

RESTAURANT REOPENING CHECKLIST

KEEPING YOU, YOUR STAFF AND YOUR GUESTS SAFE

The following items are our recommendations. Operating standards and requirements vary by state, city and county and may not necessarily be included in this checklist. If in doubt, err on the side of safety.

SALES AND OPERATIONS

- Maximize take-out sales by promoting combos, family meals, beverages, alcohol, desserts.
- Evaluate the value of using a 3rd party delivery service – consider bringing this in-house.
- Don't forget alcohol sales – know the laws in your state and how you can take advantage of this.
- Promote family-sized selling opportunities with “Meals for 4” meal kits and meal/wine combo deals.
- Consider adding a “retail market” to your operation to maximize sales opportunities.
- Ensure that your business is well-signed and easy for a guest to understand the flow, how to order, where to order, where to pick up carry-out orders. Avoid confusing traffic-flow issues...make it easy to navigate the processes. Clearly establish your “steps of service.”
- Develop new ways to “sell stuff” even if it's not consistent with what you've done before.
- Don't rely on the old, 9" X 9" 3-compartment foam box anymore. Your containers make the first impression of your business, so give your entire packaging program a new look, with branding being first and foremost. Imagine receiving a home delivery or picking up a carry-out order with generic packaging. In five minutes after receiving it, they won't even remember where it came from!
- Triple check your carry-out and delivery orders for mispacked or missing items. This is the #1 cause of frustration by guests and it leaves a “bitter taste” after ordering from your business.
- Make sure your point of sale system (POS) can handle all of the services you intend to offer. For many, using the “old” POS system no longer makes sense and new systems are very inexpensive.
- Include a note of thanks, a menu, and a current flyer/promotion in every carry-out and delivery order.
- If your packaging is generic in format now, the easiest way to brand it is by using adhesive labels with your business name, logo, URL and phone number clearly visible.
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SANITATION

- Dedicated front of house staff to sanitize tables after every use, sanitize all restrooms every 15 minutes, sanitize all door handles (including restroom and front doors) and flat surfaces constantly. This person's entire focus should be on providing a completely sanitary front of the house experience in clear view of the public (to give them confidence that your business is maintaining the highest standards of sanitation).
- All employees must always wear masks. Ideally these masks have your company logo on them.
- Enhanced prep, storage and food-handling policies in place, plus physical distancing procedures in place in the kitchen.

- Establish a “time out” every 20 minutes for every employee to wash their hands – front and back of house. Make this clearly obvious to all guests...let them know that sanitation is job #1 for every employee.
- Ensure that your employees are healthy when they arrive for work – take and record temperatures.
- Make sure you have all required posters and signs clearly displayed throughout the business.
- Consider making a handwashing sink clearly visible in the front of the house areas.
- Have hand sanitizer available everywhere including guest entrance, all restrooms, kitchen, back door.
- Have contactless payment systems or sanitize guest credit cards after every transaction.
- Provide “clean” (sanitized) pens available for guest use. Have a “dirty” pen holder.
- Eliminate unnecessary tabletop items – single use or items that can be sanitized only.
- Enforce glove usage by all staff, changed regularly.
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EMPLOYEES

- Make sure your employee policy manual is updated as it relates to sanitation requirements.
- Have a large employee poster visible that spells out your sanitation requirements and enforce them.
- Commit to training all employees on the right way to wash hands and take sanitation seriously.
- Ensure that you are following all state and local health department requirements.
- Provide single-use employee beverage cups.
- Do not allow eating or drinking in public view.
- Ensure that uniforms and aprons are always spotlessly clean. Remember that dirty = unsanitary.
- Ensure that grooming is up to new sanitary standards.
- Employers should provide paid employee sick leave and promote this policy to guests.
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MARKETING

- Realize that the way you promote your business today is different than the way you used to do it. Sanitation and running a spotless, almost “hospital-clean” operation is the most important thing you can promote with the utmost in transparency. Guests need to have confidence that you’re “on top of it” when it comes to taking care of them.
- “If you have it, flaunt it” so promote what you offer! Carry out, delivery, meal kits, a market...whatever!
- Many cities and state allow for expanded premises, usually without a maximum number of seats. To offset the limited capacities of your interior spaces, take advantage of this if you can afford it. For some, this is an expensive undertaking that has seasonal application, so consider this carefully. Just because its available does not necessarily mean you should do it.
- Update your website and all social media pages – promote having a “safe place” that guests can count on.
- Integrate carry-out and delivery ordering on your website.
- Put your menu on your website for easier ordering for guests.
- Ensure that you are collecting guest names and e-mail addresses for marketing database and contact tracing purposes.

- Create a 12-month marketing plan, supported by monthly/seasonal promotions.
- Ensure that all signage, banners, table tents, menus and posters are relevant, necessary, and spotlessly clean and neat.
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MENUS

- Have a hands-free menu format or provide disposable menus.
- Ensure that your menu pricing includes to go/delivery” packaging and enhanced PPE that you’ll be spending money on. For almost everyone, this requires price increases. Don’t pass along “to go” or “PPE” costs directly to consumers for fear of push-back...they don’t want to pay for these things.
- Eliminate all slow-moving, non-profitable or long cook-time items. Run a product mix report to evaluate item sales velocity. Profit, efficiency and ease of staffing/production are paramount considerations,
- Consider “meal package” options for easier ordering. (Appetizer, entrée, dessert). Same with alcohol package options. “Make at home kits” are very popular and for many operators, fast moving items. When you promote “package” or “kit” or “family” options, the average check is substantially increased, making this work on your part very worthwhile.
- If you don’t have profitable signature items that you’re known for, now is the time to implement these.
- Design your menus with “menu engineering” in mind. Placement, verbiage, fonts, colors, pricing and item placement on the menu all matter. (Don’t count on your printer or your vendor to do this properly).
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FINANCIAL

- Stay on top of your projected sales, labor costs, increased costs of sanitation/PPE. Track your purchases and sales daily, keeping your prime costs firmly under control. New expenses will chip away at profit.
- Stay on top of monthly accounting, correct invoicing/coding, and timely P&L’s. Now more than ever, you need high quality financial information that you can count on.
- There are many ways to cut out cost and waste that don’t directly impact your guests. Be sure request our free copy of, “30 Restaurant Survival Strategies” for a list of things that you can do today to reduce cost.
- Apply for every grant, aid or loan package that’s appropriate for your business. Many cities, states, and associations are making funds available to restaurant owners, so stay in touch with your local and state restaurant association(s).
- If you’re not a member of your state Restaurant Association, consider joining to stay on top of rapidly changing events.
- Rent: If you’ve not already done this, it’s critical that rent is eliminated, deferred, or otherwise reworked. If your rent is 10% or more of gross sales, it’s likely that you’re only working to pay the landlord.
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THE FUTURE OF YOUR BUSINESS

- Just because your business can be open at 25%, 50% or otherwise limited capacity does not mean you should be open. Every business has a unique economic model and what works for one operator may not work for another. As the owner of your business, financial modeling is the most valuable tool you can use to determine the “what if” factors. Don’t jump on the bandwagon of failure.

- Determine what a possible re-closure could mean for your business. Spending every dollar of capital now may not be in your best long-term interest. What resources are available to you now....and if restaurant re-closures be required?
- Future financial support for your business and for your employees will look different and be difficult to obtain if restaurant re-closures are required. Unemployment compensation, even in a limited amount, may not be available again to those that claimed it the first time. PPP money may not be made available again. In short, what was previously available will probably not be an option for round two, so seriously consider what a re-closure could mean for your business, your family and your employees.
- Don't forget that an open business, even operating on a limited basis, has resale value. On the other hand, a closed business is only worth the value of the assets. Should you decide that you can't see your way through this pandemic, consider your exit options carefully.
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WE'RE HERE TO HELP

- To reopen properly, all the work on this checklist needs to be substantially accomplished and we can make your life easier. Feel overwhelmed? Want to ensure that your business is optimized for success? We're here to help, so call us at 720-363-0164 or visit www.restaurantconsultingservices.com
- Denver-based with services available nationwide.



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