Dear Members,

Hmm, maybe I used my best quote on change a little too early. Read on...

**An Update on Face Coverings for Employers**

Today the Governor & Lieutenant Governor further changed the call for face coverings.

*For Customers* – they should wear the face covering, but it is not required. As a business owner, you do have the right to require it if you so choose.

*For Employers/Employees* – face coverings are **required**, except in the following instances:

1. When the employee is prohibited by law or regulation from wearing one.
2. When it is against documented industry best practices.
3. When it is not advisable for health purposes.
4. When it is in violation of company safety policies.
5. When someone is sitting alone in an enclosed office.
6. When there is a practical reason that the employee cannot wear one (examples given that employee works in an extremely hot condition or requires you to see the employees mouth for clear communication).

Further, if you feel that you – or some of your employees – will qualify for this exemption you must provide written documentation if you are asked for it.

Please note, that even if you have been open this entire time, you are now required to comply with the new protocols.

Here are updated links (again):

- [Responsible Restart Ohio homepage](#)
- [Responsible Protocols for All Businesses](#)
- [Manufacturing, Distribution & Construction (Protocols & Best Practices)](#)
- [General Office (Protocols & Best Practices)](#)
- [Retail, Consumer, Service (Protocols & Best Practices)](#)

I’ve had the question, what happens if you don’t do this? Well, either your employees or your customers can call the health department to complain, which will then send them out to investigate. I don’t have numbers on how many complaints RPH has received during the last 6 weeks, but I know it is happening. I just share that to keep you aware.

We have many types of businesses who receive these emails. Some directly serve customers in their establishment, others do not. Some have employees, some do not. I’ve had many conversations with business owners. Some are having a hard time convincing employees it is safe to return to work. Some who have been open to serving customers during this whole time, are not seeing the levels of customer traffic that they had expected. Others are not having either problem and it’s fine. I’m also watching other places as they reopen and talking to colleagues in those states.

The bottom line is that being allowed to reopen is one step, but as businesses we will likely have to up our communication game – both to employees and to customers, to get them all back. Not every business will experience this – and I hope you don’t! But I think it’s important to think through your
communication strategy. It’s certainly something I am doing as a boss and customer-serving business manager myself. I am sharing with you what is mandated to keep you up to speed, but you have to decide beyond that what works best for your business.

**What happens when someone has COVID-19?**
While much of the talk the last few days has been about masks & face coverings, I do want to pull your attention to their protocols on what to do if you have an employee test positive. Hopefully, that doesn’t happen to you, but we all must be prepared. It’s a quick read on the protocols list. A best practice is to have the written policy ready and communicate that to your employees up front so everyone is on the same page to handle it.

**Updated Local PPE Supplier List**
We have updated the list of places you can call for things like gloves, masks, sanitizer and more. [Download it here.](#) And, please use this one, because yesterday I made a mistake and included someone looking for the items, not actually selling them. Yes, I make many mistakes...please forgive me. 😞 We will continue to keep this updated, if you can sell these items, please let us know!

**Childcare**
As we get ready to go back to work, we know that childcare is a barrier for many people. Actually, it really was even before the pandemic, but all the more now. The Governor did mention today that they are also working with the General Assembly to put together a working group on how to safely reopen these options as well. I know that is big worry, so I wanted to mention it. Remember that you can find the current places [offering pandemic childcare here](#).

**Chamber Digital Academy**
Join us for our next Chamber Digital Academy – (tomorrow) Thursday, April 30th at 1pm - As we move into the "Responsible Restart Ohio" phase, we know that many business owners have questions about what is required, what is recommended, and what they may need to know. We’ll have a conversation with several local business owners who have been operating in the "COVID-19 world". What has worked for them? What have they learned? What changes are they preparing for in this new phase? Join us for this conversation! [Register here.](#)

**Unemployment Updates**
The State’s system continues to process more claims, but also continues to be overwhelmed. A few things:

- Here is an updated “Most Popular Questions” sheet that you can share with employees or others you know who may be affected.
- Also, just another quick reminder for those who may be eligible under the “expanded unemployment” (ie. self-employed, independent contractors, part-time), you should do your pre-registration now at this website.
- If you are laying off employees, please remember to tell them to use the mass layoffs number. [Here is a Mass Layoffs Instruction Sheet](#) that you can provide to employees to give them some direction (even though this says “mass layoffs” it can be used no matter how many you have to layoff). Remember, they are asking for certain people to call on certain days of the week – see that breakdown here.
- If you layoff employees, what health care options do they have? [DOL provides this overview](#) for you.
Today I want to give a shout out to our friends at Next Generation Films in Lexington. They recently made 2 very generous donations of $15,000 to local organizations serving our community. Pictured here is the gift to the Bellville Neighborhood Outreach Center and they also donated to the Crossroads City Center in Mansfield. Thank you for helping during this time!

Have a nomination for a future email? Drop me a line or a photo!

Final Thoughts
Close your eyes. Take a deep breath, and another, and another. Think of something that brings you happiness and peace. I hope there are many of those.

Some days it feels like we are trying to drink from a fire hose. The pace of change is just relentless. A few years ago, I felt that I needed to appreciate the ‘mundane things of life’ more so I started a gratitude journal. I (pretty) faithfully wrote down at least 3-4 things I was grateful for each day. As time went on, I fell out of the habit. Lately I’ve been trying to do that again to try to keep some perspective.

Today I’m thankful for:
- The smell of the freshly falling rain.
- A phone call from my best friend.
- My health.
- An adopted community of people who care so much.

I’m a transplant here, born & raised in Rochester, NY. To be so separated from my family during this time of crisis has at times been hard, honestly. And yet, in my heart this feels like home to me now. I have made amazing friends and feel like I have an ‘extended’ family here now. I’ve seen some truly amazing things happen in this community – and I remain convinced that there are many amazing things in front of us. I hope you’re keeping the faith, even on the hard days.

Shout out to Blake Wagner from New Directions Counseling for the great session he did for us a few weeks back on managing stress (you can view that here).

We remain #RichlandCountySTRONG!

Onward!

Jodie

Jodie A. Perry, CCE, IOM, CCEO-AP
President & CEO
Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development
PS – We have been widening our email list. If this is the first email you’ve received – Welcome! Here is a link to our past emails and other great resources to help your business!