OPTIMISE YOUR OPERATION – HOTELS & GUESTHOUSES

Considerations for managing:

- Reduced capacity
- Reduced P&L
- Physical / social distancing requirements
Introduction

You’ve calculated your potential reduced capacity by applying the new physical distancing guidelines to your available space. Now it’s time to use the Capacity & Commercial Impact Calculator to estimate potential revenue streams and to look at ways of reducing costs.

Doing so will help you understand how your business, in compliance with the new guidelines, will generate a profit, break even or make a loss.

This document presents a series of considerations with suggestions and guidance to consider the changes you can make to get your business back up and running.

These considerations should viewed alongside the HSE Covid-19 Operating Guidelines.

These topics are outlined over the following pages, with suggestions and insights that may be useful in reimagining your business.
1. Managing Suppliers and Managing Costs

• Consider reducing the number of suppliers you work. This will help:
  • Reduce the number of morning deliveries.
  • Reduce the number of employee hours involved with goods-in.

• Analyse all F&B costs and re-negotiate prices and ordering systems with suppliers.

• Consider bulk buying for fast-selling and high-demand items. Negotiate so that both you and your suppliers see benefits.

• Review supplier contracts; there may be terms and conditions that you are not aware of or would like removed/added.

• Ask suppliers to provide you with a copy of their Covid-19 safety statement.

• Ensure that those with responsibility across kitchen, restaurant and lounge areas understand the importance of the weekly reporting of cost savings - no matter how small those savings are.

Work with your F&B team to analyse food costs on a daily basis to identify where, or if, losses are arising. Where losses are identified, act immediately to rectify the situation.
2. Menus

Don’t get involved in a race to the bottom with your prices. It will only harm your business and your reputation.

- Remove menu dishes that don’t regularly feature on your ‘best sellers’.
- Reduce food prep items that are costly and/or very labour intensive.
- Remodel menus to suit a more reduced stock level and the slower re-introduction of your full offering.
- Avoid sharing plates, family plates and finger bowls. Use suitable individually portioned options instead.
- Avoid communal breakfast cereals/fruit bowls/juice dispensers. Better to offer individual portions.
- Re-write waste management practices the reflect new operation will function.
- Use stock, such as wines, that you have had on hand for some time. This will help increase revenues with less costs and handling.
- Consider hygiene practices when choosing your style of menu; easy-to-clean laminated menus or daily disposable menus are advisable and cost effective.

3. Opening / Service Hours

- Revise or reduce your opening hours in order to maximise revenue potential and ensure the efficient flow of customers. Altering opening hours to suit your costs and demand makes sense.
- Introduce a system of precise reservation times for breakfast, room service and dinner. Aim to upsell dinner reservations when rooms are being booked.
- Choose timings for heavy volume activities such as breakfast (particularly at weekends) and room service to suit your systems.
- Secure additional accommodation volume by offering a choice of services. For example, breakfast-to-go, pre-ordered packaged breakfast, family rooms etc. Consider two breakfast rooms; one Continental and one Full Irish.

Consider a quick-bites menu for daytime - guests may have developed a preference for less formal dining.

- Review all food offerings (all-day/lunch/dinner) and asses them vis-à-vis opening times, available spaces and pricing. Analyse last summer’s sales reports to identify times of high demand and popular items.
4. Health and Safety Food Service

- Consider using packaged sugar/milk/butter to eliminate concerns over handling of utensils, containers, etc.
- Accustom employees to the importance of mise-en-place (everything in its place) preparation, so that only as light a touch as possible is needed during service.
- Think about pre-setting tables to minimise flows of employees attending to tables.
- Avoid using linen where possible.
- Curtail and isolate activities to certain individuals by having one order taker, one server, one bus person, and so on.
- Allow buffets only on a manned basis with plates served to the guest. This could also present an opportunity to manage long term, stored stock.
- Ensure employees are efficient in order taking, upselling and the speedy delivery of food. This will be essential as a set dwell-time is likely to be a factor.
- Forecast labour needs using an ‘allocation of tasks’ approach to rosters, thus avoiding cluttering of employees and improving productivity and flow. Pre-assign activities in terms of hygiene and cleanliness, while at the same time ensuring that you adhere to physical distancing restrictions and new safety guidelines.
- Forecast a cost for one person per food department to take responsibility for adhering to all Covid-19 guidelines.

5. Employee Training

1. Familiarise employees with new layouts, designs and practices in order to avoid confusion and time inefficiencies during service.
2. Train employees on queue management techniques so as to avoid unnecessary delays, late arrivals and irritations.
3. Up sell where possible to maximise revenue opportunities. Centrally involve employees in devising your upselling programme and train them on how to execute it so that daily revenue goals are met and service excellence delivered at the same time.
6. Utilisation of Space

Use spaces that will not see significant business over the coming months, such as meeting or function rooms, for breakfast or dinner service. This is particularly useful if B&B or Dinner B&B is a popular offering. It is also an opportunity to upsell finer dining experiences.

- Increase the number of satellite stations available for staff service, where feasible, thereby reducing footfall into service areas and improving efficiencies.
- Apply for a temporary outdoor seating licence for food and drink service, if appropriate.
- Utilise lounge spaces for order taking and for pre- and post-dinner drinks.

7. Marketing and Sales

- Contact as many voucher holders as possible and encourage them to make a booking in the coming months.
- Prepare upselling techniques that will help bridge the gap between budgeted revenue and the reality.
- Develop a meals-for-collection service; it’s set to be in vogue for the foreseeable future. Consider developing an app for customer ordering.
- Use digital marketing to promote your food and drink offerings to be top-of-mind when customers think about where to go.
- Re-write and tell your food and drink story. Ensure your employees are “on message” in delivering a great customer experience. Also make use of relevant channels (online and offline) to create awareness.
- Keep abreast of customer trends and tweak your offering as relevant if you spot new opportunities.

Don’t get involved in promotions that are only based on price.
8. Upselling

• Employ the dual approach of generating opportunities for additional revenue whilst also managing your costs. Get a daily handle on demand and the execution of your newly developed upselling skills. This is as important to your business as the management of labour costs.

• Capture the attention of guests through in-room F&B promotions and through suggestive selling and personal recommendations by reservation employees.

• Review retail stock, where relevant, and apply promotions to improve stock rotation.

• Request daily targets from each department and assess where practices can be improved through mentoring and upskilling.

• Ensure your offerings are visible and in the right place to meet customer demand. Promotions need to be seen and need to be tempting.

• Start the sales process in a professional manner at enquiry/reservation stage and continue that approach throughout the customer’s full visit. Ensure relevant employees have the skills and the personality for up selling effectively.

Delivering great service - at every stage in the customer journey - is just as important than ever.