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Steps to Take Now to Prepare for the Unexpected

We all know the glass isn't always half full. Sometimes it is half empty. Being prepared for worst case scenarios can turn mishaps into opportunities. Take the time now to save your business later.

Anticipate What Might Go Awry

As the business leader, your eyes should be set toward the future. And part of that vision should include anticipating what might go awry. Your managers and employees should be charged with monitoring operations and day-to-day business. Constant monitoring and assessing will alert all to potential problems in the future. Fix small problems in processes and systems now to avoid major disasters later. This not only applies to operations and internal systems. Keeping apprised of market changes and forecasts can help you shape your business now to avert any problems or fluctuations in the industry later.



Avoid Simple Answers

When it comes to safety issues, avoid simple answers. Plan and practice fire and natural disaster drills. If you have automated or computerized processes for checking and identifying potential dangers or hazards in the workplace (i.e. leaky valves, disconnected hoses or faulty machinery), don't simply rely on them. Be sure to institute checks and assessments by humans regularly. Document processes and results and make sure that team members are regularly updated on any changes in procedure.

Notice Details & Be Aware of Changes

Train your team to notice details and be aware of changes. Pay attention to all aspects of your operations and charge your team with identifying early warning signs of any possible problems. Clearly identify what situations they have the power to address and fix (i.e. rectifying incorrect charges on invoice) and those they do not (i.e. overhauling the billing and collections process). Identify and communicate the process for what team members should do if they notice a pattern. Clarify processes for rectifying repeat problems that may indicate a larger problem.

Flexibility is Essential

Flexibility is essential to dealing with unexpected problems or disasters. Encourage people to think outside of the expected and to solve problems themselves. This will prepare people for dealing with emergencies and long-term problems. Consider taking five or ten minutes out of a regular meeting to work on brain teasers or identify and solve a recurring problem. Keeping a team focused on potential problems better prepares them for actual instances.



Solutions At A Glance...

In summary, this article deals with these issues:

- Anticipate What Might Go Awry
- Avoid Simple Answers
- Notice Details & Be Aware of Changes
- Flexibility is Essential