



LOW-LABOR *Quick-Serve*

A MESSAGE FROM **CHEF NEIL**

“Temporarily shifting to a quick-serve and low-labor operation due to current events might sound like a drain on a chef’s creativity. On the contrary, it is an opportunity. Much like the quick-thinking and adaptable chefs on shows like *Chopped*, today’s chefs are required to take pre-prepared items that may not be overly exciting and turn them into something unique. Using speed-scratch components or ready-made dishes as a base and then adding your own spin to it will make the truly great stand out from the pack.”



CHANGING TIMES CALLS FOR Creativity



The sudden shortage of labor and increased takeout demand due to COVID-19 poses a significant challenge for many foodservice operators. Creativity and adaptability are essential to continue driving revenue efficiently. Providing your customers with quality service and delicious food, while under new constraints will be critical to your success. You may have a limited staff, or kitchen staff that is suddenly filled with members who previously worked in other areas. Consider adapting popular dishes for to-go applications and cutting back the number of available dishes to increase efficiency and quality while controlling costs.

These changes might be a challenge, but they are not insurmountable. In fact, this is an opportunity to gain new and repeat customers. Here are four ways to not only manage in this difficult time but turn it into a success story.

1

ADAPT YOUR MENU TO THE *New* NORMAL



If you're faced with a shortage of labor in relation to demand, it might be a good idea to pare down or concentrate your menu on the best items possible. You already have a brand, a specific flavor unique to your operation, now is the time to lean into that. Pick one or two menu items that capture the essence of your restaurant and focus on making those showstoppers. Find ways to simplify your recipes without compromising flavor. Some of your menu items, like fried food, may need to be adapted for off-premise dining either by finding the right to-go container or switching to more forgiving batter types and cooking methods.

Ready-made entrees, family packs, or ready-to-cook meals are another great way to prepare for a high volume of takeout and delivery orders. These formats are simple to execute, require minimal labor and ultimately reduce operational costs, resulting in greater value for the consumer. It is also more likely that families right now will require all components of a meal, so be sure to offer drinks, side dishes or even snacks for later. You can cut down costs and be more environmentally sustainable by asking if a customer needs plastic cutlery instead of giving it to them outright. These items are often not necessary for a family eating in their own home.

2 FIND NEW SKILLS IN YOUR *Employees*

Another way to address a loss of labor is to restructure your staff temporarily. Sometimes you can find hidden gems in unlikely places. Take a moment to listen to your available staff and find new ways to use their strengths and skills. Some restaurants have repurposed their food-handling certified wait staff into master prep-cooks. Repurposed staff can also help in delivery or sanitation procedures. If you have enough staff and increased demand, you may choose to implement curbside or drive-in options in addition to delivery to create additional ways for customers to patronize your restaurant. This may allow you to keep critical staff employed and create a sense of comradery and unity amongst your staff and customers.



3 LONG TERM *Sustainability*

It is likely the current crisis will last more than a few weeks. Therefore, it is important to position your restaurant as safe, delicious and unique for the long term. Operators who do this well will see a spike in repeat customers that could last well beyond this current crisis. Thriving in this situation will mean finding the right balance between offering easy, consistent meals that provide a good perceived value. Regardless of how long social distancing lasts, having these systems in place and being adaptable will set operators up for success long term.



4

WORK *Smarter*, NOT HARDER

Stand out from the crowd by focusing on one small aspect of your dish to make it unique while keeping the rest of the dish simple. This will allow you to shine while still maintaining high standards for cleanliness and kitchen efficiency. Maybe focus on a signature sauce to add to speed-scratch pastas or sandwiches. Or perhaps a signature seasoning blend can give a pre-made casserole an extra kick.

Deconstruct menu items into meal kits so customers can replicate your classic dishes at home while providing an added sense of security and appeal to their sense of comfort. For example, instead of delivering a fully cooked pizza, send your customers a meal kit with your signature sauce, ready-made dough and all other toppings, as well as detailed cooking instructions. You can even use a parbaked pizza crust for easier prep. This will also allow you to easily switch out elements of the meal to accommodate vegan, gluten-free or other elimination diet choices. Your customers will think of these meal kits as safe, family-friendly fun and you will benefit from less required prep-time and easier sanitation.

Simplifying elements like parbaked pizza crust will also help keep labor down. Consider switching out some of the more basic elements of your dishes. See your Sysco Marketing Associate for more ideas and local product availability.

Precooked Meats - Pot Roast, Brisket, Ham

- Block & Barrel Imperial Beef Pot Roast (4504100)
- Austin Blues Whole Smoked BBQ Brisket (3808912)
- Block & Barrel Imperial Applewood Ultimate Carving Ham (3165051)

Soup Base, Sauce or Gravy Mixes - Demi Glaze Demi-Glace, Cream Gravy, Pepper Gravy

- Sysco Imperial Demi Glaze Sauce Mix (3769353)
- Sysco Imperial Peppered Gravy Mix (5078290)
- Sysco Imperial Real Chicken Base (4944450)

Ready-To-Serve and Parbaked Breads

- Bakersource Imperial Artisan Sandwich Ciabatta Bread (1213313)
- Bakersource Classic Rustic Filone Hoagie Bread (8508303)
- Bakersource Classic Hawaiian Cluster Dinner Roll (2473316)

Mashed Potatoes

- Sysco Imperial Redskin Mashed Potatoes (5020328)
- Sysco Classic Mashed Potato Yellow Skinless Cooked Deluxe (3009998)

Pre-Cut, Fresh or Frozen Vegetables, and Salad Mixes

- Imperial Fresh Chopped Romaine Lettuce (1310950)
- Imperial Fresh Power Blend (4966146)
- Sysco Supreme Roasted Sweet Potato, Root Vegetable & Kale Blend (3617531)

