VOLUME 24

Appetizers

Marco's Pizza plans Florida expansion



Full service restaurants continue to struggle



Three ways post-COVID audits will change



ConnectSmart adds new touchless features



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NRA calls for federal support for the restaurant industry

Washington, DC – Recently, The National Restaurant Association sent the "Blueprint for Restaurant Revival" to Congress. The comprehensive policy and legislative plan outlines specific and immediate action the federal government should take to stabilize the industry in the short-term and set the foundation for long-term rebuilding.

"In just the past several weeks, state and local government mandates have shut down almost 100,000 restaurants," said Sean Kennedy, executive vice president of Public Affairs for the Association. "Since the restaurant industry was first shuttered, the National Restaurant Association and our State Restaurant Association partners have led the call at the federal, state, and local level for policies that will allow us not to profit, but simply to survive this pandemic. Despite losing more jobs and revenue than any other industry in this country, Congress has chosen not to advance a recovery package that is tailored for the unique challenges of a restaurant on the cusp of bankruptcy."

The Blueprint focuses on three main areas where Congress can act to make significant changes that would support restaurants of every size and operational model in communities across the country. These areas include:



- Short-term relief to restart the restaurant industry by creating a targeted Restaurant Recovery Fund; creating a mechanism for restaurants to access a second round of Paycheck Protection Program loans; addressing liability protections for businesses; and other tax, insurance and loan needs.
- ◆ Ensuring the stability of America's food supply chain from farm to table by prioritizing food and agriculture employees for testing and receipt of a COVID-19 vaccine and providing Payroll Tax relief for restaurant employees as essential workers.
- ◆ Helping restaurants support atrisk communities by funding programs to feed at-risk populations and provide greater access to restaurant meals for low-income Americans.

"The restaurant industry is one of

tenacity, innovation, and dedication to serving our community," said Kennedy. "We are looking to Congress not only for support for our short-term survival, but to create a long-term framework that sustains our role as a key part of the food supply chain for the millions of families that rely on us for nourishment."

About the National Restaurant Association: Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises 1 million restaurant and foodservice outlets and a workforce of 15.6 million employees. We represent the industry in Washington, D.C., and advocate on its behalf. We sponsor the industry's largest trade show (National Restaurant Association Show); leading food safety training and certification program (ServSafe); unique career-building high school program (the NRAEF's ProStart). For more information, visit Restaurant.org and find then on Twitter @WeRRe staurants, Facebook and YouTube.

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NBA Star Giannis Antetokounmpo teams up with Greek fast casual brand

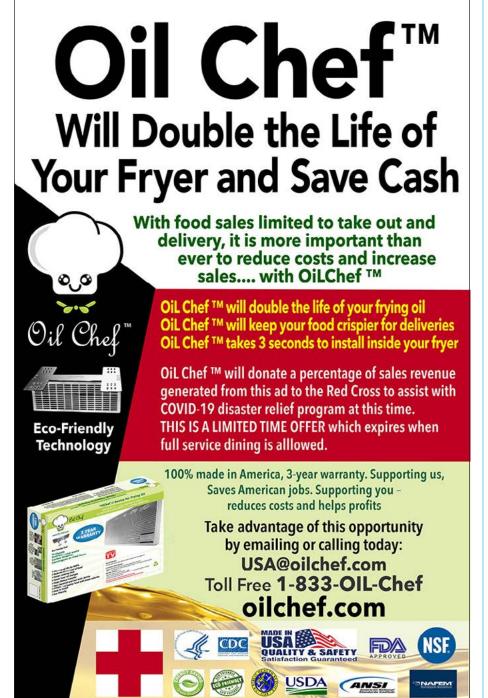


Hoboken, N.J. – Greek From Greece (GFG) Café Cuisine, the authentic Greek fast casual phenomenon, is partnering with 2019 National Basketball Association (NBA) MVP and NBA All-Star Giannis Antetokounmpo and his family to bring Greek cuisine and culture to America.

Known to professional basketball fans as the "Greek Freak" for his combination of ball handling skills, size and speed, Antetokounmpo was born in Athens, Greece, to Nigerian parents. He immediately connected with GFG Café Cuisine's authentic flavors and strong family values.

"What won me over is that GFG puts family above all else," Antetokounmpo said. "They believe in the same values as me and my family, like loyalty and lifelong relationships. They embody delicious tastes, enticing smells, and a joyful culture that neither me nor my

See GIANNIS page 10



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Appell Pie

Baseball and a changing world

Howard Appell
Today's Restaurant Publisher

Captains Log March 7, 2020: It seems like five years but alas it was only five months since that beautiful spring day in Port St. Lucie with thousands of New York Mets fans awaiting the start of the game and the regular season just a month away.

News of a pandemic was just starting to hit the news reports while masks and social distancing were not even thought of yet in the United States, but it was on the horizon of our consciousness.

Every spring my son Evan and I go to Port St. Lucie for at least one spring training game and last year we took granddaughter Sophie with us and this spring we did the same but we were more aware of our surroundings, especially of the women sitting to my right who had a hacking cough that could be heard all along the first base side. Fortunately the wind was blowing towards right field away from us. After three innings of listening to her coughing, I suggested we take a walk to the outfield to see the game from a different perspective.

When we reached the outfield we bought some snacks and were continuing our stroll when we ran into Jeff Solomon, the owner of Budget Restaurant Supply in Ft. Lauderdale whom I've known for over thirty years. We discussed the possible coming storm and we parted with a manly hug. You know the kind where both parties are tapping each-others back.

Captain's Log March 9th 2020: While picking up prescriptions at CVS I decided to get a flu and pneumonia shot for the first time in my life. I figured what the heck, it can't hurt. A few

days later we went into panic shut down. A once in a lifetime event had reached out to us causing decisions of life and death to be made on the fly with no significant data to rely on to give us proper direction.

Captain's Log April 2020: Baseball's opening dates have been postponed. Looks like a shortened season if at all. Opening in July forecast. Businesses closing all around.

Captain's Log July 24, 2020: base-ball season opens with changes. No live fans in the stadiums, players wearing masks, spitting, a major feature of baseball has been frowned on and cardboard cutouts take the place of live fans. Sounds of crowd reactions are piped in on every play.

Baseball and professional sports in general will undergo still more changes in the coming months as will our industry. The explosive growth of new technology companies debuting and those in development is astounding. It's what we do. The human race is adaptive. This COVID19 pandemic is not the first or only plague we have dealt with. My grandfather was killed by the TB plague in the early 1900's The Spanish Flu, Aids, Ebola, H1N1, Swine Flu and others occurred just in the last 100 years.

Present the world with a major global problem and humans will adapt a way out of it, but you and your company must be in a position to change quickly. If we've learned anything from this event, it is that the only constant in life is change. Stay safe, healthy and adapt your life to allow change.

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Important new products, corporate news and industry events



Hamlin's new food hall in Winter Garden, A.G.'s Market [ey-jeez], pays homage to Arthur George Hamlin, who, in addition to his legal practice, grew oranges and developed the Hamlin Orange, which remains one of Florida's most popular. **A.G.'s Market, a 22,000-square-foot lakefront venue,** will provide an array of food, drink and retail options including craft burgers, pizza, a new twist on southern fried chicken, sushi, tacos, barbecue, plus dessert options and more from popular Central Florida brands as well as new to the Orlando market vendors. A second-floor indoor/outdoor bar will provide views of Lake Hancock and Disney's nightly fireworks. The project is in construction mode and to open in the fourth quarter of 2020. Hamlin Town Center – www.hamlinfl.com

Seated, a leading restaurant rewards platform, has expanded its offerings to include the industry's first rewards-driven pickup and delivery product with the recent launch of Seated at Home. As many restaurants remain closed for dine-in service or are open with capacity restrictions due to COVID-19, pickup and delivery continue to be large and essential revenue streams on their road to recovery.

However, with the fees charged by delivery platforms, the profit that goes back to the restaurant is severely limited. Unlike these other services, Seated does not charge restaurants a fee per delivery or take a cut of restaurant profits. Instead, Seated provides restaurants with the ability to incentivize consumers and drive demand by offering a percentage of their spend as a reward, which customers can then

redeem within the Seated Marketplace for credits with their favorite brands or donate to charity. Visit www.seatedapp.io

Madison Chemical introduces new literature that details MADISAN 75 (EPA #10324-81-110), a 4-chain quaternary sur-

face sanitizer that kills the Human Coronavirus. The 2-page, full-color

brochure explains how this disinfectant, mildew-stat, and virucide for hard, non-porous, and inanimate surfaces is ideal for a wide variety of installations, including industrial and manufacturing environments. In addition to the Human Coronavirus, MADISAN 75killstheHumanImmunodeficiency Virus Type 1

(HIV-1), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) and a variety of animal viruses specified on the EPA registered label. MADISAN 75 appears on EPA List N: Disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2. Copies of the brochure are available by request. In addition



cleaning, sanitation, and maintenance products for the following industries: hospitals and healthcare,

food and beverage, surface preparation, wastewater treatment, winery, pulp & paper, and others. Since 1947, they have served customers from their Madison, IN headquarters, and through a nationwide network of direct Technical Sales Representatives. Online at madchem.com.

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care/veterinary facilities, food and beverage processing plants, schools, restaurants, transporta-

tion, and more. Madison

Chemical is a chemical

formulator that provides



→ Bimal Shah, founder of Rajparth Achievers, a business coach and expert in government grants, has teamed with Edenark Group, to offer training for companies to become certified sustainable. "The goal is to help you

See WHAT'S GOING ON page 6







How technology is affecting the local restaurant industry

David Litchman ◆ Restauranteur and founder of BellyMelly

While we're all hopeful that the pandemic leaves us soon and life gets back to normal, the reality isn't that simple. We are now living in a "new normal"— one which values safety like never before. This new normal will require restaurateurs to manage their operations with social distancing in mind, including minimizing contact between customers and staff. As we continue to push forward,

restaurants will need to rely on technology more than ever before.

The rise of contactless dining technology

Contactless dining may seem like a great leap for restaurants and customers, but if you scour the web or look at the news, you will see that consumers are already welcoming this option with open arms. They see it as a safer

method than the old way, and their comfort levels in utilizing QR codes and mobile payments is increasing. There is a population of consumers who are reluctant to enter restaurants under the old rules and will value this new way of ordering.

In many cases the pandemic created an opportunity for restaurants that had robust online ordering systems. Those that were late to the party in adopting this technology were behind and had a hard time recovering. Here's my advice to restaurateurs: Don't make the same mistake twice. Implementing contactless dining technology is simple and will be appreciated by your customers and staff.

Reliance on takeout and delivery

While technology is revolutionizing the dining experience as we know it, it is important not to forget about takeout and delivery.

Restaurants operate on thin margins. From my experience, they average around 6%, after accounting for staff, rent, and the costs of food. There's not much room for error in the restaurant business. And with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the drop in customer demand is a further strain on the bottom line. Filling the gap caused by zero or limited in-person dining are pickup and delivery orders. For delivery, the market is now dominated by expansive third-party platforms.

The price of third-party platforms

The reach and ease-of-use of third-party providers (Grubhub, DoorDash, Uber Eats) is undeniable. They offer reliable technology with a streamlined ordering process. Their users receive numerous coupons and incentives. These companies also come with a steep price, in the form of commissions up to 30% for delivery orders. That's steep. And unsustainable in the long term for restaurant owners.

In the past few years, the big delivery companies counter talk about high fees by noting the exposure restaurants achieve. The idea being more exposure to takeout customers will drive further in-person visits, and thereby increase

overall margins. However, what happens when takeout simply encourages more takeout? A takeout/delivery-only model might appeal to some restaurant owners, but I feel it creates an "assembly line" of food production. Chefs enjoy seeing satisfied faces, the hum of a restaurant as all the moving parts come together harmoniously, not an assembly line of delivery orders.

I see a shift in thinking for restaurant owners. They will question if they're working tirelessly to make Uber Eats or DoorDash more profitable or focusing on their own bottom line. If the big delivery apps are a "necessary evil," do the negatives outweigh the benefits? To be sure, these large platforms can reach a huge local population, their apps are easy to use, and their network of drivers guarantee fast deliveries. But restaurants are businesses—they need to make money to survive and grow.

While some third-party platforms recently offered reduced fees, it took governmental action to put caps on commission fees in many cities. And these measures are temporary COVID-19-specific bandages. I worry some restaurants will become completely reliant on third-party orders. Not for the profits, but simply because they represent such a significant portion of their sales. Restaurants need better options. They need platforms that work with them to help them make a profit, rather than destroying the local restaurant economy.

As the future turns toward more technology, restaurants need to do the same. My advice? Lean into touchless dine-in technology, but do not compromise when it comes to takeout and delivery partners. Do your research, trust your gut, and find a third-party provider that works with you and not against you.

About BellyMelly is a food ordering solution designed to help local restaurateurs compete with third-party sites while allowing users the opportunity to give back to their local communities at no cost to them. BellyMelly understands the challenges restaurateurs face and works with operators to help design systems that benefit restaurants and its users. With 30 years of restaurant experience and almost 20 years of technology experience, BellyMelly's team is well-positioned to help the restaurant community. Online at bellymelly.com.





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What's Going Or

thrive in difficult times and achieve your three-year goal in one year," said Bimal Shah. "With the use of government grants, we are helping entrepreneurs achieve next level efficiencies, scalability, profitability and sales they never thought they would achieve." David Goodman is President and CEO of Edenark Group, provider of the world's premier sustainability certification program, the Edenark Group ISO 14001. With the help of Edenark Group, doing the Right Thing can lead to a Good Thing! For more information visit www.edenark.com.

Minfo is a touchless technology provider whose app customers can use to view and order off menus, and make payments from up to seven feet away

(compared to about an inch for Apple or Samsung pay). This means less passing items back and forth, less exchanging germs and more safety, which can help restaurants attract and retain customers who are nervous about public



dining. Minfo's founder and CEO is Roland Storti. The company can be reached at www.minfo.com

Squadle, a technology company that enables multi-unit operators to simplify complex operations and streamline

> food safety, is now offering their Squadle SenseTM Thermal Scanner, a new offering that enables restaurants, convenience stores and food retailers to screen employee and guest health. Squadle Sense combines contactless devices, mobile apps, and web analytics so individuals can safely self-screen and comply with regulatory requirements. "The new Thermal

Scanner provides restaurants with a way to adapt to the changing foodservice environment by providing temperature screening while social distancing in one simple product," said Le Zhang, co-founder, and CEO of Squadle.

"This is a logical extension for our platform, which currently delivers the industry's fastest and most accurate way to take temperatures for food safety compliance, and this new product brings the same proven technology to a restau-

rant's most important asset -- its workforce." Learn more at www.squadle.com

restaurants would implicate a mini-

five starts quality, American Range® is a recognized leader in the commercial food service industry. While experiencing the success of the heavy-duty hotel series Medallion® and the American Range® Restaurant Series, American Range made another commitment to the professional cooking community: To create exquisite energy-efficient equipment. American Range engineers and designers have created the perfect solution for kitchens with an intermediate use of their ranges such as retirement homes, churches, catering and community centers, firehouses and schools, where standing-pilot equipment normally used in hotels and

use whole fruits and vegetables, there's

no waste." This summer, Fruitive is upgrading its entire menu of juices, which

have been a staple since the first Fruitive

Inspired by product innovation and

location opened, with ProduceBlends.

mum 7000 BTU of gas waste per hour, besides the risk of a constant gas smell. The American Range Green Flame Range has an exclusive electronic on-demand ignition for gas burners, with a system

that detects flame loss. For all details visit www.americanrange.com

Fruitive, a leader in healthy, wholefood, plant-based meals in a fast casual setting, has announced its latest industry innovation with the launch of ProduceBlends, a new line of blended and vegetable beverages. ProduceBlends, which are made from

whole fruits and vegetables, offer a delinutricious, ent-dense alternative to cold-pressed juice. "This is the healthier way to drink fruits and veggies," said Rozeboom, Gregg founder and CEO of

Fruitive. "Our ProduceBlends are a major upgrade to the juices that have been one of our specialties since 2011. But ProduceBlends are more efficient and more sustainable. They're packed with 100% of the nutrition available from the ingredients we use, and because they

Vollrath Company expands its cleaning and safety equipment offering with another product that helps prevent the spread of germs and contaminants. The new double-sided hand washing station provides both customers and employees an easy and convenient

> space to wash their hands anywhere sanitation is of concern in a building. Outfitted with a pair of sinks separated by a safety guard, each side of the unit features a sink, faucet with foot pedal for hands-free operation, soap dispenser,

and towel dispenser. "In the current health crisis businesses are looking for ways they can help keep their employees and guests safe and this double-sided hand washing station is a convenient and versatile option," said Brian

See WHAT'S GOING ON page 12

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Marco's Pizza plans to expand in Florida

Palm Beach County expansion and projects to add 13 stores

West Palm Beach, FL - Marco's Pizza, one of the nation's fastest-growing pizza brands, recently announced expansion plans for Palm Beach County as it continues to innovate and adapt in the post-pandemic era. Amid the pandemic, Marco's Pizza outperformed other QSRs, recording historic sales milestones, while supporting communities nationwide. The brand plans to add 13 Palm Beach County locations by 2025 through strategic franchise partnerships.

With an open real estate market, three thriving locations under operation, and a favorable competitive landscape, Palm Beach County is an obvious and attractive area for growth. Recently, Hinesh Patel, franchisee of Marco's Pizza in Boynton Beach, experienced several weeks of record sales as it continues to serve its community with contactfree delivery and curbside carryout. Kickstarting the new development effort is franchise owner Johnny Wong, who is slated open his location at 1540 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. in Palm Beach this October. Marco's Pizza has an impressive \$918,047 average unit volume*, and is actively seeking single and multiunit owners to help grow its footprint throughout the populous county in areas such as West Palm Beach, Boca Raton, Delray Beach and beyond.

"There are 39 municipalities within Palm Beach County, with only three



Marco's Pizza locations. The open landscape, paired with positive market reception, makes the decision to expand an easy one," said Glenn Ajmo, Area Representative for Marco's Pizza.

"We're excited to grow our incredible network of franchise partners who truly showed resiliency amid the pandemic as we remained open and operating as essential businesses to serve our communities. As a people-first organization, our success was as simple as prioritizing the physical and financial health of our team – franchisees, employees and consumers. We look

forward to welcoming motivated franchisees to our team, who are eager to build and diversify their portfolios with a pizza brand rich in heritage and authenticity," added Mike Fletcher, Area Representative for Marco's Pizza.

Throughout the pandemic, Marco's Pizza accelerated several innovations and pilot programs to pivot and lead decisively in the post-pandemic era. "Our strength, resiliency, and ability to innovate and adapt allows us to remain steadfast and focused on our growth," said Ron Stillwell, VP & Chief Development Officer of Marco's Pizza.

"Whether it be the opening of our ghost kitchens across the country, the debut of a podular unit model, rapid adoption of third-party delivery, or the testing of robotic kitchen innovations – we're committed to the future of Marco's as we continue to push forward with new openings and signed agreements during this COVID era."

Opening a new store every three and a half days on average, Marco's Pizza projects to have 1,000 locations open by year-end. As the only national pizza franchise founded by a native Italian, Marco's Pizza has carved out a niche in the industry for authentic Italian quality pizza, known for its fresh dough made daily onsite, a proprietary cheese blend that is fresh, never-frozen, and a secret original pizza sauce recipe from its founder Pat Giammarco.

"We got here by doing things the Italian way, because when your founder is a native Italian, you take pride in serving authentic Italian quality. Our dedication to quality has made us one of the fastest growing pizza chains in America, providing plenty of primo moments and opportunities along the way."

Marco's Pizza operated by Marco's Franchising, LLC, is an American restaurant chain and interstate franchise based in Toledo, Ohio, that specializes in Italian-American cuisine. The first store was opened in Oregon, Ohio. It was founded by Italian immigrant Pasquale "Pat" Giammarco in 1978. Online at marcos.com



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How restaurants can bounce back from the shutdown

Sacramento, CA – The Coronavirus shutdown is like nothing we have experienced in our lifetime, and it has been especially devastating to the restaurant industry.

As the nation's second largest private-sector employer, the food service industry could lose \$225 billion of the \$899 billion in projected annual revenue by the end of the year, according to the National Restaurant Association. As reopening measures vary greatly from state to state and city to city, including restricted seating and reduced hours, it may be worse for businesses in harder hit areas. Also, after federal-loan funds run dry, the pressure to stimulate sales will become even more intense.

In times of recession or down markets, advertisers typically cut or eliminate advertising spends. For example, \$60.5 billion in global ad spending evaporated during the Great Recession and took eight years for agencies to fully recover, according to WARC research group. Already, due to COVID-19, overall spending for digital ads is down 38 percent in March and April, and TV spending is down 41 percent versus planned levels.

Kevin Howe, an experienced digital marketer, warns against being part of

these statistics. "Executed properly. digital marketing more than pays for itself with the assurance that every dollar spent is generating an incremental dollar amount of revenue, imperative in the current business climate."

It can be incredibly expensive for small and mid-sized restaurant companies to pay for the expertise and resources needed to be successful. Unanticipated costs can include SEO, paid search, content, social media, website or app design, analytics, technology, hardware, software and subscriber-service costs needed to plan, implement and analyze digital, mobile and social marketing.

In an effort to save money, many restaurateurs try to manage digital marketing in-house, a cost-cutting measure that can backfire. "In a strong economy there's so much business to go around that shoddy or inconsistent digital marketing practices often go unpunished. But not so in a down market when you have to make sure every marketing dollar works," advises Howe.

His firm, Three29, a leading Sacramento-based digital marketing agency that launched in 2010 on the heels of the Great Recession, is

experiencing unprecedented growth even in spite of the Coronavirus pandemic and shutdown. The agency has added more than \$1.9 million in capitalized billings in just the past month, much of it attributed to restaurants looking to lead the pack as states re-open.

"We are digital marketing experts with a laser focus on advertising ROI, which is the only metric that really counts right now," says Founder Kevin Howe. "Our ability to launch a campaign or platform in weeks versus months in the current COVID-19 environment can buoy our restaurant clients as they return to in-house operations."

Sacramento-based TBar Tea & Fusion Café needed to solidify their brand image, grown online and mobile ordering revenue and build their loyalty program in order to boost sales. Three29 updated and simplified the logo and marketing materials and adopted the moniker 'TBar' to facilitate brand recognition and engagement. With the new brand design, a responsive website to enhance mobile ordering and loyalty program signups was developed. To reflect a youthful, health-oriented audience, graphics emphasizing fresh ingredients were featured in content marketing and advertising across appropriate social media platforms.

Results included a 70 percent increase in followers, 500 percent increase in engagement and 1,554 percent increase in daily impressions, all contributing to \$4,000 in additional sales over 14 days.

The team at Three29 is capable of producing similar results for quick service restaurants across the country and offers digital marketing strategies and tactics restaurants can use to bring back customers while setting up the business for long-term success.

Three29 is a leading digital marketing and technology agency headquartered in Sacramento, California, with a focus on providing insights and innovations to grow clients' business. The 10-year old agency has capitalized billings of over \$12 million with clients such as Mikuni restaurants, Selland's, Buckhorn Steakhouse, Bogle Vineyards, Facebook and also iHeart Media.

Kevin Howe is the president and founder of $Three 29, a\ digital\ marketing\ agency\ with\ a\ focus\ on$ delivering innovative digital marketing and technology solutions to grow their clients' businesses.



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Time to consider "justified disinfection"

Well-intentioned disinfecting is potentially harmful



Health risks include neurological, dermatological, and reproductive problems as well as an array of respiratory ailments. Newark, DE - According to a June 2020 report released in Bloomberg Law, "businesses across the U.S. have begun intensive COVID-19 disinfection regimes [that may be] exposing workers and consumers to chemicals that are largely untested for human health."*

The report says this is "alarming health and environmental safety experts," because disinfectants can be harmful to cleaning workers as well as building users.

Health risks include neurological, dermatological, and reproductive problems as well as an array of respiratory ailments.

These businesses almost certainly believe they are doing the best thing for their personnel and customers. Indeed, many of the disinfectants now in use are part of the Environmental Protection Agency's List N, a list of disinfectants approved by the EPA to kill the novel coronavirus.

Although they are effective against the pathogen, however, "this doesn't mean they ... are considered safe with regard to human health," says Lesliam Quirós-Alcalá, an assistant professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

See DISINFECTANT page 14



Hospitality fund sets goal of \$100K

SipSciene sets goal for Bartenders Support Foundation

SipScience, a national data analytics hospitality company for consumers, bars, and restaurants, will continue with its fundraising initiative titled 'Hospitality Industry Associates Fund' in support of individuals in the bar industry community who are affected by COVID-19. The goal for the fundraiser is \$100,000.

All proceeds will directly benefit The USBG National Charity Foundation, an organization dedicated to advancing the lifelong stability and wellbeing of service industry professionals through education and charitable activities. The USBG National Charity Foundation strives to achieve their mission through three programmatic pillars: Social Responsibility, Community Service, and Philanthropy.

SipScience's Co-CEO, Ayan Roy said, "Time and again, hospitality workers welcome us warmly and wait on us at our favorite bars and

See \$100K FUND page 12

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Full service restaurants continue to struggle

Quick service restaurants fuel improvement in customer transaction declines in week ending July 5th

Chicago, IL - Customer transactions at major U.S. restaurant chains declined by -10% in the week ending July 5 compared to same period year ago, an improvement over last week's decline of -14%, reports The NPD Group. All of the improvement in the week sources to major quick service restaurant chains (QSRs) where customer transaction declines improved by 4-points from the prior week's decline of -13% versus year ago. Full service restaurants (FSRs) continued to struggle in the week with customer transactions down -30% compared to year ago, a 5-point decline from the prior week, according to NPD's CREST® Performance Alerts, which provides a rapid weekly view of chain-specific transactions and share trends for 72 quick service, fast casual, midscale, and casual dining chains.

"We are entering a new phase of the restaurant industry evolution: the divergence of quick service restaurants and full service restaurants," says David Portalatin, NPD food industry advisor and author of Eating Patterns in America . "Long before anyone ever heard of social distancing, consumers were showing an increasing preference for off-premise restaurant meals. Then suddenly this March, we entered a reality where the entire restaurant industry was off-premise only. That harsh reality was far harsher for FSRs, a segment that saw transaction declines near -80% or worse at the depth of the pandemic in

Then suddenly this March, we entered a reality where the entire restaurant industry was off-premise only.

the U.S. In contrast, QSR declines were roughly half as severe thanks to their abundance of drive-thru windows, capacity for high volume pick-up, and the ability of large QSR chains to leverage digital apps as an accelerant as well as provide a contactless experience."

Two things have happened since dine-in services were closed in mid-March, according to Portalatin. The first is that QSR chains have doubled down on their off-premise prowess with streamlined menus optimized for volume and efficiency and by expanding drive-thru capacity with reconfigured traffic flow and added lanes. These changes are among the reasons QSRs have continued to improve, whether or not their state and local authorities have granted reopening of dining rooms. Given this new off-premise capacity, many QSR chain operators have found the incremental cost of opening a dining



room to be greater than any incremental margin dollars they might gain and are remaining closed even when governing bodies allow reopening. Secondly, FSR performance remains largely at the mercy of governmental regulation and the persistence of the coronavirus. For many FSRs, making

the pivot to off-premise is far more difficult, he says. These restaurants can employ similar tactics as QSRs, like streamlined menus, temporary drive-thrus made of pop-up canopies, and traffic cones, but none of these tactics play to the inherent strengths of these restaurants. Furthermore, as on-premise dining restrictions are lifted, many FSR operators are forced to dismantle much of their temporary off-premise infrastructure so that guests can park, have a waiting area that allows for social distancing, and labor can be redirected to the front of the house. Many FSRs are now faced with shutting down again.

The NPD Group –NPD.com - offers data, industry expertise, and prescriptive analytics to help you grow your business in a changing world. With offices in 30 cities across the Americas, Europe, and Asia-Pacific, we help you measure, predict, and improve performance across all channels.

Giannis from page 1

brothers can resist."

Dedicated to raising the bar of true Greek coffee techniques and food in America, GFG Café Cuisine is a fast casual destination that offers an authentic experience and high-quality, flavorful food imported straight from Greece.

"For years I have been looking for a way to go back to Greece at any moment and now I have found it," Antetokounmpo added. "GFG gives me the opportunity to share with America everything we love in Greek everyday life and which knows no boundaries. For many years, America has been giving me and my family opportunities to sample and appreciate so many different experiences and cultures. Now it's time for us to return the favor. I'm sure that America will love our culture and our flavors and will adopt them as a way of life."

Just like Antetokounmpo, GFG Café Cuisine is showing rapid growth. For GFG Café Cuisine, the first half of 2020 included a merger and rebranding of its largest competitor in Manhattan; a 31-unit expansion across Long Island and Stamford, New York; and the announcement of its first franchise location in Philadelphia. The recent expansions will increase GFG Café Cuisine's footprint to more than 41 locations, making them the dominant brand in Greek cuisine. With more deals in the pipeline, the concept projects more than 100 units will either be open or in progress by the end of the year.

"They are a freight train barreling across the country," said Dan Rowe, founder and CEO of Fransmart, GFG Café Cuisine's franchising partner. "GFG continues to sign deals, build, and open locations, even during this unusual time for the restaurant industry. Their team is highly motivated and is creating incredible opportunities for all-star franchisees."

GFG Café Cuisine CEO and Founder Georgios Drosos and a group of successful businessmen with high levels of industry experience and knowledge opened the first location in 2017 to long lines and delighted customers.

"We feed our customers 'the Greek Way' as we would feed our family at home," said Drosos. "All of our foods are based exclusively on 776 authentic Greek products carefully curated from the best farmland for olive and citrus groves, vineyards, wheat fields and beehives. We know good food, and we are here to share it with the world."

GFG Café Cuisine is currently seeking experienced multi-unit foodservice operators and scouting potential markets across the country and internationally. Those interested in joining GFG Café Cuisine as franchisees will get support from start to finish, from site selection expertise and sample floor plans to custom training systems and localized brand building.

About Greek From Greece Café Cuisine: Led by a core team from Greece that can best be described as "traditional pioneers" dedicated to raising the bar of true Greek coffee techniques and food in America, GFG Café Cuisine (GFG) provides visitors with a friendly, comfortable environment, and a high-quality, homemade taste experience with every bite. GFG is the only bakery in which all products are made in Greece. The concept's wheat, olives, corn, and tomatoes grow under the Greek sun and the beneficial sea breeze before being imported to all GFG locations. The concept also perfectly aligns with the universal shift towards organic natural ingredients, and the growing popularity of the Mediterranean Diet as the premier paradigm of healthy, natural eating.

About Fransmart: As the leading franchise development firm in the country, Fransmart - fransmart.com - turns emerging restaurant concepts into successful national and global brands. Founded by Dan Rowe, the man who identified and grew brands such as Five Guys Burgers & Fries and QDOBA Mexican Grill from single unit businesses to the powerhouse chains they are today, Fransmart's formula for success is finding emerging brands ripe for expansion and building successful multi-unit franchise businesses across the U.S. and globally. Fransmart's current and past franchise development portfolio brands have opened more than 5,000 restaurants worldwide, and facilitated franchise investments that have cumulatively generated 1-billion in revenues to date.



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Three ways restaurant operations audits will change post-COVID-19

By Mark Seibert

CEO at iFranchise Group

Some of franchising's best success stories come from within the restaurant industry. But even some of the best brands struggle to meet their growth and revenue projections. Throw in a pandemic, and operations (when they are able to resume) present new challenges. For many restaurants – franchised or not – an operations audit can help.

Simply put, a restaurant audit involves an in-depth review of existing operations to identify areas for improvement. The end result of any audit is a written report with specific recommended action steps that the franchisor (or franchisor-to-be) should undertake in each audited area.

- 1. Optimizing costs. It's safe to say that all business owners were forced to take a hard look at all of their costs when operations were halted or curtailed due to the pandemic. Going forward, they will be even more motivated to operate as cost effectively as possible. A restaurant audit helps ensure that controls over food costs, labor and waste are in line with best practices.
- 2. Maximizing revenue opportunities. None of us knows how long



dine-in restrictions will stay in place or whether another round of shut-downs is on the horizon. The answers could change market to market. An audit can identify ways to increase opportunities for delivery and to-go orders and help maximize dine-in revenues.

3. Improved safety. Restaurant audits have always included sanitation and food safety review. Now they will need to help clients to evaluate and improve their policies and practices

for sanitizing, social distancing, use of protective gear and guest communications around these issues.

Restaurant franchisors who survive the onslaught of the pandemic will soon find themselves with a unique opportunity. The huge number of failed restaurant locations around the country will provide the survivors with numerous opportunities for expansion in prime locations with substantially reduced investments and occupancy costs. And these opportunities will come at a time when the number of displaced restaurant executives is at an all-time high and interest rates are at an all-time low. But in order to take advantage of these opportunities, these survivors need to be able to demonstrate that they can survive even in a worst-case scenario.

For existing franchisors or companies on the verge of franchising their restaurant, it is vitally important to have all your systems streamlined, efficient and safe. Undertaking a restaurant operations audit can provide valuable guidance.

About iFranchise Group: The iFranchise Group is a franchise development and consulting firm that provides a variety of services to start-up franchisors, established franchisors, dealer/licensor organizations converting to franchisors, and companies exploring the feasibility of franchising or other alternate channels of distribution (licensing, dealerships, etc.) Franchise Consulting services for start-up franchisors include market research, business planning, financial analysis, operations manuals, training programs and videos, online learning, franchise marketing plans, franchise brochures, franchise sales videos, website optimization, franchise sales training, and ongoing coaching on "how to franchise." Franchise consulting services for established franchisors include overall performance audits, franchise sales improvement. franchise marketing improvement, franchisee relations, expert witness services, acquisition due diligence, and general franchise problem resolution. Online at ifranchisegroup.com.

Mark Seibert is CEO at iFranchise Group. Email him at msiebert@ifranchise.net.

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companies on consumer behavior pat-Mark Wagner

Waterfront dining experience Water Pig BBQ is now open. Owned and oper-

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ated by Innisfree Hotels, operator of

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What's Going Or

five hotels and three other restaurants in Pensacola Beach, the Santa Rosa Sound's newest restaurant features open-air seating, water views and family-friendly entertainment. The restaurant was designed by

a Concentrics Restaurants team led by legendary Atlanta restaurateur and James Beard nominee Bob Amick. With award-winning pitmaster Steve Seige presiding, Water Pig BBQ is already collaborating with local farms to source ingredients for its menu. Most recently a smokehouse operator in Central Michigan, Seige has more than 10,000 hours of experience operating various BBQ smokers. On Pensacola Beach, he now has a 4,300-pound smoker at his disposal. It can handle up to 700 pounds of meat at a time. Water Pig BBQ - waterpigbbq.com - is located across the street from Hilton Pensacola Beach at 5 Via De Luna Drive.

To help foodservice operators incorporate trending flavors from around the world on menus, McCormick for Chefs has launched five McCormick Culinary Blends. Pre-blended to ensure consistent flavor and help save on labor costs, these spices were developed to make it easy for chefs to tap into the latest global tastes. According to Technomic, 24% of consumers, and specifically 36% of millennials, purchase ethnic fare from restaurants at least once a week. McCormick For Chefs has more than 450 products in its foodservice portfolio from leading flavor brands like Cattlemen's, Frank's RedHot, French's, Grill Mates, Lawry's, McCormick Culinary, OLD BAY, Stubb's, Thai Kitchen, and Zatarain's. For menu ideas, trend insights, and more info visit www.mccormickforchefs.com

Barron Collier Co. and Metro Commercial Development Group broke ground earlier this year on

Founders Square, a 55acre mixed-use development in Naples. The Pointe, a collection of restaurants and other service and retail tenants, will anchor the project. At full buildout, the project will include The Haldeman, a 400-

unit multifamily complex; a 35,000-sq. ft. medical office building adjacent to The Pointe, and more. Founders Square is located at the corner of Immokalee Road and Collier Boulevard. Developers expect the property to be delivered in summer 2021.

In its continuous efforts to help combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, P&O Global Technologies, Inc., an international leader in surveillance camera systems and other sophisticated technology, is now offer-

ing its new Check Point Temperature Pedestal, featuring a hands-free sanitizer dispenser by Moksha Design Inc, based in Doral. The compact, lightweight and durable device includes temperature measurement, face mask and a mask compliance alert, and a handsfree hand sanitizer dispenser. "The Check Point Temperature Pedestal provides several very important tools to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in one device," said Maurizio Pejoves, director of P&O Global Technologies. "It is highly accurate, and ultimately can help save lives. In addition, Moksha Design Inc can brand the entire unit for any business or or-

ganization, further imprinting any brand's name with customers."

\$100K Fund

restaurants, and now it's our turn to take action. We will help our industry in every way, angle, and means to drive relief for those who are affected by this pandemic."

SipSciene is slated to launch its official app, Sip, in select cities around the United States later this summer. The Sip app is designed to advantage each part of its three-pillar ecosystem of venues, consumers, and alcohol companies by providing real-time data for marketing terns on alcohol purchases made inside restaurants and bars- all with meaningful perks for the consumer.

SipSciene is a data analytics Hospitality Company that provides a first to the world picture about what is happening inside bars and restaurants so consumers, alcohol venues and brands can modernize their experience.

The USBG National Charity Organization was sparked into being when a United States Bartenders' Guild member dared to ask "how do I get out of this industry alive, with my health, a little money, and my sanity intact?" Shaken by this candid outlook on our industry, we committed the Foundation's mission to advance the lifelong stability & wellbeing of professionals industry through education & charitable activities. "We at the USBG National Charity Foundation strive to achieve our mission through three programmatic pillars: Social Responsibility (Health & Wellness: physical, financial, and mental), Community Service, and Philanthropy."

10 ways to update a menu for pick-up for delivery

By Matt Maroni

Director of Kitchen Design Implementation for Kitchen United

As the food industry continues to get hit hard by COVID-19, many restaurants have had to pivot their business models seemingly overnight. Going from a solely or primarily dine-in establishment to pick-up and delivery may seem like a daunting task in the midst of a crisis, but as a company built to streamline and grow success in takeout and delivery, Kitchen United is going all out to help restaurants navigate these unprecedented times.

"In our last webinar hosted by Jim Collins, CEO of Kitchen United, he discussed how to optimize pick-up and delivery–fast. Joined by Larrah Palwak, Senior Director of Operations at Kitchen United, Matt Marroni, Director of Kitchen Implementation at Kitchen United, and Elizabeth Villa, Director of Digital Strategy at Kitchen United, they discussed the key ways to make the sudden transition as smooth as possible."

Make the necessary updates to your dine-in menu for pick-up and delivery.

The main aspects to focus on are:

- Operations. Enhance or change the direction of your current operations to reflect what is needed now. This includes prioritizing the safety and sanitation of your teams, partners, vendors, and consumers, as well as reevaluating all aspects of your daily operations—from your operating hours to labor and deployment.
- ◆ FOH updates. Make the appropriate changes to your physical setup to adhere to social distancing guidelines and facilitate pick-up orders. Take care of your staff by giving them everything they need to maximize efficiency.
- ◆ Facilitate new to-go options. Offer curbside pick-up and use signage to clearly communicate how your customers can order. You can try instituting internal delivery so you have more control of the labor and experience.
- ▶ **Kitchen adjustments.** Logistically, this includes working in teams, scheduling time and stations to sanitize, and removing barriers to optimize the flow for the new volume of pick-up and delivery orders.
- Marketing efforts. Ramp up the way you communicate with your current audience, by finding easy ways to provide up-to-date information such as changes in operating hours, new menu items, or weekly specials in real time.
- Menu. Make the necessary updates to your dine-in menu for pick-up and delivery.

In these uncertain times, your menu is a great way to stay connected to your audience. As you streamline your offerings to meet the demands of pick-up and delivery, remember that your menu is also an opportunity to deliver what



your community needs. Here are 10 key ways to update your menu for pick-up and delivery:

- 1. Offer a limited menu. Start by scaling back to 6-8 menu items, cutting out dishes that take up individual prep time and aren't multi-purpose. Focus on top sellers and high margins, and offer at least one dish that puts the customer in control like a build-your-own option.
- **2.** Think about your form factor. Most online orders are sent through mobile apps, so take the user's experience into consideration. When the form factor is small like a cell phone, having a limited menu actually increases sales.
- **3. Offer comfort foods.** In this current climate, people are reaching for comfort foods and feeling less adventurous. Your offerings should reflect those customer preferences.
- **4. Focus on convenience.** Dishes that are easy to reheat and require little prep are extremely popular right now, as are family-style meals because of their large portion sizes. And if you can package meals in one container, even better. Do your best to minimize the steps your customers need to take to enjoy a hot meal.
- **5. Payattention to price point.** Offer what your customers are used to, but remember that most people are opting for lower priced items right now. We recommend keeping the value between \$10-12, and avoiding prices increase on regular menu items for the time being.
- **6. Don't forget drinks.** If your state allows alcohol purchases, package cocktails and alcohol to go so that your customers can enjoy their favorite drinks even while your dining room is closed.
- **7. Get creative.** Consider frozen and CPG on signature sauces or customer favorites that you can easily produce in bulk. This is a great way to stay connected to your community while also meeting their needs.
- **8. Work with your vendors.** Before making any menu adjustments, it's a good practice to check inventory levels with your vendors first.

9. Add grocery store staples/pantry items. Think of restaurant bulk items that are hard to find in stores and make them easily available to the community. These items are not about profit margin, but more keeping your restaurant's experience relevant to the

 $community\ your\ serve.$

10. Keep it simple. Stay connected with your audience and design a menu that offers what they want and need. You know your customers best, and you can use your menu to showcase that even while the dining room is closed.



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New contactless features added to ConnectSmart Kitchen and DineTime

Louisville, KY In response to the demand that the global pandemic has created for restaurants to comply with social distancing measures, QSR Automations, a leading provider of kitchen automation and guest management solutions announced the addition of new contactless features within ConnectSmart Kitchen and DineTime.



QSR Automations' ConnectSmart Kitchen (CSK) or DineTime customers can now:

• Easily create and print QR codes to join the waitlist. This new touchless feature provides diners with a contactless way to join the waitlist for a restaurant. With a QR code, guests can easily scan the code safely from their own device and join the waitlist through DineTime.

- ◆ Add a dynamic QR code link to seater receipts, allowing operators to point guests to any relevant website including digital menus, loyalty programs, COVID-19 policies, promotional offers or online payment options from the comfort of their own device.
- ◆ Leverage two-way SMS to notify diners of order status updates from ConnectSmart Kitchen, including when the order is complete allowing for no-contact pickup.

QSR Automations CEO Lee Leet said, "As the restaurant industry continues recovery efforts from the pandemic, we're going to see more and more social distancing measures required. These latest feature enhancements provide simple ways operators can ease hesitations and offer safe environments for both on-premise and off-premise diners."

About QSR Automations: QSR Automations is headquartered in Louisville, KY, is a global technology company with leading positions in kitchen automation and guest management services. Since 1996, we have empowered independent, multi-unit, and large chain operators with smart management solutions that improve the dining experience and make restaurants of any size and concept more successful. Working side-by-side with customers, we develop customized solutions that integrate seamlessly to add more efficiency, insights, and better control for restaurant operations. Online at grautomations.com.

Disinfectant from page 9

Other experts agree. According to Steve Teasdale, cofounder and vice president of Scientific Affairs at InnuScience, a global leader in commercial cleaning systems based on biotechnology, "systematic overuse of disinfectants is common [and] has grown worse due to the pandemic. What we need is 'justified disinfection' to address this problem."



Teasdale defines "justified disinfection" as:

The principle that effective cleaning using high-quality detergents across non-critical touch surfaces is as effective, if not more effective, than the widespread, systematic use or abusive use of disinfectants.

This is the basis of "RESTART program: Guide for FM cleaning/commercial offices reopening post

lockdown," a new white paper InnuScience has just published

The paper explains that critical surfaces include high-touch surfaces; noncritical areas include floors, ceilings, most walls, and other surfaces rarely touched by building users.

Along with discussing justified disinfection, the paper explains what biotechnology cleaning solutions are, how they are used, and why interest in this green technology is growing worldwide.

"We understand businesses were caught off guard by the coronavirus and rushed to find ways to keep their facilities healthy," says Teasdale. "But now is the time to step back and reevaluate our cleaning procedures, especially when it comes to the use of disinfectants."

*Arianne Cohen, "Rush to Disinfect U.S. Offices Has Some Health Experts Worried," Bloomberg Law, June 15, 2020, news.bloomberglaw.com/coronavirus/rush-to-disinfect-u-s-offices-has-some-health-experts-worried.

About InnuScience: InnuScience has established itself as a key leader in biotechnology-based cleaning products. Backed by 27 years of research, InnuScience is at the forefront of shaping eco-friendly cleaning. With a reputation for effective products and excellent service, InnuScience prides itself on high performance products that are environmentally responsible, reduce health and safety risks, and are competitively priced. Online at www. innuscience.com.

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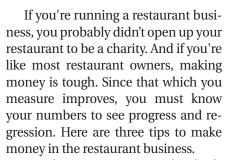
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How to make money in the restaurant business

David Scott Peters ◆ Restaurant Expert and Coach



Number one: it starts with a budget. Restaurant owners hate this word. It's a dirty word in the restaurant business. But it's how you make money! The budget you need is not the document you put together when you went to ask for money to open in the first place. We all went to the bank and said, "Please give me money, please, please, please," and here's what I think I'm going to do, and it collects dust. A year later you look at it and go, "what was I thinking?"

That's not a budget. The budget sets your targets for every single month and you measure on a routine basis. You take our profit and loss (P&L) statement and measure right up against it.

This brings me to number two:

have timely and accurate P&L statements. Now, this means you have to take control of your chart of accounts. You don't have a CPA tell you what your chart of accounts should be. Now, if they're restaurant specialized, they should suggest a chart of accounts, but all too often I see things like Uber Eats as a sales category. That's a payment method? I'll see things like food cost, and then I see something called liquor cost, and that has bottled beer, craft beer, wine, liquor. Liquor isn't a category by itself. You need to split those things up.

I see things like front-of-house labor, back-of-house labor, salaried labor, hourly wages; I need that broken up by position. For every line item I go down, if I look at your P&L, and I say, "What goes in this number?" and you say, "I don't know, I have to call my accountant," that is a crap chart of accounts. You have to tell your accountant what that chart of accounts looks like and split everything up so you can have accurate numbers. Then you need to provide that data to your accountant and/or bookkeeper as fast

The budget sets your targets for every single month and you measure on a routine basis.

as possible each month so they can get the numbers back to you within five days after they received them. When you have accurate and timely P&Ls and a budget, you can see where you hit or miss, and you can adjust.

That brings me to the third piece: when you put the budget and P&L side by side, and you need to make an adjustment, that is the budget variance report. When you see where you hit or miss, you can make adjustments through the next 11 months, next 10 months, the next 9 months, to make sure you make up the money you may

have lost or not earned that you were expecting.

Then I want you thinking about weekly budget variance reports for your prime cost, cost of goods sold, and labor cost. That way, if you're off in one week, you can work with your management team to make adjustments that week. You can make small adjustments to make the money back.

See? That which we measure improves. If you want to make more money in your restaurant business, you must understand your numbers. That's a budget, accurate and timely P&Ls, and budget variances.

David Scott Peters is an author, restaurant coach and speaker who teaches restaurant operators how to use his trademark Restaurant Prosperity Formula to cut costs and increase profits. His first book, Restaurant Prosperity Formula: What Successful Restaurateurs Do, teaches the systems and traits to develop to run a profitable restaurant. Known as THE expert in the restaurant industry, he uses a no-BS style to teach and motivate restaurant owners to take control of their businesses and finally realize their full potential. Thousands of restaurants have used his formula to transform their businesses. To learn more about David Scott Peters, his formula for restaurant success, his book, or his online courses, visit davidscottpeters.com.

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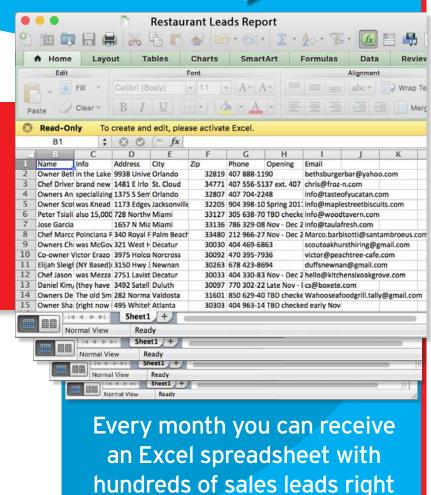
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