



# OPEN

## *Your Reopening Response Plan*

*Fast, Flexible Communications  
Help Associates Keep Customers Safe*

The mammoth task of reopening your physical stores during a pandemic requires tremendous operational changes which must be communicated to every employee to ensure changes succeed. It's paramount associates understand and adhere to all new procedures required to ensure their and your customers' wellbeing. Shoppers must feel certain that front-line associates who greet and serve them demonstrate comprehensive safety practices, and that your stores are pleasing, safe places to be. And return to.

As such, reopening stores means retailers must completely retrain their associates -- and field, district and regional managers -- on new safety protocols and procedures, including store operations, return policies, sanitation, contactless payment, new HR rules and much more. Many retailers already have established safe selling and COVID-19 responses. But as situations change state by state, even county by county, communications must be quick and targeted to be effective. In fact, the speed of these changes requires associates to be reached daily on their personal devices

before they even set foot in a store. Communicating with them quickly and continuously is more important than ever before.

A company-wide mobile associate communications platform allows this power and flexibility.

Consider your new sanitation plans, for example. It is mandatory that frequently touched areas such as door handles, tables, countertops, clothing racks, fitting rooms, keyboards, railings, carts, rest rooms and break rooms be disinfected thoroughly and often. Do associates understand how and when to sanitize these areas? Do they know where to access PPE items and how to use them properly? How can you be sure they understand? A communications platform providing simple two-minute quizzes in between customer time confirms their understanding and ensure compliance while identifying where further safety guidance is needed.

For some retailers, the entire essence of selling and operations will need to adapt:

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Think about product sampling, for example, and the practice of physically touching customers when applying cosmetics or fitting clothes. Procedures like these require a complete overhaul; associates must be completely retrained and confirm they understand. Again, simple quizzes following communications and training sessions allow this confirmation and ensure compliance.

You want your in-store associates to spread an atmosphere of safety -- nothing else.

Think about product returns, which Greg Buzek of IHL notes have always been cumbersome even without a world-wide pandemic. He questions, "When do you start taking returns after opening? How do you handle clothing that has been tried on? How long do you allow products to sit before having an associate touch or move them? How do you disinfect them?" Good questions.

Once you've developed a safe returns strategy, or any other new operational consideration or method, a good company-wide communications platform allows instant drag-and-drop publishing of correspondences -- in any language -- direct from corporate to every employee, or just those in certain locations. Just about anything corporate and regional, district and field managers want to convey can be published instantly across the platform.

Some associates, especially millennials, are accustomed to video and may learn and retain information better with brief, interactive video instruction. You or a vendor can design these simple videos to outline new protocols and procedures, product trends, competitive information, selling techniques, etc. When this more engaging method of communication is resident in the platform app, it and other high-bandwidth content is delivered to each employee without buffering and streaming, and with no impact on your store's bandwidth.

More last-minute staffing changes may arise as employees show symptoms, must care for a family member or be with their children during daycare closures. For staffing issues, the CDC recommends identifying a workplace coordinator who will be

responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace. For this purpose, coordinators at the store level can be given instant, limited access to a robust communications platform, with access controlled and monitored by store or field managers.

So much more must be incorporated into your reopening response plan. To guide retailers further, Kroger Co. created a grand blueprint for businesses to follow as they start creating plans for safer workplaces. The document, which includes a retail-specific strategy, may be accessed at [KrogerBlueprint.com](https://www.kroger.com/blueprint).

Consider that with any operational rollout, even the smartest safety initiatives can fail if associates aren't well trained, can verify to management they understand, and receive communications quickly and continuously from corporate and managers. All this and more are accomplished with a sophisticated, company-wide training and communications platform that gets up and running quickly in just a matter of days.

For more information about how to best train and communicate with associates as you plan and reopen your physical stores, please contact [info@multimediaplus.com](mailto:info@multimediaplus.com).