



HELPING RESTAURANTS MANAGE CRISIS

Scott Logie | Senior Director, Business Development
March 27, 2020

AGILITY IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY



WHILE THE WORLD REACTS TO THE ONGOING HEALTH RISKS AROUND COVID-19 AND ITS SPREAD,

CITIZENS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA HAVE BEEN FORCED INTO NEW PATTERNS OF WORKING AND LIVING, PROTECTING THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILY, AND THEIR COMMUNITIES BY REDUCING THEIR EXPOSURE TO PUBLIC SPACES AND GATHERINGS.

Quick service restaurants remain an integral part of North American communities, employing more than 4 million people and feeding 50 million guests every day. But amidst the current global pandemic, the volume of those guests and how they expect to be served is changing daily. Operators need to update their policies and procedures to keep their customers, employees, property, and revenues protected in ways they never have before.

How are restaurants adapting to the changing behaviors of their customers to weather this season of disruption? They are quickly adopting new playbooks across all areas of store operations.

FOOD SAFETY AND PREVENTING THE SPREAD

First and most critical to restaurant operators' role in preventing the spread of this virus is a re-dedication to hygiene and safe food handling. Even in a time of social distancing, and despite dining room closures across the country, customers continue to rely on local restaurants for meal options on-the-go and dine-out food service. Consumers trust those restaurants to follow the food preparation and handling procedures necessary to provide quality product, while minimizing their further risk of exposure.

According to results from the The New England Journal of Medicine published on March 17, 2020, the COVID-19 virus is able to survive in the air for up to three hours and on various surfaces 72 hours or more. So not only is regular and proper handwashing for employees who come in contact with customers and food products essential, but so is the regular cleaning of preparation and packing surfaces, and of cooking and handling utensils.

Health authorities indicate that procedural compliance is key right to the last moments of product delivery. Whether it's moving a pizza from the cutting board to the box, packing french fries in a bag, or handing a customer their drink cup, food and paper products should be handled with serving utensils or gloved hands to prevent contamination.

A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

For many chains, 70% of restaurant clients are served at the drive-thru or pick-up windows already. While many restaurants are going to be impacted by falling revenues during this current pandemic, those that continue to drive business will see customer buying patterns radically reshaped.

For starters, the proportional changes to sales volumes may not be consistent across every location. Guests who used to frequent the restaurant closest to their office at lunch may instead order from the location closest to home (where many Americans are currently spending far more time). School closures may drive more kids meals during weekday morning and afternoon day-parts when typical orders were exclusively for adult entrees, and completely disrupt supply expectations.

But most notably, forced dining room closures are going to mean that the majority of diners are either picking up at the drive-thru window, mobile ordering ahead, or using in-house or third-party delivery services (like Uber Eats and DoorDash) to take their meals off premises. For some brands, this will be business as usual. For others, it will require a completely new model of resource deployment to meet their customer's needs and expectations for speed of service.

If your drive-thru is used to accommodating only a small number of vehicles, now will be a key time to reassess your strategy for handling increasing volume of drive-thru traffic. And for restaurateurs trying to keep their employees as productive as possible, there are a few approaches to increasing speed of service that can benefit from re-distributing crew members:

- **ADVANCED ORDER TAKING AT INDIVIDUAL CAR WINDOWS AS VEHICLES LINE UP IN DRIVE-THRU LANES**
- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT THE PACK STATION TO EXPEDITE PRODUCT DELIVERY**
- **PULL-FORWARD POLICIES TO THE PARKING LOT, TO REDUCE CONGESTION AT THE DRIVE-THRU, AND CREW MEMBERS SERVING AS RUNNERS TO MAXIMIZE THE THROUGHPUT OF CUSTOMERS**

For those customers who continue to provide you patronage, providing them the same friendly and attentive service levels they are used to will be key to making them feel invited to return. Marketing teams may explore coupons and buy one/take one offers, to incentivize drive-thru guests to return and drive customer loyalty.

VIGILANCE AGAINST THEFT AND FRAUD

Internal theft and fraud has always been a significant financial risk facing restaurant operators. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports that 75% of employees steal from their employer at least once and the National Restaurant Association asserts that internal theft translates to 4% of sales losses on average per location. For restaurants already struggling to maintain sustainable revenue, internal theft represents an intolerable source of cash leakage.

Rising financial pressure, employment uncertainty, and scarcity of consumer food and paper products just exacerbates the temptation of many employees to steal. With more guest orders transitioning to the drive-thru, dishonest employees will be tempted to take advantage of under-ringing and other point-of-sale manipulation to rob you of your already impacted revenues. So now is as important a time as ever to remain attentive to cash handling and transactional anomalies in your restaurants.

SECURING YOUR PROPERTY AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Always important to any business owner is assuring the physical safety and security of their locations. For businesses that have been sadly forced to close their doors temporarily during this pandemic outbreak, keeping those sites secure and reducing the risk of break-in and burglary is paramount. This means closing and locking safe and office doors, securing coolers to avoid food spoilage, keeping valuables out of sight, and following cash drawer best practices to reduce any temptations to outside eyes. Parking lots and drive-thru lanes can also be secured to unwanted vehicles while business operations are suspended.

But even the locations that remain open may be vulnerable to additional physical security risk in times of social anxiety. Keeping back doors closed after dark, adjusting store hours to reduce the amount of time employees remain on site for limited revenue gains, and avoiding shift timing that leaves employees alone in the store or as they exit the property can help mitigate the risk of physical or property damage.

MANAGED VIDEO AS A CRITICAL TOOL TO NAVIGATE EMERGENCY

IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY, OUR DAILY ROUTINES AND BEST PRACTICES HAVE TO SHIFT TO MEET THE EVOLVING NEEDS OF OUR CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES. NEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE BEING DEVELOPED AND ROLLED OUT DAILY BY BUSINESSES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, IN RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NATION'S TOP HEALTH OFFICIALS TO CONTAIN COVID-19.

Envysion's Managed Video Solution, our integrations to point-of-sale and third-party reporting platforms, and our expertise providing remote loss prevention and operational audits of video tied to data provide you virtual eyes on every location in your fleet. The video software platform that our customers depend on for surveillance and loss prevention can now serve them

to assess and enforce new policies around health and food safety that diners are trusting brands to follow.

Above-store managers can leverage our desktop and mobile applications to monitor a daily checklist of safety, hygiene and security items before they communicate with field managers. They can leverage video to confirm that new policies and job aids are being followed consistently across all locations. And by leveraging our audit services and incident management platform to identify and track outliers, your teams can quickly respond to minimize further business risk.

Envysion has over ten years of experience helping restaurant operators proactively leverage video to reduce risk and maintain customer loyalty. More than twenty thousand rooftops rely on our software and services to help keep them protected and drive profitability. We remain a committed partner to you, your people, and your business as we tackle the current challenges presented by COVID-19 together.

