MENU

CANADA'S FOODSERVICE MAGAZINE

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Confucius once said: "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." By the time you read this issue, our industry will most likely have started rising again, opening our doors and embarking on what will be a challenging road to recovery. To say the last few months have been overwhelming is an understatement. Things have changed quickly, and the challenges are all-encompassing, taking both a financial and emotional toll. However, as we navigate this period of uncertainty, one thing is clear—to successfully rise up we must work together.

Now more than ever we need to lean on the foundation of our industry—our passion and our relationships: our relationships with vendors and suppliers, our relationships with staff, and rebuilding trust in our relationships with customers.

Restaurants will certainly look different when they reopen and it's important to be prepared for when we can finally invite customers back. To help navigate this journey, we've spoken with industry experts and leaders to develop our Recovery Series. This section provides vital insights to help support you during this transition, focusing on recommended best practices and procedures to assist in safely reopening your business. We provide guidelines on how to manage current financial challenges, handle impacts on restaurant space and successfully rehire and train staff so they feel confident, motivated and safe when returning to work.

Reassuring patrons and your staff of their safety will also be paramount for a successful reopening. Employees need to know that you are taking their safety seriously. Take the time to retrain your team so that they can provide the experience consumers will be looking for. Customer confidence will be a key concern and we need to manage their expectations accordingly—the customer's perception is your new reality. In this issue you will find marketing tips and advice to implement as you reopen and rebrand your establishments in order to win back your customers, increase loyalty and attract new business.

Finally, we focus on key areas where the pandemic has hit hard—such as the supply chain management cycle and rent. We investigate the current foodservice landscape and how each commodity within the supply chain has been impacted. There is a great opportunity to strengthen our relationships with suppliers, focus on the importance of buying local and leveraging commodity groups to save on food costs. We know managing monthly rent payments has become challenging and we offer up negotiating advice to navigate your current situation with your landlords.

Many of you may be wondering what the future of foodservice looks like? My answer is hopeful. The next few months will be all about reinvention—and with reinvention comes change. Lots of it. And we'll need to learn to love change. Let's remember why we got into this industry in the first place—driven by our shared passion for food and for feeding people—mind, body and soul. Stay hopeful, stay resilient, stay healthy and let's stay connected with each other. Together we can rise up.



Roy Little
President



Guy Laframboise
Chair of the Board

On a parting note, Shanna Munro, President & CEO of Restaurants Canada, has left the organization. Shanna joined Restaurants Canada in September of 2015 and over the past four and a half years worked to strengthen a number of aspects of the organization. Shanna also sought out and hired several highly qualified staff members, and she has improved member services by enhancing the research capability, introducing MENU and other digital resources. In addition, she forged relationships with other trade associations, academic institutions and key industry suppliers. We thank Shanna for her stewardship of Restaurants Canada, and on behalf of the Board, we wish her well in the next chapter of her career.

Summer 2020
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Restaurants Canada
The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

Do you have comments or a story for us? If so, please email menueditor@restaurantscanada.org.

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Managing Editor
Stacey Newman

Contributors
Laura Bickle
Ivy Knight
Mishal Omar
Ellen Smith
Jacob Richler
Aidan Fisher

Creative Direction
Boomerang Art & Design Inc.
boomart.net

Circulation Inquiries, Changes and Updates
members@restaurantscanada.org
1-800-387-5649

Advertising Sales
Laurie Dawe
1-800-387-5649, ext. 4233
menu@restaurantscanada.org

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Mailing Address
Restaurants Canada
1155 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M6J 1J4
T: 416-923-8416
Toll-free: 1-800-387-5649
F: 416-923-1450
info@restaurantscanada.org

Twitter
@RestaurantsCA
@MENUmagCA

Instagram:
MENUmagCA

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Restaurant patios are open for business but employing pandemic safety protocols, i.e., physical distancing and facemasks worn by staff. Photo by Stacey Newman.

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NEWS

When COVID hit, many organizations and collaborative efforts sprang into action to help the restaurant community. Sectors came together to help right across the entire supply chain.

Canada Takeout Day

Throughout the pandemic, #TakeoutDay has become a mainstream movement, with Canadians ordering takeout or delivery on Wednesdays to support local restaurants. This has made a powerful impact on keeping restaurants in business, showing consumers that delivery is a safe and secure option. According to founding partner Restaurants Canada, 95 per cent of revenue from restaurants goes directly back into the economy.

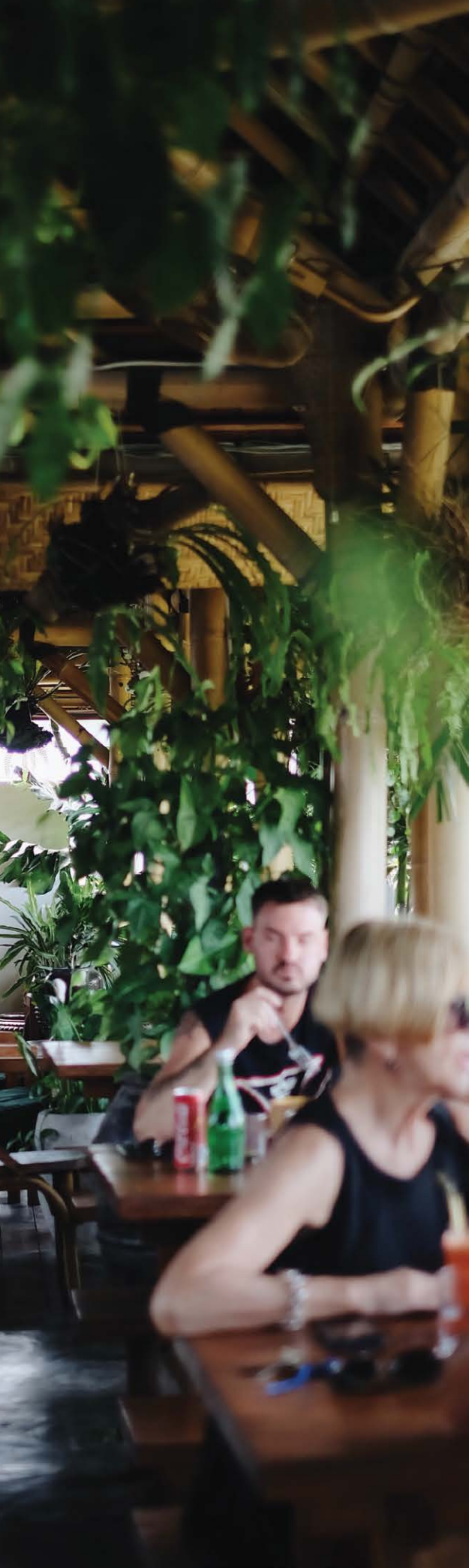
Canadian Hospitality Worker Relief Fund

In April, the Canadian Hospitality Worker Relief Fund (CHWRF) was announced by Canadian Chefs Vikram Vij, Victor Barry and Dan Geltner. Applications opened on May 6, 2020 to an overwhelming response, receiving over 17,000 applications in less than 24 hours. The $1 million fund was created by founding partners Welbilt, Garland, Uber Eats and Nella Cucina and it provided one-time $500 grants to restaurant and hospitality workers who found themselves impacted by COVID-19.

Corby Spirit & Wine - #StillOpen

Now more than ever, restaurants and bars need Canada's support. That's why Corby Spirit and Wine has launched the #StillOpen campaign designed to connect Canadians to local takeout and delivery options in their area. At corby.ca/stillopen, restaurant lovers can find a list of geo-targeted restaurants and bars in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (Alberta coming soon) that are supporting their communities by offering delivery and takeout food as well as Corby's products.





Bartenders Benevolent Fund

The Bartenders Benevolent Fund is a non-profit financial resource for bartenders, servers and front-of-house support staff working in the hospitality industry in Canada. As a significant need increased across the country during the COVID-19 global pandemic, the fund has been able to meet those needs, with critical funds being provided to applicants on a rolling basis.

Beam Suntory, a world leader in premium spirits, donated $50,000 to the Bartenders Benevolent Fund to support Canada's hard-hit hospitality community with monetary assistance during this unprecedented time of crisis. Additionally, Beam Suntory Canada has launched the 'First Shift Meals' program, which will provide meals for bar and front of house staff who are currently out of work. This campaign will facilitate the purchasing of wholesome meals through Beam Suntory's bar and restaurant partners.

The Maison Hennessy, as part of their Coming Together program also donated $50,000 CAD to the Bartenders Benevolent Fund, in recognition of the hardships the hospitality community is currently facing.

Bringing Toronto Back To Its Feet

The "Bringing Toronto Back To Its Feet" program was designed to thank and support Toronto's frontline health workers, their families and local community agencies with complimentary meals. The program, initiated by Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment, utilized the facilities and staff and was able to expand beyond their original production goal of 10,000 meals per day to now produce up to 13,000 meals per day. The program was supported by partners BMO, Second Harvest, Mackie Movers, Pinnacle Caterers, Nestlé Canada, McCormick Canada, Smucker's, Pizza Pizza and Diageo Canada.

P.O.S.T. Promise

Labatt Breweries of Canada is taking a leading role in restoring public confidence during the COVID-19 reopening stages by signing on as a founding corporate partner along with Restaurants Canada on the newly launched POST (People Outside Safely Together) Promise. The private sector-led initiative is designed to help Canadians confidently and safely take the first steps back into public spaces and the workplace. "Restaurants Canada is proud to be a founding partner of the POST Promise initiative. The health and safety of those that restaurants serve is always mission critical and restoring consumer confidence is key to successfully welcoming the return of diners," said Shanna Munro, former president and CEO of Restaurants Canada.


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THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

OPERATORS ACROSS CANADA ARE MAKING THE BEST OF A BAD SITUATION

BY IVY KNIGHT

Ali Khan Lalani's parents emigrated from Uganda to Ontario in the 1970's and became restaurateurs. Growing up, Lalani worked at the family business, Diana Downtown in Guelph, from the time he was nine years old. "It was the kind of diner where you could order bacon and eggs or lamb vindaloo."

He peeled potatoes, washed dishes and bussed tables. At thirteen he was put on toast-making duty, then prep. By sixteen he says, "I could almost keep up with the cooks on the line." At 25 he bought a Swiss Chalet franchise in Guelph, taking over a location that had been in business since 1978. "There were 82 union employees. I had staff who were celebrating their 20th anniversary within the first month of my taking over. It was a family."

By the time he was 31 he had three locations. "When I started we were doing 80 per cent dining room and 20 per cent takeout." That changed as he watched the demand for takeout rise. "I had massive dining rooms that were half empty." He wanted to change too, but being a franchisee he had to stick with the model. In 2015, at 32, he sold everything and moved to Toronto. In 2017 he realized a lifelong dream and opened a pizzeria. Hiring international pizza consultant, Anthony Falco (a founding member of the Roberta's team), Ali's spot was included in *Toronto Life*'s 'Best New Restaurant' list that year. He based the design on the Swiss Chalet model where the dining room allows for sit-down service and an attached takeout area, with a separate entrance accommodating pickup orders. Even though he'd watched takeout grow at Swiss Chalet he still had to have a dining room, his new pizzeria was in the Financial District after all, and people would always want table service.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

LEFT: THE NAMES OF THE IRANIAN VICTIMS OF FLIGHT PS752 ARE ETCHED INTO THE GLASS AT BANU

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Sarah Bennetto O'Brien grew up in Northern Ontario and moved to Prince Edward Island 15 years ago. She started The Handpie Company in 2014, selling mostly to grocery stores and a core group of diehard customers. Her bestsellers are the bacon cheeseburger hand pie, the PEI pasty and the curried chickpea. She sells them out of her production facility seven minutes from the Confederation Bridge.

A little known fact about Islanders is that they abhor driving any kind of distance for anything. Every community on the island is self-sustaining with its own grocers, banks and, perhaps, most important, hockey rinks.

"Anywhere else, when you have an hour commute to work each way it's not a huge deal. It's a bit different on the island." Because of this, while she does some retail out of the shop, grocery stores are her main focus. This past winter she created a ten-pack box for frozen hand pies, it launched a month before COVID hit.

Heat Laliberte was born in Saskatchewan and moved to Vancouver at 16. The Cree-Métis chef was working as a butcher and charcutier at the Fairmont Pacific Rim in Vancouver when he saw an ad for an Indigenous entrepreneur program. He applied and got in. That's where he developed the model for his hand-cured bacon business, One Arrow Meats. He rented out space at a butcher shop and began hauling bacon all over town, selling at the eight Vancouver Farmers Market locations and through specialty food shops. While getting the bacon business off the ground, Heat was also working full time for a catering company. In January of 2020, One Arrow had grown enough that he was ready to take some big steps. He found a commissary kitchen, applied for permits, and quit his day job. He was ready to take his bacon to the next level.

While he was waiting for those permits to get approved, the virus hit the West Coast.

In 2005, the Mohyeddin siblings, Amir, Samira and Salome, opened a restaurant on a sketchy street in Toronto. Called Banu, which means "lady" in Persian, they put a picture of their beloved mother behind the bar and opened the doors to sell the Persian dishes she raised them on. The restaurant thrived and that sketchy street got hip. Now Queen West is home to some of the best restaurants in the city, Banu among them. This past winter they started planning an anniversary party for spring, to commemorate 15 successful years of the family business. A mandatory shutdown in March meant the siblings had to shelve the party plans. They didn't know if they'd still have a restaurant left to celebrate.





FROZEN PIZZA AT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In mid-March Ali closed General Assembly Pizza and laid off most of the staff. He kept the core members of his team and they sat down in the empty dining room to figure out a plan. “It was the first time since we opened that we’ve been able to sit down for more than an hour, and just come up with ideas as a team.” By the end of March they rolled out frozen pizzas and fresh pizza kits. “Without them we wouldn’t have been able to keep the lights on.”

When asked if he’d planned to get into the frozen pizza business Ali laughs, “No! We were just brainstorming how to get our product into people’s houses in a safe way. How to keep paying our suppliers and ourselves.”

They are currently selling over a thousand frozen pizzas a week. That doesn’t mean sales are equal to pre-quarantine times but he’s been able to hire back some staff.

The frozen pizzas are carried at two Fresh & Wild locations. “We have requests from other grocers but we’re kinda tapped on production. It’s a great problem to have.”

General Assembly is building a new direct to consumer website and organizing frozen pizza production in a facility outside of Toronto. “Our current set-up won’t be able to handle it once dining rooms come back,” he says.

Checkpoints were put in place on the Confederation Bridge for all traffic coming to PEI starting on March 23rd. Rumours of food shortages were especially frightening for residents of the small island, but Sarah’s Handpie Company felt no panic. “Forty-five per cent of the flour we use

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THE ROAD TO RECOVERY



THE BANU TEAM (L-R) - SAMIRA, AMIR, AND SALOME ARE SIBLINGS.

THE EVER RESILIENT FOLKS WHO MAKE UP THIS INDUSTRY WILL NEVER STOP FEEDING PEOPLE

is from ten minutes up the road…The strength of our [local] supply chain really helped us." And so did those frozen pie packs. They stopped selling baked pies and switched to frozen, ready-to-bake. Despite the upheaval caused by the pandemic, sales are on par with where they were last year.

Turns out islanders will drive out of their way if it means a night off from the kitchen. "We had people driving in from Souris, Tignish, Charlottetown," says Sarah. "We were one of the only options for food you didn't have to cook yourself and people were stocking up." Those frozen mix-and-match ten packs have been her biggest seller.

"If I had applied any later I wouldn't have got the permits in time," says Heat, who just squeaked through before Vancouver's shutdown went into effect. One Arrow Meats was able to move into their new space on April 1st. And just in time. Sales have tripled since last year. "People are ordering fifteen pounds of bacon at a time."

The Hickory Maple bacon, made with syrup from nearby Squamish, is the top seller. One Arrow is still selling at farmers' markets through Spud, the BC grocery delivery service, and Heat and his wife are also delivering. "Customers who don't want to stand in line will email me or message on Instagram and we go and leave it on their doorstep."

"The only places we see making money right now are grocery stores," says Samira Mohyeddin, as she portions sumac into tiny takeout cups. The sun-filled dining room at Banu now features shelves of sundries like Barbari bread, Lighvan—a pressed sheep's milk cheese, dried limes and doogh the carbonated yogurt drink, as well as their own house-made preserves: sour cherries in syrup, an anjelica-spiked mixed vegetable pickle called torshi, and Persian quince jam.

"I've never been in the grocery business and I don't want to be a grocery store, but we can't have a pre-COVID business model for a post-COVID economy," she says, noting that each item at the soon-to-open bazaar is something that could be taken off the shelf and used in the restaurant's kitchen. Where her brother Amir is busy boxing up orders for their bestselling zereshk polo va morgh—saffron and turmeric-braised chicken thighs with Barberry basmati rice. They've always been a sitdown restaurant but have also done a fair amount of takeout: that side of the business has grown in the last two months.

Samira has been teasing the new market products on Instagram and Banu's devoted customers are messaging back asking for specific items, many of which have never been available before in Toronto's downtown core and usually require a trip out to North York.

"I've worked for seventeen days straight," says Samira, who's also an associate producer on CBC's *The Current*. "In a lot of ways, and this is sort of a ray of sunshine, it feels like it did when we first opened. When it was just the three of us and we were doing a hundred hours a week. It's just as scary." She looks at what was the former dining room; sacks of Iranian pistachios are piled on one table, flats of doogh on another. Fridges will be installed here soon, to be stocked with marinated meats and grab-and-go menu items. "We've been here fifteen years, so being scared is a little bit exciting too."

This isn't the best of times for sure, but it also isn't the worst, at least for those who are lean and agile enough to change. While it's unsure how many restaurants Canada will lose by the time the dust settles, we can be assured that the ever resilient folks who make up this industry will never stop feeding people—whether that's pizza, bacon, and torshi or hand pies.

In PEI, Sarah and her team are busy building a new freezer, from a storage container. She's optimistic about the future and aims to create a federally certified food manufacturing hub in the next few years. "The demand off-island is really high. I'm turning down a retailer every week," she says. "We've become a comfort food staple in Islanders' lives and that was one of my missions from the start."

Ali sums it up from his pizzeria in Toronto. "None of this would've happened if my dining room kept humming along normally."



FAQS ABOUT THE CANADA EMERGENCY COMMERCIAL RENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Please note that the following article reflects the most-up-to date information at the time of printing and some things may have changed. Please see the full article on menumag.ca for the most current information, as we will be updating the piece digitally. You can also find more resources and information at restaurantscanada.org/covid19.

We (CHI Real Estate Group) have been getting a lot of calls to help answer questions about the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (CECRA).

Here are the answers to some of your most common questions.

Q What are the criteria for a landlord/commercial property owner to apply?

To qualify for CECRA for small businesses, the commercial property owner must:

- own commercial real property which is occupied by one or more impacted small business tenants
- enter (or have already entered) into a legally binding rent reduction agreement for the period of April, May and June 2020, reducing an impacted small business tenant's rent by at least 75%
- ensure the rent reduction agreement with each impacted tenant includes:
  - » a moratorium on eviction for the period during which the property owner agrees to apply the loan proceeds, and
  - » a declaration of rental revenue included in the attestation

NOTE: Small businesses that opened on or after March 1, 2020 are not eligible.

The commercial property owner must not:

- hold federal or provincial political office
- be controlled by an individual holding federal or provincial political office
- CECRA will not apply to any federal-, provincial-, or municipal-owned properties, where the government is the landlord of the small business tenant.

There are some other exceptions

Where there is a long-term lease to a First Nation, or Indigenous organization or government, the First Nation or Indigenous organization or government is eligible for CECRA for small businesses as a property owner.

Where there are long-term commercial leases with third parties to operate the property (for example, airports), the third party is eligible as the property owner.

Q How long does a landlord/commercial property owner have to apply?

The application is available until August 31, 2020. Support would be retroactive to April 1, covering April, May and June 2020.

Q What is considered an impacted small business tenant or subtenant under the program?

An Impacted Small Business Tenant or Subtenant are businesses—including non-profit and charitable organizations—that

- pay no more than $50,000 in monthly gross rent per location (as defined by a valid and enforceable lease agreement)
- generate no more than $20 million in gross annual revenues, calculated on a consolidated basis (at the ultimate parent level)
- have experienced at least a 70% decline in pre-COVID-19 revenues (at the entity level)

NOTE: Eligible small business tenants who are in sub-tenancy arrangements are also eligible, if these lease structures meet program criteria.

Q Can you give me an example of how the program works?

Imagine that the monthly rent for a small business is $10,000. In this example, assume the landlord doesn't make a profit. The landlord forgoes $2,500 (25 percent of rent). The small business would be responsible for paying $2,500 (25 percent of rent). The government would cover the remaining $5,000, with $3,750 from the federal government (37.5 percent of rent) and $1,250 (12.5 percent of rent) from the provincial government.

This means the landlord gets up to 75% of the rent or $7,500 of rent per month for April, May and June. This adds up to $22,500 for the landlord over the course of the program.

Q As an impacted small business tenant, how do I calculate the 70% reduction in revenues?

There are 2 scenarios by which to calculate your 70% reduction in revenues:

If your small business was operating during April – June 2019, then compare your gross revenues from April, May and June of 2020 to your revenues of April, May and June of 2019.

If your small business was not operating during April – June 2019, then compare your average gross revenues from April, May and June of 2020 to your average gross revenues for January and February 2020.

NOTE: Your revenue must consist of revenue earned from ordinary activities in Canada. Calculate your revenue using your normal accounting method and exclude revenues from non-recurring items.

For registered charities and non-profit organizations, the calculation would include most forms of revenue, excluding revenues from non-arm's length persons.

Your June forecast must be supportable by the variables at play for your business. The result is to be guided by the average revenue reduction for April and May and the forecasted change given your respective province or territory's guiding principles for reopening the economy (i.e., where the impacted business falls in the staged approach).

Q If my business was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, does it still qualify?

Yes, if your business was closed during March, April and June, it will still qualify for the subsidy if it was open in January and February and earned revenue during that time.

Q If my business qualifies for CECRA but my landlord refuses to participate in the program, can I still be evicted if I don't pay full rent?

Some provincial governments have instituted a ban on commercial evictions provided that the business tenant in question qualifies for CECRA. This legislation protects commercial tenants from being locked out or having their assets seized due to the negative impacts of COVID-19.

This legislation in Ontario was only backdated to June 3, leaving those that didn't pay April or May rent and were evicted with concerns they've been forgotten. There are also some lingering concerns that landlords not applying for the program will just wait until September to evict, once the moratorium on commercial tenant evictions has ended in Ontario.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



My commercial property doesn't have a mortgage—would we still be eligible for the program?

Yes. CECRA for small businesses is available to property owners who do not hold a mortgage.

Can i obligate my landlord to apply?

Unfortunately, not. On the date of the News Release from the Prime Minister's office there was both a collective sigh of relief and a flurry of new questions. This lifeline brings into question both parties' eligibility as well as the landlord's ability and willingness to participate. Effectively, the landlord agrees to waive 25% of the rent for the 3-month period (April, May and June) and is made whole on the remaining 75% by (1) receiving 25% from the tenant and (2) 50% in forgiven loans from the government (federal and provincial governments to share in the cost). Some landlords have already extended free rent periods or other compromises/deductions to their small business tenants. This is also where having a relationship in good standing with the landlord is proving to be part of the decision too.

Applying for this program is a benefit to both Landlords and small business tenants. If a small business tenant declares bankruptcy and the landlord must evict them they will have to continue to pay mortgage or debt costs on the property, including property tax, maintenance and other costs. Landlords will also incur additional costs and go through a lengthy process—often between 6 to 18 months—to find a new tenant and they may pay much lower rent post pandemic.

What documentation and information is required for the application?

The following documentation must be provided by the landlord to support the application. Documents can be found in the CMHC application portal.

- Property Owner Attestation signed and confirming the information relating to the property owner and the property provided in the application is correct and attest to their eligibility with the program requirements.
- Tenant or Sub-Tenant Attestation signed by each of their eligible commercial small business tenants and/or subtenants sign an attestation. Tenants are responsible for attesting to their eligibility with the program requirements.
- Rent Reduction Agreement for each impacted tenant. This agreement is conditional upon final approval of the application for CECRA for small businesses.
- Forgivable Loan Agreement

The following information is also required for the application:

Property owner information such as the property address, property type, property tax statement, latest rent roll for each property and the number of commercial units (a rent roll should include your tenants' unit number, amount of square footage rented, the rent per square foot, their monthly rent and your gross rental income)

Applicant information includes: banking information (including bank statement), property owner contact information, co-ownership information and contact details for co-owners

Tenant information such as contact information, registered business name, business number, number of employees, lease area and the monthly gross rent for the period of April, May and June

The application process is now open.

I would like to know if I am eligible, who can I talk to?

A great resource for seeking clarity on your eligibility is your accountant. Landlords should also contact CMHC to discuss their options, including applying the loaned funds to other existing debts or fixed cost payments (e.g., utilities).

I am a small business tenant and I have paid my rent for April and May. How can I be sure that my Landlord will forward the CECRA for small businesses funding to me?

The loan agreement stipulates that your property owner will either:

- send you the funds up front, or
- if you agree, provide you a credit for future rental payments.

Who will administer the loans?

The Federal Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.

I have tried my best to negotiate a solution with my landlord and we have no resolve. Is there anyone looking to buy a restaurant business these days?

Absolutely. We understand that it can be a difficult but necessary decision for some restaurateurs. The good news is that there are long standing investors in the hospitality industry who are looking to the future and those who are choosing to enter the market now. There is always a demand



for AAA locations. We help our clients make confident decisions in these trying times and negotiate excellent deal terms.

Q Will the program extend beyond June if public health measures remain in effect?

Possibly

We asked Gregory M. Prekupec from the law firm Dipchand LLP about some of the shortfalls of the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program. Dipchand LLP is a firm with a proven track record working with emerging and established clients providing insightful legal advice and strategies from starting-up, developing a new market, growing their existing business, or selling or purchasing an existing business. Their work includes dealing with landlords as well as tenants as it relates to the CECRA program.

On March 17th, 2020, the Government of Ontario declared a state of Emergency, ordering the closure of indoor recreational programs, public libraries, theatres, cinemas, private schools (all Ontario public schools have been closed since March 14), daycares and the prohibition of all public gatherings of more than 50 people (later reduced to 5 people on March 28). Bars and restaurants however were allowed to remain open, but only for those that offer takeout. By order of the province, starting March 24, non-essential businesses were closed. Whilst the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance was announced on April 24th, it wasn't until May 25th that the program was open to receive applications. Even then, the initial criteria to qualify was very confusing, and left both landlords and tenants in a state of flux. As such, the initial uptake was not as high as anticipated. Furthermore, while the program is retroactive to the months of April and May, it did nothing to assist tenants whose leases were terminated for failure to pay either April or May rent due to the state of emergency.

A combination of caveats restricting landlords from being eligible, a complex and sometimes confusing application process, and the high standard for revenue decline has turned off applicants.

For restaurants in particular, with those offering takeout, or those that converted to offering takeout in order to survive, should their revenue break through the 70 per cent decline threshold they are automatically disqualified from participating in the rent-assistance program. Many restaurateurs are left asking, "Would it have been more financially responsible of me to not open my business when I was allowed to offer takeout, and have prevented my scaled down staff from collecting a pay cheque?"

There's businesses that if they lose 30 per cent, they're in a tough spot just from that alone. It's not one shoe fits all and different provinces are in very different positions. However, the federal government's program is designed to be a hard qualification, either you qualify, or you don't. Two solutions to the barriers small businesses are hitting when trying to access the emergency funds would be to adopt a sliding scale system that ties rent relief to revenue, or evaluating rent relief on a month-by-month basis. M

Sources referenced for this article include:
https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/finance-and-investing/covid19-cecra-small-business

How is Restaurants Canada advocating to improve this program?

According to a survey that Restaurants Canada conducted at the beginning of June, half of restaurant owners across the country are still dealing with landlords who are not willing to participate in the CECRA program or any other rent relief arrangement.

Restaurants Canada is continuing to advocate for government to take the following actions:

1. **ENSURE COMMERCIAL TENANTS ARE PROTECTED UNTIL SOLUTIONS ARE IN PLACE.** The federal government needs to work with the provinces to ensure commercial tenants continue to be protected against evictions until long-term solutions are in place that work for all parties.
2. **TENANTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO APPLY FOR THE CECRA PROGRAM** and an application from an eligible tenant should make a landlord's participation compulsory.
3. **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE EXPANDED** to be more inclusive of all foodservice business models.
4. **SUPPORT THROUGH THE CECRA PROGRAM SHOULD BE AVAILABLE ON A SLIDING SCALE**, recognizing the tenuous financial circumstances that many commercial tenants still face. Relief should continue until business revenues return to a determined percentage of pre-pandemic levels.



The view from here

RESTAURANT VETERANS SHARE THEIR BEST PRACTICES FROM WEATHERING THE STORM

BY LAURA BICKLE

IORI KATAOKA, YUWA



IORI KATAOKA

Co-owner/Sake Specialist, Yuwa Japanese Cuisine, Vancouver

Iori Kataoka has been a stalwart on the Vancouver culinary scene for more than three decades, opening her first restaurant, Kitto Japanese House, in 1990. Her latest, Yuwa, debuted in 2017 and was a finalist for Best New Restaurant at the Vancouver Magazine Restaurant Awards.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS?

We were one of the lucky restaurants that had regulars who have continued to support us. The transition itself was somewhat smooth as we decided to continue with a similar menu, but our sales have not fully recovered yet and we are currently covering our costs with government support.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT DECISION YOU HAVE HAD TO MAKE SO FAR IN THE PANDEMIC?

Temporarily laying off staff. Deciding who is working and who gets laid off was difficult.

WHAT PRINCIPLES ARE YOU USING TO GUIDE YOUR DECISIONS?

A combination of seniority and hours worked (full time vs. part time).

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING YOUR RESTAURANTS AND STAFF TO ENSURE YOU ARE READY TO SAFELY FULLY REOPEN?

We are providing face masks and hand sanitizer for staff and are considering face shields as well—we have already installed sneeze guards as well.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING TO KEEP YOUR CONNECTION WITH YOUR CLIENTELE?

We have been taking orders by phone and delivering our food by ourselves without hiring third parties, which helps us keep in touch with our regulars and continue to provide them with the personal touch that is so much a part of what we espouse here at the restaurant.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY THROUGHOUT THIS EXPERIENCE?

We are a family business, and that family extends to our team.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ENSURE CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN DINING OUT ONCE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO?

Face masks and hand sanitation are mandatory for staff. We wipe down surfaces with alcohol and we keep the door open so that people don't need to touch it to enter the restaurant. We've created a separate area specifically for customers to follow social distancing rules so there can be the least amount of interaction as possible between staff. In the time since we have shifted to takeout and delivery only, we have been taking payment over the phone and sanitizing the POS machine prior to each use.

WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR FELLOW RESTAURATEURS?

We haven't won this battle yet. I am trying to tell myself to stay positive!

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

A crisis is essentially composed of a series of problems; the more you solve, the more likely you will survive it.

Zoran Kocovski



LANCE HURTUBISE

President and CEO, Vintage Group

Lance Hurtubise founded Moxie's in the 1980s and went on to form Calgary's Vintage Group in 2003, which operates eight restaurants, including Vintage Chophouse, Township and Booker's BBQ and Crab Shack.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS?

Although we have seen tremendous success in Calgary and have navigated three recessions in Alberta since starting Moxie's in 1986, I'm sure anyone in the hospitality industry can attest that this pandemic is unlike anything we have seen before. While we always managed to keep our doors open, the sudden and dramatic halt in customers dining out puts restaurants throughout Canada, and the world, in serious jeopardy.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT DECISION YOU HAVE HAD TO MAKE SO FAR IN THE PANDEMIC?

When the virus started to rapidly impact our economy, we made the difficult decision to lay off 100 per cent of employees and shut down all Vintage Group restaurants indefinitely. Fortunately, in mid-April we were able to bring back a handful of staff at Chairman's Steakhouse and Waalflower to offer delivery and curbside pickup. But this is not enough to sustain all our restaurants and employees.

WHAT PRINCIPLES ARE YOU USING TO GUIDE YOUR DECISIONS?

Our focus when deciding to close our doors was on the health and safety of our staff, clientele, friends, family and greater community. While we know this decision was made in the best interest of Calgarians, it was still difficult to navigate the implications of this decision, including seeing our dedicated employees without jobs during this unprecedented time.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE PANDEMIC WILL CHANGE RESTAURANTS?

Without immediate relief from the government, Calgarians will likely see over 30 per cent of restaurants never open their doors again. Many employees will never get their jobs back, including those who have devoted over 20 years to a restaurant.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING TO KEEP YOUR CONNECTION WITH YOUR CLIENTELE?

We have been engaging with the community, showcasing unique ways that the community can still come together.

In April, we hosted a distant dining event called Balcony Bash at our Chairman's Steakhouse (which is surrounded by a condo development). It featured live music for residents to enjoy from their balconies while providing an opportunity for staff to return to work during the temporary restaurant closure. Chairman's sold meal kits for residents to BBQ on their balconies while enjoying the performance. With the support of our public relations agency, Brookline Public Relations, we were able to reach broader audiences, livestreaming the event and sharing our initiative through local media and influencer platforms.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY THROUGHOUT THIS EXPERIENCE?

We have used communication updates, through our senior management team, to communicate next steps and updates to our employees.

WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR FELLOW RESTAURATEURS?

What we know for sure is that our voices need to be heard. We need the government to listen to advocates of the restaurant industry to help relieve the grim conditions we face. Even those restaurants who manage to survive the pandemic will wait a year to be profitable again. That is best-case scenario, and many will not be able to survive that reality.

We encourage those who have been impacted by the closures, whether you are a franchise, chef, bartender, hostess, or you simply don't want to see your favourite restaurant shutdown permanently, to share your story and make your voice heard.

ZORAN KOCOVSKI

Founding partner, Sassafraz, Toronto

Kocovski founded Sassafraz in the heart of Toronto's Yorkville district in 1997. The building was destroyed by fire in 2006, reopening 11 months later.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS?

During any crisis, maintaining the confidence of your staff, supply chain and customers is imperative. I am purposefully slow in my decision making, developing a comprehensive strategy for a way forward and then I seek ways to provide clear and candid communications to all of the stakeholders. A crisis is essentially composed of a series of problems; the more you solve, the more likely you will survive it.

The community provides a great deal of support, so giving back is an important consideration when navigating through difficult periods, so much so that it has become one of our core organizational values.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT DECISION YOU HAVE HAD TO MAKE SO FAR IN THE PANDEMIC?

Initially, it was laying off all of the staff. Business levels will be depressed for some time, so deciding on who I can bring back is proving to be even more difficult.

WHAT PRINCIPLES ARE YOU USING TO GUIDE YOUR DECISIONS?

Staying true to our core organizational values and making sure that the decisions we are making are aligned with those values.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE PANDEMIC WILL CHANGE RESTAURANTS?

In the short term, larger restaurants have an advantage; they can accommodate more seating while still allowing for social distancing measures. However, I believe this advantage will be short-lived. Once diners become comfortable with dining out again, I think we are going to see the acceleration of a trend that was already well underway. That is the rise of what I call the "compact fine-casual restaurant." This restaurant model melds the speed and convenience of quick service with a chef-driven menu and other upscale touches that take the guest experience up a notch while keeping operational costs down. A small physical space can be maximized by bringing the kitchen forward to form part of the customer experience and then extending that experience to the customer's home via takeout and delivery. These types of operations will be technology driven and mobile efficient with more food delivery platforms and advanced cooking methods, including kitchen robotics.

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING YOUR RESTAURANT AND STAFF TO ENSURE YOU ARE READY TO SAFELY FULLY REOPEN?

We closely monitor all the various governmental public health agencies and have developed a clear health and safety plan that goes above and beyond those agencies' recommendations and requirements. For example, we plan on implementing electrostatic spraying of broad-spectrum, food-safe, botanical disinfectant to ensure that our sanitizing procedures are best-in-class.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING TO KEEP YOUR CONNECTION WITH YOUR CLIENTELE?

We make sure our lines of communications are open, posting updates on our website and social media channels and communicating directly to our client base via email updates. Our next stage of reopening will be the launch of our curbside pickup and delivery services scheduled to begin the last week of May, and we have developed a comprehensive communications plan to support the opening of these services.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY THROUGHOUT THIS EXPERIENCE?

We have maintained constant communications with our staff and have implemented collaborative initiatives so that everyone remains engaged and connected. We will be operating with reduced staffing levels, and to maintain service standard levels, our staff will take on multifunctional roles. So cross-training will be a big part of our HR strategy moving forward.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ENSURE CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN DINING OUT ONCE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO?

In addition to clearly communicating our comprehensive health and safety plan, we are closely monitoring restaurants internationally and south of the border that are now reopening and look for successful best practices that we can include in our plan.

WHAT MESSAGE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR FELLOW RESTAURATEURS?

Stay true to your values, always keep the lines of communications open and seek ways to collaborate with one another rather than competing. M







The Restaurants Canada

Rapid Recovery Series

The impact of COVID-19 on the foodservice and hospitality industry cannot be understated. As restrictions begin to ease across Canada, operators are still left with more challenges ahead of them. This is why Restaurants Canada launched the Rapid Recovery Series. From June 9th - 11th, operators and suppliers were invited to join a series of free webinars that tackled some of the most pressing issues affecting the foodservice industry including:

- Profit Modelling Scenarios
- Menu Engineering
- Navigating Landlord and Tenant Agreements
- Rebuilding Your Workforce
- Winning Your Customers Back
- Leveraging the Supply Chain for the Future

The Rapid Recovery Series also featured an exclusive CEO Panel that spoke to the future of foodservice, provided leadership insights, and ideas for reinvention to help foodservice operators move forward in the next normal.

The objective of this Series was to empower industry professionals with the expertise and knowledge from industry leaders needed to recover from the pandemic, reopen with confidence, and help to rebuild their communities.

Bringing this series to life in MENU, we're providing some of the key takeaways, top highlights and actionable insights from all 10 of the sessions of the Rapid Recovery Series.

While MENU has put together this digestible view of each session, you can find recordings for all sessions as well as the Rapid Recovery Guide at restaurantscanada.org/rapidrecovery.

SESSION 1

COVID-19 Impact & Industry Outlook



Asad Amin



Jenny Companion

Kicking off the Rapid Recovery Series, Session #1 saw Restaurants Canada CEO & President Shanna Munro and Senior Economist Chris Elliot joining Ipsos' Vice President, Asad Amin as well as The Fifteen Group's Vice President, Eastern Operations, Jenny Companion.

Presented by The Fifteen Group, this session took a deep dive into what the current economic landscape looks like, what the consumer mindset is, and an overview into how operators not just responded to the pandemic, but also how they can continue to adapt and pivot as we move forward.

What does the economic landscape look like for foodservice?

- Commercial food sales dropped from over $6 billion to $3.98 billion in March 2020
- Drinking places saw a 58.8% drop in commercial food sales in March 2020
- 44% of operators polled said the reduction in capacity has had a negative effect on sales, compared to 35% who said it had a positive effect and 21% who said it's too early to tell
- We're seeing a slow, tepid recovery and facing many unknowns and uncertainty—scalability is key
- Contactless delivery and payment will still be in demand going forward; among operators polled, contactless payment, curbside delivery/contactless delivery, as well as simplified or reduced menu offerings top the list of services they will continue to provide post-lockdown

What is the consumer mindset?

- From April 2019 to April 2020, drive-thru usage grew by 22%, whereas dine-in shrunk by 32%
- Looking at consumer confidence, 63% of Canadians state that they are 'cautious' when it comes to enjoying activities
- It's not all doom and gloom though, 43% are 'optimistic' that they will enjoy life more than ever "once the crisis ends"
- 65% of consumers "believe restaurants are doing everything they can to prevent the spread of COVID-19"

Thinking about how you engage consumers going forward—whether through marketing or their overall experience, there are a few stats to keep in mind:

- 48% of consumers say that "restaurant cleanliness and food safety will matter more to me after COVID-19"
- 45% will "seek delivery or takeout from restaurants that provide tamper-proof packaging"
- 48% of consumers will "support local restaurants and brands more"

How can operators prepare for the 'new normal'?

The Fifteen Group outlined six key areas for operators to consider as they think about how they will prepare for the 'new normal': financials, your new menu, space & atmosphere, operations, staff & service, and your guests. While you can review the entire presentation from Jenny Companion and the team at restaurantscanada.org/rapidrecovery, here are a few pieces of actionable advice to take into account as you prep to reopen:

Will your hours of operation adjust?

- What items can you produce with minimal staff?
- Do your menu items hold up in delivery?
- Can you provide signage for both consumers and staff in order to direct proper and safe use of the physical space?
- Have a checklist for daily practices and procedures
- Ensure you implement proper staff training

SESSION 2

Opening Your Doors to a Safer Future


Valli Akella


Jack Minacs


Jim Gauthier

As operators prepare to reopen with confidence, ensuring the health and safety of guests and staff alike is essential. In Session #2 of the Rapid Recovery Series 'Opening Your Doors to a Safer Future' presented by Diversey, our panel of experts provided best practices and procedures for a secure reopening.

Jim Gauthier, Senior Clinical Advisor Infection Prevention for Diversey spoke to cleaning, disinfection as well as hand hygiene as it pertains to preventing and managing COVID-19.

Here are some of the biggest highlights and takeaways:

- According to van Doremalen, 2020, COVID-19 can last on the following surfaces for the specified times:
  - » Plastic, stainless steel: 3 days
  - » Cardboard: 24 hours
  - » Copper: 4 hours

However, transfer has not been tested.

- Some of the most essential prevention methods include proper hand hygiene, using hand sanitizer, and cleaning and disinfecting most-used items
- Non-food contact sanitizers will kill 99.9% (3 log) of bacteria within 5 minutes, to get this claim
- Food contact sanitizers must kill 99.999% (5 log) bacteria within 30 seconds.
- Disinfectants kill 4 – 6 log10 organisms
  - » Viruses 4 log (99.99%)
  - » Bacteria 6 log (99.9999%)
- Ensure you are using the approved sanitizer and following directions as indicated on the product

Aside from keeping your space safe, workplaces need to take action to keep staff safe. This goes beyond cleaning and includes awareness, conversation, and recognition. Jack Minacs, Senior Account Manager at Workplace Safety and Prevention Services detailed their hazard management process, using the acronym RACE (Recognize, Assess, Control, Evaluate).

- Recognize: Recognize how people can come into contact with COVID-19 during work and take steps to minimize contact
- Assess: Assess the hazard for level of risk
- Control: Controlling exposure to the risk by controlling who comes into your workplace and how they interact with employees, sanitizing and hygiene measures as well as physical distancing measures, health screening and PPE
- Evaluate: Look at preventive measures on an ongoing basis and adjust as needed

Lastly, the session featured Valli Akella Director, Food Safety, Quality and Brand Standards and Domenic Pedulla, President of Canadian Food Safety Group. The CFSG team discussed the proper usage of PPE and how it relates to food preparation and serving.

HERE'S A FEW QUICK TIPS TO TAKE AWAY:

Wash hands before/after wearing gloves

Ensure a snug fit for gloves

Do not reuse disposable gloves

Masks and gloves should not be damaged

Change mask frequently

Mask should fit around the nose

Training is key when it comes to keeping all safe in your establishment.

SESSION 3

What's Your Post-COVID Profit Model?



Dave Hopkins

In Session #3: What's Your Post-COVID Profit Model?, attendees heard from David Hopkins, president of The Fifteen Group. Presented by The Fifteen Group, this session took a look at some of the considerations in the 'new normal' landscape and how establishments can work within these new regulations, mandates, or procedures to achieve a positive bottom line.

For operators, these considerations look like:

- 50% capacity restrictions
- Sanitization procedures
- Guest caution over dining out
- Catering revenues / buffet revenues
- Supply chain
- Staff challenges about working

So, knowing that these are challenges along the road ahead for operators, how can they ensure they not just survive but thrive? Here are three key highlights from David's presentation that speak to how operators can maintain a positive profit statement.

Take advantage of the wage subsidy for reopening

David Hopkins points out that pre-COVID, an average restaurant may earn roughly CA$7,000/month. In a post-COVID model, David estimated that a restaurant would be losing $27/month with a 50% capacity. By taking advantage of the wage subsidy, David shows how a restaurant would lose much less. He notes that this still is not enough though. According to David, restaurants still need 3 - 3.5% sales volume to get to opening day. Ensuring that the wage subsidy is held well into fall is vital.

Increase prices

Consumers are tentative about returning to dining out. David suggests that the market size will be 60 - 70% of what it was before, pre-COVID. As restaurant capacity shrinks, the market size is still larger than the capacity, creating a seller's market. He notes that this provides the opportunity for restaurants to take advantage of this and raise prices.

Increase value proposition

Increase your value proposition by increasing experience. David spoke to his experience in working with restaurateurs and the importance of offering what he calls a '10/10 level' experience.

This means taking a look at the four pillars of post-COVID restaurant success:

Product, Service, Atmosphere, Safety/Sanitization: is your business offering unparalleled excellence in all of these categories?

David points out that staff will become incredibly important going forward. Your staff need to execute products, deliver quality customer service and atmosphere, and as they're on the frontlines, they need to be sure that guests are keeping customers safe and healthy.

We encourage readers to not just listen to the full session but reach out to David Hopkins of The Fifteen Group for more information on how they can help relaunch your business right.

SESSION 4

Navigating Landlord and Tenant Agreements



Alan Spergel



Lawrence Gold



Irving Fox

The world of tenant/landlord and lease agreements is a complex one. While everyone's case is different, understanding the basics of your agreement as well as your options can be a starting point to navigating these tricky waters.

In Session #4 of the Rapid Recovery Series: Navigating Landlord and Tenant Agreements, our experts took a look at why landlords aren't participating in the CECRA program, definitions and explanations that operators should note, as well as tenant options for lease defaults.

Our panel of experts included: Irving Fox, Alan Spergel, and Lawrence Gold.

Here's a cheat sheet of takeaways from this session:

Why aren't landlords applying for CECRA?

- Complex application
- Exposure to audit
- Strict stipulated use of funds
- No rush; retroactive application is allowed
- Documentation required to support loss
- Possible drawback if fraud known to landlord

The term "commercial evictions" has been used very often in the media, but what does this really mean? Landlords will take either of two paths:

Right of distraint: seize assets, sell assets after appraisal however, lease remains active

Right of termination: your locks are changed, you need to leave and remove belongings

But it's important to note that this doesn't mean game over!

Plan ahead—educate yourself on rights/obligations and options.

Negotiate, negotiate, negotiate!

Landlord/tenant relationship is governed by:

- Language contained in lease agreement
- In Ontario, *Commercial Tenancies Act* R.S.O. 1990, c. L.7 (the "Act")
- Case law

There are two ways to default: monetary (not paying rent) & non-monetary (improper use of premises).

Four remedies for landlord upon tenant default:

1. Affirm the lease and periodically sue for rent as it becomes due for balance of term
2. Lease continues and landlord takes possession and re-lets premises on tenant's account
3. Terminate lease; sue for arrears of rent until termination
4. Terminate lease; sue for damages until end of term

Additional remedy of distress (same as distraint) available where lease is not terminated.

What can tenants do?

- Apply to court for relief from re-entry or termination
- Examine force majeure clause
- Dispute resolution provisions
- Limitation or notice periods
- Insist on landlord following proper procedure
- Apply to court where illegal distraint
- Negotiate rent waiver or deferral
- Understand your leverage

COVID-19 I.C.U. for Business

First: you need to find out what you can afford to pay?

Have you had a good working relationship in the past with your landlord? Whether or not you can survive affects your landlord; you need to work together.

Construct a forecast for the next 6 months, and the next 6 months after.

Freeze all existing accounts payable where possible.

If you have a positive cash flow (without paying past debts), opt to negotiate with the landlord first. If this is not an option, then you can go forward with a Notice of Intention/Proposal.

Those with a negative cash flow (without paying past debts) should examine the possibility of bankruptcy to remove yourself from a bad situation in order to regroup and fight another day.

SESSION 5

Driving Online Revenue


Brian Deck


Emma Knight


Micheal Thalassinos


Oren Borovitch

In Session 5: 'Driving Online Revenue' presented by Silverware POS, our panel of experts discussed what industry trends they worked with, witnessed, or executed and how these changes may fare going forward. Our panel included: Michael Thalassinos, Sales Director at Silverware POS, Brian Deck, CEO of Smooth Commerce, Oren Borovitch, Co-Founder & COO of Kitchen Hub, and Emma Knight, Co-Founder & Head of Brand for Greenhouse.

If this pandemic has taught us anything, it's that no one can predict the future, and diversification and quick adaptation are vital to success in the foodservice industry. Understanding how these panelists rolled with the punches to drive online revenue can help your establishment not just survive, but thrive.

#1: Look to occasion-based eating

Both Oren and Michael spoke to the opportunity for operators to build out packages, or offer higher-end items that can be sold for special occasions. As consumers need to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and even graduations while staying home, restaurants have the chance to provide customers with the option to purchase luxury dishes and alcohols (or packages with these put together). Oren and Michael indicated that while pre-COVID, consumers wouldn't be inclined to purchase for example, a tasting menu for delivery complete with a bottle of wine, in a COVID world, consumers are looking to celebrate their occasions with something new, different, and exclusive.

#2: Offer value through partners

Emma and the Greenhouse team found success with their Plant Pantry—a collection of plant-based treats, goodies, and sustainable products. With a fleet of refrigerated vehicles, it made sense for Greenhouse to deliver their bottled juices straight to the customer's door. However they found that many of their partners had lost their distribution. As Emma points out, "they had freshly roasted beans but no way to get them into consumers' cups." The Plant Pantry brought together all of these partners in a fun box to be delivered directly to customers. Not only did it solve an issue for Greenhouse's partners but by offering a way for consumers to get those favourite brands and products in a convenient package, Greenhouse offers value for buyers.

#3: Take advantage of fast-changing consumer habits

Oren points out that for many, COVID-19 has "fast forwarded business by three to five years." For example, creating a more holistic digital dining experience, with playlists and backgrounds that provide the feel of a restaurant. Oren also speaks to how the "over 50 demographic has been ordering delivery through apps at a much higher pace than in the past." Going off of this Brian and Michael also spoke to the importance of providing customers with grocery, produce, and pantry staples during COVID. As many of us saw throughout the lockdown, grocery stores had long lines, and product shortages. Many restaurants jumped on this opportunity and provided items like flour, yeast, and eggs to customers.

#4: Safety first

All panelists echo that safety is of the utmost concern for customers not just now, but going forward. While Greenhouse prides itself on sustainable practices, working with the reusable glass bottles no longer became viable during COVID-19 and instead, they opted for more single-use products. Contactless payment and delivery have become incredibly important and expected by consumers during COVID-19, and panelists believe it will continue to do so. Customers are demanding that foodservice operators follow health and safety best practices, and they want to see it in action even upon reopening.

SESSION 6

Rebuilding Your Workforce


Angela Donnelly


Terry Weir

As restrictions ease and restaurants reopen, getting your staff back in and working will be paramount to your success. As uncertainty around safety is among a few concerns that many foodservice employees have, how can operators ensure that staff is not just able to get back into action, but also want to? Additionally, how can they ensure that staff feel secure and safe with their decision and confident and motivated to continue their career in hospitality?

This is the pivotal question for Session #6: Rebuilding Your Workforce, presented by BDO. This panel consisted of presentations by Kerry Graydon-Tsang, Manager - People Advisory at BDO, Angela Donnelly, Founder of Corethentic, Terry Weir, Senior Consultant at Thomas International, and Kyla Tuori, Corporate Chef for Unilever Foodsolutions North America and Fair Kitchens ambassador.

Keeping staff safe

As operators begin to prepare for reopening (or even if they've already reopened), they should review their HR policy and update it to ensure that employees are protected and kept safe.

"Safe staff are engaged staff," says Kerry. Once policies are put in place, reinforcement of these policies becomes the next step. Communicate the policies to staff, whether through posters, in meetings, or one-on-one and once policies are in place, follow up to see if they are effective for all, for some, or for no one. If policies aren't effective for all, they won't be followed. Terry also outlines the guiding principles for success:

- Lead with empathy
- Agility is not an option, it's a necessity
- Follow the 200% rule to ensure accountability, this means not only should staff follow policies for themselves, but encourage those around them to do so as well
- 360-degree feedback

Leadership & trust

Angela Donnelly outlined two key ways to "unlock willingness": alignment with the goals and objectives of the organization and a good relationship to the direct manager.

Upon reopening, it's time to ask yourself: Do you have the right managers and leaders in place to unlock commitment, loyalty, and willingness of your staff?

According to Angela, the right managers: listen to staff, are approachable, fair, honest, and experienced. She identifies two themes in this list: care and growth. These themes in turn, are the motivation that staff needs to remain engaged in the workplace.

In an industry like foodservice, that can be seen as transient, and with the added pressure of post-lockdown 'new normal,' having the right managers in place is the key to making sure that your employees don't just stay with you, but thrive in their position.

Mental wellness

The COVID-19 pandemic affected us all in a number of ways and the foodservice industry felt it deeply not just financially but mentally as well. Isolation, financial insecurity, and lack of coping mechanisms were just some of the effects reported.

Upon reopening, operators should be aware of, and support the mental wellness of their employees. Chef Kyla Tuori of Fair Kitchens explains that management should look for signs that someone in their operation is struggling. "They need to be available, share, and take initiative," she elaborates.

A positive team environment is paramount for reopening. Encourage employees to connect as a team, share their experiences and management needs to communicate what measures are in place to ensure safety in order to ease anxiety.

Furthermore, workplaces need to have a support system and tools in place to navigate these tricky times. Have digital resources readily available and accessible to employees, and schedule regular mental wellness check-ins.



Jo-Ann McArthur



Charlie Angelakos



Steve Buors

SESSION 7

Winning Your Customer Back

As we've seen, consumer confidence and a successful reopening go hand-in-hand. To garner and boost confidence in the 'new normal,' marketing will take centre stage. Session #7: Winning Your Customer Back presented by Silverware POS explored COVID-19 consumer trends, marketing strategies, and best practices for foodservice operators.

The panel featured amazing insights from key industry players like Jo-Ann McArthur, President of Nourish Food Marketing, Steve Buors, Co-Founder & CEO of Reshift Media, Kathy Snow, Director of Marketing & Communications at DRMG, and Charlie Angelakos, Vice President, Legal & Corporate Affairs at Labatt Breweries of Canada who spoke specifically to the P.O.S.T. Promise program (People Outside Safely Together).

We'll focus specifically here on an overview of the consumer trends that will be top of mind, as well as the challenges and opportunities leading the way into reopening and recovery.

We recommend viewing the full panel to layer on those specific marketing tactics as this will provide you with a good base to work off of when thinking about how you will move forward.

Setting the stage, operators should note that uncertainty reigns at the moment. Consumers worry about the state of the economy, as well as a possible second wave of COVID-19.

I think we can all attest to how many loaves of sourdough bread we saw on our Instagram feeds during the COVID-19 quarantine. This increase in home cooking and baking was one of the biggest consumer trends during COVID-19. Other trends include:

- Cooking as a family activity
- From snacking to three square meals a day
- Consumers are more mindful about what they're buying
- Food waste is top of mind issue
- Comfort foods and the "quarantini"
- COVID fatigue, looking for mental relief

Operators are facing a number of challenges on the road to recovery including:

- Building trust with consumers
- Bringing joy back into the dining experience
- Remaining agile as conditions change

What are the opportunities that come along with these challenges?

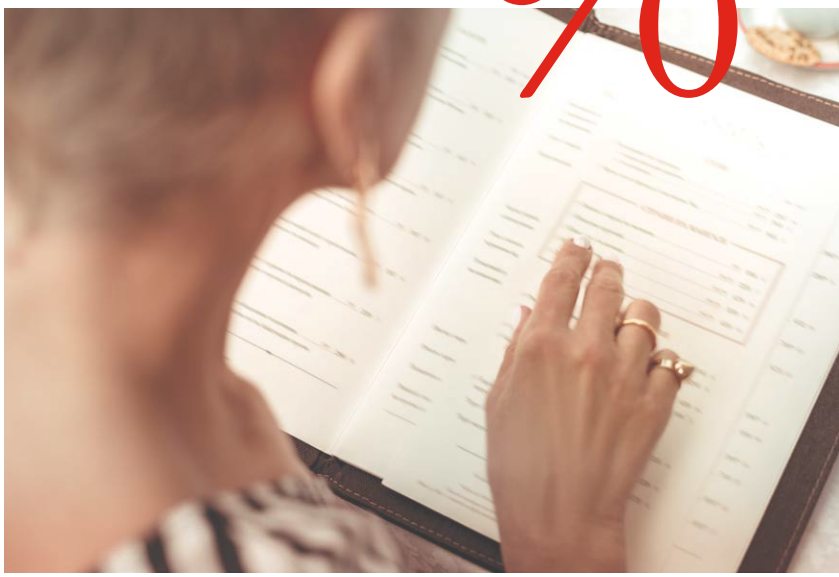
- Pent-up demand for connection and experience
- Domestic travel increasing (becoming a tourist in your own neighbourhood)
- Boredom at home and your own cooking
- Support for local; leading with your passion and story
- Transparency when it comes to cleaning, safety measures and pricing

Finally, taking a look at the trends from our pre-COVID life, which are we seeing carry over to our 'new normal'?

- Single-use items became the norm during COVID, but in our 'new normal,' the guilt of using single-use will facilitate a renewed passion and interest in climate change
- A more in-depth look at our protein sources will also occur in the 'new normal'
- This includes a continued increase in plant based
- As well as consumers taking an interest in and exploring meat processing

SESSION 8

Engineering Your Menu



Operators are looking for savings, now more than ever, wherever they can achieve it. Along with labour, and rent, food costs is one of an operator's biggest expenses and thankfully, one that operators have more control over.

In Session #8: Engineering Your Menu for Profits, presented by The Fifteen Group, Fifteen Group president David Hopkins led the discussion on how restaurants can examine their menu to reduce food costs for a more positive bottom line.

David started off the presentation by speaking to the norm he sees working firsthand with restaurants. Most operators, he says, are aiming for 30% food cost but don't often have a good idea of what ingredients are actually costing them. In fact, David pointed out that this 30% model isn't actually the best judge of how successful your menu is, or how it will fare to produce a positive bottom line.

Here's a few tips for operators as they begin to engineer their own menus:

Recipe costing is paramount

To start engineering your menu, take the time to cost out your recipes and menu. While this can be time consuming, according to David, now is the time to take advantage of the wage subsidy. Use the subsidy to help subsidize the cost of an employee spending the time to cost out your menu.

Food cost vs. margin

Focus on the margin instead of food cost when costing out your menu. David used the below example, based off of a real-life client:

	Steak			
Sale Price	$34.00	$50.00	$38.00	$39.00
Product Cost	$9.00	$13.00	$13.00	$13.00
Food Cost %	26%	26%	34%	33%
Margin $$$	$25.00	$37.00	$25.00	$26.00

In this scenario, product cost increased from $9.00 to $13.00. And if keeping with the same food cost, this operator would need to charge $50.00 for the dish that once cost $34.00. It's a big jump, and one that many customers wouldn't make. However, if looking at this from the margin, while the food cost rose to 34%, the operator is still making the $25 margin they once were and the $38.00 cost is more palatable for customers.

Or, consider playing around with the margin, to fit the best compromise and fit for your business. Perhaps adding one extra dollar to the end price makes more sense for you. Looking at the margin instead of the food cost helps improve profitability and value proposition.

Build a QuaM graph

While David goes into detail on the importance of the QuaM graph, here's a quick primer; the QuaM graph allows you to plot out your menu in four categories: opportunities, stars, unknowns, and dogs.

- Opportunities are dishes that are perhaps below profit; and while you may wish to take them off the menu, if they're popular, think about raising prices.
- Stars are items that are above average in profitability and popularity.
- Unknowns are items you want to sell more of, but currently may not be selling that well but it might take some digging to figure out why. David uses an example of a dish description on a menu using terms that the public may understand.
- Dogs are below average margin, popularity or quality. Take these items off the menu and try to recreate in a way that benefits your business.

While this is a start to engineering your menu for positive profits, there is much more to delve into. Relaunch and reopen with the right menu, reach out to David Hopkins and The Fifteen Group for help.

SESSION 9

Leveraging the Supply Chain for the Future






L-R:
Jean-Michel Laurin,
Jim Robinson,
Luc Chabot,
Lisa Bishop-Spencer

Session #9: Leveraging the Supply Chain for the Future, moderated and sponsored by Gordon Food Service, brought together commodity groups and food distributors to discuss the current interruptions and issues we're experiencing, in addition to an exploration into how leveraging local and taking advantage of ingredients like chicken, beef, and dairy and eggs can help lead to menu innovation for recovery.

Opening up the session, Jim Robinson, National Merchandising Manager - Poultry & Seafood at Gordon Food Service took the stage to speak to what the current supply chain landscape looks like. He outlined four major challenges:

- Dealing with the fresh dilemma
- Impact of retail demand
- Interruptions in supply
- Explosion of PPE needs

However along with these challenges, he provided the following advice points to customers:

- Simplify and focus
- Work closely with suppliers
- Look for labour and waste savings
- Targeted forward buys
- Look for deals

Moving along to the panel, our experts included: Jean-Michel Laurin, President & CEO of the Canadian Poultry and Egg Processors Council, Lisa Bishop-Spencer, Director, Brand and Communications for Chicken Farmers of Canada, Mathieu Pare, Executive Director, Canadian Beef Centre of Excellence, Canada Beef, and finally Luc Chabot, Director, Business Stakeholder Relations, Dairy Farmers of Canada.

While most of the panelists indicated that on the farm level, COVID did not have a significant effect, they each spoke to the issues on the distribution end, echoing many of Jim Robinson's points. Safety is of the utmost importance in processing plants and many of the panelists highlighted the increases in sanitization procedures.

Moving along to menu innovation, Jim asked the panelists to speak to recipe ideas that can be incorporated to positively impact an establishment's bottom line.

Starting with beef, Mathieu Pare spoke to the versatility and flexibility of beef and encouraged operators to look beyond their regular cuts. Beef has such a variety in texture and taste, and can work with both dry and moist cooking methods. Mathieu recommends that chefs look into the whole carcass to see what will work best for their customer. Additionally, he suggested that operators consider the burger going forward. The burger, he pointed out, is key in terms of both customer satisfaction and profitability. In the 'next normal,' Mathieu also wants operators to think about how they will approach sharable items as these may wane in popularity.

Lisa Bishop-Spencer from Chicken Farmers of Canada spoke to the intersection of comfort food and health trends due to COVID-19. These customer tastes and demands coming out of COVID-19 should be top of mind when building your menu. Additionally, Lisa spoke about the customers' need for "demonstrable proof that the [food] they are eating is Canadian." Chicken Farmers of Canada has produced a brand and recognizable mark for operators to use on menus, that denotes that what you are offering is a Canadian product.

Luc Chabot of Dairy Farmers of Canada echoes this sentiment. From pre-COVID and going into our next stage, harnessing local is a selling point. He highlights the strength of Canadian food standards and how these standards are a sense of pride that consumers can be confident in.

SESSION 10

CEO Panel

One of our most exciting sessions, the CEO Panel that centered itself around 'Driving Business Forward,' presented by Garland Canada and sponsored by PepsiCo Foodservice as well as moderated by Tony Chapman. The session featured some of foodservice's top leaders including: Susan Senecal, CEO of A&W Food Services of Canada, Paul Bognar, President & Chief Operating Officer, Service Inspired Restaurants (SIR Corp), Juanita Dickson, President & CFO of Gusto 54 Restaurant Group and John Lettieri, CEO of HERO Certified Burgers.

This session consisted of a frank and open conversation about the changes and challenges each CEO and company witnessed and underwent during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a peek into what the future may hold for these major Canadian players upon reopening and recovery.

The hour-long session is filled with insights and a must-listen. To whet your appetite, we've put together a mini interview based on the session.

Tony Chapman: How did you pivot your restaurant operations when you had to shut it down?

Paul Bognar: We made the decision to protect management teams and we opened half of our restaurants in order to have some positive cash flow. We moved very quickly, going from takeout only to takeout and curbside and we leveraged the use of our app. We only have about 25% of the volume that we used to do under a full business however our takeout business grew from what used to be 5 - 6% to 25%.

Juanita Dickson: Initially, we had to lay off almost all employees and we were closed for two weeks. We were able to transition to be an essential service for takeout and delivery and we were very purposeful about who we decided to bring back. We brought back our managers who understood the need to wear many different hats. Additionally, we implemented a marketplace to deliver pantry/grocery and kits to consumers.

John Lettieri: Over the past few years we've been concentrating on growing our virtual kitchens so we are growing our business without the traditional brick and mortar. This experience has been a double edged sword for us as many of our distribution partners are not open right now.

Susan Senecal: COVID-19 has caused a major upheaval but it's been an opportunity for A&W to try new things; our drive-thru business and mobile app ordering have increased and we put communication into place early on. Our team is in constant communication so that we can respond quickly. We have daily calls and we've been able to embrace the opportunity to learn and shift and put agile methodology into practice.











Clockwise:
Tony Chapman,
Paul Bognar,
Juanita Dickson.
John Lettieri,
Susan Senecal

A special thank you to the presenting sponsors: The Fifteen Group, Egg Farmers of Canada, Diversey, Gordon Food Service, Chase, SilverChef, Silverware POS, BDO, and Garland Canada as well as the panelists, speakers, and moderators who helped bring this series to life.

The road to recovery in the wake of COVID-19 is not exactly well-paved and smooth. There's no pretending that the foodservice industry has been presented as an incredible challenge to overcome. The Rapid Recovery Series was built to address and provide solutions to some of the most urgent concerns of operators as they reopen, or prepare to reopen, their business. Through the expertise of and insight from some of our industry's brightest stars, Restaurants Canada hopes that together, we can overcome this obstacle before us. Though we may be building the road as we travel along it, the Rapid Recovery Series provides the tools we need to get to our journey's end.


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CELEBRATING SUMMER SOLSTICE

Thanks to updated regulations around alcohol takeout and delivery, Canadians are patronizing their favourite establishments with enthusiasm! Processors and operators, you have demonstrated your adaptability and your remarkable creativity, finding ways to celebrate with your customers without compromising on safety or quality. As we start to slowly emerge from our pandemic doldrums, there are many exciting products, pivots, flavours and trends on the horizon for summer 2020...here are just a few!

BY AIDAN FISHER



Sheep Black Wine—Stel + Mar premium California wine

Packaged in ultra-portable and environmentally friendly cans and boxes. With the launch of Stel + Mar, consumers can now get highly rated California wine in modern designed and convenient single-serve packaging formats; low in sugar and fruit-forward!

Launching five premium wines:

- Dry classic style Zinfandel (100% Red Zinfandel) from Lodi, California with notes of raspberry, blackberry and cherry
- Dry but fruit-forward 100% Unoaked Chardonnay from the North Coast of California with flavours of ripe green apple, melon, and hints of caramel
- Grenache/Syrah Rosé that's exceptionally well-balanced with notes of ripe nectarine, grapefruit, and strawberry
- Sparkling White and Sparkling Rosé that are perfect wines for savouring or celebrating, whether they're served in a glass or enjoyed straight from the can



WATERLOO BREWING'S SEAGRAM ISLAND TIME TIKI MULE

New Seagram RTD cocktail builds on the sales momentum of Seagram Island Time Anytime, one of the most popular new products last summer. The vodka-based ready to drink cocktail is a Caribbean twist on the Moscow Mule craze, blending the classic Moscow Mule flavours of ginger and lime with a refreshing tropical twist of juicy pineapple, mango, passion fruit and a splash of coconut, with 5% alcohol.

LONE STAR TEXAS GRILL recently started selling their signature Margaritas and Caesars in "Ready-to-go Cocktail kits." Each kit contains a house-made base mix, garnishes, house smoked rimmers, and 200ML of Premium liquor (Hornitos Tequila or Tito's Vodka). $28 for cocktail kits with alcohol, $12 for just the mix and garnishes. They have been a huge hit!



ABSOLUT VODKA SODAS & ABSOLUT COCKTAILS



A range of vodka sodas and cocktails crafted using original Absolut Vodka and made with natural flavours—delivering all the fizz, but none of the fuss. Inspired by the iconic, go-to cocktail, Absolut Vodka Sodas are lightly sparkling, ready-to-enjoy mixed drinks in three delicious flavours—Lime & Cucumber, Grapefruit & Rosemary, and Raspberry & Lemongrass. With 97 calories per serving, the original Absolut Vodka-based sip offers a crisp, carbonated taste with no added sugar or carbs.

Those who enjoy a premium classic cocktail experience are covered with the addition of the Absolut ready-to-drink Cocktail line. The trio of beverages—Mango Mule, Berry Vodkarita and Grapefruit Paloma—are a well-balanced blend of original Absolut Vodka and fruity sweetness that delivers a refreshing flavour.

- Sodas: Grapefruit & Rosemary: Lightly sparkling with the crisp and refreshing taste of grapefruit, accentuated by the bright notes of rosemary. (5% ABV)
- Lime & Cucumber: Lightly sparkling with the crisp and refreshing taste of lime, accentuated by the bright notes of cool cucumber. (5% ABV)
- Raspberry & Lemongrass: Lightly sparkling with the crisp and refreshing taste of raspberry, accentuated by the bright notes of lemongrass. (5% ABV)
- Cocktails: Berry Vodkarita: Lightly sparkling with the intense and refreshing flavours of strawberries, raspberries and citrus fruits. (10% ABV)
- Grapefruit Paloma: Lightly sparkling and bursting with the delicious flavour of grapefruit, sherbet sweetness and tropical fruits. (7% ABV)
- Mango Mule: Lightly sparkling, perfectly balancing the taste of tropical mango with citrus and spicy ginger. (7% ABV)



ABSOLUT FLIES THE FLAG FOR THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY WITH NEW ABSOLUT RAINBOW EDITION BOTTLE

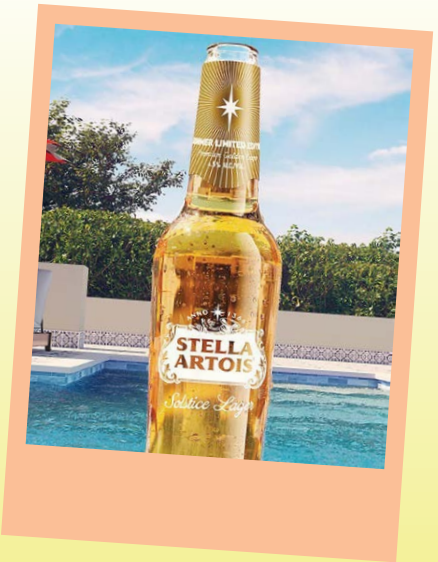
Since 1981, Absolut has supported the LGBTQ+ community as part of the belief that a colourful, diverse and equal world is something to strive and work for. Available from June 2020, the bottle pays homage to American artist and gay rights activist, Gilbert Baker, with a newly designed bottle co-created with The Gilbert Baker Foundation.

Originally devised by artist Gilbert Baker in 1978, the rainbow flag has become a universal symbol for inclusion, peace and love. This bottle pays tribute to the iconic 2008 bottle collaboration between Absolut and Gilbert himself, where Absolut was the first spirit bottle to proudly wear the flag.

Stella Artois Solstice Lager

Stella Artois Solstice Lager is the brand's first-ever limited-edition golden lager brewed especially for savouring under the summer sun. Drawing on the Stella Artois brewmasters' tradition of making special brews for the holidays, the brand created something extraordinary for one of the most beloved holiday seasons of all, summertime, to encourage everyone to savour time together, in socially responsible ways online or safely distanced.

Stella Artois Solstice Lager is balanced with citrus essences and triple filtered for a smooth, crisp finish. Full-flavoured and refreshing, the beer features malty sweetness and zesty citrus notes and has 4.5 percent ABV and 105 calories per bottle.



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SPICE STORY

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THE OLD BAY® FLAVOUR STORY



- OLD BAY® is great on seafood.
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- Celery Seed has a slightly bitter flavour, with earthy and grassy notes like the celery we eat.
- Paprika has a mild, slightly sweet flavour and pleasant, fragrant aroma and is made from dried sweet red pepper.
- Mustard Seed delivers an initial floral sweetness with a pungent finishing bite.



FEATURED RECIPES



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Takeout and delivery is keeping the Michelin-starred lights on

BY JACOB RICHLER



There are a lot of things unfolding now that if you or I had predicted a year ago or even six months back, we would have been proclaimed mad for our troubles. Face masks all around, for example. School and travel cancelled. And Michelin-starred restaurants offering takeout and delivery.

Takeaway got its start in the realm of fast food, and so from the haute-cuisine restaurant's point of view, it would always carry that stigma with it. Even as the concept moved slowly upscale—and these last few years, got its big boost in accessibility from third party apps, some chefs still looked down upon it with the same distaste and suspicion with which a sommelier regarded screw-top wine back in the 80s.

Nowadays my inbox is cluttering up fast with takeout from posh restaurants I booked online and left my email with on my last trip to France. When in late May I made online inquiries on what was happening in Europe's culinary capital of London, England, I counted no fewer than 62 Michelin Guide restaurants peddling delivery and takeout in that city alone.

A couple of weeks back I decided to shelve the home cooking for a night and see what I could rustle up on an equivalent level here in Toronto. I placed an order with the incomparable Sushi Masaki Saito on Avenue Road, and tried out chef's exquisite chirashi-don (CA$118) and then made my way through one of his edomae morikomi (CA$198) too. Oh, and sake as well. Premium Japanese food during lockdown: wonderful.

If you're tempted, be advised that Sushi Masaki Saito has been sold out for weeks in advance. So is Alo, the 2019 #1 restaurant on the *Canada's 100 Best* list, which is now pre-selling CA$65 four-course tasting menus through Tock. For my next takeout I tried

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 42

> *The long-term sustainability of takeout under current circumstances is dubious. I mean, why run takeout on premium downtown rent when you could do more volume more easily from a commissary in a less pricey part of town?*

my more modest west end favourite, Dandylion, and fetched some delicious roast chicken with braised young fennel—along with a couple of bottles of fine, small, low-intervention produced Riesling that you have no chance of finding at the LCBO. Then on Sunday night, we collected the best takeout pizza I've ever enjoyed, from our 2019 Best New Restaurant Giulietta.

The novelty of these delightful new takeout options is not going anywhere soon. What started as a Band-Aid solution to empty the walk-in fridge and generate enough money to keep the lights on and maybe a few core staff on the books has proved to be more profitable than that. Every last one of these empty restaurants is far busier with their takeout program than they anticipated possible at launch.

Over the last few weeks we've checked in with every restaurant ranked from #1 to #50 on last year's Canada's 100 Best Restaurants list. Even the ones that told us two weeks ago that they wouldn't implement a takeout or delivery program have now changed course and started offering the service in some capacity.

Clearly, at best, it's a good way to get your restaurant warmed up again for whatever form of reopening is soon allowed. Patios, for an obvious start. Leading to new socially-distanced interiors, downgraded to half their previous capacity.

But what happens then? The long-term sustainability of takeout under current circumstances is dubious. I mean, why run takeout on premium downtown rent when you could do more volume more easily from a commissary in a less pricey part of town? Likewise, any restaurant with a business model that worked, just as it was, is not going to be profitable with half as many customers. So for a lot of independent restaurants the only viable choice will be to keep the takeout going and do both.

It's tough for a small restaurant and team to concentrate on fulfilling two different jobs to the same high standards to which they used to execute just one. And if they have to follow one path it will be that of the simpler food that these restaurants now have in play as takeout-suitable. Which is to say that by necessity, restaurant cooking is going to be a little less ambitious for a while.

Fortunately this is on pace with the public's appetite. René Redzepi's decision in May to relaunch Noma, the world's most influential tasting menu restaurant, into a burger peddling wine bar, was an unmissable signal of modest dining to come. But there is also "I think" a silver lining to our restaurants' strange new multi-tasking format: liquor sales.

The flow of wine-to-go in jurisdictions like Ontario and Quebec that never previously allowed it has been a boon for restaurants and consumers alike. Restaurants get to sell inventory for profit, and benefit financially from their expertise—as they should. Consumers meanwhile have been granted new and easy access to wines properly paired to their takeout meals, as well as to individual bottles from small wineries here and abroad whose offerings were previously only available by the case through private import (and at that, were often snapped up moments after their release). An improvement of access and convenience that customers have proved as happy to pay for as restaurants have been to profit from.

The popularity of the idea makes it all the less likely that even when business normalizes, provincial governments will seek to turn back the policy clock. And that is something to which restaurants and consumers should both raise a glass. M

About the Author

In these unprecedented times, having an understanding of the future possibilities is essential. While no one can guarantee to know what the next few months will hold for us, having insight from the experts who know the industry best can be incredibly useful. Especially as we think ahead, diversify our business, and innovate to stay afloat.

Providing these industry insights for MENU is Jacob Richler, editorial director of *Canada's 100 Best*, who will be joining MENU Magazine as a featured guest columnist. Bringing his intimate knowledge of the Canadian culinary landscape, Jacob is one of the experts providing his voice and point of view to the COVID-19 situation.

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3M would like to express our gratitude and commitment to the well-being of all those in the Food Service Industry during this difficult time and beyond.

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STATE OF THE NATION: FEEDING THE RECOVERY

FROM RESTAURANTS CANADA

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to confront our industry with an unpredictable and evolving set of challenges, Canadians are appreciating how critically important restaurants are to the social and economic fabric of their communities.

Beyond serving delicious food, restaurants are a top source of jobs, contribute significantly to charitable causes and provide much needed spaces for meeting new people, connecting with colleagues, and getting together with friends and family.

Restaurants will help reenergize the Canadian economy. We feed the nation—we feed families and communities, we nourish the bodies and souls of our customers, we feed a massive supply chain system whom in turn feed so many other small enterprises. Now it's time to feed our livelihoods and feed the recovery.

Our industry is a key pillar of the national economy, supporting Canadian farmers, food and beverage producers and distributors, trucking companies and drivers from coast to coast. Canadian foodservice businesses sustain our country's tradespeople and designers, suppliers of furniture, cookware and professional services, in addition to directly employing more than a million chefs, cooks, servers, dishwashers, bussers, cashiers and hosts, managers and more.

At least this was the case before COVID-19 resulted in **MORE THAN 800,000 PEOPLE FROM THE FOODSERVICE AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR OUT OF WORK BY APRIL**. That's nearly two-thirds of the restaurant workforce that was lost and double the number of jobs that Canada's entire economy lost, across all sectors, in the year following the 2008 financial crisis.

Not only was the restaurant industry among the first and hardest hit by the pandemic, our sector will also be among the slowest to return to profitability: **SIX OF 10 FOODSERVICE BUSINESSES ARE STILL OPERATING AT A LOSS**, even as jurisdictions across the country are moving forward with reopening plans.

After months of significantly reduced revenue, or none at all, and now facing months of operating at reduced capacity, this is only the beginning of what will be a long and difficult road to recovery for Canada's restaurants.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants have demonstrated an exceptional level of responsiveness and innovation while continuing to ensure the health and safety of their staff and everyone they serve.

But the creativity and resiliency of our industry won't be enough to keep restaurants from closing down in the face of insufficient cash flow and insurmountable debt.

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 46



Restaurateurs are eager to help rebuild the economy and revive neighbourhoods, but the window of opportunity is quickly closing: **THE DEVASTATION THAT THIS PANDEMIC HAS HAD ON OUR INDUSTRY IS GOING TO TAKE SUBSTANTIAL GOVERNMENT ACTION TO REVERSE.**

To make sure that restaurants have what they need to continue playing an integral part of the social and economic fabric of our everyday lives, Restaurants Canada has launched a campaign called Feeding the Recovery. Through this campaign, we are inviting everyone across the industry to join us in raising greater awareness among the hearts and minds of all Canadians that supporting restaurants is key to Canada's recovery from COVID-19. Visit **FEEDINGTHERECOVERY.CA** to learn more about the importance of restaurants in communities and to find sharable resources.

Restaurants Canada is continuing to call for stronger action in the following key areas to ensure that restaurants have the support they need to survive the road to recovery.

ONE OF THE LARGEST CHALLENGES OUR INDUSTRY IS FACING IS THE LACK OF COMMERCIAL TENANT PROTECTIONS AND RENT RELIEF. Most restaurants don't have enough liquidity to last one month let alone three months of rent payments and counting. The current rent program is facing challenges as landlords fail to participate in the recovery process. In order to get our system up and running as fast as it can, landlords need to work with restaurant and food business owners.

Assistance with labour costs is another key concern. We are a staff-heavy business who in turn employ many other business. Before the pandemic we were already facing a massive labour shortage which will only be amplified during the recovery period. There will be a considerable cost to get employees back to work, including training and introducing new business practices, such as the purchasing of safety equipment and other health and safety supplies, to ensure the safety of staff and customers. Thanks to restaurants being listed as an essential service, and with help from the wage subsidy that Restaurants Canada and other industry allies fought for, many restaurants were able to increase staff hours and at least 40,000 jobs were recovered by May. However, even with these gains, **MORE THAN HALF A MILLION PEOPLE WORKING IN THE FOODSERVICE SECTOR ARE STILL OUT OF JOBS ACROSS CANADA.**

Then there's the fact that our industry supports an entire supply chain system which has been deeply impacted by the shutting of restaurants and food service businesses—we went from having an overabundance of potatoes that needed to be disposed of, to a lack of orders and workers to support the next harvest. Once the reopening process begins, the supply chain as it exists today will be overwhelmed. Farmers and distributors will go from not being able to sell a thing to suddenly needing to support multiple orders while faced with the challenge that many restaurants are behind in payments for goods. It's a complex issue that makes it extremely difficult to kick start the economy.

RESTAURANTS DESPERATELY NEED HELP WITH CASH FLOW and managing crushing levels of debt. With little to no sales revenue coming in for most foodservice business, many of them have already depleted their reserve funds or soon will. Due to the perishable nature of inventories, many faced unrecoverable food losses and now they will need to support restock as they open. This has left many of you in a very precarious position.

Restaurants Canada will continue to call on all levels of government to ensure that restaurants and foodservice businesses have what they need to feed the recovery.

FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RELIEF MEASURES ACROSS CANADA, DOWNLOAD OUR "NAVIGATING COVID-19: FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL RESPONSE PLANS" HANDBOOK. THIS HANDBOOK INCLUDES ALL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RELIEF MEASURES ANNOUNCED TO DATE, BOTH AT THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL LEVEL, INCLUDING AN OVERVIEW OF EACH MEASURE, HOW IT WORKS AND ANY OUTSTANDING DETAILS STILL TO BE DETERMINED.



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PANDEMIC *PIVOTS*

HOW BRANDS ARE RESPONDING TO RAPIDLY CHANGING CONSUMER NEEDS



BY ELLEN SMITH SENIOR EDITOR & MISHAL OMAR MANAGING INSIGHTS EDITOR, TREND HUNTER INC.

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PRE-PACKAGED PLANNING



PRE-PACKAGED PLANNING

As physical distancing measures remain in effect, once-simple decisions—like going to the grocery store—require a cost-benefit analysis. The need for meal-planning is greater than ever as most people are unable to keep up their habits of eating out—but doing everything from home, including working and/or homeschooling children, has resulted in increased responsibilities for many consumers. To make things a little easier on people (and to keep them at home as much as possible), some businesses are offering pre-packaged meal kits that make meal-planning much simpler for families and people in other communal living set-ups.

Among the companies pivoting to cater to consumer needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic is Culinary Adventure Co.—a local Toronto-based food tour group that's combining its love of food with its love of the city in a unique way. While consumers are stuck inside their homes, the brand has brought the culinary spirit of Toronto to their doorsteps, with curated food boxes inspired by the city's foodie-friendly neighborhoods.

Each themed kit includes signature dishes and ingredients from restaurants within the city's neighborhoods, offering Chinatown's pork buns and barbecue meats, with chickpea curry and lentil dishes from the city's Little India. More niche to Toronto locals is the St. Lawrence Market box that offers artisanal cheese, smoked salmon, and locally made mustards from the city's most iconic public market, which has been closed since the beginning of the pandemic.

CHARITY & PRODUCTION



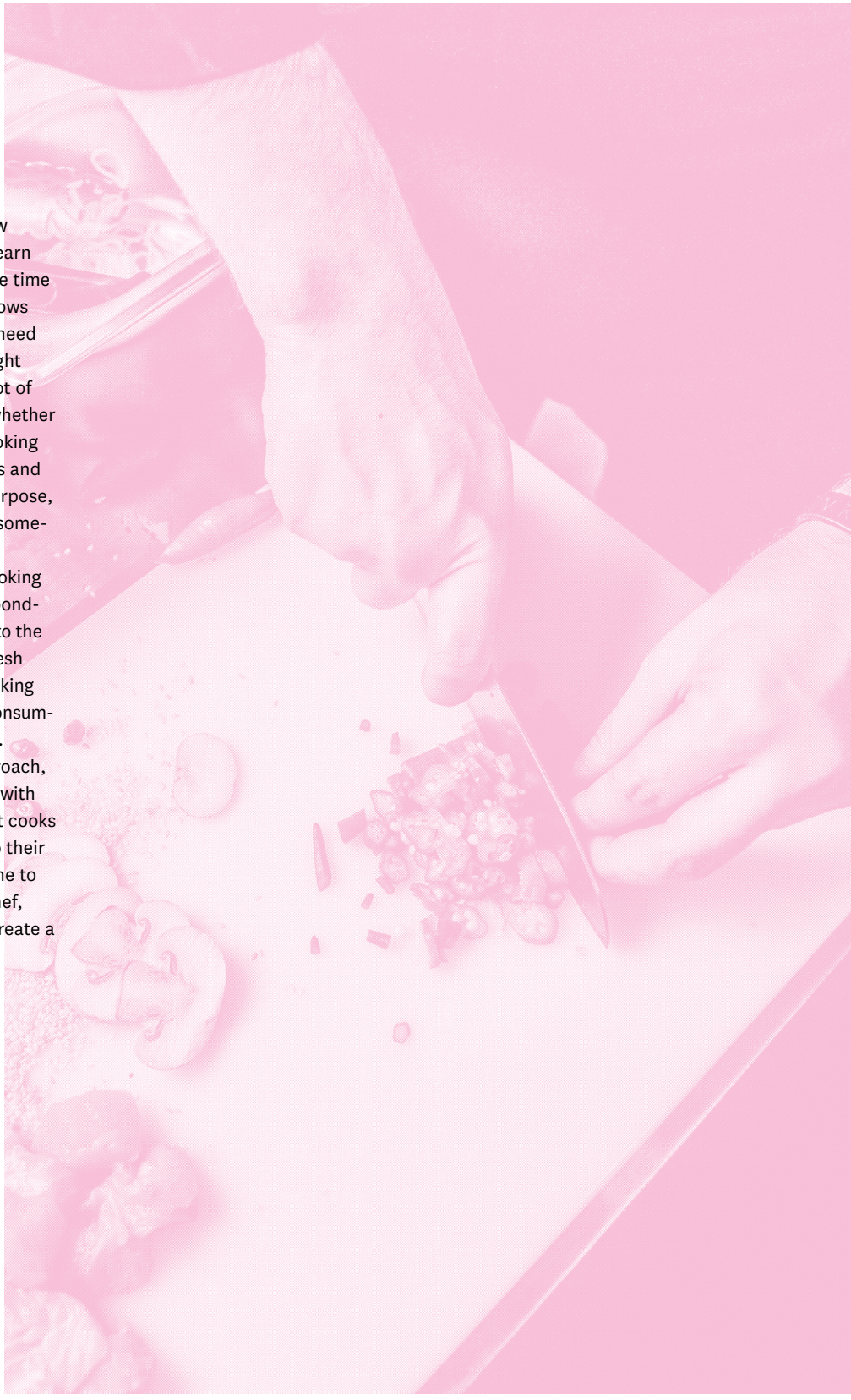
CHARITY & PRODUCTION

Both people and businesses are trying to find their place in a capitalist system that's been stripped down to meeting consumers' most basic needs. Brands in the food and beverage industry are trying their best to make do, while also acknowledging the needs of others. Brands with the capacity to rapidly shift production in order to better meet the needs of consumers, or to donate to causes offering help, are increasingly doing so in order to relieve the burden that the average person is facing right now. COVID-19's impact is beyond the physical and has taken a large mental toll as well—with the stress of financial instability, social isolation and the upending of lifestyles it's brought on—and brands that are trying to relieve some of that impact are able to create a lasting impression on consumers.

A perfect example of businesses using their resources to support the community at this time is Toronto's Spirit of York Distillery, which has shifted its focus away from alcoholic beverages in order to produce hand sanitizer in response to the global shortage. Using alcohol from its facility, the distillery has been producing sanitization gel that adheres to the guidelines presented by the World Health Organization. Starting this initiative in early March, Toronto's Spirit of York was one of the first local businesses to jump to action, donating the proceeds from its gel bottles to the local food bank.

Community support had been at the heart of this distillery long before the pandemic, with 10% of its regular proceeds being donated to various city-wide initiatives. Once the pandemic was in full-force, The Spirit of York continued to brainstorm ways it could help, opting to reduce the price of its beverages, and donating $1 from every bottle to the local food bank.

NEW HABITS



NEW HABITS

With the majority of people's recreational habits now being confined to the home, many are choosing to learn new skills, or hone existing ones, in order to pass the time and keep themselves stimulated. Virtual cooking shows are one way that brands are fulfilling the consumer need to keep themselves busy while they stay indoors. Right now, consumers are facing a loss of control, and a lot of uncertainty about what their futures will look like, whether that's socially, health-wise, or financially. Online cooking shows and courses, and other home-based activities and skill-building hobbies, give consumers a sense of purpose, and allow them to control what they can even if it's somewhat restricted.

A quick glimpse on social media will reveal that cooking is everyone's new favorite hobby, and brands are responding by providing accessible and educational content to the masses. Based in Kelowna, British Columbia, Start Fresh Kitchen has hopped on this trend, offering virtual cooking classes and one-on-one coaching sessions to keep consumers well-fed and stimulated during these trying times.

What's so unique about Start Fresh Kitchen's approach, is that it allows consumers to book private sessions with Chef Michael Buffett, inviting seasoned and hobbyist cooks to join in on virtual sessions that are personalized to their tastes and experience level. Participants are welcome to bring forward their own recipe suggestions to the chef, receiving personal coaching to help consumers re-create a recipe they've been wanting to try. M


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15 The Fifteen Group
Hospitality Consulting Agency

The Fifteen Group is one of North America's leading restaurant consulting companies. Founded in 2001, the company has a team of over 30 of the industry's top personnel and has worked with over 1,000 restaurant operations of all shapes and sizes. Post-COVID success requires a new mindset—your profitability model pre-COVID most likely can't succeed as your post-COVID model, at least not in the short term. The Fifteen Group are experts at strategically developing operational models for success—Menu Development/Menu Engineering, Brand and Concept Development, Financial Modelling, as well as developing streamlined operational Systems and Procedures. Visit thefifteengroup.com for one of their specifically designed Post-COVID packages or let them customize something specific to your restaurant needs.



KWIK SIGNS wishes to support the restaurant industry during these unprecedented times. They have added to their services and offerings to ensure that clients can feel confident in reopening their businesses safely. Products made by Kwik Signs to support reopening include: curbside pick-up and wayfinding signage, face shields, physical distancing floor graphics, concrete graphics, physical distancing/COVID-19 window decals and acrylic shields for—countertops, cash barriers, garnish counters and booth dividers. Custom orders are also available.

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EMERGENCY REVENUE... *to go*

PART 1: HOW RESTAURANTS ARE LEVERAGING THIRD-PARTY DELIVERY TO KEEP AFLOAT

FROM DOORDASH

When the coronavirus pandemic took over in Canada, not only did it grind the country's economy to a halt, but it altered how companies, especially restaurants, would run their businesses going forward in the future. Delivery and takeout became essential for restaurants during the lockdown in order to keep operating. And while many establishments have re-opened to dine-in service, this change is not a cure-all for the effects of COVID-19.

According to Restaurants Canada, "restaurants are reporting mixed results after opening for on premise dining. Fewer than half (31 per cent of single-unit operators and 43 per cent of multi-unit operators) said doing so has had a positive impact on their operations."

As restaurants tackle consumer confidence and work to regain cash flow, the importance of delivery and takeout is obvious. Restaurants may still have trepidations about using third-party delivery platforms. Be it the cost, marketing or customer data issues, all need to be weighed for your particular business. Restaurants Canada has been working with all delivery platforms on cost levels and service level parameters. The intention is to work towards ensuring a sustainable delivery model for both parties.

"We don't succeed unless our restaurant partners succeed and that's never been truer than right now," says Ryan Freeman, head of enterprise partnerships at DoorDash Canada. "Helping restaurants navigate through COVID-19, even as we enter the recovery phase, is our top priority." Freeman noted that delivery no longer was a convenience: it became an essential service. As COVID-19 forced the industry to shift to online sales and delivery, DoorDash aimed to open their platform to every restaurant who wanted access to reach customers online as quickly as possible.

SHIFTING PRIORITIES

Acting quickly was paramount, as companies coast-to-coast saw their dine-in revenue stop in an instant.

The Kinka Family, which operates six different brands including Kinton Ramen, Kinka Izakaya and Neo Coffee Bar, have already had dine-out infrastructure in place to service what was roughly 20 per cent of their business. But they needed to shift to a business model that was 100 per cent reliant on take-out and delivery, and also accounted for changing consumer habits. Stella Yu, the Director of Marketing at Kinka Family, said that they saw an influx of orders on Sunday and Monday, which were normally lower-traffic days for most of their restaurants.

"Many of these trends go beyond what and when customers are ordering: Canadians have felt the effects of pandemic economically, and they're being much more cautious with where their money's going," says Yu. "During COVID-19, each of our restaurants and locations has offered a number of specials, such as 30 per cent off takeout and delivery orders...We've noticed that our customers have taken a strong liking to these specials and as a result, we see many returning customers."

↣ CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

INNOVATION OUT OF COVID-19

FROM DOORDASH

Third-party delivery platforms continue to help restaurants stay connected with their community, market to new potential customers, and, above all, sell their products to keep some revenue coming in.

Some companies, besides offering added specials, have found innovative ways to best service customers, which could remain mainstays even after the pandemic settles down.

JOEY Restaurants continued to offer their diverse menu for delivery, but they also added a JOEY Market, which allowed customers to order groceries during weekend mornings, plus ready-to-make meal kits and drink kits, which were wildly popular.

"The meal kits and drink kits were innovations that came out of COVID and have been well received from guests," says Britt Innes, Vice President of Marketing for JOEY Restaurants. "They will definitely be a mainstay for delivery as we reopen our restaurants."

While the agility to create new offerings that better serve their customers' needs (on the fly) is impressive, Innes also was impressed with how well DoorDash worked with them for the common goal of giving the best possible customer service possible.

"It shows the possibilities from delivery companies and restaurants working together to ensure the best possible experience for our shared guests and both of our businesses," says Innes. "I'm looking forward to keeping the lines of communication open and coming together to innovate and provide the best service and offering to consumers!"



DIG IN

Look for the next installment of this series in the upcoming Foodservice Facts Report. And find both Parts 1 and 2 of this story at menumag.ca.



What services can delivery platforms offer?

Fundamentally, third-party delivery platforms connect consumers to restaurants in their area, giving both sides exposure to a vastly greater demographic than they previously had. But as Ryan Freeman, Head of Enterprise Partnerships at DoorDash Canada, explains, these companies can offer so much more.

DoorDash Drive

DoorDash's white label logistics platform, where restaurants use their own native channels for online ordering and DoorDash simply fulfills their last mile logistics needs, bypassing the need for in-house infrastructure on delivery.

DoorDash Storefront

Enables restaurants to create their own online stores at the click of a button. Through their online stores, customers can order takeout or delivery directly from the restaurant, with deliveries fulfilled by DoorDash.

DashPass

DoorDash's subscription product for consumers offers unlimited $0 delivery fees for $9.99 a month. Restaurants who join DashPass often see increased sales from high-frequency customers and are highlighted as a DashPass restaurant on the app.

Pickup

Allows restaurants to offer pickup or takeout from their restaurant directly. 56 per cent of customers said the amount they ordered takeout has increased amidst the pandemic as customers support their local businesses during COVID-19.



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