

Preparing to Reopen After the Shutdown

*A resource guide for Restaurants and
the Hospitality Industry*

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Introduction

Dear Friends and Associates in the Hospitality Industry:

It has been a long year, and it's not even summer yet. One of our customers told us the other day, "I have never worked so hard and made so little money". Amen to that.

Were you (was anyone) prepared for this pandemic crisis? Did your disaster plan help? Do you have a disaster plan? (And if not, now is a good time to meet with your team and develop one or update your existing plan.) There were many lessons learned that could apply to any disaster – and as we learned quickly – you can't predict the future, but you can definitely be better prepared.

Now it appears that we may be able to slowly start opening businesses again, so it is time to get ready.

Are you ready for the day when you can reopen your doors? Do you have a reopening plan? It may seem overwhelming, so remember to take baby steps, check in with your peers, your vendors, and your staff and make a plan. Sometimes just writing it down can help immensely.

At Card Systems, we are in the unique position of being able to speak with a variety of restaurant owners, managers, and staff on a regular basis, and we have learned a lot during this crisis.

While this e-Book is far from comprehensive, we wanted to share what we have learned. The information is intended to help you start thinking about what needs to be done now (or in the near future), so that you, your staff and your business are ready when the time comes to open.

-The Card Systems Team



Getting Ready

First, keep apprised of the State and other local guidelines for reopening. Remember, rely on the official sources. Rumor and speculation are rampant – it is easy to get misled.

Here are links to some of the State and local COVID-19 resources:

- [Florida Health COVID-19](#)
- [City of Fort Myer's COVID-19 Page](#)
- [CDC Guidance](#)
- [Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Health Mandate – REOPEN FLORIDA RESPONSIBLY for Restaurants](#)
- [Florida Guide Standards Recommendations](#)



Once you've gotten yourself up to speed on the official regulations and guidelines, please consider the following suggestions:

- Finances permitted, make changes and perform necessary maintenance to your restaurant/kitchen etc. Traffic is low or non-existent right now.
- Deep clean your refrigerator and freezer. Throw away anything that may be contaminated.
- Inventory your food – check with your suppliers to see what is available.
- Research alternate places to order food and supplies. There may be shortages right now.
- Clean / sanitize your Point of Sale system - think about all those fingerprints on that touchscreen! [For recommendations on how to clean your screens and monitors.](#)
- Make sure you have ample supplies on hand for all the re-opening requirements issued by the state or local government, such as masks, soap, disinfectant, hand sanitizer, and paper towels. This could take time – so start now.
- If you owe money, review payment plans with your vendors – so that you can get the supplies and services you need when you need them.
- Turn on or renew any services you may have turned off. Review the ones that were not necessary – consider eliminating or postponing them - get rid of the fluff.

- ✓ **Internet**
- ✓ **POS Services or licenses**
- ✓ **Music Services**
- ✓ **Utilities**
- ✓ **Phone Services**

Understanding the New Normal



What did you learn? What are you going to look like on the other side?

- **Review your menu – what stays, what needs to be eliminated?** If you had a special menu during the shut-down, see what was popular – maybe add these items to your regular menu. There were so many creative offerings – your guests will probably still want them moving forward.
- **Lessons learned from many of our customers – a smaller menu means lower food cost.** Use your POS reports to eliminate the items that do not sell well and take them off your menu.
- **Online Ordering – This. Is. The. New. Normal.** While many restaurants didn't have this service going into the crisis, now that they do – this is the time to kick it up a notch – add pictures and enticing descriptions, refine the menu, and continue to promote it – daily.
- **No-contact takeout, curbside pickup, and delivery have also become the new norm.** Which services make sense to retain and grow your customer base? Invest in mobile or order-ahead options with limited or no-contact pick up for guests who will still be wary of close contact.
- **Inside the restaurant, guests may be hesitant of getting too close to strangers,** and it is important to make sure everyone feels comfortable coming into your place of business. This includes maintaining a strict cleaning regime, but also keeping social distancing protocols in place, and communicating them to your staff and guests.
- If you were doing table side ordering, what is that going to look like? Maybe consider kiosks or apps that let you order at the table.
- If you are removing or moving tables in order to maintain social distancing – update the table layout in your POS system to reflect these changes.

Refer to the Marketing Section below on marketing and social media tips for your business.

Other Things to Consider:



- Signing credit card slips? Give branded, single use pens to your customers. Offer pens in wrappers.
- Use cashless and receiptless transactions.
- Use contactless payment devices – or even better, apps where they use their own device to pay.
- Install automatic doors, touchless dryers, water, soap, paper towels.
- Menus – who wants to touch them?? Use digital signage, have your menu on your website for customers to review, offer laminated menus that are sanitized after each use, or print disposable menus.
- Have your branded single-use hand sanitizer at the table, for customers to use after touching the menus. Order them now – there is a backlog!
- Condiments upon request - single serve or reusable that you sanitize between usage?
- Use fresh tablecloths for each party. Or use butcher paper table coverings that are replaced after each guest use. Throw in a box of new color crayons, and now everyone is happy!
- Use security seals on takeout/delivery orders for extra peace of mind. [Learn more here.](#)

Staffing and Safety

Staffing – what a conundrum right now! So many people laid off, but the additional \$600 per week unemployment benefit continues through the end of July. We are hearing rumors that finding good employees may be a challenge. **Start recruiting now!**

- **As you bring on your staff – rehire the stars first.** This is an opportunity to review your staffing needs.
- **Reward your loyal staff for helping your through the crisis.**



- **For new staff, set them up ahead of time in your POS system.** For returning staff, make sure to reactivate them in your POS system.
- **Review the safety protocols for when you are opening and have a plan to educate your staff.** Visit [ServSafe](#), [CDC Guidance](#), [the FDA](#), the Muni and State websites for additional safety information and guidelines.



- **Have your training program in place:** update manuals, videos, etc. Be prepared for training new staff, as there is no guarantee your original staff will be back. Update or create a video training library. Make this a fun project – involve your staff, grab your smart phone, and get started!
- **Review and re-establish your routine with the staff.** It probably looks a whole lot different now.
- **Communicate, communicate, communicate with your staff at all times.** They are probably worried about safety and all the new requirements that will affect them and their guests.
- **In key places** – counter service, hostess stands, takeout areas, etc., install countertop shields and sneeze guards. [Check out this cool portable guard from APG Cash Drawer.](#)
- **Update and refine your emergency plan with lessons learned so far** – and share with key employees and managers.

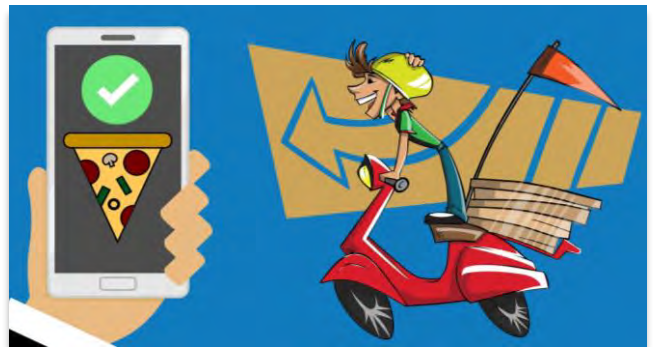


Online Ordering / Delivery / Takeout Revisited: It is Here to Stay

- As mentioned above, **people are now used to online ordering / delivery services**. If done properly, online ordering, delivery, curbside pickup, call centers and order ahead apps will continue to be the new norm and a revenue growth area for your business.



- Continue to offer family takeout and take and bake meals. This was **a huge success for restaurants across the country**. Food cost is lower on family meals, the average \$ ticket is higher, these items are easy to upsell (add beverages, dessert, a large side salad), and guests like the convenience and safety of curbside pickup.



- **Review delivery options – should you do this inhouse or rely on 3rd party services?** Call your insurance company for requirements / costs, etc. (Remember, you cannot use 3rd party services for delivery of wine and beer.)
- [Learn what has worked for others here.](#)

Now
ORDER ONLINE

Marketing

- **Update your social media pages** – let your customers know you are open.
- **Pictures are worth a thousand words** – yes, that means getting on Instagram.
- **Use a free application such as [Canva](#) to create Facebook and Instagram posts** -they have some great pictures ready to use – many are free! You can also use it to create flyers and take free marketing and social media classes.
- **If your website is old or difficult to update – replace it!** If you do not have a website – get one! We know, most people follow Facebook and Instagram these days, but trust us - you still need a website – and one that you can easily update and maintain to keep the content fresh. Check out easy website builders such as [Wix](#) or [Weebly](#). Hire someone on your team that has creative skills – you just need a basic site with beautiful pictures (check out the pictures on [Canva](#)), some nice words about your restaurant, and - ***this is IMPORTANT - a link to your online ordering site!***



- **Remind and update your customers daily** on your menu, ordering options, social distancing procedures, etc. Take good pictures of your daily specials and make sure to post them. Add a link to your online ordering site on every single post!
- **Have some fun** – be entertaining and engage your customers.
- **Promote a local cause.**
- **Plan a reopening celebration** – maybe a friends and family soft opening for starters. This would be a good way to test all the new protocols.
- **Start marketing now** – presell the event. Start a promotion, such as, Buy a Gift Card and Get x% off the Event Ticket. Tease them with a new recipe that you will present on your grand reopening.
- **Keep Promoting Gift Cards** -the revenue from gift cards is going to help keep you afloat with cash now, without having to provide something in return until things start to get better. On average, 20-40% of gift cards are never redeemed, which results in pure cash flow.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

If you are not communicating with your customers, most likely they will think you are shut down now, or even worse: shut down for good. [Even if you are shut down temporarily – continue to communicate with them.](#)

Keep them *engaged* so that when you do reopen, they want to come back:

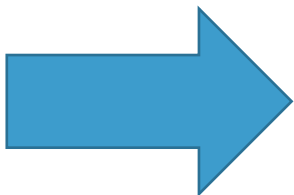


- *Offer your loyal customers a reward for coming back*
- *Post about community events or whatever engages your audience*
- *Share recipes*
- *Create a video and teach them how to cook one of their favorite dishes*
- *Give daily talks and share tips - keep it fun and entertaining*

Adapt, be flexible, be creative, let go of the old, embrace the new, don't just survive – figure out how to thrive! It has been an inspiration to see how creative you have been. Even with all the bad, so much good has come out of this crisis – we have seen this particularly in the hospitality industry.

Reward yourself for the ways you've thought outside the box and all the creativity that happened during this period.

And once you are fully reopened - have a grand re-opening, complete with a special menu and giveaways. Take the time to thank your loyal customers for being there when you were shut down and let them know how happy you are to see them back in your restaurant.



*Thank you for reading!
Please check out the following pages for
additional resources and help.*



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