

Notes from conference call for reference

Innovate for the interest of your people or customers, not for sales. People will remember.

Alternative sustainable system model:

- Click/call and collect
- Home delivery

If you can master the back office system for click and collect, delivery will follow quite simply if the background work has been done right.

Shop floor becomes warehouse/stockroom - not a shop. Make it work for you.

Rationalise your range to what you think people want and need at this time? What can you feasibly keep stocked at this time? Stick to staples – easier to manage. Be confident in what you can keep available.

People aren't expecting to buy everything in your shop. You can do the work for them. Make the choice simple and easy. 'Browsing' is not necessary.

Make it as simple as possible for yourself and the customer when it comes to options and range of products.

Remove cash payments if you can.

Shorten trading hours so you have time to re-stock and take stock. Again, make it work for you.

Keep today's orders separated from tomorrow's orders. Labelling is key to ensure customers receive all products – label each box with customer details, order details, collection car registration plate (?) and 'box 1 of 3' etc. Ambient, chilled, frozen.

Accept that the first day you launch, there will be error, mistakes. Learn from it – tell staff it's OK. Tell me about what happened, it's fine, we can learn from this and fix it and make it better tomorrow etc. People will be nervous and scared – let them know they are allowed to be, and that mistakes won't be punished.

Q&A section

Should we stock things we don't normally have in store?

Take it day by day. Adapt what you do already to start with. Get a good system in place. Then add to it if you think its right to do so. Consider how and if you should adapt. What do your customers want? Listen. Then look at catering outfits who normally stock restaurant and bars etc – there are plenty of companies out there with stock who are looking for alternative outlets whether you want to add new things in this time frame. Jigsaws?! Beans. Toilet roll. Etc etc..

Health wise – it's hard to know if your staff have the virus.

Show them appreciation. Look after them. Ask them what will make them feel confident, comfortable and safe at work. Do you do a daily health check list? Or common sense? A little bit more time off? Ask everyone to take their temperature twice a day? Do what feels safe and sensible for you and your team.

How will my staff adapt?

Some will thrive – some people love pressure and change – new and exciting. Some like routine and will be scared. Accept their own feelings and realities. Do what you can to adapt on their behalf, Listen to them. Give them a voice and a chance to talk to you.

How do we manage if staff get ill?

You have the ability to scale this up or down. If you need to go down to 2 or 3 days a week, do it, if you need to offer 2 delivery or collection slots instead of 4, do it. Hopefully your customers will understand that you are doing all you can in these changing times.

Is the general consensus that shops should actually close?

I think they will need to. Eventually your team will demand it. They are at risk. Customers are not always following social distancing. There are lots more risks in maintaining a physical operation. It's not essential to close, but you are putting yourself, your customers and your staff at more risk by doing so. By all means control access, manage how many in shop at same time etc. Each business needs to take a look at their own operation and make that decision.

Might my staff get stopped by police if they are coming to work?

Letters on headed notepaper for staff, so if they get stopped by police they can show that they are on their way to work and are delivering an essential service. Jenny to draft something to share.