streetsense.

FAQs from the Front Lines

JULY 2020

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INTRODUCTION

In the two months since we published our [Pandemic Relaunch Toolkit for Restaurants + Bars](#), the U.S. has entered (and perhaps retreated from) various stages of tentative reopening. Our work with clients has resulted in a number of frequently asked questions — read on for the most commonly asked questions from our restaurant and bar clients, as well as insights and data on current customer sentiment, operations, and staffing + human resources.

CONTENTS

Customer Sentiment + Other Markets

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Q

"What's the current view on when restaurants + bars will be back to pre-COVID-19 levels of business?"

A

No one knows definitively — as of this publishing, early projections from a variety of industry sources showed a gradual recovery starting in early summer of this year and slowly growing to pre-pandemic levels of business by mid-spring to early summer of 2021.

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This was based on two assumptions: 1) that the government would be successful with a coordinated approach to curb the pandemic and 2) that there would be a widely available vaccine or treatment by mid-spring to early summer of 2021.

Unfortunately, the U.S. response to containing the virus will likely result in a much longer time at the bottom of the market for restaurants and a much more gradual return to pre-COVID levels of business due to spikes in the outbreak around the country. In addition, there is a real concern at the CDC about the return of colder weather forcing people indoors and into enclosed public spaces. This combined with a potential outbreak of the seasonal flu could make winter a very challenging time for restaurants and bars. The worst case scenario for any given market is what is happening now in Texas and Florida: a return to business restrictions requiring restaurants or bars to close for an indefinite period of time.

This does not change the anticipated date of finding a vaccine or treatment for the virus, but it does make getting to the end of the pandemic an extremely difficult process. The important thing is to understand that this crisis will be with us for at least another 8-12 months and businesses have to be prepared to operate with a 'mid-pandemic' mindset until a vaccine or treatment is widely available.

Q

"What is happening around the country?

Anything we can learn from other markets in the U.S.?"

A

With the ebb and flow of the pandemic, the situation for restaurants changes every day. Based on our work with clients in the markets that were first to reopen, we have seen bright spots and real setbacks across the country.

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The earliest markets to reopen (Houston, Charleston and Miami) saw an enormous pent-up demand of customers wanting to get back into bars and restaurants. Despite being limited to outdoor dining and socially distanced tables, these early phase restaurants were at their post-COVID capacity quickly. Early on, there was a tangible optimism on the part of a few operators in these markets. Initial reports from several of our clients was that the outdoor seating, extended hours and excited patrons resulted in the **restaurants making about 60% of their pre-pandemic revenue**. We heard reports of tips in the 30-40% range and much higher check averages than before because people were excited to be back in a restaurant.

Unfortunately, that has all changed with the recent spikes in the pandemic infection rate. We are now seeing pauses in the reopening efforts and a return to the business closure orders that were in place at the start of the pandemic. Without a unified strategy to deal with the crisis, we will likely see these on again/off again restrictions continuing to erode consumer confidence and preventing a more robust near-term recovery.

→   **The Good News:** People can't wait to get back to dining out and socializing with friends.

→   **The Bad News:** If we don't do it responsibly, we'll only make it worse.

Q

"What data do we have on what customers are looking for as they come back into the market?"

A

The National Restaurant Association has partnered with a company called Datassential to conduct research on how customer preferences and perceptions have changed in response to the pandemic. Together, they have published research on everything from the most popular cuisines ordered for delivery, to the levels of consumer concern in reentering the market, to the impact of the pandemic on restaurant closures in different regions. They have provided an amazing amount of insight and it would be time well spent to listen to one of their recorded webinars webinars on a variety of hospitality consumer research.

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One of the most interesting insights was around the criteria guests are using to choose a restaurant. Prior to COVID-19, consumers' top reasons for choosing a restaurant were that the food had "great taste," that they were "nearby" or that the establishment provided a "value" for its patrons.

Twelve weeks into the pandemic, **the number one consideration for a customer selecting a restaurant is that it is "clean and sanitary."**

Consumers report feeling that "eating out has become a minefield" with every interaction and surface being perceived as a potential contaminant. This makes the concept of overt sanitation — or "sanitation theater" as we call it — that much more important. Being open and transparent and amplifying all the ways you are protecting the safety of your guests can go a long way toward making customers feel comfortable. Guests are now demanding that places they frequent are clean, sanitary, and are flexible in supporting the changes that come with this new normal.

Another key insight is that this customer flexibility, at least for now, extends beyond safety and sanitation measures. Surveys from The National Restaurant Association and Datassential indicate that consumers today are much more willing to accept smaller menus, to adjust their eating habits, to support their local restaurant community, and to be open to ordering food in new ways than before.[1] Pre-COVID ordering trends that were creeping up in the industry — delivery, takeout, online ordering, curbside dining, drive thru — have become commonplace and consumers have already adapted. Delivery and order ahead has accelerated and consumers plan to do less traditional counter ordering or dining in than before, even once the COVID crisis has passed.

[1] Li, Jack. "Running through the Fire – Planning the Future of Restaurant Menus." Restaurant.org, National Restaurant Association , 12 May 2020, on24static. akamaized.net/event/23/32/51/6/rt/1/documents/resourceList1589289278178/ webinarslides1589289276319.pdf.

"What are local governments doing to support restaurants during the pandemic?"

As we work with clients throughout the U.S. during this crisis, we have seen local and state governments step up to the plate in a variety of ways to support the restaurant community:

OUTDOOR DINING

The most impactful way jurisdictions have been helping is by relaxing restrictions on the use of outdoor spaces and opening up sidewalks, public spaces, and streets for restaurants to use for outdoor dining during the pandemic. This has been an incredible help to restaurants and bars in the near term as an offset for the social distancing regulations for interior spaces that have been put in place. We have seen local jurisdictions

not only relax regulatory burdens to create these opportunities, but also to bring on extra staff and create expedited processes for permit approvals and licensing. We have also seen jurisdictions lower or waive the fees for outdoor dining, which has also been a big help.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE SERVICE

Local and state governments have modified some of the regulations regarding alcoholic beverage service to help restaurants and bars make money. In some cities, restaurants are allowed to serve alcohol outdoors (where it was previously prohibited). In other cities, the delivery or takeaway of beer, wine and spirits is allowed as well. This opens up some "check-building" opportunities for businesses that take advantage of these regulatory changes and can replace some of the pre-pandemic revenue for restaurants.

However, the pandemic does not give your business a pass on the standard liabilities associated with responsible alcoholic beverage service, which means if you sell a guest a take-out pitcher of margaritas and they drink it in their car and get into an accident, your business may still be liable.

ADVOCACY + RESOURCES

During the pandemic, Streetsense has had the opportunity to work with Main Street Managers and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) on programs to deliver advice, support, planning and awareness to bars and restaurants throughout the U.S. We have seen local business advocacy spur changes in legislation, regulations and reopening processes to help those in our industry weather the crisis. While this is something these organizations have always done, we have seen many BIDs and Main Street Managers lead the charge in their communities. If you haven't done so already, contact your local BID or Chamber of Commerce to see what resources they have to support your business.

Q

"Are there any examples of business that have adapted well to the new normal?"

A

When restaurant closures began to happen in the early stages of the pandemic, there was a lot of talk about ghost kitchens, virtual menus and a move towards a 100% delivery model. Off-premise dining was a very strong trend before the pandemic, and it seemed like a perfect fit for an entire population that was required to shelter in place. However, as with all things, it isn't quite that simple.

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While virtual menus and delivery are a helpful way to generate top line revenue and gain awareness for your restaurant, many of the off-the-shelf solutions and delivery apps are very expensive to use. With fees that range from 15-30% of the total order (often paid for by the restaurant itself), these delivery apps created volume — but no profit — for the struggling restaurants. In addition, delivery is a tough business to do well, and the logistics behind packaging, portability and quality are difficult to solve. Unfortunately, delivery wasn't the silver bullet that early adopters hoped it would be.

The businesses that we have seen adapt best to the incredible difficulties posed by the pandemic have treated their business as a start-up and have quickly responded to the immediate and unique needs of their customers and market. Many of them have added multiple new revenue streams to their operation. Some of the most effective include:

⟶   Grocery/Food Retail

⟶   Pick-Up + Delivery

⟶   Catering

GROCERY/FOOD RETAIL

Founding Farmers in Washington, D.C. converted several of their stores into curb-side grocery outlets with an on-line menu of fresh produce, meats, pre-made meals, and sundries. They were able to hire back 250 of their employees to assist with this operation during the first weeks of the pandemics. We have seen other versions of this around the country and it seems to be working very well.

PICK-UP + DELIVERY

As we discussed above, the idea of making a restaurant menu available for home delivery is a very popular idea, if the restaurant can either gain additional exposure to promote their business or make a reasonable profit on each order. We consider many of the larger delivery app platforms (Postmates, UberEats, GrubHub) as awareness-building channels, but not necessarily profit-building channels. While we do encourage our clients to be present on the larger app platforms for exposure or awareness, **the ideal scenario for take-home food is for it to be delivered to the guests at the lowest possible cost to the restaurant**. Many newer POS systems have the ability to set up an online menu that allows guests to order directly from the business (and go directly into your POS) with minimal or no additional fees. If the demand is there, often it is less expensive for restaurants to hire one or two people to handle their deliveries than to rely on third-party delivery services. Regardless of where your delivery or take-out business comes from, we suggest driving your customers into your direct channels to avoid the fees associated with other platforms.

CATERING

A number of restaurants have amped up their off-site catering as businesses in their neighborhood get back to work. While many social events will likely be put on hold for a while, large scale businesses who bring their staff back to work may have limited access to viable food and beverage outlets to feed their staff and may be concerned about their teams going off-premises to eat. Offering boxed lunches or pre-order items to larger businesses has worked in quite a few markets.

We also have seen restaurants be successful with curbside pick-up, special dining hours for vulnerable patrons, private dining options and many more innovative options for their guests. As we mentioned previously, think about your business like a startup and respond to the changing needs of your customers and you may come out well ahead of the competition at the end of this crisis.

Learn more in our Pandemic Relaunch Toolkit for Restaurants + Bars

Operations

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Q

"I'm back open at limited capacity — what are the things I need to think about and plan for moving forward?"

A

Congratulations for weathering the storm and getting back on your feet. Now comes the hard part: staying in business. The two best pieces of advice we have for surviving the pandemic is first to understand the capital you have available and do what you can to build up reserves to make it through the next 8-12 months, and second, diversify your business as much as you can so you are not totally dependent on in-store dining to survive.

CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Cash is king, and restaurants should be exploring as many ways as they can to preserve cash, defer payments, and create a cash reserve to prepare for a second wave of the pandemic, the leaner winter months, or future unexpected bumps in the road.

As of July 8th, 2020 the government's PPP loan program still has a significant amount of funding available to support small businesses. The application deadline has been extended to August 8th with much more flexible terms than were written into the initial bill. If you haven't yet taken advantage of this program and you qualify, now may be the time to look into this source of capital for your business.

You may be making a bit of money with outside seating and, limited indoor dining, but what happens when the weather gets cold? Or rainy? Do you have the capital available to stay in business when things get leaner and you no longer have access to your outside tables? If not, now is the time to line up additional sources of capital. The Pandemic Relaunch Toolkit for Restaurants + Bars features a variety of ways to source and secure additional capital for the road ahead. We advise getting everything ready now so that when your business needs it, you are not scrambling to pay the bills.

DIVERSIFICATION

Now is the time, while the weather is good and your customers are eager to get back into your restaurant, to get good at delivery, takeout, catering or any other supplementary revenue stream you can think of to support your restaurant during the leaner times. Now is the time to perfect your offerings, work out the kinks in your business model, and establish your clientele while there is a bit of business coming your way. If you wait until the weather turns sour, it may be too late.

Q

"What do I do if the guests don't want to wear a mask or practice social distancing?

Is this my responsibility?"

A

The governmental requirements and guidance on social distancing and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) varies widely. Some states and local governments are crystal clear about the need for PPE and masks, others are much less prescriptive. Unfortunately, this means that most of the responsibility of enforcing these safety measures falls to individual businesses. As uncomfortable as this may be for your staff, we believe that it is good business to prioritize the safety of all guests, staff and the general public, above all else.

According to the CDC, social distancing and the use of PPE are effective ways to help limit the spread of the coronavirus.[2] While it is true that not all of your patrons will care or respect these guidelines, as hospitality professionals we believe that we all have the responsibility to protect our staff and patrons — specifically if they are among the most vulnerable members of our community.

For that reason, we have been advising our restaurant clients to take a hard line with patrons when it comes to following the social distancing and PPE guidelines in the restaurant.

HERE'S WHY:

→ Wearing a mask while waiting for a table or moving through the restaurant is not a big ask in the midst of a global pandemic that has killed more than a half million people worldwide

→ Enforcing these standards will gain the loyalty and support of guests who are worried about getting the virus, are personally vulnerable to the disease, or who are caring for a vulnerable family member at home

→ You will be helping to protect your staff who, just by coming to work, put themselves at continuous risk of contracting the virus

→ You will be protecting your establishment from becoming the epicenter of a potential outbreak

This means turning people away who do not want to comply without hesitation. As a restaurateur, you have a responsibility to keep people safe while they are dining with you and the absolute right to establish the rules for your business.

No shirt, no shoes, *no mask* — no service.

[2] "How to Protect Yourself & Others." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 24 Apr. 2020, www.cdc.gov/ coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

A

As we move through different stages of the pandemic, constantly monitor the restrictions set by your local jurisdiction to determine your occupancy and acceptable seat count. This will change over time and understanding your guidelines will allow you to react accordingly. Once you understand the guidelines, you will want to diagram your restaurant to allow for six feet of space along all corridors and circulation paths. We have helped a number of clients to clear out their floor plans, work through social distancing in both the customer and employee journey and then layer on all of the flexible furniture to maximize seat count while respecting the local guidelines.

Some of the best strategic thinking has come from Los Angeles County, where they have introduced clear guidelines on how to use partitions to create a socially distanced environment with cleanable, impermeable barriers like plexiglass to accommodate for numerous different kinds of seating.
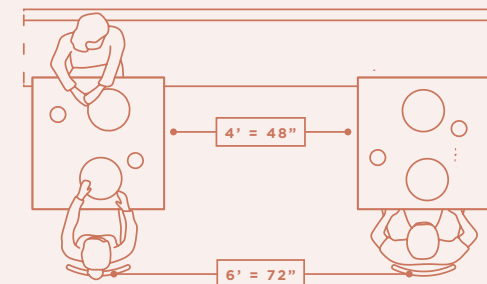
The diagrams below and on the follow page give a few examples of how you can reconceptualize your dining room.

Q

"I know I have to provide for social distancing inside my restaurant. Any ideas on how I can maximize the seating and still comply with the CDC guidelines?"

SCENARIO 1: Side by Side Seating (no barrier)
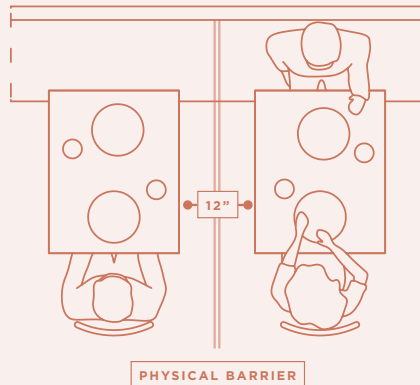*Table, counter, or banquette seating*

4 feet between tables, edge to edge
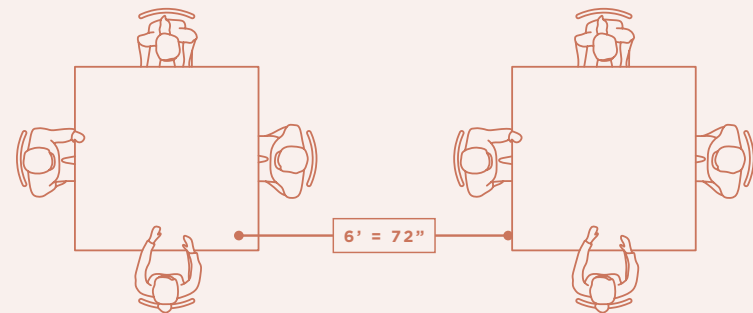6 feet between chair centers

4' = 48"
6' = 72"

SCENARIO 2: Side by Side (with barrier)

1 feet between tables, edge to edge
No spacing required for counter seating
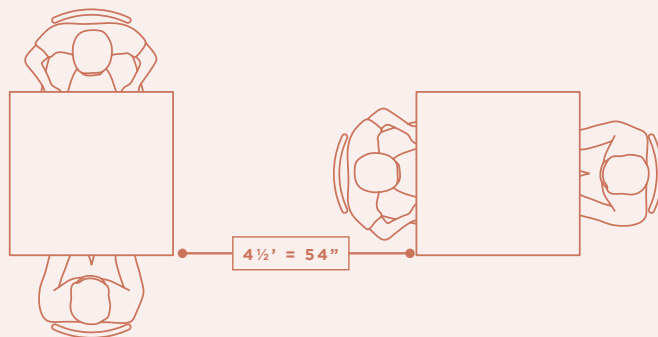Barrier must extend at least 18" from table edge

12"

PHYSICAL BARRIER

SCENARIO 3: Perpendicular (no barrier)

4.5 feet between tables, edge to edge
6 feet between chair centers

4½' = 54"

SCENARIO 4: Back to Back (no barrier)

6 feet between tables, edge to edge
If booth seating is back to back, with no
physical barrier, this distance also applies

6' = 72"

For additional dining room scenarios, reference our Pandemic Relaunch Toolkit for Restaurants + Bars.

Some best practices include using outdoor dining as an extension of the typical indoor experience, through planters, partitions and atmosphere and repurposing bars — which are difficult to socially distance at any meaningful capacity — to be staging areas for pick up and delivery orders.

Q

"I have recently been given access to outdoor space that I didn't have before to use for my restaurant. What are the keys to doing this well?"

A

Many jurisdictions are offering temporary extensions or expansions of outdoor dining space, but require additional permitting for serving food and/or alcoholic beverages outside. Check with your local municipality to see if you need a sidewalk/outdoor seating permit or if this has been waived due to the pandemic. Also check also with your local liquor board to see if you need to file anything to serve alcohol outside.

→

Even if outdoor dining was not a part of your business before, see what extensions or modifications you can make to add some tables outside and recover some much needed capacity.

Operationally, there are some important things to consider for shifting service outside in the COVID era. First, is ensuring that outdoor diners have easy access to sanitation and a place to safely discard any disposable PPE — hand wipes, single use masks, gloves. Since many guests will be apprehensive about coming inside and going to the restroom to wash their hands, keep sanitizer available for outside guests and for those venturing inside near the entryway. Set up a freestanding, wall-mounted, or touchless sanitizer station for your outdoor guests to use freely.

We have been encouraging clients to think through their reservation policies including with outdoor tables. Walk-in traffic — usually strongly desired — is difficult to accommodate when only 50% of your seating is available. Think about how to modify your reservation policies so that you don't have to keep anyone waiting for a table — inside or out.

Finally, partner with local organizations, business districts, area tenants, and other operators to lobby your local jurisdiction for broader support of more robust outdoor dining areas. Many municipalities are offering "streatery" programs that allow a consortium of restaurants, property owners, or BIDs to apply for street closures and many are sponsoring outdoor dining infrastructure in these areas. Collective action can help build a critical mass and drive new customers to outdoor areas where they can safely dine out but also be part of neighborhood dining experience that they have missed since the start of the pandemic.

Q

"How much of my pre-pandemic revenue will I reasonably be able to recapture if I implement a takeout or delivery program?"

A

Takeout and delivery were significantly growing trends before the pandemic took hold and we think that all restaurants should put a real focus on developing these additional revenue streams as a part of their overall strategy. However, delivery and takeout are not a silver bullet that, by themselves, will save your restaurant.

→

As we mention earlier, take-out and delivery is both logistically challenging and potentially expensive. Takeout through your own channels can be a lower cost option, but requires outreach and marketing to be successful and you'll need to set up your own ordering platform online.

At the end of the day, whatever you do is probably not going to make up for losing half or more of the seats in your dining room. **Most operators we spoke to say that they have been able to recoup about 20-25% of their pre-COVID-19 business** through takeout or delivery channels.

VERDICT

→ While takeout and delivery is a critically important part of your overall pandemic business plan, it should be a part of your broader strategy to diversify your business and explore other revenue streams.

Q

"Delivery and Takeout apps (Postmates, Uber Eats, GrubHub) are expensive — what can I do to improve my business without giving away all of my profits?"

A

The fees third-party delivery charge operators can be crippling when it's a primary revenue stream. Many restaurants don't realize how easy it can be to self-administer an online ordering platform through your POS. Most POS systems have online ordering capabilities out of the box that with a little work, you can get an online portal that's directly run by your point of sale in a matter of days. Furthermore, with dine-in traffic dampened you need fewer staff to manage the floor who would probably gladly take the tips for doing delivery instead of waiting on just one or two tables.

By managing your own online platform — delivery or takeout — you can drive all of your customers to YOUR online portal on your social channels and website, capture all of the information about your guests eating at home, and most importantly — can keep the profits from every sale. You may not be able to sustainably manage a delivery program forever but now is as good a time as any to try and start.

You don't have to kick the third parties to the curb to make things work. You can control your pickup traffic and farm out only delivery, negotiate better rates by talking to all the providers and getting the best deal for you, and run your own delivery alongside third-party apps to control the experience from your channel while still leveraging the additional customers that may find you through services like GrubHub, UberEats or Caviar. Explore how you can drive as much traffic through your own internal channels and leverage third party ordering services for their marketing benefit, not necessarily profit.

Staffing + Human Resources

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Q

"Is it legal to take the staff's temperature before each shift?

Is this a best practice?"

A

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has given permission for ADA-covered employers to take employees' temperatures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.[3] Generally, this would be considered a "medical examination" and would be prohibited under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but because the CDC and local and state health authorities have recognized community spread of the virus and issued precautionary guidance, an employer may conduct non-invasive temperature screenings of its employees to stem the tide of further infections.

Although measuring an employee's temperature may be allowed, the jury is still out on whether or not it's a best practice. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) compiled a comprehensive guide[4] to employee temperature checks that all operators should review. There are pros and cons to employee temperature checks: on one hand, screening can ensure anyone with a fever is promptly sent home and patrons might feel better knowing that your establishment is taking every precaution. On the other hand: we know now that lack of fever does not mean a person isn't a carrier. We also recommend everyone review the CDC's guidance[5] on screening in the workplace — ultimately, it's up to each individual establishment to review the guidance and various approaches and decide what is best for them.

[3] "Testing Employees for COVID-19." SHRM, 1 July 2020, www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/tools-and-samples/exreq/Pages/Details.aspx?Erid=1586.

[4] Smith, Allen. "EEOC: Employers Can Screen for COVID-19." SHRM, SHRM, 23 Apr. 2020, www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/coronavirus-employers-can-screen-for-covid-19.aspx.

[3] Eckard Michael Oliver. "CDC Issues COVID-19 Testing Strategy Guidance for Workplaces." Ogletree Deakins, 7 July 2020, ogletree.com/insights/cdc-issues-covid-19-testing-strategy-guidance-for-workplaces/.

Q

"What do I do if someone on my staff is diagnosed with COVID-19?"

A

There are three primary areas of concern that a restaurant or bar has to handle when dealing with an employee who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

1. The steps to take with the employee who has contracted the virus;

2. How to communicate with your staff and those who have been in 'close contact' with the infected employee;

3. How to handle the cleaning of your facility in light of a confirmed infection on property.

→

Here are the steps you may need to take:

INFECTED EMPLOYEES

When an employee communicates that they have symptoms of COVID-19, there are several important steps that you, as their employer, have to take to mitigate your risk and keep the staff and the public safe. If this happens at work, send the employee in question home immediately, and then question the employee about who they've been in contact with.

If an employee calls in sick, and believes that they have COVID-19 symptoms, follow the below guidelines that align with the CDC recommendations:

1. Express sympathy with the employee who is sick and listen to their concerns

2. Strongly encourage them to self-quarantine at home, seek medical attention and get tested as soon as possible.

3. While speaking with them, ask the employee to identify anyone she/he was in close contact with during their past three to four shifts. *Close contact is defined as anyone "who has been within 6 feet of the infected employee for 15 consecutive minutes".*[6]

4. Make a list of these 'close contact' employees and prepare to communicate with them as quickly as possible.

5. Keep in touch with your employee and check in on their progress.

[6] *"Public Health Guidance for Community-Related Exposure." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5 June 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html*

RECOVERY

Infected employees should not return to work until they have fully recovered from the virus and are no longer contagious. According to the CDC, COVID-19 symptoms are fully resolved once the patient has been fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medications) and without respiratory symptoms for at least 72 hours. The World Health Organization recommends that a confirmed patient be released from isolation once their symptoms fully resolve and they have two negative PCR tests 24 hours apart. If testing is not possible, a confirmed patient can be released from isolation 14 days after their symptoms fully resolve.[7]

'CLOSE CONTACT' WORKERS

Using the list of 'close contact' names from the employee who has been infected, immediately reach out to them and take the following steps:

1. Inform the employee that another coworker has been infected with COVID-19 and they have been identified as someone who has been in 'close contact' with that employee. As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), do not reveal the identity of the employee who contracted the virus.

2. Express sympathy with this employee.[58]

3. You will need to ask exposed employees to self-isolate and not come in to work for their shifts until they have been cleared for work.

4. Encourage these employees to see their doctor and get tested for COVID-19 as soon as they can.

5. The CDC recommends that employees who have been in 'close contact' with an infected employee should stay home two weeks following their last exposure.[69]

6. Unless you are a doctor, do not speculate as to the health risks to the employee or their family. One *Harvard Business Review* article recommends scripting this conversation as follows:

"Someone in our workplace has tested positive for COVID-19 and they have identified you as a 'close contact' according to the CDC definition. We are here to support you. If you are at work, please prepare to leave as quickly as you can. Once you get home, please find a place to self-isolate, monitor yourself for any symptoms, and talk to your doctors. How can we support you in doing this?"[7]

Contacting the rest of your workforce: Once you have had the discussions with the infected employee and the close contact employees, it is recommended that your organization communicates with the entire active workforce to let them know what is going on, while continuing to respect the privacy of the infected employee and the close contact group. This will prevent rumors from swirling and give your staff confidence that you have a plan for this and know what to do. The following script from The *Harvard Business Review* article may be good for this conversation:

"On X date, someone in our workplace has tested positive for Covid-19 and they are now self-isolating. The staff members who have been in close contact with the infected employee have also been told and were asked to leave the workplace and self-isolate. If you were not already told that you were a close contact, then you have not been identified as one. If you have any questions about Covid-19 or your situation, please call your doctor or review the information from the CDC website. We are here to support everyone during this difficult time."[710]

[7] "Criteria for Releasing COVID-19 Patients from Isolation." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, 17 June 2020, www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/criteria-for-releasing-covid-19-patients-from-isolation.

[8] Issuing Authority This guidance document was issued upon approval of the Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission., and This guidance document was issued upon approval of the Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. "Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act." Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 21 Mar. 2020, www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/pandemic-preparedness-workplace-and-americans-disabilities-act.

[9] "Quarantine If You Might Be Sick." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 16 July 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html.

[10] Cohn, Alisa. "Your Employee Tested Positive for Covid-19. What Do You Do?" Harvard Business Review, 30 March 2020, https://hbr.org/2020/03/your-employee-tested-positive-for-covid-19-what-do-you-do.

WORKPLACE CLEANING + RECOVERY

According to Restaurant Business Online, "in most cases, you do not need to shut down your facility" to mitigate the potential spread of the virus following a staff member or guest who has been confirmed to have been infected with the virus.[11] However, a deep, forensic-style cleaning is required to ensure that the virus does not spread.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO)
"The general guidelines outlined in the General Principles of Food Hygiene for food processing and manufacture premises should be followed. If a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified in a food premises then there is a requirement to completely clean the area with a neutral detergent, followed by decontamination of surfaces using a disinfectant effective against viruses. All surfaces that the infected employee has come into contact with must be cleaned, including all surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids/respiratory secretions, and all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones. Alcohol based sanitizers/surface disinfectants should be used for cleaning purposes. In general,

alcohol-based disinfectants (ethanol, propan-2-ol, propan-1-ol) have been shown to significantly reduce infectivity of enveloped viruses like SARS-CoV-2, in concentrations of 70-80% with one-minute exposure time. Chlorine-based disinfectants (sodium hypochlorite) are effective for surface decontamination, as are disinfectants with active ingredients based on quaternary ammonium compounds (QUATS).

All staff should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection. Staff engaged in environmental cleaning should wear PPE when performing cleaning activities, such as overalls or uniform, single-use plastic aprons, gloves and a face mask. Protective clothing (e.g. uniforms, overalls, etc.) should be frequently washed at 60°C or above." [12]

The bottom line: it's possible to clean and disinfect a restaurant or bar that has had an infected employee or patron on premises without long term interruption of your business. In some instances, it may make sense to outsource this task to a cleaning company trained in viral mitigation, but that is not a requirement. A deep cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces, areas and objects potentially touched or used by an infected person with CDC-approved disinfectant is a reasonable response to this situation.

The restaurants that we have seen close for a more extended period of time are dealing with multiple infections from either staff or patrons. In this instance, we recommend that the deep cleaning be done professionally — out of an abundance of caution and for peace of mind.

[11] Joe. "An Employee Has COVID-19. Should You Close Your Restaurant?" Restaurant Business, 29 June 2020, www.restaurantbusinessonline.com/operations/employee-has-covid-19-should-you-close-your-restaurant.

[12] "Questions Relating to Food Businesses." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, 15 May 2020, www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/questions-relating-to-food-businesses.

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Jay has spent over 30 years in the restaurant and hospitality sector and has served as Managing Director for Dean & Deluca, Global Brand Leader for EDITION Hotels, VP of Lifestyle Brands for Marriott International, and has held key leadership roles at iconic properties such as The Inn of the Anasazi, La Mansion del Rio, and the Inn at Little Washington. As an independent restaurateur, Jay has co-developed concepts in Santa Fe, Baltimore, and Washington DC.

Alex Barrow
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Alex brings nine years of experience to his role as Senior Project Manager on the Eat + Drink team. With a background in training, new store development, culinary strategy, and operations, Alex worked as the COO of the DC-fan favorite Taylor Gourmet, and built Simple Food Consulting to provide systems and launch support to other fast-casual and full-service concepts. Before diving into the restaurant industry, Alex earned his bachelor's at VCU and worked toward his master's at the Elliott School of International Affairs whilst studying, living, and working in Belgium, Hungary, and Italy.

Thank You

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