



**KITCHENTELIGENCE**  
FROM SHAMROCK FOODS®

# PREPARING FOR POST-COVID WELCOMING YOUR CUSTOMERS HOME

Restaurant dining rooms have been closed all over the country, but now is the time to start thinking about the day they re-open. The timing for recovery is not clear at this point given uncertainty on when regulations will be lifted and how long it takes consumer demand to recover. With an eye to the future with learnings from the past several weeks, there are some specific areas you should focus on today:

## Looking Forward

### 1. Product Preparation:

- a. You've streamlined your menu during the takeout/delivery only phase. Some of these menu items might be good additions to your permanent menu, as the trend for family meals and delivery & takeout will likely linger.
- b. Consider easing back into a full menu until you are back at full capacity and fully staffed and trained.
- c. To even out cash flow and get ahead of stocking needs, consider ordering sanitation supplies, paper goods, dry goods and frozen items now.
- d. A streamlined, concise, brand-forward menu is an advantage when it comes to ramping back up to full staff and full capacity.

### 2. People Ramp Up

- a. If you had to part ways with any of your staff, now is the time to check in and see if they would consider returning. Training will go more smoothly if you have familiar faces around your establishment. A streamlined menu requires less staff to execute, so consider this when planning for staffing needs.
- b. Consider a streamlined onboarding process to get new I-9, 8850 and other paperwork into the payroll system.
- c. You can plan on takeout and delivery to continue. When your dining room is in full swing, do you have the right mix of staff to accommodate all forms of dining? Consider what the shifts should be to maximize profitability.
- d. The sensitivity toward sanitation and food safety in the restaurant industry is forever changed. Have you developed new onboarding and training tools that emphasize sanitation and epidemic prevention? (ServSafe now has a COVID-19 Precautions class) Guest facing employees will now be the sanitation ambassadors for your restaurant. Do they have the proper training to demonstrate and talk about best in industry sanitation methods?

### 3. Preparing Your Space

- a. Assuming a lowering of your guest capacity, either required by legal mandate or because of leery guests, how will you go about removing or limiting access to tables, chairs, bar stools and waiting areas? Have you created a new table map for the service and host staff? Do you know how many fewer front of the house employees it will take to run the limited dining areas?

- b. Given the heightened sense of sanitation the post pandemic customer will require, do you have new policies and procedures in place to tangibly and visibly show the customer your efforts to keep them and your staff safe?
- c. Assuming your customers, at least initially, will still desire take out food, do you have the infrastructure in place to handle that?
- d. In this new “no touch” and “low touch” world, customers will be drawn towards restaurants that embrace those practices. Have you considered online order taking, touchless payment, mobile pay, automatic faucets, auto flush toilets, and plexiglass sneeze guards between customers and guests?

#### 4. Promotion

- a. Make sure to update your operating hours on your website, social media and Google. How will you enhance your social media presence and content to reflect your higher sanitation efforts and sick time policies?
- b. Consider a plan for a Grand Re-opening with special touchpoints including live music, décor, giveaways and bounce back promotions. Advertising the new, enhanced sanitation processes along with content.

### Looking Forward Checklist

#### Product Preparation

- Outline menu adjustments moving forward
- Identify staffing needs to execute streamlined menu
- Stock dry goods, frozen items, sanitation and paper goods as soon as possible

#### People Ramp Up

- Reach out to staff you want to return to your restaurant to make the connection
- Streamline onboarding process
- Identify mix of staff considering increased takeout and delivery numbers and a dining room with maximized space
- Plan shifts based on revised operating hours and business mix shifts (to-go, delivery, in-house)
- Develop new onboarding and training tools that emphasize sanitation and epidemic prevention

#### Preparing Your Space

- Consider removing or limiting access to tables, chairs, bar stools and waiting areas to still demonstrate safe social distances.
- Display sanitation cues such as hand sanitizers, hand washing signage, and table cleaning supplies in a greater way
- Designate a space to accommodate delivery and takeout orders alongside your in-house dining experience
- Identify places where no-touch or low-touch needs to be enhanced. Online order taking, touchless payment, automatic faucets, auto flush toilets, plexiglass sneeze guards

#### Promotion

- Update operating hours on your website, social media and Google
- Develop your messaging plan to reinforce safety measures to ensure guests feel secure
- Identify your plan to communicate your dining room’s grand re-opening



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