

CONFIDENCE
IN EVERY CASE.



SPECIAL EDITION COVID-19 2020

During this unprecedented time, the foodservice industry has been one of the hardest hit sectors. With most of the population on lock down and dine-in traffic on-hold, chefs, owners, suppliers, and distributors have risen to the challenge of reinventing their businesses by getting creative, finding solutions, and working harder than ever.

Trends

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Successful Strategies

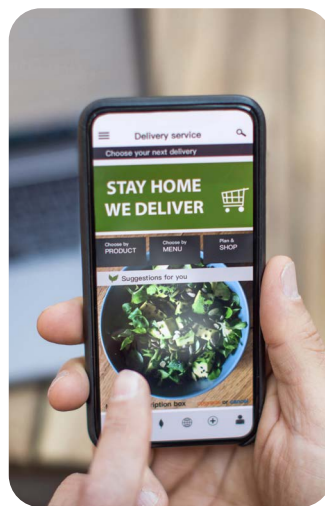
From increased social media posts, to reconfigured take-out/delivery menus, giftcards, and more, here is what Markon customers are doing to keep customers coming back for more.

- Tucson, Arizona's **The Parish's** owner and Executive Chef Travis Peters has had great **Instagram success** with his "Doesn't matter where you spend it, as long as it's locally" campaign. He promotes fellow businesses and has developed even deeper community support by calling on TV and radio to push the local message. Customers are rallying to keep the orders flowing. Other ideas include cocktails to go, curbside pick up with six-foot markers to maintain distance, and giving discounts to first responders and those who have lost their jobs.
- Cape Canaveral, Florida's **Darci's Bacon Blues** owner and Executive Chef Darci Kropp already had her entire staff properly trained in food safety, hygiene, and cross-contamination. She has upped the game with refresher trainings, visible sanitizing stations, and social media blasts (including fun sing-a-longs and skits) to put customers at ease. She reiterates solidarity with fellow local chefs, maintains quality and consistency, and keeps a sense of humor for mental health.
- Markon member chef Shane Henderson reports success with loyalty programs, online ordering, cross utilization of ingredients, and menu modification. And above all—letting customers know you are open for business and there to help.
- Markon member chef Jonathon Merrick suggests family-style portions, limiting pick-up hours for payroll maximization, packing special occasion meals/boxes, and offering free meals to first responders.

Changing Menus

To adapt to current social distancing rules, restaurants of every type are adjusting to take away and delivery modes.

- Streamline: condense menus to top selling favorites. Easy to manage, package, and maintain.
- The fine dining segment is reconfiguring dishes to withstand to-go journeys. Most artistic dishes are on-hold, while comfort foods and creative cocktails are in high-demand.
- Offering meal boxes packed with ingredients that aren't accessible through grocery and big box outlets is giving customers options for high-end dishes that they miss. Why not sell restaurant-grade meats and seafood with global produce to simulate the dining out experience at home?
- Increase appetizers and entree portions to family-style dishes where possible.
- It's the little things: add edible flower and microherb garnishes to add both flavor and beauty.
- Known for a special sauce? Sell quarts of marinara, carbone, alfredo, bolognese, and pesto to be tossed with pasta, (either house-made fresh or premium dried), packed alongside.
- Vinaigrettes, creamy dressings, and salsas can also be made in bulk to ensure guests maintain the delicious integrity of carefully curated salads and tacos.
- Anyone can pour beer or wine, but few can recreate their favorite restaurant's signature cocktails; sealed containers such as Mason jars add charm as well as increase safety.
- Expect continuing changes: the longer people are on lockdown, the more they will move from basics and comfort foods to more exciting offerings. Be ready!





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Covid-19 Food Safety

The general public is now adopting behaviors that are normal protocol for foodservice employees. Food safety has and is of the utmost concern, pre- and post-Coronavirus.

- Now more than ever, it's important that employees are well-trained in sanitation and cross-contamination procedures. Revisit rules, be vigilant enforcers, and increase disinfection frequency.
- Let your customers know about your safety measures clearly and often—offer alcohol-based wipes at pick-up sites, post signs asking to use sanitizer before/after approaching/leaving pay stations, physically show extra measures if possible (wiping, washing, disposing), and talk about/post videos demonstrating your efforts.
- Set up six-foot markers inside/outside of your establishment to maintain social distancing during pick ups.
- Don't forget the delivery staff training: use tamper-proof seals when possible, provide masks and gloves/hand sanitizer, and limit contact with customers (or opt for contactless payments by phone or online).

Social Media Lifelines

In the internet/smartphone world of today, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and Twitter were already important tools to connect with current and potential customers. Now that most of the world is practicing social distancing, these modes are perhaps the most critical forms of communicating what you are doing to keep customers safe, but well fed.

- Many restaurants have closed temporarily—it's important to show the public you're open.
- Post your new and/or modified menus so that customers know what's currently available.
- Share your story: put chefs and employees in photos and videos for a personal connection; pair them with delicious food and smiling faces.
- Let your customers brag about you; repost a series of their tagged photos that show what they are ordering and how much they enjoy your food.
- Ask your audience questions for one-on-one feedback: what's working, what's not, what do they want to see?
- Highlight your ingredient suppliers. Showing solidarity within the food chain lets everyone know you trust your farmers and purveyors, that you have solid, positive relationships with them, and above all, we're in this together.
- Promote online gift cards for future use, promotional merchandise (logoed t-shirts, hats, face masks), and donations to laid off staff and local first responders.
- Make it fun! Uplift your audience by showing bartenders mixing cocktails, chefs cooking, creative face mask designs worn in the kitchen, even choreographed dances and songs to raise spirits.

Industry Help

Many media outlets and industry associations are compiling information about what's available to help industry workers and business owners, as well as best health and safety practices.

- [Eater](#) -Help For Restaurants
- [FMCA](#) - Delivery/Truckers Assistance
- [Foodable](#) -Recovery Resources
- [FSR Magazine](#) -Feeding Workers
- [Harvard Business Review](#) - H.E.A.R.T.
- [James Beard](#) -Industry Support
- [Perishable News](#) - United Fresh Donations
- [Perishable News](#) - Markon Perspective
- [Plate Magazine](#) - Chef Activism
- [Plate Magazine](#) - Hospitality Help
- [Restaurant Hospitality](#) - Workers
- [Restaurant Hospitality](#) - Stimulus Plan
- [Restaurant Workers Community](#) - Relief
- [Small Business Payment Protection](#)
- [United Fresh](#) - FRESH Grants
- [United Fresh](#) - Produce Industry Links
- [U.S. Treasury Department](#) - Programs
- [World Central Kitchen](#) - Delivering Meals

Stay abreast of the latest global health and safety measures.

- [Centers For Disease Control](#) -Testing
- [Centers For Disease Control](#) - Overview
- [F&B Issue Alliance](#) - Safety Protocols
- [FDA](#) - Coronavirus Main Page
- [U.S. News & World Reports](#) - Myths
- [World Health Org](#) - Rolling Updates

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control
Datassential
Eater
Food & Drug Administration
Food & Bev Issue Alliance
Foodable
FoodNavigator-USA
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Harvard Business Review
James Beard Organization
Nation's Restaurant News
Perishable News
Plate Magazine
Restaurant Hospitality
Restaurant Workers
Small Business Association
Touch Bistro
United Fresh
U.S. News & World Reports
U.S. Treasury Department
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