streetsense.

Winter Dining Guide

RESOURCES FOR RESTAURANTS + BARS

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WINTER DINING + THE PANDEMIC

As colder weather approaches and the viability of outdoor dining wanes, many restaurant and bar operators across the U.S. are struggling to find a way to survive through the winter. Establishments that have been keeping their heads above water with the addition of a handful of outdoor tables fear that they will not make it financially without this additional seat count and are now looking for alternative solutions to make it through. With this reality bearing down on state and local governments, many regions have begun to allow restaurants and bars to reopen their indoor dining rooms in a variety of limited-capacity models as a way to mitigate the total collapse of these businesses.

While this is good news for many struggling operators, **indoor dining during the pandemic still poses serious risks to the health and safety of your guests and your staff that cannot be ignored**.

The traditional nature of indoor dining creates a situation where large groups of people interact with one another without wearing masks over an extended period of time in an enclosed space. The convergence of all of these factors dramatically increases the risk for spreading or contracting COVID-19. As we know from the CDC, "The more an individual interacts with others, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread." Add the removal of masks in larger crowds of people and you have the potential for a significant transmission of the virus from person-to-person. In fact, the CDC puts indoor dining in restaurants (even with reduced capacity) as a **moderate to high-risk activity**, ranking it as follows according to the CDC:

- Lowest Risk: Food service limited to drive-through, delivery, take-out, and curbside pick up.

- More Risk: Drive-through, delivery, take-out, and curbside pick up emphasized. On-site dining limited to outdoor seating. Seating capacity reduced to allow tables to be spaced at least 6 feet apart.

- Even More Risk: On-site dining with both indoor and outdoor seating. Seating capacity reduced to allow tables to be spaced at least 6 feet apart.

- Highest Risk: On-site dining with both indoor and outdoor seating. Seating capacity not reduced and tables not spaced at least 6 feet apart.[1]

As a result, the restaurant industry faces significant headwinds in convincing governing bodies and potential guests that these indoor spaces are safe for our staff and patrons.

[1] *"Considerations for Restaurants and Bars." Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 12 Oct. 2020, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html.*

Fortunately, there are a number of actions operators can take to help. Broadly, these tactics include:

- Lowering the risk of COVID-19 exposure for your patrons and staff
- Safely increasing the total seat count of their operation within social distancing guidelines
- Broadening the revenue generating potential of their business.

We feel that a multi-pronged approach to the current situation gives these businesses the best chance of making it through this crisis.

CREATING A WINTER DINING PLAN

We know enough about COVID-19 at this point to help restaurants and bars develop a plan that reduces the risk to diners and staff and increases consumer confidence with the winter dining experience as a whole. While no plan could absolutely guarantee zero transmission for this virus, we believe that the following three areas are key to making it through the remaining months of the pandemic in a responsible way:

⟶   Extending the Outdoor Dining Season

⟶   Minimizing the Risk Factors for Indoor Dining

⟶   Partnering with Local Municipalities to Create Additional Revenue Opportunities + Awareness

Any successful pandemic survival strategy combines many factors — an 'all of the above' plan that incorporates as many components as possible with the establishment's available budget. The following sections detail a variety of strategies in the above categories that restaurants can immediately implement to lower the risk of transmission through the crisis.

Extending the Outdoor Dining Season

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One of the bright spots for F+B operators during the pandemic has been how state and local municipalities have minimized restrictions and opened up opportunities for outdoor dining. By relaxing fees and red tape, closing down streets or parking areas to create additional dining spaces, and working with the restaurant community to create safe open-air dining communities, many businesses have been able to keep their doors open while the weather is pleasant. But as winter approaches, the question becomes: how can a restaurant or bar maintain these outdoor seats for as many days as possible and continue to generate revenue?

While no solution will make an outdoor dining area comfortable in sub-zero temperatures with driving winds, there are a few things operators can do to add days and, perhaps, weeks of viability to their outdoor dining areas.

A Note About Investing in Outdoor Spaces

At present, many health experts estimate that the ongoing impact and social distancing requirements for the COVID-19 crisis may last through summer of 2021. While no one can really predict when this pandemic will end, if this timeline does become reality, the investment you make now to improve the safety and comfort of your outdoor dining areas may pay dividends throughout the next 10-12 months or beyond. This is an important consideration as you think of your capital expenditure for these enhancements.

OUTDOOR HEATERS

While this seems like an obvious solution, outdoor heaters can present a series of complex problems for an operator looking to make the outdoors more comfortable for guests. Consider the following when adding heating to your outdoor spaces:

Know What is Allowed

Until very recently, New York City prohibited propane heaters for outdoor dining spaces — but they now allow certain types of fueled heating units. Some jurisdictions will not allow you to run power across public walkways. Others will not allow gas-fueled generators. Check with your local jurisdiction and understand the restrictions they are placing on the type, safety requirements or operational restrictions for outdoor heating units. Make sure that you can use whatever you buy.

Research the Right Kind of Unit

There is a wide variety of outdoor heating options available to restaurant and bar operators — from the standard mushroom-style propane heater, to fire pit tables, quartz cylinders, even bromic tungsten units. In addition, there are liquid-fueled units and electric units. Really evaluate the space you have available, and the heating radius of the units you will need before making a purchase. The online retailer Webstaurantstore.com has a fantastic rundown of the pros and cons of a wide variety of heating units appropriate for outdoor dining at the link below: https://www.webstaurantstore.com/guide/785/different-types-of-patio-heaters.html

Order Early

In anticipation of the winter weather many popular heating units have already gone out of stock. If adding heating units is a big part of your winter strategy — it is important to order these units as soon as possible. While the companies that produce these units may match their supply with demand, we are already hearing stories of operators unable to purchase the right kind of heaters for their operation.

COLD WEATHER ENCLOSURES

Another way to extend the usability of your outdoor space is to create more enclosed spaces that protect your patrons from the elements. Depending on your budget, these enclosures can range from something as simple as vinyl curtains to block the wind, to something as elaborate as individually heated geodesic domes appropriate for small groups. We see a variety of options operators can explore for colder weather:

Curtains and Freestanding Barriers

Oftentimes the temperature is less of a factor than the chill and disruption that is created by wind. Many oceanfront and high elevation locations have installed simple barriers to extend the use of their outdoor spaces as have urban operations located in wind corridors created by big buildings. These barriers can be something as simple and inexpensive as securely affixed vinyl, plastic or canvas curtains placed in strategic locations around your dining area to block most or all of the impact of the wind. Other solutions include more permanent barriers made of glass or plexi to block the wind. As with all of these recommendations, check with your local jurisdictions as to the limitations and requirements for these enclosures.

Tents + Yurts

Where allowed, restaurateurs have had success with freestanding tents that either cover the entirety of their outdoor dining space or individual farmers market style units or domed yurts that hold a single table in a semi-enclosed space. Because the smaller tents or yurts are only suitable for one group of diners, many guests feel safer frequenting these as the risk from exposure to other diners is significantly reduced. While these units can be helpful in retaining heat from outdoor units and protecting patrons from the rain, they tend to be vulnerable to high winds and can be dangerous if burdened and not properly secured in bad weather. The other issue that we have encountered is that, at some point, some jurisdictions have declared these types of enclosures to have the same risk factors as indoor spaces and have pushed back against the use of full three- or four-sided enclosures. Check with your local municipality as to their stance on tents and other enclosures.

Geodesic Domes + Greenhouses

These all-weather geodesic domes were a trend prior to the onset of COVID-19, cost around $3000, and are easy to set up and offer dining seating for a single small group (4-5 people) or a lounge area for up to 10 people within the same group. Because they are translucent and fully enclosed, they warm up quite quickly with the body heat of the occupants and require very little effort to heat. The downside is that they have a somewhat large footprint and normally do not have any mechanical ventilation and are, therefore, only appropriate for one group at a time. We have also seen operators begin to use small, modular greenhouses that can be self-assembled from a kit and sit on a slightly smaller footprint than the garden igloos. These are also easy to heat, have no mechanical ventilation and are only appropriate for one group at a time. The upside is that these are about half the price of an igloo and an operator may be able to fit more of these in a smaller area than the igloos. A few vendors can be found below:

- Gardenigloo USA
- Palram Applications
- Alvantor

Inflatable Enclosures

This is something relatively new on the market. Recently, we have begun to see operators experiment with inflatable bubble tents that can hold a single table in a relatively small footprint. Similar to a greenhouse, these are see-through plastic enclosures with doors that zip open and closed. The upside is that they are slightly less expensive than other options and are suitable for a single table. The downside is that they have a large footprint, require an electric pump to remain inflated (which can be noisy) and are somewhat difficult to enter and exit. One low-cost example for moderately cold weather is BubbleTent. The usage of enclosures or any auxillary structures should comply with all local regulations, please check with your jurisdiction.

CREATING AN EXPERIENCE

If you are lucky enough to have access to outdoor space that allows for any of the above solutions, it's important to remember that your work isn't done. While dining amid these barriers and enclosures will be a novel experience for your guests, these areas still need to be activated in the same way that you would your interior dining room to make them guest-friendly. The following are some atmospheric cues to consider to develop a memorable outdoor dining experience:

Lighting

String lights, flameless candles or table lanterns go a long way on creating the right mood in these outdoor spaces. Whether within the individual units or covering your entire outdoor dining area, lighting is an essential element to the overall dining experience.

Music

Extend your normal playlist to these outdoor enclosures through wireless speakers or individual wired units.

Uniforms

Since your staff will be working in the cold, create some comfortable, on-trend uniform pieces that keep them warm and healthy while serving your guests. Look to ski resorts, ice rinks or other cold weather venues for inspiration.

Pashminas and Blankets

If you have the ability to safely launder these items between each use to prevent the spread of the virus, having a few blankets or throws on hand is a great touch.

- Bring-Your-Own Blanket: We've seen some creative municipalities host "Bring Your Own Blanket" events that invite guests to bring blankets and comforters to restaurant locations for special offers on outdoor dining at local restaurants — it's great way to make eating al fresco during the cooler months a fun and entertaining event.

Fire Pits

We've seen some operators with ample outdoor space anchor their outdoor enclosures around a central fire pit to make the overall experience seem festive and planned.

Winter Menus

Adding a selection of warmed cocktails or heartier dishes that travel well to your menu is another great way to turn this unusual experience into a memorable evening.

The goal is to turn these all-weather outdoor spaces into a dining adventure, and not something you have to apologize for during the pandemic.

SAFETY + SANITATION

As with all dining experiences during the pandemic, safety and sanitation are paramount. We recommend employing the same heightened, CDC-approved cleaning and disinfecting protocols that we have outlined in our Streetsense Pandemic Toolkit for Restaurants and Bars.

The fact that these spaces are somewhat exposed to the open air, does not change the fact that the virus can still live on surfaces, furniture and other areas to which guests are exposed. Every effort should be taken to ensure that these outdoor units are safe, sanitary and free of potential contaminated surfaces.

Minimizing the Risk Factors for Indoor Dining

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As we approach the colder months in much of the U.S., the viability of outdoor dining will diminish. Inevitably, restaurants will face the need to return indoors for survival. While the risks for indoor dining are significant, there are many things a restaurant or bar operator can do to make the experience safer for the staff and guests.

The following is a series of steps an operator can take to potentially reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Some steps are simple and inexpensive, others require a significant investment. While we fully acknowledge that everyone in the industry is struggling right now, we believe that a combination of these tactics below will give viable operators a greater chance of keeping their patrons and staff safe during the remainder of the crisis.

AIR QUALITY

For enclosed spaces such as a restaurant or a bar, the quality of filtration of the HVAC system can play a pivotal role in risk of transmission from one patron to another. While many restaurants have state-of-the-art heating and air conditioning systems, these systems were not designed to deal with transmission during a global pandemic. In fact, some systems are designed so that air flows horizontally through a space, circulating throughout the guest areas and flowing past multiple tables, rooms and service areas. Rather than preventing the spread of the virus, this can be a recipe for easy transmission of the virus to large groups of people. So what can a bar or restaurant operator do?

The good news: there are a lot of different interventions that may help filter out or kill the virus as it flows through the HVAC system in a bar or restaurant. The solutions that are applicable for a foodservice establishment normally fall into one of three categories that can be implemented to combat the spread of COVID-19. The options available include:

Filtration

Upgrading the type of filter on your existing HVAC can significantly reduce the amount of droplets that contain the virus from recirculation through your restaurant. Depending on the kind of unit you have, upgrading to a higher quality filter could be a significant investment for the business, but the right filter can make a material difference in the quality of the air going to your staff and patrons.

Irradiation

This involves adding an electromagnetic (UV-C) light to the existing HVAC filtration system that destroys organic compounds such as a virus as it passes through. This is more complex and costly to implement, but can be added to many existing systems for a one-time fee.

Spot Purification

A more visible solution that involves purchasing a number of high-tech ionized purifiers like Molekule that are positioned throughout the establishment that pull in potentially contaminated air and purify it within a set radius. For more information consult the manufacturer directly:

https://molekule.com

While studies are still being conducted as to how the virus travels through the air, some early evidence indicates that increasing the amount of outside air that is reconditioned for the space can improve the quality of air flowing through the guest spaces. Also, there is also an indication that changing the indoor airflow patterns could help reduce the rate of transmissions[2]. This means working with your HVAC professionals to explore ways to create a slow and steady flow of air within your spaces and to direct potentially contaminated air out of guest spaces and away from people (for further details, visit the website of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)).

While no single solution will be a single bullet that makes your establishment perfectly safe, investing in any combination of the above enhancements to your HVAC system may lower the risk of transmission to your staff and guests. Work with your local HVAC maintenance provider to determine the solution that fits your budget and provides the greatest amount of protection.

[2] *Bagelman, Stephanie, et al. Can HVAC Systems Help Prevent Transmission of COVID-19? 10 July 2020, www.mckinsey.com/industries/advanced-electronics/our-insights/can-hvac-systems-help-prevent-transmission-of-covid-19.*

SOCIAL DISTANCE FLOORPLAN

Once you have decided on a course of action for your HVAC system and air quality, the next step is to ensure that your dining room or bar spaces are as safe as possible. In the face of the oncoming cold weather, many jurisdictions across the U.S. have allowed their restaurants or bars to reopen their indoor spaces to a limited capacity — usually 25% to 50%. While these guidelines are helpful in preventing dangerous overcrowding, they do little to address exactly how an operator should lay out their guest spaces and what other steps they should take to mitigate the potential spread of the virus.

Every business should begin with their floor plan, their occupancy limit and think through how to optimize seating arrangements, guest flow and service corridors to allow for social distancing, and to maximize available space for small groups of patrons. Below are specific recommendations and considerations for creating a distanced floorplan during the pandemic:

- Determine storage areas for any excess furniture and equipment that you must now remove

- Continue to maximize your outdoor seating potential to chip away at your imposed occupancy limits

- Remove bar stools to ensure comfortable separation options for guests and consider re-purposing as walk-up bar or pickup area

- Increase semi-private dining opportunities with flexible partitions or screens

- Ensure service pathways that are comfortable for guests and staff and minimize bi-directional traffic flow when possible

- Add hand sanitizing stations throughout the restaurant, specifically at the entrance, near each server station, and near the entrance to the restrooms

- Remove waiting areas and host stations when feasible to maximize available dining spaces

- Think through both external and internal queuing, pick up and delivery, and how-to safely continue all of your off-site business with patrons inside

BEFORE

AFTER
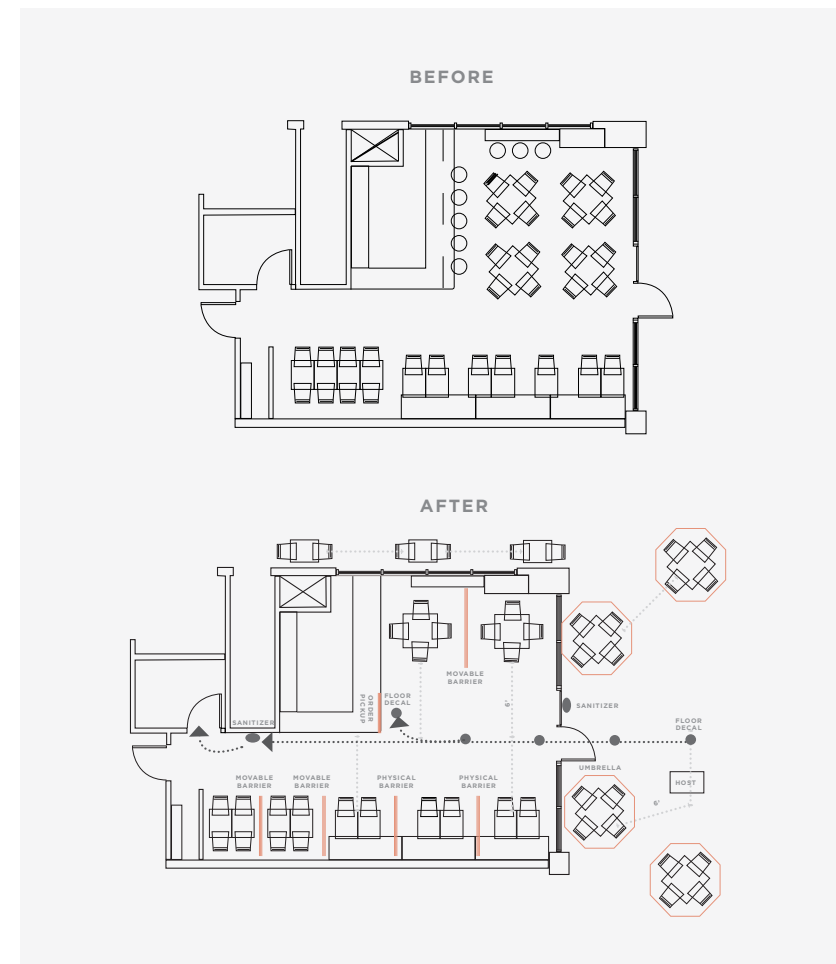
SEATING SCENARIOS

Every physical space is different with a variety of seating types and arrangements available. The following scenarios present different seating options that should provide clear direction on how to meet or exceed social distance guidelines in a number of different situations and environments.

Physical Barriers

In addition to existing furniture, a number of these scenarios introduce physical barriers when furniture is not easily movable. In general, these barriers must meet a number of criteria to qualify. General guidelines are helpful in understanding which kinds of physical barriers can assist in social distancing efforts:

- Barriers should be made of impermeable, cleanable, and durable materials that can be frequently cleaned and sanitized.

- Barriers should provide at least six-foot high barrier and must be installed per fire and building codes so as to not interfere with the ventilation or fire protection systems.

- Barriers should provide 30 inches above the table and other dimensions noted in diagrams.

SCENARIO 1

Side by Side Seating (no barrier)
Table, counter, or banquette seating

4 feet between tables, edge to edge

6 feet between chair centers

4' = 48"

6' = 72"
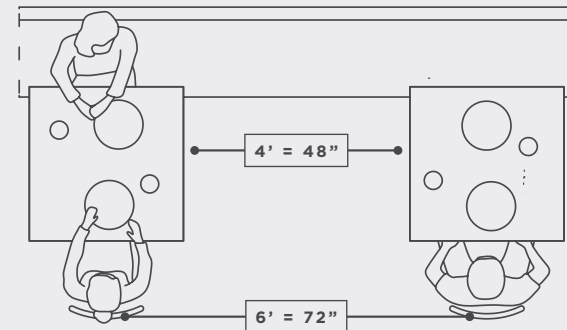
NOTE

The detailed guidance provided in this guide has come courtesy of The City of Los Angeles. However, nearly every state and local jurisdiction has published at least some guidance on social distancing your dining rooms and outdoor spaces. Please ensure that the guidance found in this toolkit fits within the guidelines for your state or local jurisdiction.

SCENARIO 2

Side by Side (with barrier)

Barrier should extend at least 18" from table edge

Barrier sould be at least 30" above table height
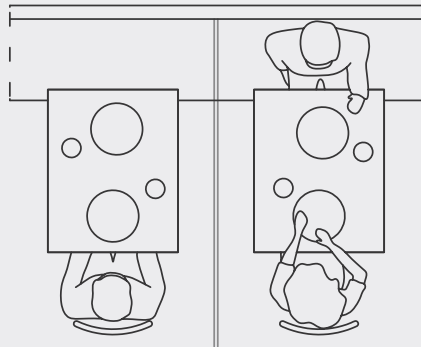
PHYSICAL BARRIER

SCENARIO 3

Perpendicular (no barrier)

4.5 feet between tables, edge to edge
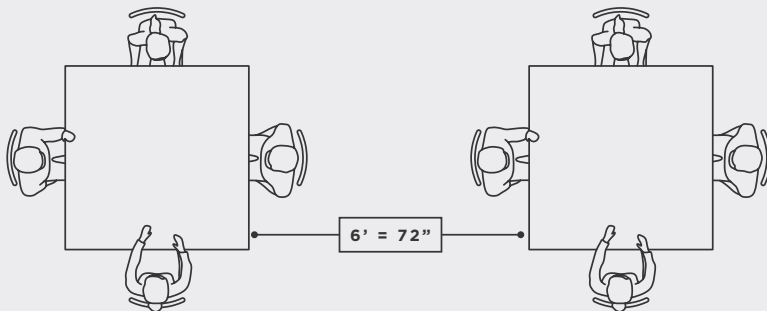
6 feet between chair centers
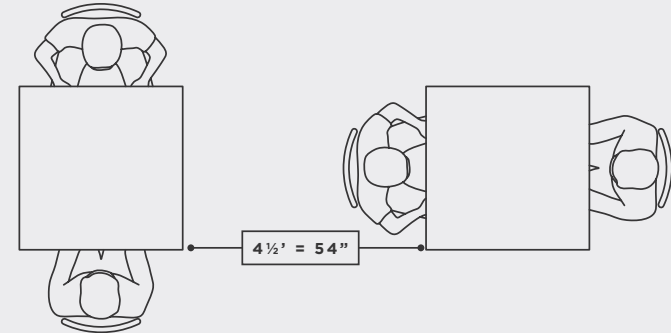
4 ½' = 54"

SCENARIO 4

Back to Back (no barrier)

6 feet between tables, edge to edge

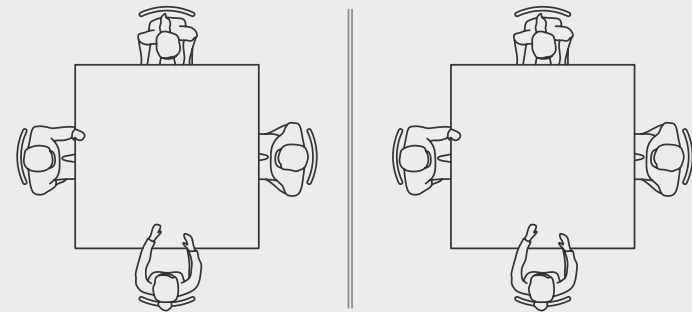If booth seating is back to back, with no physical barrier, this distance also applies

6' = 72"

SCENARIO 5

Back to Back (with barrier)

Barrier should be at least 30" above table height

Barrier should extend at least 18" from table edge

Barrier should extend to cover chair depth

PHYSICAL BARRIER

Booth Seating (with barrier)

No minimum distance required if barrier extends at least 30" above the table, is imperable and can be easily disinfected and cleaned

PHYSICAL BARRIER

NO MINIMUM SPACING
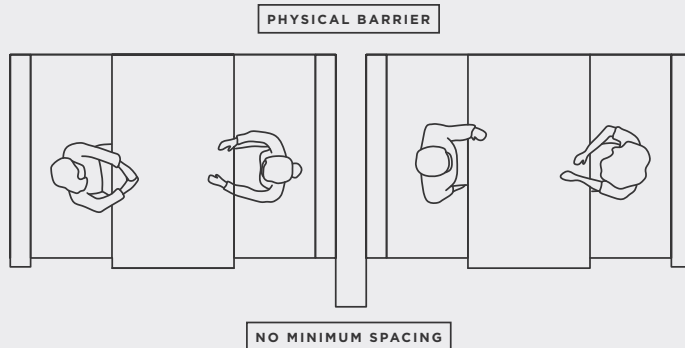
Staggered (no barrier)

4.5 feet between tables, edge to edge

6 feet between chair centers

Applies to all table shapes

4 ½' = 54"
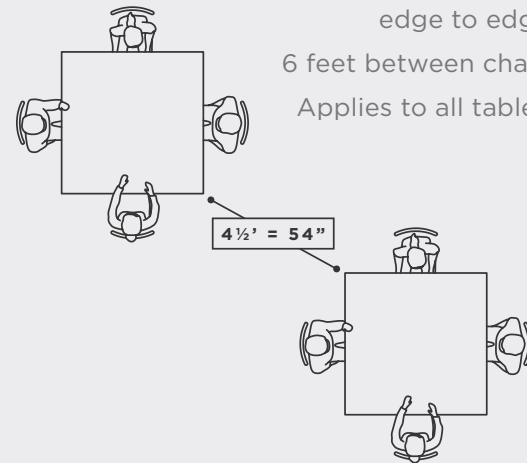
Staggered (with barrier)

Barrier should be at least 30" above table height

Barrier must cover the entire seat depth

PHYSICAL BARRIER
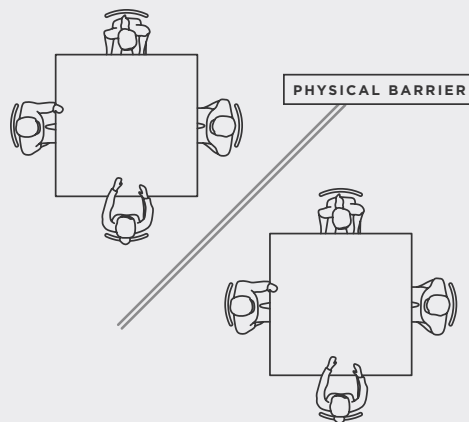
Communal Seating (no barrier)

6 feet between closest member of another party

6' = 72"
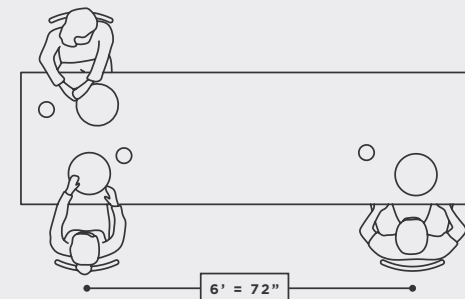
Communal Seating (with barrier)

Barrier should extend 30" above table

Barrier should extend 18" beyond table

Also applies to counter seating with barrier

PHYSICAL BARRIER   PHYSICAL BARRIER
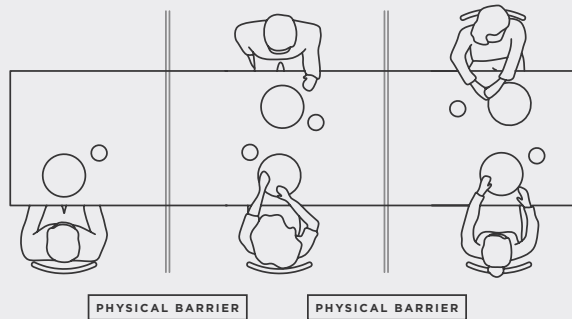
Counter Corner (no barrier)
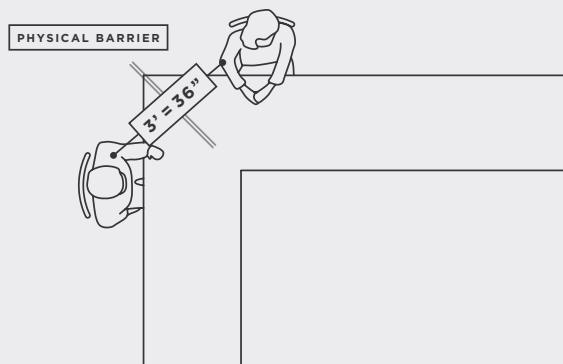
6 feet between chair centers if from different parties
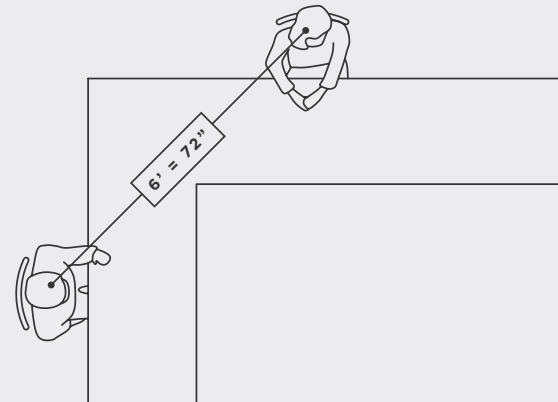
6' = 72"

Counter Corner (with barrier)

Barrier should be at least 30" above table height
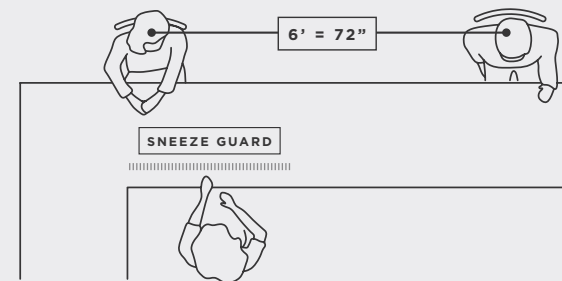
Barrier should cover the entire seat depth

PHYSICAL BARRIER

3' = 36"

Counter Seating (sneeze guard)

When employee distance is not feasible (i.e. built in jockey station or beer taps) barrier may be used

Barrier should extend at least 30" above counter

6' = 72"

SNEEZE GUARD

SERVICE IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

For many restaurants, personalized high-touch service is the very definition of their guest experience. However, COVID-19 has undoubtedly changed the public's perception of what service means — specifically as it relates to interpersonal distances, the quantity and volume of personal contact, and what is safe and hygienic. Some examples of this new style of service include:

- Altering service strategy to a less interactive model with less personal touches per table

- Mobile pre-ordering capabilities that allow guests to skip the menu and ordering process at the restaurant

- New food delivery processes, transitioning from hand-carried plates to tray or cart service for less server contact with the plates

- The elimination or transition of self-service components like buffets and salad bars

- Coverings over meal plates that are removed tableside

- Interim cash-free policies with prepay options

- Digital guest checks with tableside credit card processing

- A transition to e-receipts in lieu of paper

- Single-use menus or digital menu tablets with anti-microbial screens

- QR code menu technology for self service menu browsing and ordering

- Updated reservations processes to bring in guests at set intervals with no anticipated wait times to prevent overcrowding waiting areas

- Not setting tables with cutlery, glassware or napkins prior to guests sitting down

Partnering with Local Municipalities

TO CREATE ADDITIONAL REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES + AWARENESS

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BROADENING THE REVENUE GENERATING POTENTIAL OF YOUR BUSINESS

Maximizing Revenue During the Pandemic

Below is some step-by-step guidance on how to maximize available revenue streams by optimizing your business for the current situation.

Business Diversification

For many restaurants and bars, the goals during the pandemic are to keep as many of their employees as possible, generate much-needed cash flow, and support their local community. Unfortunately, for many owners, this is not going to happen with their traditional business model.

Here we detail straightforward, near-term tactics to generate more cash flow, keep your staff busy, and diversify your business for the future.

None of these strategies are a silver bullet for your business, but used in combination, they just might get you through the crisis and create a more profitable business on the other side.
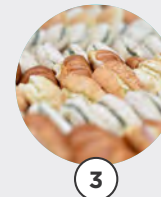
Evaluate Your Revenue Mix

The following pages contain step-by-step guides for helping you maximize your revenue. Even if you have all of these streams up and running now, read through to learn how to best tailor them for profitability.
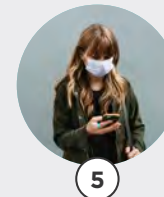

1

TAKEOUT

2

DELIVERY

3

CATERING

4

RETAIL

5
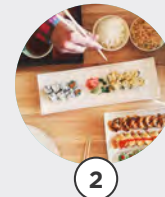
DIGITAL

①

Takeout

One of the most successful formats that restaurants have leveraged during the pandemic is Takeout. Because this format is both convenient and allows for minimal contact with the staff, it has become a go-to strategy for sit down restaurants looking to capture some revenue and keep some of the lights on during the pandemic.

Step One — Optimize Online Partnerships
Step Two — Establish Clear Pickup Procedures
Step Three — Adjust Your Offerings
Step Four — Takeout Packaging + Printed Collatera
Step Five — Market the Experience

TAKEOUT

STEPS	

1

Optimize Online Partnerhips

If you do not already have an online ordering system for takeout orders through your point of sale, evaluate your available options critically:

- What are the fees + costs and are they negotiable?
- Does it integrate with your POS?
- Does it allow for timed pick-ups?
- Will it integrate seamlessly with your website?

2

Establish Clear Pickup Procedures

Curbside

Curbside pick-up is a safe, easy, and convenient option during the pandemic. A couple of key considerations for curbside pick-up include:

- Do you have an area where cars can queue out front?
- How do customers indicate they have arrived?
- Can you facilitate this from a staffing perspective?

In-Restaurant

It is important that your restaurant has the physical space and infrastructure to handle takeout in store.

- Set up a designated waiting area that complies with Social Distancing guidelines
- Consider building a pickup window or shelf either out one wall or by the front door of your store
- Set Up Remote Payment Options – Add Google Pay or Apple Pay to avoid unnecessary contact

3

Adjust Your Offerings

Tailor your takeout menu selections to best represent your business and ensure selections are take out appropriate

- Start focused and small
- Review your menu mix - include top producers and highest profit items
- Ensure menu items travel well
- Provide instructions for reheating at home

4

Takeout Packaging + Printed Collateral

Having the right packaging to ensure that the food is hot and fresh when delivered is essential. It is also important to give the impression of safety and sanitation in the selection of to-go items.

- Find appropriate packaging for your entrée, sides, soups, and beverages
- Purchase 'tamper-resistant' packaging or sealants
- Branding (Low cost rubber stamps, customized packaging, easy to carry bags)

5

Market the Experience

- Announce your new service through all of your online and social media channels
- Be specific about your offering
- In-store and curbside signage – Announce that you are open and what services you offer
- Takeout menu — print a take-away menu and include it with every order

(2)

Delivery

Setting up a reliable delivery service can help offset lost dine-in revenue and will help position your business to capture new guests who may not be familiar with your offerings. Working to maximize your profit potential and controlling your customer relationships can ensure that it is a sustainable growth strategy for the long-term.

Step One — Define Delivery Strategy

Step Two — Establish Procedures

Step Three — Optimize User Experience

DELIVERY

1

Determine Your Long-Term Delivery Strategy

Third Party

Picking the right online partner requires some real research and negotiations. Consider the following when choosing your partner:

- What is the total cost (above and beyond your menu item cost) that these companies charge?
- Can you pass some or all of these additional costs along to your delivery customers?
- What is your overall profit margin after all of these fees and costs of delivery packaging?
- How are orders transmitted to your restaurant and can they easily integrate with your POS?
- Can you handle multiple service providers or will you explore order aggregating systems?
- How will an online ordering platform increase the exposure of your business and capture new guests?

Self Administered

Another option for restaurants looking to increase their profit margins and put more employees back to work is to manage your own delivery fleet.

- How are orders input into your POS and how do you estimate order times?
- Do you have procedures in place to verify insurance and driving records of your employees?
- How will you route and manage order delivery?
- What is your tip, gas, parking, and service fee policy?
- What are your policies on parking tickets, gas reimbursements, and accidents?

2

Establish Delivery Procedures

It is just as important to set up and protect delivery personnel as it is to protect the health and safety of your guests. Consider the following when establishing delivery procedures:

- Do you have an area where drivers can queue out front?
- How will drivers pick up and identify their orders?
- How will you enforce social distancing with drivers and takeout customers?
- How do you handle complaints and delivery issues?

3

Optimize User Experience

Tailor your delivery menu selections to best represent your business and are delivery appropriate:

- Start focused and small
- Review your menu mix - include top sellers, highest profit items
- Ensure you put on only things that travel well

Online menu requirements are very different from a traditional in-store menu offering. Consider the following key items when preparing your online delivery menu:

- **Photos:** Hi-res pictures that capture your offerings and sell themselves
- **Descriptors:** Clear, concise; ensure that this is in your brand-voice
- **Categories:** Consider the structure of the menu by categories including 'most popular' or 'recommended'
- **Add-Ons + Modifiers:** Provide easy ways for your guests to upgrade and/or edit their dishes

③

Expand Catering

As offices get back to work and gatherings are planned for small groups, off-site catering can provide critical incremental revenue. Simple, large-format packaged offerings can be planned and executed ahead of time, create operating efficiencies at scale, and expand your customer base beyond your immediate neighborhood.

Step One — Strengthen Off-Site Menu

Step Two — Plan Packaged Offerings

Step Three —Solve Bulk Order Input

Step Four — Build Customer Relations

CATERING

STEPS	
1	**Write an Off-Site Menu** Off-site catering allows restaurateurs to capture back some of the control ceded to patrons who order individual items and entrees with typical takeout or delivery services. Menus should be tailored for small groups and a streamlined menu of core offerings can be developed to limit customization and maximize efficiency. Consider the following when writing an off-site catering menu: • Avoid price per person + plan for packaged platters • Large-format build-your-own experiences for a set range of people can appease groups that crave customization • Try and select repeatable formats with a select range of options within each category. For example, offer an "Assorted Sandwich Box" with a choice of three or four limited options • Consider bulking up sides and salads to sell as simple add-ons • Think of ways to add incremental sales through desert offerings - cookie trays or pastry baskets • Try to limit the customization of items within each platter and instead offer selections that will appease different dietary needs for groups • Think of items that work well in a build-your-own format and consider charging more for packaged platters that allow guests to craft their own meal experience from your core ingredients • Bottled drinks are easy up-sells that don't require any additional preparation • Consider simple options for multiple day parts to capture breakfast revenue and afternoon snacks for meetings beyond just lunch • Options that can be batch assembled or heated are ideal for catering menu items • Eschew individual box lunches until you have a solid program in place to execute large orders efficiently

2	**Plan Packaged Offerings** Packaging is critical to off-site catering as it should function as both a delivery vehicle for your food and as a presentation piece for the guests. Ideal packaging should be able to function as both and not need to be "re-plated" for guests to enjoy. • What cutlery and service ware is needed with every item? • Can the packaging hold up to delivery and allow guests to serve themselves? • Are labels and instructions included for guests to enjoy their experience as designed? • Are your delivery bags robust enough to protect and carry multiple items at a time? • Is packaging easily stackable for staging and delivery?
3	**Solve Bulk Order Input** Integrating catering programs with a POS is difficult as catering orders are often complex and require instructions to be input carefully for the kitchen to aggregate and batch orders. Consider using a simple quote and invoice order system that can be printed and used both as a production order ticket and delivered to the guest as a receipt.
4	**Build Customer Relationships** Trusting a meal to an outside party requires confidence. Follow up on every order, provide assistance in building standing order options and strive for repeat guests. It is a lot of pressure for one person to order for many, so try to make it easy for them to get it right every time.

④

Grocery + Retail

One of the more creative strategies to come out of the early stages of this pandemic is restaurants who have used their venues as curbside grocery businesses. Since restaurants often have great relationships with local producers, the best meat and seafood vendors and are specialists in prepared foods, the combination between essential groceries and prepared foods delivered curbside is hard to beat. Below is a step-by-step guide to transitioning your restaurant space into a curbside grocery and prepared meals business.

Step One — Determine Offerings

Step Two — Learn the Rules

Step Three — Plan the Experience

Step Four — Integrate Technology

Step Five — Market the Experience

GROCERY

STEPS	

1

Determine Your Product Offerings

Create a small but meaningful selection of items that highlight your specialty purveyors and experiment with family style versions of some of your restaurant's most popular items. Start small, listen closely to your guests and consider the following when designing a provisions or grocery offering:

- What are some items that customers can't get from their local market or grocery?
- How will you package and portion offerings so that you can build efficiencies at scale?
- Are there house recipes - dressings, sauces, condiments - that would be popular as stand alone offerings?
- Review your pricing against area competition and understand that retail margins are often razor thin.
- What items are in particular high demand - fresh produce, beef and raw proteins, sanitation supplies?
- Will you offer everything a la carte or will you be offering provision style grocery boxes?

2

Learn the Rules

Federal jurisdictions have relaxed rules regarding labeling and local authorities may continue to permit the delivery of alcohol. However, retail items are taxed at different rates. Consider the following when designing your grocery program:

- How will you ensure the correct taxation rates for grocery items?
- What are the FDA labeling requirements currently in place?
- Is your establishment permitted to deliver wine, beer, liquor and prepared cocktails?

3

Plan the Experience

Grocery stores take up some of the largest footprints in retail for a reason. Take steps to plan out how you will execute grocery orders in terms of storage and fulfillment:

- Do you have adequate storage space to add new products for offer or can you only handle selling what you already have on hand normally?
- When + where will you repack bulk recipes, prepare to-go meals, and package up grocery orders?
- How will you fulfill and stage large orders to go out for pickup or delivery?
- What are the pickup or delivery procedures and times available to guests?

4

Integrate Technology

Restaurants have a competitive advantage over grocery stores in adding delivery because they typically already have technology in place to rapidly fulfill and track hundreds of orders at a time. Leverage that technology in the following ways:

- Program your POS, ticket or invoicing system and online ordering platform with your new offerings
- Review your ordering systems to allow enough time to pick, pack and fulfill orders for pickup or delivery

5

Market the Experience

- Announce your new service through all of your online and social media channels
- Be specific about your offering
- In-store and curbside signage – Announce that you are open and what services you offer

(5)

Digital Strategy

It can be complicated to have to replace the in-store guest experience with a digital one. Think of your website as your front of house and your online ordering system as the back of house and make sure that it functions like you need it to in the shift to digital dining.

Step One — Website Design

Step Two — Photography + Collateral

Step Three — Buisness Listings

DIGITAL STRATEGY

STEPS	
1	**Website Design** Your brand should be equally well represented online as it is in person. Pay attention to some critical details in your web design and determine if you need a redesign or a facelift: • Is it easy to find the critical information about your business like location, hours of operation, menu and reservation tools? • Is your online ordering system linked directly to your website and is it intuitive to "order now"? • Do you have a Covid-19 banner or update? • Does your web design represent your brand look and feel as well as you'd like? • Are your social media channels clearly linked to your website? • Do you have a good place for press or reviews? • Do you have information about your catering program? • Can you edit your website yourself? • How much does it cost to implement new features?
2	**Photography + Collateral** There is a lot you can do to promote a good image of your establishment. The number one thing in your control is the quality of your photography and posts. • Do you have a library of high quality photography to use on your website and social media? • Do the quality of your social media posts reflect the quality of your business? • Does your online ordering menu use up to date and compelling photography? • Are all of your web assets and social media profiles leveraging the correct logos and current branding?

3 **Business Listings**

Have you ever googled your business like a customer would? You must take as much control as possible in the publicly available information about your business. Consider the following when thinking about your digital strategy:

• Is your restaurant listed on Google and do you own your listing?
• Is all of the contact information available on Google up to date?
• Is your website search engine optimized?
• Are hours of operations listed correctly?
• Do you have negative customer reviews?
• Have you reviewed your Yelp page and is everything accurate?
• Do you have a plan to respond politely to reviews on Yelp?
• Does your Yelp profile accurately reflect your service and offerings?
• What are people saying about you on social media?
• Have you checked your mentions and tags on Instagram?

COMMUNITY + MUNICIPALITY SUPPORT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Partnering with Local Municipalities to Create Awareness and Additional Revenue Opportunities

In addition to the broad spectrum of federal and state financial support during the pandemic, local municipalities are becoming increasingly creative in finding ways to support their struggling business communities. Some examples for the U.S. and around the world that provide a model for ways a local community can pull together to help businesses weather the crisis:

Streateries + Outdoor Dining

By closing down streets, granting access to viable park spaces, reworking parking lots and getting really creative about opening up areas for use by local restaurants, municipalities have created a much-needed lifeline for their local business community. If you have not seen this in your area, reach out to your local Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Manager or Business Improvement District to see what can be done in your area.

Flexibility on Liquor Sales + Delivery

Communities that have relaxed liquor laws to allow restaurants and bars to sell and deliver alcohol have provided a much needed additional revenue source to many businesses during the crisis. If this has not been implemented in your area, reach out to your local Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement District and ask them to raise this issue with the appropriate governing body.

Winter Retail + Food Markets

Temporary winter retail and food markets in parks and public spaces across the U.S. give people a safer opportunity to enjoy food and beverages. Similar to an outdoor holiday market filled with small retailers and food vendors, several municipalities have developed these open air marketplaces (with the proper social distancing guidelines and density constraints) and allowed local businesses to set up shop temporarily during the crisis. With the right staging and atmosphere, this can be a great way to generate some revenue and keep your staff engaged over the winter.

Community Marketing

Some business Improvement Districts have been helping the community during the crisis by sponsoring a community marketing program for businesses that have been able to open. Streetsense has partnered with a company called Bandwango in Fairfax County, VA to develop a community based marketing platform that informs local residents about new hours of operation, special offers and which businesses are still up and running. Through direct communication with local residents, these businesses are able to stay top of mind, communicate special offers and support their community without a big marketing budget.

COVID Certification

Recent surveys have concluded that many Americans are very concerned about going into any public space while the pandemic is still prevalent. The uncertainty around how individual businesses are handling the pandemic and the lack of a federal mandate on any Covid-19 mitigation efforts has lead to this drop in consumer confidence. However, according to a survey conducted by Delos, a wellness real estate and technology company, 83% said that they would feel more comfortable going to a public space if there was a governmental or third-party certification.[3] For this reason, we have been encouraging local municipalities to add a COVID-19 certification grade to their health department or fire, life and safety inspections. This will allow patrons to understand the extent to which the business has embraced COVID-19 mitigation requirements and best practices.

[3] "Survey: More Than Half of Americans Uncomfortable in Shared Spaces." Hotel Business, 2 Oct. 2020, www.hotelbusiness.com/survey-more-than-half-of-americans-uncomfortable-in-shared-spaces/.

Fairfax County, VA
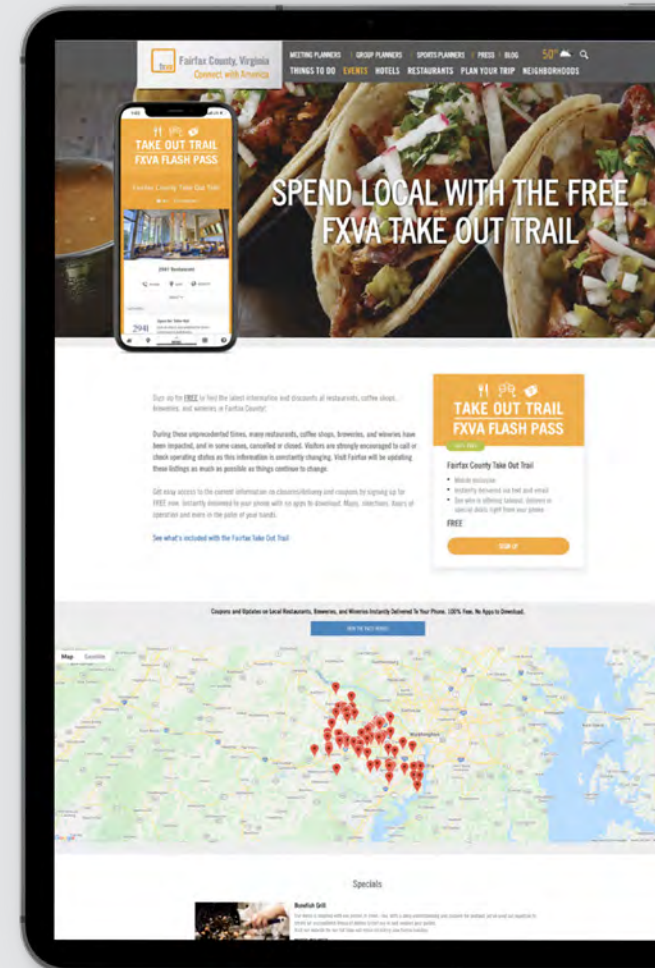
CONCLUSION

While there is opportunity for operators to squeeze out additional revenue by extending the outdoor dining season, without a widely available vaccine or effective course of treatment, winter represents an enormous risk to an industry already in peril. Operators would be prudent to leverage the combination of minimizing indoor dining risk and diversifying their business outside of the four walls, whenever possible.

Although the holiday season will look a lot different this year, guests still have hopes to gather — even in smaller numbers — and the hospitality industry will cater to those needs in innovative and creative ways. Looking ahead, for those that can modify their business and survive through the winter, there will be a lucrative combination of long-term pent up demand and deflated competition as life returns – ever so slowly – to normal following the eventual distribution of a vaccine.

Thank You, Be Safe

streetsense.

Contact

Need help developing
your relaunch strategy?

Give us a call at
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→

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Jay has spent over 30 years in the restaurant and hospitality sector and has served as Managing Director for Dean & Deluca, Global Brand Leader for EDITION Hotels, VP of Lifestyle Brands for Marriott International, and has held key leadership roles at iconic properties such as The Inn of the Anasazi, La Mansion del Rio, and the Inn at Little Washington. As an independent restaurateur, Jay has co-developed concepts in Santa Fe, Baltimore, and Washington DC.

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Adam brings his financial expertise and passion for the restaurant business to offer insight and strategy for the company's roster of food and beverage clients. Prior to joining Streetsense in 2013, Adam co-founded Financial Foods, where he did business and concept development, branding, operational consulting, project management, and revenue forecasting for clients like Dolcezza Gelato and Hill Country BBQ.