

The Age of Adaptation



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As the second quarter of 2020 passes, restaurants and retailers alike are scrambling to adapt to a post-pandemic world amidst a swarm of health guidelines and regulations. Restaurants have been disproportionately impacted due to the highly sensitive nature of food preparation, seating arrangements, guest/staff interactions, and a perishable supply chain.

On June 16th the San Diego Health and Human Services Agency issued revised emergency regulations to both individuals and businesses. These guidelines address restaurants, bars, wineries, and breweries with stiff measures to prevent the transmission of Covid-19. Guidelines include distancing of tables, the discontinuation of open seating, elimination of waiting areas, employee temperature screening, and installation of physical barriers. Restaurants are forced to limit occupancy while simultaneously increasing general food safety measures, employee training, and sanitization standards.

Consequently, restaurants across the country are determined to create new income streams while optimizing their delivery platforms and take-out experience. Rapid adaptation and innovation are survival instincts in this ever-

changing landscape. Now more than ever, agility is rewarded with market share and customer loyalty. Although opportunity can be difficult to recognize in times of immense change, there are many ways restaurants can add value to their offerings. The drive-thru and curbside experience at Chick-fil-A is a shining example of continual adaptation. At Chick-fil-A, customers are whisked through the drive aisle by a friendly attendant who processes orders and payments directly on a mobile device. The queue for chicken moves steadily and customers are greeted at the drive-thru window by two more friendly attendants who execute a timely and pleasant to-go experience. Although the drive-thru is a unique advantage, it is certainly not the only way to adapt. Restaurants of all shapes and sizes are implementing internal delivery, rethinking their menus, and offering meal (and beverage) kits to-go.

As appealing as 'normal' might seem, the successful restaurant prioritizes agility and dedicates itself to engineering a new normal. The health and safety regulations placed on food service and dining, well-intentioned as they may be, have strained attempts at profitability. However, necessity breeds innovation.. And this too shall pass.

