

Use Lessons From 2020 To Prepare For 2021



The GGF's James MacPherson writes on the subject of business risk and continuity planning for 2021.

2021 has the potential to be on par or even more challenging than 2020, yet it also has the potential to be easier because of the lessons we may have learned.

We have seen that many businesses in our sector are resilient, agile and flexible. Next year they may have to continue to demonstrate these traits to prosper.

Prepared for almost anything

It is important that companies stay focused on the future and what is within their control. That is not to say not to keep an eye on what is not in their control – I always say it is best to plan for the worst and hope for the best and you will be prepared for almost anything.

So with that in mind here are some tips and ideas that it may be worth adopting as we enter the New Year.

Developing Foresight – whilst we don't want to worry too much about the near future, we still want to ensure we at least know what may be coming. So with Brexit for example, it's advisable to find out the key sources of information, sign up to mailing lists for the government departments and the HSE.

Joining groups formed by small business experts or formal trade

associations and professional bodies are great ways to stay in the know, especially on local or specific areas.

Gathering information can help you spot potential or pending risks to your business and can prepare you, your business and your people to cope with the challenges these risks could present.

Business Risk Assessment – critically review your business and assess your procedures, your capacity and your resources and ask if you can absorb change or if you need to change to adapt to any change.

A useful exercise is to introduce learning games to your staff. Get a diverse group of your workers; get some refreshments, a white board and post-it notes; then start by picking a system, a supply chain, a department or a process. Create a scenario that would challenge or even stop if there was another global pandemic or Brexit caused materials to double in price. What would the business need to do to survive?

H&S Risk Assessment – learning games such as these above can be applied to more everyday scenarios such as working at height. Get a group to imagine an employee falls off a ladder. What happens? Are our health and safety policies and procedures working as well as they can? Could we do more? Do we want to do more? What does doing more entail?

Your staff may have plenty to

contribute and their answers, thoughts and views may help inform your business decision on what to do next.

Focus on your culture – start now if you haven't already on building a stronger and more positive culture in your business. Increase your employee engagement, create multiple feedback channels so employees can communicate up the chain to leaders. Ensure your leaders are visible and that they communicate and update employees regularly – and in the most open and honest way. Be empathetic with your employees they have been through tough times with you this year and they are also likely to be feeling the strain. Perhaps ask a senior leader (or leaders) to ring round the staff to say thank you for their work and efforts. The impact could be very positive and it could make a difference to working relationships and company cultures as we head into the challenges of next year.

Thrive and prosper

Those that have used 2020 as a catalyst for change and collaborated with their employees are more likely survive future challenges and thrive and prosper. **■**

Here's to a healthy and prosperous New Year from all at the GGF. James MacPherson, GGF Health, Safety and Environment Manager – pictured.