

# Do You Have a Business Reentry Plan?

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When the Gemini V spacecraft finished its mission in 1965, Commander Gordon Cooper followed a detailed 38-page typewritten checklist to bring the Gemini space capsule back to earth and splashdown in the Atlantic Ocean safely.

Over time, as spacecraft grew more complicated, the reentry checklist grew exponentially. By the time Commander Dominic Gorie brought the space shuttle Challenger back to earth in 2001, NASA's reentry flight guide had a 27-page table of contents! Gorie's flight guide listed some 99 individual checklists with hundreds of steps required for successful reentry.

Apparently, coming back from space flight is way more complicated than simply aiming for the earth and riding the spacecraft down. Every contingency is taken into account, and every contingency needs a separate checklist.

The pilot and crew had one chance to do it right, and failure at any point could be catastrophic.

We may not be facing life and death decisions as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, but how we lead our businesses to reentry will determine our future success. Some businesses will reenter successfully, some will have a bumpy landing, and sadly, some will crash upon reentry.

The difference between these outcomes is mainly dependent on how you, as a leader, prepare for reentry.

## What We Know

The first step in planning for reentry is understanding the current situation.

- **Unemployment is at Record Levels.** We went from having a booming economy with record low unemployment of 3.6% (January), to record high unemployment of 14.7% (April) in just a few weeks. Millions of people are unemployed, and millions more are underemployed.
- **Government Debt is Spiraling.** The federal government has authorized the expenditure of \$2.4 Trillion (so far) to combat the economic fallout of the pandemic. Individual states are also spending billions of dollars to pay for COVID-19 related expenses.
- **Government Regulation is Increasing.** Politicians at all levels are using executive order power to insert themselves into every aspect of our private lives and businesses.
- **Personal Anxiety is Off the Charts.** Broad swaths of the public express uncertainty about the future. People are concerned about their physical health, emotional stability, employment prospects, and a host of other things. This uncertainty is contributing to anxiety and stress.

## What We Can Anticipate

The second step in planning for reentry is understanding what may happen next. Obviously, no one has a crystal ball, and no one has all the answers. That said, as a leader preparing for reentry, you should anticipate a number of scenarios and make plans for each one. For example:

- **Business Will Recover.** We can expect businesses to recover, but no one knows how fast the economy will pick up steam. Different segments of the economy will probably lead the recovery while other segments will lag.
- **Government Regulations Will Unwind.** Some of the politician’s executive orders will certainly be rescinded but which ones and in what order is unclear.
- **Taxes Will Increase.** All this government spending must be paid for by someone. A safe bet is no matter who controls congress, both businesses and individuals will be taxed to pay the COVID-19 bill.

Given what we know and what we can anticipate, leaders must plan for a variety of contingencies if they expect to have a successful reentry.

### 3 Reentry Guidelines

The Bible contains a lot of advice that applies to us as business leaders today. While Solomon didn’t deal with a pandemic, he did take over as ruler of Israel in a tumultuous time.

Here are three nuggets of wisdom from Solomon to help you develop a reentry plan for your business.

#### **1. Commit Your Business to God**

Begin your reentry business plan by committing your business to God. No matter what your business is, you must work as working for the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established” (Proverbs 16:3).

#### **2. Have a Plan**

Just like Challenger, you cannot expect to execute a successful reentry without a plan. If ever there was a time to plan and plan diligently, this is it. Plan for every contingency, so when the inevitable surprise comes up, you know exactly what you need to do!

“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty” (Proverbs 21:5).

#### **3. Focus on What is Most Important First**

There will be a million things to do to get your business up and running efficiently. To have a successful reentry, you need to focus on doing only the most important work and do that first. Only when you have the fundamentals in place should you even think about non-essential elements of your business.

“Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that, build your house” (Proverbs 24:27).

The time to plan is before you need the plan. So, plan now—plan for every contingency. Focus on doing the first things first. And most important, commit yourself and your business into God’s hands!