

# MURRIETA PIVOTS

All businesses in the City of Murrieta have felt the effects of COVID-19 and the stay-at-home orders. Murrieta Pivots offers a question and answer to discuss how they have met the challenges that the pandemic has presented to their businesses.



Which Wich Superior Sandwiches has been a Murrieta restaurant for the last 3 years. They are well known for their ordering bags, which let you pick all of your sandwich elements and toppings right on the bag, and for Project PB&J, which donates a PB&J Sandwich to someone in need every time a customer purchases one. The owner, Sandy Word, has been very active and giving to the business community since they opened. She is always quick to donate her time to help a cause or food to those in need.

**How deeply has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your business?**

We are down 31% over prior year same period.

**Have you applied for and/ or received funding from any of the Federal or State programs such as the SBA's Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) or Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL)?**

We applied for both and have received both.

**What changes or improvements have you made to your business model since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Our ordering process has changed dramatically; we are not allowing customers to order on a bag or to touch our pens. We are taking walk-in orders at our cash register. Now, all of our orders, whether from walk-in, online or phone are delivered directly to the customer's car in the parking lot. During this time, our sales have shifted from in store sales to on-line ordering, which is up 60%. We have seen an increase in our third-party sales (Grub Hub, Doordash, Uber and Postmates). We are also providing hand sanitizer throughout the store and supplying sanitizing hand wipes.

**Do you anticipate that these changes will make it easier to do business with the public going forward?**

The in-store ordering process is more difficult to manage and causes longer wait times in the lobby. As we do not have in house dining our volume of walk in customers is down. When we reopen fully this could cause higher wait times in the lobby. The increase in on-line ordering has been a benefit, and helped customers feel comfortable with the process. This allows their orders to be ready when they arrive.

**What investments will you need to make going forward to ensure the survival and growth of your business?**

We need to come up with a different ordering system that will delete the old ordering process, of customers touching pens and bags. Even the automated system some stores have creates shared germs from other customers on an iPad. Possibly having an employee in the lobby with an iPad to take an order would alleviate this issue. It will cause an increase in payroll costs, which is always difficult with high minimum wage in CA.



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We also will need to continue our focus on Catering. The two Temecula stores are not scheduled to re-open and a focus on the business community in Temecula will help to bring sales back to pre COVID-19 levels.

**Briefly, describe the immediate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on your business?**

Initially, in order to reduce labor, the owners were working a combined total of 120 hours per week which was an increase of 35%, 6-7 days a week. With the approval and funding of the PPP loan we have been able to return the employee hours to normal. Our ordering process and curb-side delivery, as stated above has changed dramatically, this is driving labor costs up.

**What is the most important way the citizens of Murrieta and Southwest Riverside County can support your business?**

We have received tremendous support for our community and loyal customers. Customers daily thank us for remaining open, keeping everyone safe by wearing masks and gloves for everything we do. We have had several community members order catering for the fire department, police department, the City office, hospitals etc. and this has truly helped. As we come out of the current state, just the continued support of ordering from us and passing on the word about what we do will be a tremendous help.

OVERALL, WE ARE VERY GLAD WE HAVE STAYED OPEN TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY, WE ARE BLESSED WITH THE OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT AND ARE BLESSED TO DO BUSINESS IN OUR FABULOUS COMMUNITY.

To contact Which Wich, call 951-445-4035 or visit their website at <https://www.whichwich.com/>.