Safely back to **Sharing**

How the hospitality industry can **win back customers after COVID-19**

SafetyCulture

Finding the bright spots

It's fair to say that cafes, restaurants and bars took the first hit when the pandemic began to take hold. It started with increased social distancing, and the refusal of those who had recently traveled to countries where the virus was rampant.

When COVID-19 then took hold of several countries rapidly, it created a domino effect in the hospitality industry. Businesses quickly closed, independent cafes and bars suffered huge losses of trade, and thousands lost their jobs.

Cleanliness was always key, but now it is paramount. The businesses that will survive this pandemic will be those who remain flexible and adaptable.

Even for businesses that continue to remain open, there is apprehension in the air. With less tourism, the economic impact has stretched even the most popular of hotel chains, restaurants, and public bars. Customers are choosing to save their money, protect their health, and stay indoors - this has led to a number of innovative solutions by the industry.

The hospitality industry is adapting by changing its business model at a rapid pace. Restaurants have been converted into drive-thrus, cafes turned into home delivery services, and online shopping has skyrocketed. Stringent cleaning procedures are now in place for everyone, particularly for those who handle food and beverages.

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How has the hospitality industry been affected?

The hospitality industry has been dramatically transformed by COVID-19. Here's just a glimpse into how the industry is reaching to meet the needs of the consumer:

Cleanliness

Any place where we eat, drink and socialize not only needs to be clean but needs to feel like a safe space to relax in. It's always been key, but COVID-19 has changed the way we now view these public spaces, potentially forever.

For example, perhaps hotel customers will now want 'keyless and contactless check-in and checkout and few personalized interactions', as the pandemic unfolds.

Increasing cleanliness for staff as well as customers is essential, and the businesses who are quick to respond by building new processes will gain customer loyalty.

Social distancing

When the pandemic hit, some businesses opted to freeze operations altogether, whilst they understood more about the potential risk.

To turn a good profit, high-end Sydney restaurant, Nomad, needs an average of 1,500 covers per week, or a full 180-seat restaurant across two sittings from Wednesday to Saturday. When COVID-19 was becoming a looming threat, executive chef, Jacqui Challinor, made the difficult decision to put the business into hibernation.

Many restaurant owners across Australia are not able to accommodate the new social distancing measures.

10 or 20 diners at a time not commercially viable for many

Social distancing measures have also changed the habits of customers wanting to dine in a public space. Will they want to stay in a hotel that has a small cafe area, and the inability to stay two meters, or six feet apart?

A reduced spending capacity also means a re-evaluation of the hospitality sector as a whole.

Customers are considering whether they want to take the risk to mix and mingle, especially if they have or are close to someone with underlying health conditions.

The death of cash

The hospitality industry is rethinking how they take payments. Handling physical cash brings increased risk.

Since the coverage of the pandemic, card payments in the UK have sharply risen, and now account for half of all purchase transactions.

Increased concerns around handling cash means that smaller cafes, restaurants, and accommodation

providers may have to quickly adapt to new payment measures, and include alternative payment options.

The increase in popularity of contactless payment is shifting consumer behavior and may affect who is willing to spend at various establishments.

Reduced global travel

With self-isolation and quarantine measures now associated with air travel, the hospitality trade has naturally been concerned about the impact this will have on the industry.

Hotels that rely on out of town visitors will be forced to re-evaluate their proposition. For example, one restaurant in Cancun, Mexico is giving free nights stay and free meals as part of a special deal to entice customers back post COVID-19.

How the hospitality industry is adapting to retain customer loyalty

In cafes, restaurants, and bars, the need to be adaptable has been a pressing concern since the beginning of COVID-19. Getting everyone safely back to business and continuing to generate revenue has been the main challenge of the industry. After all, going out for dinner at a restaurant could be a potential life or death decision.

Takeout and contactless delivery

With potential staff shortages, many have opted towards offering a takeaway service to maintain a skeleton staff structure, and to protect customers from lingering threats.

UK high street chain Marks and Spencer, for example, has reopened it's cafes in the form of a takeaway service, including perspex screens at tills.

Online ordering has led to an increase in contactless delivery, and many businesses are leaning on the gig economy in order to satisfy customer demand.

Flexible delivery options

We've also seen the rise of the 'virtual restaurant' or 'ghost kitchen', whereby entire kitchens are used purely to serve the likes of Ubereats, Deliveroo and Doordash orders. This requirement for flexibility has led many hospitality owners

to change their business model entirely to meet the needs of customers amidst new challenges.

Restaurants are turning into grocery stores and running online cooking classes, as well as special 'dine-in' home delivery kits to supplement lost revenue.

Design changes to the dining experience

When it comes to indoor dining and socializing, design changes are afoot.

Cafe and restaurant businesses planning to reopen may encounter issues depending on their location, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) availability, people management, and implementation of new precautionary measures.

Business owners have the responsibility to plan ahead and manage health and safety risks as they resume business operations.

Outdoor space has become king. Cafes and restaurants have started to utilize all available outdoor space, and reduce contact within indoor locations.

Some social-distancing friendly design changes may include:

- Spaced out tables with dividers to force physical distancing

- Increased outdoor seating, as it is safer than contained spaces

- Capping the number of customers who can dine for a period of time

Using iAuditor by SafetyCulture, cafes, and restaurants can take advantage of easy-to-use digital checklists on a mobile app to streamline not only restaurant reopening inspections but the entire safety and quality initiative on re-opening operations.

New hygiene measures

Food safety is essential to re-opening success. Incorporating hygienic packaging for utensils and food packaging, as well as removing self-serve buffet stations are just some of the ways businesses are responding to the challenge.

It's also important to consider those who may carry potential risks, even without knowing it. As a high temperature is one of the COVID-19 symptoms, one McDonalds in Hong Kong has installed a thermal monitor that customers must stand in front of before ordering.

Is it going to be safe to eat at restaurants?

A leading public health researcher believes there are five different ways that businesses can keep the public safe when dining out:

- **Highly trafficked surfaces:** Keeping surfaces sanitized involves cleaning every single touchpoint a user comes into contact with, including furniture, door handles, coat hooks, or tablecloths.

- **Shared condiments / utensils:** Does your business need these any more? Consider removing anything that was previously 'shared', like ketchup bottles. It is also safer to invest in disposable instead of reusable cutlery.

- **Shared air supply:** By increasing the amount of ventilation to your space, you reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

- **Increased sanitization:** Increasing sanitization methods means that if possible, spaces need to be disinfected in between diners, although this may prove a challenge.

- **Interactions with staff:** Since it is impossible to keep a two-meter/six feet distance when serving food, the risk to public health is highest when dining.

Digitization of the dining experience

Increased digitization of the dining experience is a key trend emerging from the pandemic.

The need for downloadable menus that customers can scroll on their personal devices, online booking systems, and easy-to-use dining apps are all becoming imperative. It's time for every hospitality business to move towards developing a culture of safety, and it doesn't have to come at a huge commercial cost to your organization.

Back to work checklists for restaraunt, bar and cafe owners and operators

Here are some helpful processes to help you get safely back to work in the form of handy digital checklists:

- Cafe and Restaurant Reopening
- Top 5 Food Safety Checklists
- Daily Food Safety & Hygiene Checklist
- Hospitality - Bar Re-Opening Checklist
- 6 of the Best Restaurant Cleaning Checklists
- Cleaning Schedule Templates
- Best Risk Assessment Templates
- Top 3 PPE Safety Checklists
- Kitchen Operations Checklists
- Additional Food & Hospitality checklists

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Establishments that have never had to take reservations will find themselves looking for ways to control guest flow and manage capacity limits. Tech will play a bigger and better role in hospitality, especially in restaurants. We were already seeing that shift happen but Covid-19 has definitely sped it up.
"

Andrea Johnston,
the CEO of Open Table

How the tourism industry is responding to the pandemic

The tourism industry has been profoundly affected by the pandemic.

With most flights grounded for an unspecified period of time, hotels and accommodation providers have lost significantly, with some smaller independent owners potentially having to give up their livelihood.

With no business travelers or tourists, hotels are starting to market their services to different audiences. For example, offering hotels to medical staff as a place to stay, utilizing bed space for affected COVID-19 patients as hospitals fill up, and offering spaces to the homeless. A hotel in Tokyo is even using robot-staff to look after mild COVID-19 cases.

As domestic travel opens back up, winning local business is the primary focus for many accommodation providers, targeting those who decide to take a short trip in their own country.

Property upgrades

The central focus for many during quiet periods is property upgrades. Measures may include installing hand sanitizers, setting elevator restrictions, installing protective screens, and reducing or eliminating common areas.

From a commercial perspective, it may make sense to improve the aesthetics of your facility at this time to make them more attractive when reopening is encouraged.

However, this doesn't need to come at the cost of public safety. Ensuring commercial growth in a pandemic is possible, for those who can be most flexible and adaptable about their service provisions.

Virtual tours

Taking steps to encourage safe future travel can be a great way to generate business post-COVID-19. This can be done through virtual property tours and highlighting what steps your business has taken to ensure risk is kept to a minimum.

It's important for hospitality companies to build trust so customers can see and believe that you are taking new measures seriously. Showing off special areas of your hotel and new design layouts will help facilitate customer loyalty.

One London hotel has designed a virtual walkthrough of their spaces since the pandemic hit, taking you through their restaurants, lounges and lobby, and a superior double room.

Keeping guests safe

In hotels especially, it may be appropriate to consider what guests may like in their rooms to help them stay safe and COVID-19 free. This may include offering a package of face masks, hand sanitizer, and gloves. It could also be a good idea to remove amenities that are difficult to be sanitized correctly, so books, magazines, and pens.

Implementing a rigorous cleaning schedule is imperative for every hospitality owner, and may have to be reviewed every hour, or even more, depending on the amount of guests.

Hotels that have already reopened in Spain are facing tough challenges, according to a Guardian article:

"We'll change all hotel services to ensure minimum contact. Kitchens will be transformed to reduce handling and we'll be demanding maximum guarantees from service providers. It is a radical change." said Manuel Vegas of the Spanish Association of Hotel Directors (AEDH).

Travelodge, a UK-based hotel chain, says that it has already begun installing Perspex glass on front desks and placed two-meter/six-foot tape markings in the reception area in the 50 Travelodge hotels that are still open.

Global giant Hilton Hotels are exploring the use of electrostatic sprayers, which uniformly mist disinfectant across large areas, as well as potentially using ultraviolet light to sanitize surfaces and objects.

New protocol for staff

Supplying PPE for cleaning staff is paramount, as is the requirement for deeper cleaning of bed sheets, towels, and other communal-use items.

The American Hotel and Lodging Association have released new industry-wide safety measures, that include using hand sanitizers with up to 60% alcohol content.

So how will hotels and B&B's manage with these new guidelines? It may mean restructuring daily regimes so that more time is allowed for cleanings between bookings, and that there is a strict protocol to follow during checkout that covers specific hygiene standards.

Keeping events and catering industries safe

The events and catering industry are stepping up to meet new hygiene requirements post-COVID-19.

Smaller groups of gatherings

With most events being restricted and even canceled, we will start to see the introduction of smaller gatherings in the future, incorporating strict social distancing measures. The pandemic has paved the way for live streaming events, which is radically shifting the events sector.

As events resume, large-scale social gatherings may be on a long hiatus. The events industry may see the rise of smaller weddings, socially distanced funerals, and smaller groups for birthday parties.

It's not enough to just be compliant anymore. With events, the spread of a virus could turn catastrophic in a number of weeks, or even days.

Hygienic packaging

By introducing hygienic packaging which can be easily cleaned, offering clear evidence of safe food handling, and giving contactless delivery to customers, this all serves to provide the end-user with a sense of trust and safety.

This has a huge impact on those businesses who were moving towards reusable and sustainable alternatives; for example bamboo cutlery.

Moving away from single-use plastics may be a challenge as new measures may prioritize human health over environmental aims.

Our handy set of checklists will help you implement safety as your number #1 priority.

- Movie Theatre reopening checklist
- Safely back to business checklist
- Church reopening checklist
- Kitchen Operations Checklists
- Social Distancing Plan
- Hazard Identification Templates
- Best Risk Assessment Templates
- Mobile-Ready Food Truck Inspection Checklists

How hospitality leaders can get safely back to business

It's time to put safety first, across the board. Hospitality businesses that are transparent about hygiene measures will gain the loyalty and trust of their customers as we emerge from a post-COVID-19 world.

iAuditor is your very own early warning system

With the simple-to-use digital checklists in the iAuditor app, you can digitize your existing guidelines or select from thousands of predefined checklists.

Empower employees to conduct daily or hourly inspections and act on issues as they arise with iAuditor's

list of safety checklists around business continuity, stopping the spread, and getting back to business.

These include:

- The new normal
- Return to work
- Social distancing
- PPE safety checklist

Balance commercial growth and public safety

Public safety and commercial growth are not mutually exclusive. An integrated culture of public safety can be achieved whilst sticking to predefined measures.

Getting back to trading safely is top of everyone's agenda, despite concerns about an additional 'second wave', or even the chance that the pandemic could be transmitted in your hotel, restaurant, or bar.

A simple checklist can change the world

Business continuity checklists can help you weather the crisis quickly and efficiently, with guidelines for both staff and customers.

Did you spot a surface that hasn't been sanitized, or notice a face mask missing from a guest welcome pack?

With iAuditor's inspections feature, you can set up checklist forms in minutes, add logic to make your forms smarter, and record and track safety action items. Share with a colleague at the tap of a finger.

Build a robust safety culture

By assigning everyone in your organization accountability, iAuditor allows you to assign actions to specific team members, ensuring everyone adheres to the new hygiene and safety procedures.

With iAuditor's actions features, you can spot a task that needs to be completed, assign it to a team member, and alert them with an email, SMS, or a push notification. It also allows you to track and report.

85% of our customers get problems solved faster

WITH IAUDITOR

Join us as we build a new **Safety Culture in 2020 and beyond.**

Get back to work safely and quickly with a variety of free hospitality checklists to help you mitigate new standards, which include:

- [Hotel Reopening Checklists](#)
- [Hospitality - Hotel Safety & Security Inspection](#)
- [COVID-19 - Hotel Operational Guidelines Checklist](#)
- [COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Task Sheet Checklist](#)
- [Social Distancing Plan](#)
- [Top 6 Workplace Housekeeping Checklists](#)
- [Cleaning Schedule Templates](#)
- [Best Risk Assessment Templates](#)
- [Top 3 PPE Safety Checklists](#)
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