening policies to staff, fans, and third-party service providers who need access to facilities?
- ☐ How do you resolve conflicting testing guidance from different leagues and associations with local public health guidance?
- ☐ How have you qualified your third-party medical service providers to ensure they comply with all

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applicable data privacy laws and health reporting requirements?

☐ How do you ensure third-party medical service providers adhere to Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) requirements?

☐ How have planned for the possible suspension of waivers, loss of CLIA certification, or an industrial action by or related to your third-party medical service provider(s)?

Vaccinations

☐ How have you communicated your organization's policy regarding vaccination for talent, staff, and guests?

☐ How does your organization verify that talent, staff, and fans are vaccinated?

☐ How does your organization verify that talent, staff, and fans who are vaccinated are current or require a booster vaccination?

☐ How have you qualified your third-party medical service providers to ensure they comply with all applicable data privacy laws and health reporting requirements?

Venue executives and managers should develop effective partnerships with all key stakeholders and work together with local, state, and federal authorities, unions, leagues, associations, and sports sanctioning bodies to understand the new and evolving requirements to plan and host sports and entertainment events. All changes should be reflected in existing policies. New policies and changes to policy should be a standard part of training and tabletop and field exercise programs. Policies should be incorporated into revised plans and communicated to talent, staff, and fans.

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Platforms

"Technology is best when it brings people together."

– Matt Mullenweg, Social Media Entrepreneur

The **discontinuous moment** created by the COVID-19 pandemic has yielded a tremendous opportunity for the sports and entertainment industry to evaluate their current platforms and identify compliance, operational, health, safety, security, and service gaps that affect the fan experience and then implement appropriate technology solutions. This opportunity has not gone unnoticed by solution providers and the so-called "snake oil" salespersons.

While **technology** can be a force multiplier and an efficient and effective means of solving problems, it often comes with a financial cost. Some technologies rushed to the field for the pandemic may only be actors in "hygiene theater" rather than practical or long-term solutions. These technologies may have a limited function and are not easily adapted and responsive for the needs of the industry and its stakeholders. A targeted communications campaign about the capabilities and limitations of these technologies may manage expectations of key stakeholders, staff, and fans.

Taking advantage of this discontinuous moment is complicated by the need for solutions for the immediate health and safety compliance requirements before turning to the longer-term technology gaps to help enhance operations, health, safety, security, and service and improve the overall fan experience. Some foundational questions can help assess the current state of the organization's technology, including:

☐ Which technologies that you currently have contribute to health and safety compliance?

☐ How does your current technology contribute to revenue generation?

PLATFORMS

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Learnings

Some key learnings from the pandemic era and the "Great Wait" include:

☐ *"Snake oil" salespeople exist, so it is important to fully understand technology requirements.*

☐ *Technology must be adaptive and responsive to the needs of the environment and stakeholders.*

☐ *Technology without communication to set stakeholder expectations is a waste of time and money.*

- ☐ How does your current technology contribute to cost management?

- ☐ How does your current technology contribute to staff, fan, and vendor security?

- ☐ How does your current technology contribute to and facilitate guest services?

- ☐ How does your current technology contribute to the overall fan experience?

Gap Analysis

Most organizations conduct some form of gap analysis as they review their overall performance against their performance goals. A gap analysis can answer some basic questions, including:

- ☐ How does the organization assess its ability to currently provide for health, safety, security, and service?

- ☐ What is the desired end state for the organization in terms of health, safety, security, and service?

- ☐ What are the gaps between where the organization is now and the desired end state?

- ☐ Why does each gap exist?
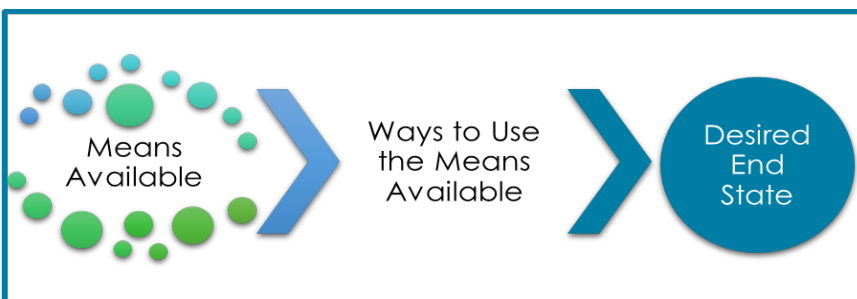
Figure 25 - Strategy Simplified to Close Gaps

- ☐ What means (resources) are available to enable the organization to achieve its desired ends?

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☐ People (current or new staff)?

    ☐ What skills are required to close the gap(s)?

    ☐ Do existing staff have the requisite skills to help close the gap?

    ☐ How can the ATP be adapted to include the required skills training?

    ☐ Can people with appropriate skills be combined with technology and/or changes in policy to close the gap(s)?

☐ Policy – potential non-material solutions?

    ☐ Which policies must be adapted or created to ensure compliance with current health, safety, security, and service requirements?

    ☐ Which policies can be adapted to close identified gap(s)?

    ☐ Which policies can be combined with people and/or technologies and/or partnerships to close identified gap(s)?

☐ Platforms (existing or new technology)?

    ☐ What technologies are required to close the gap(s)?

    ☐ How can existing technology be adapted to close the gap(s)?

    ☐ How can the organization's current technology, with changes in people and/or policy and/or partnerships, be adapted to close the gap(s)?

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NOTES

☐ How will you identify and qualify potential technology solutions?

☐ Partnerships (existing and new key stakeholders)?

    ☐ Who are the traditional key stakeholders?

    ☐ Who are the new key stakeholders?

    ☐ Which stakeholders can help fill the identified gap(s)?

Technology Need Assessment

☐ When was the last technology needs assessment completed?

☐ How often is the technology needs assessment revised?

☐ What are the new health, safety, security, and service requirements?

    ☐ Health

        ☐ Access Control?

        ☐ Contact tracing?

        ☐ Personal Protective Equipment?

        ☐ Virus Testing and Detection?

        ☐ Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sanitation?

        ☐ Barriers where physical distancing cannot be maintained?

        ☐ Improved ventilation?

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- ☐ Vaccine passports or documentation?
- ☐ Real-time Testing?
- ☐ Data protection and information management?
- ☐ Other?
- ☐ Safety
  - ☐ Personal Protective Equipment?
  - ☐ Supplies for good hygiene practices?
  - ☐ Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sanitation?
  - ☐ Testing and Medical Screening applications?
  - ☐ Contact tracing?
  - ☐ Enhanced communication and notification systems?
  - ☐ Enhanced means of recording and reporting health and safety incidents to appropriate organization, OSHA, and public health authorities?
  - ☐ Other?
- ☐ Security
  - ☐ Access control?
  - ☐ Medical screening applications?
  - ☐ Contact Tracing?
  - ☐ Crowd Management?
  - ☐ Security screening?
  - ☐ Ticket and vaccine passport scanners?
  - ☐ Thermal scanners?
- ☐ What are the new health, safety, security, and service technology requirements imposed or mandated by:

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- ☐ Government?
- ☐ League, Association, Sanctioning Body, or similar?
- ☐ Local Ordinance?
- ☐ Public Health Agencies?
- ☐ Occupational Safety and Health Administration?
- ☐ Other?
- ☐ What technologies does the organization have available now that might address compliance gap(s)?
- ☐ What new technologies have been identified to solve health, safety, security, and service gaps?
  - ☐ What problem does the identified technology solution uniquely solve?
  - ☐ How mature is the identified solution?
    - ☐ Ready for deployment?
    - ☐ Scale quickly to meet needs?
    - ☐ Fit the timeline for deployment required for the identified gap or need?
  - ☐ Is this technology unique to COVID-19, or can it be adapted to address other identified needs or general wellness?
  - ☐ Will new technologies be:
    - ☐ Purchased with a maintenance plan?
    - ☐ Contracted as a service?
    - ☐ Leased for unique functions, events, or seasonal activities?
  - ☐ How will any new technology seamlessly integrate with current and legacy systems?
  - ☐ Do all critical technology systems – power, HVAC, water pumping, waste management,

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communication, signage, etc. – have automatic failover capabilities and/or allow for graceful degradation of capabilities under emergency conditions?
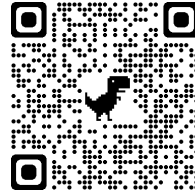
Clean Air, Water, and Surfaces

- [ ] How are you using the EPA's "N List" to source reliable disinfectants for deep cleaning?

- [ ] How are you reducing the potential for airborne transmission of COVID-19, allergens, and other pathogens in interior spaces?

- [ ] How are you ensuring safe drinking water and the treatment of wastewater?

Legal, Regulatory, and Policy

- [ ] Does existing venue technology provide sufficient due diligence under COVID-19 or other risk conditions?

- [ ] Do identified gaps preclude the venue from complying with new health, safety, security, and service requirements?

- [ ] Do proposed technology solutions comply with federal, state, and local regulatory guidance?

- [ ] Do proposed technology solutions provide sufficient due diligence under COVID-19 conditions?

- [ ] How will proposed technology solutions provide long-term solutions for health, safety, security, and service requirements in the post-pandemic era?

- [ ] Data protection and Compliance

  - [ ] What changes are required to ensure your cybersecurity program is current?

  - [ ] How are employees trained to protect information and cyber networks?

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☐ Does cyber training include ways to protect networks against intrusion, ransomware attacks, (spear)phishing, and other forms of network attacks?

☐ How does your organization ensure compliance with data protection regulations and laws?

NOTE: Compliance with any of these data protection laws and similar privacy guidance and regulations are not sufficient for any venue. Comply with applicable state requirements.

☐ General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?

☐ California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)?

☐ Virginia Consumer Data Protection Act (CDPA)?

☐ Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)?

☐ Your national and/or state requirements?

☐ Other?

Risk and Crowd Management

☐ How do you use your venue's technology to mitigate health, safety, and security risks?

☐ How do you use existing technology to manage crowds under normal, emergency, and COVID-19 conditions?

☐ How do you use technology to reimagine the space, time, movement, and perception surrounding preventative measures (i.e., masks, social distancing, temperature taking, and non-contact policies)?

☐ How do you use technology to create normal, emergency, and COVID-19 crowd flow projections for the venue?

PLATFORMS

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NOTES

- ☐ How do you use technology to provide signage, communication, and wayfinding for crowds under normal, emergency, and COVID-19 conditions?

- ☐ How do you use existing crowd management technology to manage crowds and flow rates:

  - ☐ During ingress?

  - ☐ As people circulate inside and outside the venue?

  - ☐ During egress under normal, emergency, and COVID-19 conditions?

- ☐ How do you use existing ticketing, parking and transportation, and crowd management technologies to maximize revenue and/or maximize capacity while accounting for social distancing requirements?

- ☐ How do you use technology to manage first aid and other on-site medical programs?

- ☐ How do you use technology to manage and control anti-social behavior inside and outside the venue?

- ☐ How do you use technology to test new health, safety, and security concepts, configurations, and capabilities?

- ☐ How do you integrate technology into tabletop and field exercises and training?

- ☐ How are you taking advantage of limited capacity to test new technologies and operational procedures?

- ☐ How will new technology scale up when full capacity crowds return?

PLATFORMS

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Enhancing the Fan Experience

- ☐ How are you soliciting information from fans about their expectations when they return to sports and entertainment venues?

- ☐ What technology trends will address gaps in Fan Experience?

- ☐ Which technologies "excite the senses" and create a more personal, sensory, a visceral experience for fans?

- ☐ Have you considered contactless /touchless services for ticketing, parking, food and beverage service, and merchandise?

- ☐ How will you provide self-service options to fans?

- ☐ How can you make fans feel in control of their experience and create a lasting impact that endures beyond the event?

- ☐ How will you use technology to boost stadium attendance in the coming year?

What Do Fans Say About Ways to Enhance Fan Experience?

57% of Fans Want to Schedule Food and Beverage Service Before the Event
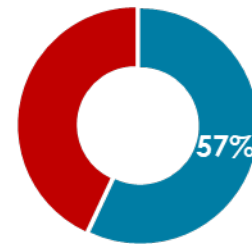
Figure 26 - Fans Who Want to Schedule Food and Beverage Service Before the Event
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

50% of Fans Plan Their Game Itinerary Before the Event
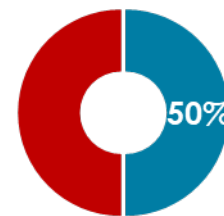
Figure 27 - Fans Who Plan Their Game Itinerary Before the Event
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

60% of Families Want "Fast Pass"

Figure 29 - Families Who Want "Fast Pass"
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

51% of Fans Want Food Delivery Apps to Deliver Food During the Game
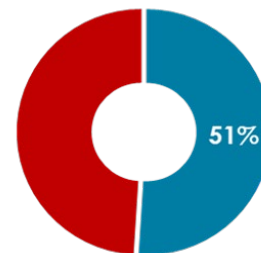
Figure 28 - Fans Wanting Food Delivery Apps to Deliver Food During the Game
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

44% of People Want to Buy a "Game Day" Food and Beverage Package
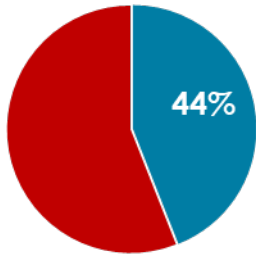

Figure 30 - People Want to Buy a "Game Day" Food and Beverage Package
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

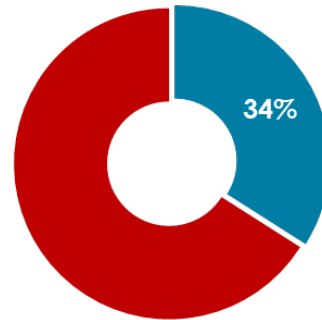## 34% of Gen-Zs Want Contactless Service

Figure 31 - Gen Zs ant Contactless Service
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

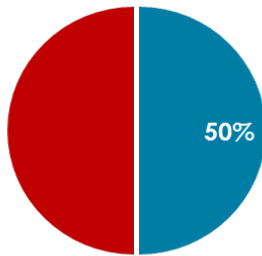## 50% of Millennials Will Pay More to "Jump the Queue"

Figure 33 - Millennials Who Will Pay More to "Jump the Queue"
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

44% of Gen-Zs Missed Sports Venue Food
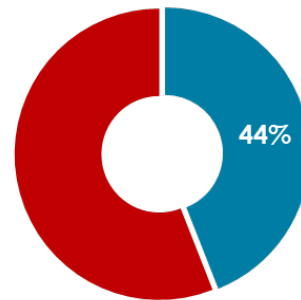
Figure 32 - Gen-Zs Missed Sports Venue Food
Source: Oracle. (2021, April 6). Back in the Arena

44% of People are Willing to Exchange Informaton for Game-Day Offers
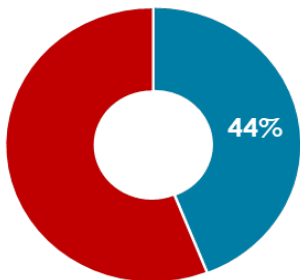

Figure 34 - People Willing to Exchange Personal Information for Game-Day Offers

USE IIFX AS YOUR RESOURCE

Contact IIFX

Need help navigating this document? Need assistance with planning, training, and scenario-based tabletop and field exercises for your reopening? Need new ideas and technologies to enhance the fan experience at your venue? IIFX can help. We have an extensive network of thought leaders, skilled practitioners, and solution providers around the world. Contact IIFX at info@iifx.org and we will find a way to help!

Subscribe to IIFX

Join the IIFX Global Community of Sports & Entertainment Industry Stakeholders and Influencers with your New International Subscription Service 2021. We offer Season Ticket Individual Subscriptions and a Club Level Season Ticket Subscription for your team!

The Innovation Institute is the International community for executive, future, and educational leaders who are thought leaders and hold positions in safety, security or fan experience, and organizations who provide solutions for the sports and entertainment industries. The cost is **$99/year ($9.99/month)**.

Medical Advisory Board

In March 2021, IIFX formed a new Medical Advisory Board comprised of board-certified physicians who serve as chief medical officers for various sports and entertainment leagues and associations. The Advisory Board is led by Dr. Til Jolly, Chief Medical Officer for Aveshka, Inc.; Clinical Professor of Emergency Medicine, The George Washington University; and Senior Consultant, Department of Health and Human Services. The IIFX Medical Advisory Board works with the IIFX leadership team to foster best practices and education for venues, participants, and fans who are striving to work, play, and spectate safely and effectively. The Board sponsors a weekly "COVID Risk Playbook Health and Medical" Podcast series, bringing together a wide range of experts to discuss and share knowledge of critical COVID topics, including youth and

mental health, vaccines, performance athletics, and a host of other issues. The podcast series can be found at https://iifx.org/podcasts/.

COVID TECH Playbook

A Live Webinar Series – The Latest Innovative TECHnology Powering a Confident Return to Live Events.

Xperience, an IIFX technology network of enterprises and startups produces a COVID-19 Return to Work, Play and Spectate Tech Talk Series. As we move through 2021, sports and entertainment organizations will prepare to reset, restart, and reopen to fans. The process of opening a venue and delivering a live sports/entertainment experience has never been more difficult. Not only must venue operators meet medical and government requirements to ensure safety, while maintaining a security posture, they must also convince skeptical fans that the in-venue experience is worth it.

Learning Hub

IIFX is invested in lifelong learning for its members and the professional development of the sports and entertainment industry workforce. Coming in the 3rd Quarter of 2021, the IIFX Learning Hub will provide skills, competency, and capacity and capability courses that are relevant to the sports and entertainment industry.

Next Steps

The **Return to Work, Play, and Spectate Task Force** is still hard at work. The members are continuing to evaluate new information about COVID-19 and its variants and examining the effects of rapid testing, vaccines, and new technologies on the spread of COVID-19. The lessons learned are being gathered and will form the basis for publications related to resilience, education and training, revenue generation, and more.
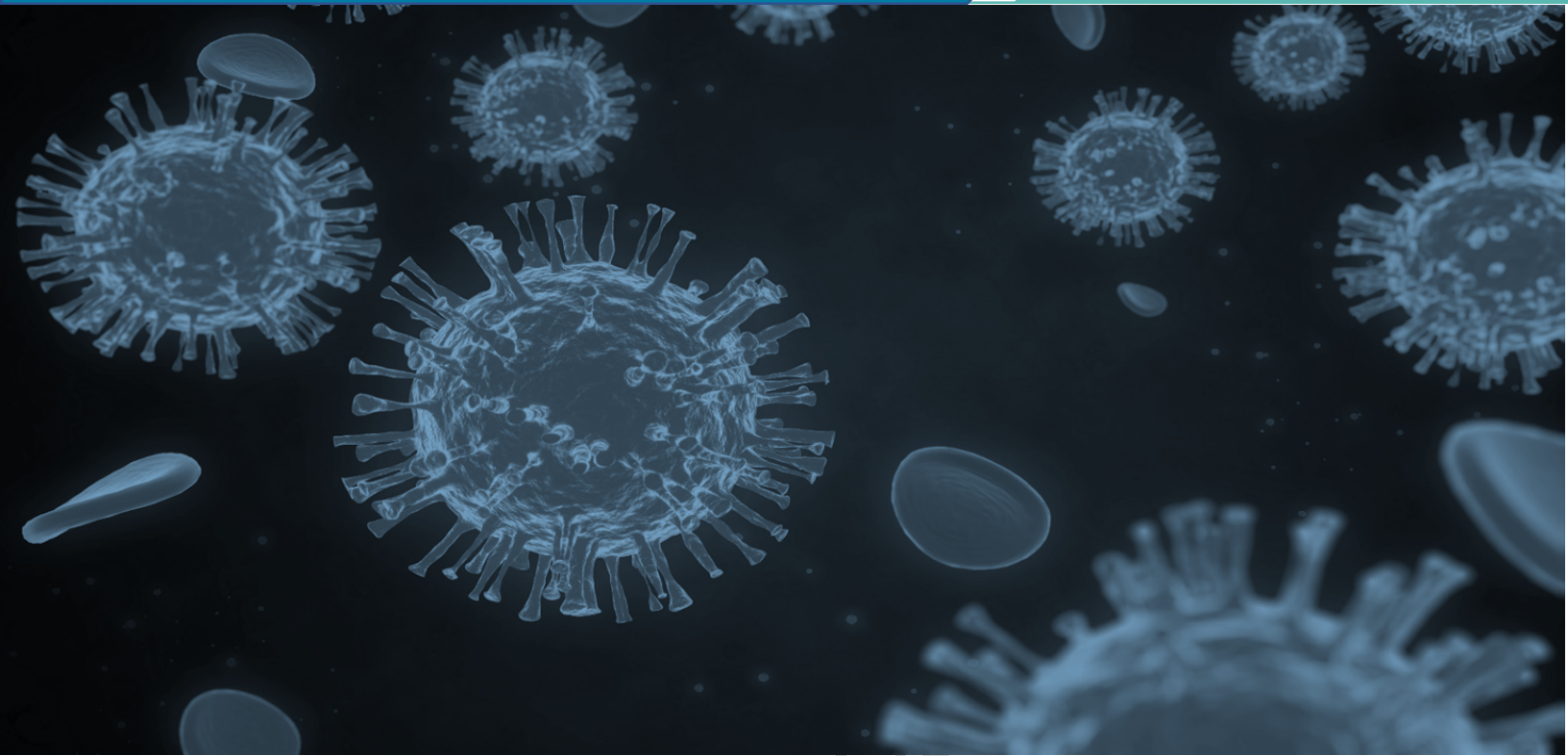
Build Resilience to Future Shocks

Build upon what we have all learned and use it to explore "what if" during your annual planning cycle. Where you find risk or threats and develop mitigation strategies, also consider building resilience into your plans.

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