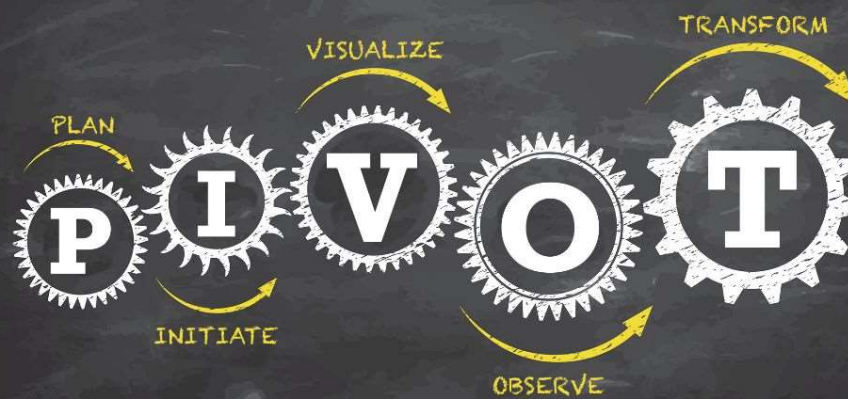


HOW TO PIVOT BACK TO THE POST-PANDEMIC WORLD, PART 4



by Jane Auster

Eventually, the pandemic will end and it will be time to make the transition to a "new normal." The new normal will look different for different types of operations. For some it will be a return to the old format, but for others it might be an opportunity to try something different, or to continue with some of the changes introduced during COVID-19.

Those who have successfully pivoted to takeout & delivery with simplified, streamlined menus are likely to stick with their new format with a gradual shift back to their previous brand identity.

Getting diners back into restaurants may prove challenging, according to Technomic, Inc. and Caddie Inc. research on COVID-19 and consumer behaviour. "Most consumers believe that it will take between two and five months for them to return to previous dining-out behaviours. This reluctance to envision revisiting restaurants anytime soon is likely due to Canada still being in the middle of the country's coronavirus battle. As of now, millennials and males are the demographics most likely to return to their normal restaurant behaviour within just a few days of virus concerns subsiding." For others, the return to dining out will be more gradual.



Mind Your Menu!

Just like every other part of a restaurant's operation, the physical menu is about to pivot, too. Gone are the days of large laminate tomes with pages of options or even iPad ordering where many hands touch a single screen. We're entering a brave new world with streamlined menu offerings presented either very simply (think menu board or throwaway paper) to higher tech options. The goal with this component of restaurant operations, as with all others, is to be as contactless as possible.

What options are guests looking for in menus when restaurants reopen? One company in the US, called VIPinsiders, a platform run by fifth generation restaurateur Philipp Sitter, sent a mass post through customers' emails, texts and social media sites, ran SM ads and engaged with Facebook groups to ask a number of pivot questions. Within 24 hours, VIPinsiders had received more than 8,500 responses and some valuable insights.

Regarding menus, the company asked:

"Are disposable, single-use menus important to you?"

Yes: 58.7%

No: 41.3%

Gone are the days of elaborate menus brought to the table for loving perusal. And disposable menus represent a loss of revenue, not to mention an increase in waste.



Enter Digital QR Code Menus

According to Monika Adarsh, product marketing manager at [Beaconstac](#), there are a couple of ways to use QR codes with menus:

1. Upload your menu in pdf format and convert it to contactless QR code. This avoids the expenses of printing up disposable menus.
2. Enable order taking in advance with QR code. Create a form listing menu items. Customers can scan the code, choose the dishes they want, and then submit the form. Restaurant staff receive the order and process it.

Some Canadian restaurants are already introducing QR menus. One of the first to reopen in BC – OEB Breakfast Co in Vancouver – has brought in contactless menus with QR codes, in addition to other new safety and reopening measures.

Restaurant operators are sure to try out more tech innovations to enhance safety and reduce contact, while at the same time working to recapture the warmth of hospitality.

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