

## DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

### INNOVATION

The DSM Forward Playbooks were created to support our local businesses and help our community move forward after the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Each playbook serves as a resource for our local business owners and managers to turn to when they are looking to the future after the impact of the virus. Our team worked with partners and experts in several industries to create a set of assessments and recommendations — leveraging international, national, state and local sources, and following federal, state and local public health official recommendations — to help businesses in their decision-making process on their road to recovery. These playbooks were placed on our website and shared out through our social media channels and newsletters. The Partnership also implemented a blog strategy to help share resources offered through the series, and hosted more than 20 events related to DSM Forward topics. The events featured local experts and leaders giving updates on topics such as the Paycheck Protection Program, child care, nonprofits, and specific industries and organizations that had been impacted by the pandemic. These events drew a total of more than 500 attendees. The Partnership also highlighted the playbooks at its Investor and Member Virtual Briefings that happen every other week, which feature healthcare experts and industry leaders who reviewed the playbooks and updates. These events drew around 150 attendees per event.

### OUTCOME

The DSM Forward Playbooks served as a catalyst for community-wide strategizing regarding best practices, next steps and industry standards for businesses adapting during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the end of 2020, the DSM Forward playbooks garnered 9,932 unique pageviews. There were 216 downloads of printable resources businesses could use for their operational efforts. This included things like signage reminding of health and safety guidelines, germ mitigation tips, 6' distance markers, etc. Several of these were available in both English and Spanish languages.

The DSM Forward project was recognized by several different outlets for its efforts including the following:

- An acknowledgment in World Chamber Federation's international Chamber Resilience Report
- Restart America, based in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles, identified the DSM Forward playbooks as a best-in-class response and tool to help businesses recover.
- ACCE has highlighted the DSM Forward playbooks as an example for other chambers to learn from and leverage.
- Iowa Tourism's Office said the DSM Forward Events and Arts and Culture playbook is an excellent example and resource for other Iowa communities to follow.
- The Economic Development Corporation of Utah highlighted DSM playbooks as a Best-in-Class, Back-to-Work example for others in the industry.

### EXECUTION

The playbooks were guided by input from the DSM Forward Task Force made up of more than 100 business and community leaders. The Partnership worked with consulting firm Bâton Global to guide this process, which included extensive feedback from business, industry and community leaders and the community at-large. The playbooks were produced in alignment with plans by state and county health and government partners. The DSM Forward Playbooks were first officially released to the public at the beginning of May 2020 with the first five playbooks focusing on Child Care, Gyms, Personal Services, Restaurants, and Retail. After the initial launch, the team consistently worked with investors and members to update existing playbooks and add additional playbooks as they were completed. The Partnership continued to self-promote these resources through investor and member briefing calls as well as including them in weekly social media and email marketing efforts. The Partnership also continues to update the playbooks with the latest resources and information.

## **REPRESENTATION**

During a time regularly referred to as “unprecedented,” the DSM Forward Playbooks provided a unified, data-driven approach forward. Leaders from across many disciplines and backgrounds collaborated to provide succinct guideposts and insight for businesses navigating the marketplace amid a pandemic. These playbooks have been released to the public, making them easy to access for any business of any size at any time. The Partnership also worked diligently to make sure that several areas of work were included within the playbooks.

## **REPLICATION**

The DSM Forward Playbooks stand as a guideline to creating streamlined communication with your workforce as they tried to keep up with news headlines. This process connects business owners with the current content and rulings that they need to try to push through a challenging time. Although the playbooks take a lot of time to curate, many other regions could work actively to create similar versions of these playbooks as we continue to work toward economic recovery following the disruptions caused by COVID-19.

## **COMPLEXITY/SIMPLICITY**

The DSM Forward Playbooks project was complex and needed to bring together 100+ community leaders (virtually) fast, while leveraging numerous state, national, federal and international guidelines and best practices. The Partnership Team worked with Bâton Global, a global consulting firm, to ensure work on these playbooks was happening 24/7 for several weeks straight – leveraging overseas talent to keep the project moving forward while our team was asleep. We also worked closely with industry leaders to ensure the information we were publishing was accurate and practical for businesses of all sizes and backgrounds. Ultimately, the DSM Forward Task Force and Partnership Team collaboratively identified best practices for businesses and organizations to consider safely opening at the time and pace of their choosing. While phase one of the project is complete, an ongoing complexity is that rules and regulations continue to change frequently. The Partnership has established a process to update the playbooks on a regular basis.