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## **CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR RUNNING A RESTAURANT BUSINESS IN A PANDEMIC**

***Summary.** The hotel and restaurant industry has been considered one of the most successful types of small business in recent decades. After all, the funds that are invested in this activity return 6 times faster than the funds that are invested in any other area.*

*But unfortunately, today the hospitality industry is considered to be one of the most affected businesses from the global crisis caused by COVID–19.*

*As a result, the owners of restaurants and hotels were forced to close, change the format of production, dispose of raw materials that suppliers delivered to the establishments, a large number of hotels due to lack of tourists ceased operations. Even after the quarantine restrictions have been eased, this area is just beginning to regain its economic momentum. Owners who have managed to keep up with the influx have had to take the following measures: additional funds for personal protective equipment, stickers with appropriate distance marking, develop additional instructions for work in the institution and reception, and of course restrictions on the holding of ceremonial events, accompanied by banquets, dinners, buffets and the appropriate number of persons entitled to sit at one table.*

*However, under severe restrictions, business owners and their chefs were allowed to look at running this type of small business from the other side, as a result of creative and bold ideas of the owners, which helped some establishments not only not to close but also to become popular.*

**Key words:** *pandemic, hospitality, cooking box, online restaurant.*

**Statement of the problem:** There is a sharp decline in hospitality in Ukraine and around the world today, a factor linked to the global coronavirus epidemic. In today's conditions in this area, it is necessary to impress guests with its innovative approach to doing this type of business and adhere to quarantine restrictions.

Looking at the static data for 2019–2020, we can conclude that many institutions that could not keep the guest closed, because the introduction of strict quarantine restrictions has led to the need to create modern, interesting and new format institutions, respectively, which are adapted to modern life [1, p. 121; 2, p. 364; 3, p. 383].

Today, restaurant businesses are rethinking their business in terms of the Internet and its new culture and opportunities.

**Analysis of recent researches and publications:** Powerful is the direction of research work, which was formed at the National University of Food Technology, Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics, Kharkiv State University of Food and Trade, universities in the United States and Great Britain. A significant number of scientific publications in the direction of solving global problems that have befallen the world as a result of the pandemic, which has significantly affected the field of restaurant services. Attention is paid to the development of creative and conceptual institutions, with a new concept and format of doing business and, of course, compliance with all sanitary and epidemiological norms.

It is proved that the prospects of this sphere are not only in the economy of the state but also in the world.

**Formulation purposes of article (problem):** Highlights and suggestions for resolving the crisis that hit the hospitality industry practical recommendations on the example of successful establishments that were able to return guests after knockdowns .

**The main material:** The growing pace of modern life is becoming more mobile (users of mobile devices have ample opportunities to purchase restaurant products through convenient applications). Promising dominance of information and communication technologies creates not only the possibility of maintaining viability during the global fight against the pandemic, but also new prospects for the development of restaurant business enterprises through the introduction of alternative innovative solutions [4, p. 2].

Mobile applications in virtual objects have led to the emergence of creative directions for the development of restaurant businesses and their approach to consumers. Today, the consumer can order culinary meals without leaving home, work or in other various situations that limit the appropriate time to visit the restaurant business. Interactive technologies allow the consumer to watch how culinary dishes are prepared through a webcam in the kitchen. Michelin–starred chef Massimo Bottura stayed at home for the time of quarantine and launched a culinary show «Kitchen Quarantine» on Instagram. Several times a week, he and his family prepare dinner and share culinary experiences. Many people who are forced to stay at home are interested to see the experience of the Michelin boss.

Well–known Ukrainian chefs also began to actively develop their food blog during the pandemic. The brightest chefs of Ukraine, who actively ran social pages, answered questions and organized online marathons: Volodymyr Yaroslavsky, Olga Martynovska, Yevhen Klopotenko, Denis Shagov, Alisa Cooper, Eduard Nasyrov are the most famous, these chefs impressed the people

of Ukraine incredible and at the same time simple recipes and an amazing combination of various ingredients.

As a result, after the quarantine restrictions were lifted, a large number of guests began to visit their establishments, because during the quarantine consumers saw famous chefs from the other side, namely without a team of talented and promising assistants, they also proved that it is possible, and not only from the exotic.

But not only chefs have focused on the development of social pages, but also restaurateurs are actively involved and invest in the development of this tool for promotion, ie the restaurant business and its brand through the use of social media, the content of which is created or updated. namely, social media marketing (SMM) [4, p. 2; 5, p. 1; 6, p. 93].

Because last year not only in Ukraine but in the world there was a global digitalization: menu by QR-code, pages in social networks, sites, telegram channels, etc. The way the guest chooses the establishment has also changed: people communicate less in person, more – through messengers.

Among the popular platforms used by consumers are not only the popular «Facebook», «Instagram» and «Twitter», but also the social Internet service and photo hosting «Pinterest», the business social network «LinkedIn», microblogging services «Tumblr» and «Flickr», video hosting «YouTube» and «Vimeo», new formats for hosting video files «Coub», «Vine», as well as individual messengers «WhatsApp», «Viber» and «Telegram». It is the maintenance of these social pages by experts is the key to the success of the introduction of this type of business.

However, it is necessary not only to run your blog successfully, but also to look for new approaches, formats of doing this type of business.

That is why the owners of establishments around the world are in search of innovative solutions, from changing the format of the establishment to individual capsules, so that guests are at a safe distance from each other [4, p. 1].

One of the creative networks in Ukraine was Chernomorka LLC, the owners of the institution launched the country's first online restaurant.

That is, in a real-time virtual establishment, guests have the opportunity to chat with waiters, place orders, choose from a shop window fish or seafood from which they wanted to cook for them and get a ready order quickly enough.

To visit the online restaurant you need to go from any device to the page of the institution, choose a waiter for the photo posted on the site, after which the system will automatically launch a direct video link in the browser with the team of LLC «Chernomorki», except video communication, guests have access to an online chat function, where they can write during the time as the order is executed, the message will be received by the waiter who serves the guest.

The waiter accepts the order and forms it, the guest has the opportunity to either pick up the dish at the point of delivery, or through delivery, payment for the order in the online establishment is made in two formats – cash or non-cash.

Keeping your distance when visiting restaurants is the first and key safety measure. Some entrepreneurs took it literally and offered certain solutions, namely in Germany, the institution «Burger King» was able to adapt their branded cardboard crowns to the requirements, ie simply increased them in diameter, so guests keep their distance from each other.

In Schwern, Germany, the owners of the Rote café offered guests straw hats with foam poles attached to them.

Also, some owners, in order to limit the number of guests at the tables, put soft toys behind them, or improvised cardboard guests.

In Amsterdam, in order to maintain social distance in the institution, introduced transparent capsules, which accommodate tables for two. In turn, almost at the same time as their Dutch counterparts, Ukrainian restaurateurs created bubbles for their guests. In particular, the Lviv restaurant «Very High Kitchen» has installed domed transparent greenhouses around the tables on the roof of the building on Rynok Square.

Owners of gourmet restaurants with Michelin stars were even more desperate than ordinary entrepreneurs, because guests visited their establishments not only because of the impeccable service, but also got aesthetic pleasure from the dishes, due to their design, that is why these dishes using shipping containers are inappropriate.

The owners of the restaurant «Narisawa» in Tokyo, which is among the top 20 best restaurants in the world, have created appropriate delivery chains that combine the brand aesthetics of the restaurant and ease of transportation. In addition, they have introduced an additional «Keep in touch with the farmer» service, encouraging their guests to buy vegetables from partner farms with which the restaurant itself works.

Brat Restaurant, one of London's top establishments, has become a high-quality fresh food store during quarantine. At the time, The Cheese Bar, a British chain of cheese restaurants, launched a transport to deliver food to various parts of the UK.

The delivery schedule is published on the restaurant's website, and guests can come on a certain day to buy their favorite dish.

The owners of the world-famous Starbucks have rethought the key concept of «third place» – meaning when guests can relax and unwind outside the home or work. As a result, Starbucks has decided to speed up the process of deploying a network of self-pickup points, where coffee drinks can be purchased only through the windows.

In order to free up capacity for the new format of coffee shops, for example in cities such as New York, Boston and Chicago, the company is forced to close about 400 outlets.

One of the new formats of shop-restaurant / cafe, etc. is the combination of retail with the food business. The room is divided into two zones: in one you can buy something, and in the other – to eat. They usually sell chocolate and

other sweets, wines, dairy products and gastronomic products. Such institutions are designed on small areas, from 50 m<sup>2</sup>.

This format of the institution is most in demand at first quarantine, because they allowed to work during the lockdown. The owners fenced off the food area with tape or a chain, and the goods continued to be sold.

This format, according to the expert, is promising outside the lockdown, because it creates a synergy effect: the store attracts restaurant audiences and vice versa.

Also, one of the most popular and popular services today is the creation and implementation of «Cooking box». The purpose of this service is that it is the delivery of a semi-finished product of a high degree of readiness for home cooking of restaurant dishes with a minimum amount of heat treatment.

Guests choose a menu for themselves, and employees deliver semi-finished products along with a detailed recipe to customers.

Restaurant analysts estimate that the introduction of this service will not only reduce the time of cooking, but from an economic point of view it is more profitable than visiting a restaurant or supermarket.

Because the owners of the restaurant buy raw materials at wholesale prices, firstly, and secondly, guests are delivered only the required amount per serving, so you will not have unused ingredients.

Especially tangible benefits when buying exotic ingredients.

Demand in society in humans is at the genetic level, unfortunately due to the pandemic movement is limited and of course communication, even when the quarantine is relaxed, it is forbidden to organize so-called evenings, workshops, menu presentations, etc., as a result many people are outraged and even depressed.

The owners of the American restaurant chain Chipotle Mexican Grill quickly realized what people were missing and organized the Chipotle Together project.



Every day on their Twitter page there is a link to an online lunch at Zoom. Popular personalities and stars become guests of such video conferences. Guests can join the meeting by reserving a seat the day before. The campaign was one of the most successful for Chipotle. After all, thanks to collaboration with celebrities, they were able to promote their brand among a young audience of fans.

Domestic restaurateurs quickly adopted the experience of foreign colleagues and carry out similar activities. For example, Dogs & Tails and "Wave" organize online parties, and «Chinese Hello» conducts live meditations.

The main business card of any institution at all times was the menu, because the guest first gets acquainted with it and the concept of the institution.

Of course, traditionally at the beginning of the summer season, a summer menu is developed and implemented. However, in the last two years, institutions have a completely different task – to adapt to new conditions.

The owners of the restaurant «Bread» launched the Easter menu and delivered delicious Easter cakes.

The restaurants of the La Famiglia chain have developed a wish list, which must be in the Easter basket, the guests chose from the list of items, and the chefs designed the basket accordingly.

The owners of French restaurants Très FRANÇAIS offer their guests dishes from a special "quarantine" range, add vitamins to the menu to support the guest's immunity, or provide the service of a cook on departure, the employee prepares a dish at the request of the customer.

If you analyze the culinary direction, the restaurant consulting Olga Nosova believes that the future lies in Asian dishes. In Ukrainian restaurants, the first place is still occupied by European cuisine – a mix of Italian, Ukrainian, German, French. The second is eastern.



In large cities, Asian dishes are offered: Chinese, Korean, Thai, in small – Georgian. According to her, Asia is the new Italy, its cuisine will come to the fore in Ukrainian city restaurants for 30 years.

Today, vegetarian dishes are becoming relevant, due to the reduction of meat consumption. As a result, vegetables and nuts are eaten more. This is what caused the appearance of vegetable meat, such as Beyond Meat.

However, experts believe that people will switch to plant foods not through veganism, but more to support the idea of menopause – a trend of frugal treatment of the planet's resources, including restrictions on meat consumption

**Insights from this study and perspectives for further research in this direction:** Virologists believe that the world will increasingly face a pandemic. That is why the creation of new formats of institutions, or creative approaches to running existing businesses is more relevant and timely than ever.

The advantage of the new formats and concepts of the institution is that guests will feel and try something new. They will be able to discover a new world of restaurant business. Of course, to stay afloat today, you need to invest significant finances and efforts in the development of your business, because globally during the pandemic, the gastronomic habits of Ukrainians have not changed, because the year is not enough to transform tastes. However, visitors have become more attentive to external factors: the cleanliness of the institution, the neatness and appearance of the waiters, social distance, and so on.

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