

# Adapting Dining Through the Pandemic

## Overview

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The foodservice consumer profile has completely changed since the onset of the COVID pandemic. Decision-making criteria has moved from atmosphere and impulse dining to highly planned outings that offer value and safety. In today's atmosphere, high concept dining experiences are not in demand, when simply going out to a restaurant is the experience.

According to Technomic, Inc.'s weekly foodservice consumer surveys, people at the beginning 66% of the pandemic said they would go back to dining in within a month. As of September 2020, only 30% would consider it. In addition, it is anticipated that the foodservice industry will not return to normal until 2024.

During entegra's webinar, Adaptive dining Through the Pandemic, industry experts offered ideas and tools for attracting the current customer through adapting your offerings and dining experience outlined in the following pages.





## Adapting Dining Through the Pandemic Key Learnings

### Menus and Takeout

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- Streamline menus to include the most popular and profitable items
- Offer an adjusted menu for takeout with value options, at discounted pricing, such as family packages or sides by the pint
- Be resourceful and willing to make a change in terms of suppliers
- Introduce limited-time specials with seasonal foods
- Explore revenue streams via e-commerce and online
- Add convenience products for customers to take out with them
- Incorporate menu as well as design changes, such as firepits/smores' package; rebound in soups, stews, chili
- Offer promotions around comfort foods/beverages like free soup or hot cocoa when outdoor temperatures get chilly
- Add a personal touch to take out bags, such a thank you note or a special card.







## Adapting Dining Through the Pandemic Key Learnings

### Dining Areas - Indoors and Outdoors

- Stay on your brand – make sure your dining areas and service maintain your previous reputation
- Remove the additional tables from view When reducing the number of tables in dining areas for social distancing, and store them in the back or off-premise
- Ensure top notch service no matter the method
- Invest in touchless technology, such as door openers, bathroom facets and toilets and payment systems
- Place individual hand sanitizing wipe packets on tables
- Deep clean tables, chairs, and all high-touch area in full view of customers
- Make masks the norm for staff and customers
- Place appropriate and polite signage at entrances, but do not go overboard with pamphlets
- Extend the outdoor dining season creatively by setting up tents or individual igloos with space heaters and mood lighting





### Key Learning: Best Practices for Attracting Customers

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- Communicate your practices through social media, advertising, community involvement and signage
- Invest in a third-party safety inspection, such as with [entegra's Sanitation and Safety Services](#) – certification label from a trusted provider on the door is a welcome sign for the hesitant diner
- Leverage holidays and seasonal events such as Mother's Day or Football Sunday's with family take-out specials
- Capitalize on social media with daily posts or fun Facebook Live videos
- Maintain the reputation you built and track online reviews on yelp and google for possible issues
- Operate your takeout business in a separate space from your dining room if possible, so that the pick-up process does not disrupt the atmosphere for in-house diners

