



Article Title

Tips for getting through the COVID-19 crisis

Citation

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Abstract

N/A

Summary

This entire year is going to be incredibly challenging for restaurants, bars, cafes and eateries - there's no sugar-coating it. I hope these tips can help some restaurateurs and business owners stay in the game and come back stronger than ever.

Reassure customers

Promote your pandemic response measures on social media so customers can see you're on top of the situation and can feel safe ordering from your establishment if you are doing takeaway. Let customers know how much you appreciate them buying from you, and how much it means to your small business.

Pivot, pivot again

Make a list of all those tasks you've been putting off that require an empty restaurant. Sand and re-lacquer tables. Acid wash tiles. Repot plants. Update the staff manual. Upskill staff if you can. Teach them how to enter receipts, curate social media, update the menu and website and plan future events for when the pandemic ends - people will be wanting to celebrate. Do some online marketing courses. This is the time to get all your systems and processes in place to make your business run smoothly without you. If you going down the takeaway or delivery path, stock up on packaging and capitalise on your online ordering platforms. Encourage phone orders. Provide alternative pick-up options such as kerbside or drive-through, if possible. Increase your offerings. For instance, create frozen meals or "supply packs" for customers who want to stock

their fridges. Ramp up retail sales of coffee, gift cards, e-vouchers and, if possible, alcohol. Most importantly find out what government relief packages are available to you.

Build rapport with your community

Consider specials for disabled or elderly people and carers who cannot make it to the shop for supplies. Order extra sanitiser and soap from your supplier and make it available to high-risk groups possibly with takeaway orders. Make some videos to promote your business and showcase your team's skills and personalities. It could be a cooking demonstration or something that creates product knowledge for customers to watch who can't visit your venue. It doesn't have to be perfect, just post!

Reach out

Liaise with your landlord, suppliers, banks, and direct-debtors. Ask for a delay of payments or payment plans to accommodate reduced income. Get in touch with your accountant so that you can apply for all government subsidies and rebates. Join industry Facebook pages to see what people overseas are doing. We can take lessons from international counterparts who might be a few weeks ahead of Australia's situation. Do not stop marketing! When this is over, you want people thinking of your business first, and how much fun they will have at your establishment. Finally, the reliance on personal savings and support from family, kin and friends as a means of financing businesses should be noted as an unsustainable coping mechanism by SMTHes. This is because it can incapacitate businesses during disasters especially when savings are not enough to absorb a shock. Therefore, the possible risk associated with such an indigenous savings culture could be buffered using suitable insurance covers by SMTHes.