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**FIVE WAYS TO  
SURVIVE  
& THRIVE**

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**IN A CONTACTLESS WORLD**

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## IN CHALLENGING TIMES, SMART BRANDS INNOVATE

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Even before the COVID-19 crisis, the restaurant industry was undergoing a transformation, as customers demanded faster, more convenient carryout and delivery options. Dining rooms were shrinking, while more than 70% of all customer traffic in quick service restaurants was for **off premises consumption**.<sup>1</sup> Some operations struggled to manage the increase in takeout and delivery, experimenting with improvised order pickup shelves and cubbies, or adding dedicated staff to hand off orders.

The coronavirus outbreak has forced nearly every brand to create **new operational workflows** and experiment with **new menu items and messaging**. The same is true for customers, as they get more comfortable with digital ordering, practice social distancing and experience new ways of picking up and enjoying restaurant orders. It's the "new normal," and chances are that many of these new experiences will become permanent habits.

But are these new options sustainable under your current business model? To survive this crisis and come out on the other side, it's important to **optimize your takeout and delivery** business, balancing operational efficiency with a superior customer experience.

<sup>1</sup> "2020 State of the Restaurant Industry," National Restaurant Association, February 2020.



**Take a look at five smart moves  
that can help restaurants endure  
today – and thrive tomorrow.**

# 1

## Optimize for takeout and delivery

For limited service brands, off-premise sales increased by +20% YOY.<sup>2</sup>



Consumer demand for off-premises dining has been growing for years, and dine-in sales have taken a hit. Now there's another challenge: Once restaurants are allowed to reopen for dine-in service, they'll have to space tables further apart to provide social distancing, **reducing previous capacity** by as much as 50%. That's why in the "new normal," restaurants will find carryout and delivery even more critical to their growth.

That means adding and optimizing online and mobile ordering if you don't already have it. You also need to ensure a **seamless, on-brand experience** that's as enjoyable as dine-in.

You can also offer automated order pickup, giving customers **fast, self-serve pickup** from their own secure compartment. These solutions are faster because customers and drivers can skip the line, without waiting for an employee to help them. That means your staff can concentrate on preparing orders, not finding them and handing them out. You also get full cloud-based visibility of when the order was loaded and when it was picked up. That helps you ensure an ideal experience that **keeps busy customers coming back.**

<sup>2</sup> "Coronavirus and the Restaurant Industry: Key Insights – April 29, 2020." Black Box Intelligence



You know how hard it is to recruit and train great employees – and how important they are to your success.

The good news is that optimizing your operation for off-premises orders increases employee satisfaction, as well. By **eliminating extra touches**, wasted time and effort and **reducing customer contact**, you reduce employee stress and aggravation. Keeping them happy is more important than ever and reduces turnover – which can cost more than \$1,800 per non-management employee and upwards of \$10,000 per manager.<sup>3</sup>

It's also critical to make the most of each employee's time. Although you might think you need extra employees to manage takeout and delivery pickup orders, your customers and delivery drivers see it differently. They want to "get it and go." Their expectations are changing rapidly, and they've **grown comfortable with new contactless services**. Experience at thousands of locations using Apex self-serve solutions has proven that people don't want an employee handing them their carryout or delivery order. They've voted with their feet, choosing restaurants with efficient, hassle-free pickup.

When you use an automated order pickup solution, everyone gets what they want. The most efficient solutions offer a two-sided design that's open in the back, so associates **quickly load orders** without leaving the kitchen or adding to traffic in customer areas. Best of all, once that order is loaded, associates don't have to think about it again. They just move on to the next order.

You can utilize your employees for other critical roles to ensure each customer has an outstanding experience. And that's the true value of good employees.

<sup>3</sup> "Cost of Turnover in 2019." Black Box Intelligence, 2019

## 2

## Hold onto your team



### THEATER SEES SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS

Regional theater chain **Santikos Entertainment** often needed **three or four employees** at its concession stands to hand out orders. Then they implemented **an automated pickup solution**, which not only increased order size, but also allowed them to cut steps from the process and **reduce order pickup labor** to just one person, even during peak hours. The other employees were **reassigned to crucial tasks** like cleaning auditoriums and lobbies and assisting customers.

# 3 Offer self-serve, contactless order pickup



Limited-service restaurants will see **strong sales** due to their focus on **takeout and drive-thrus**, since they reduce **human-to-human contact**.<sup>4</sup>

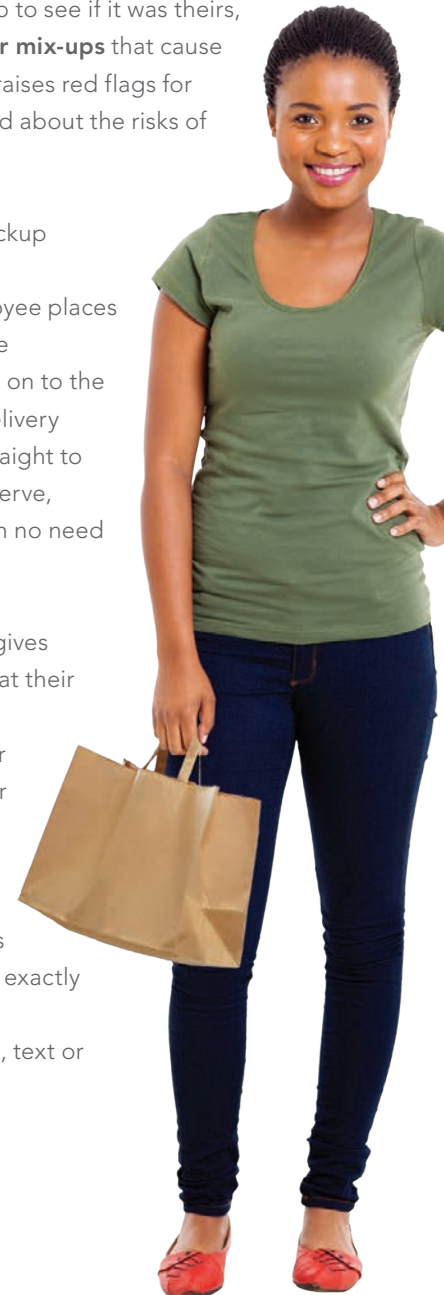
<sup>4</sup> "Technomic's Take: COVID-19, The Foodservice View." Technomic, March 20, 2020



Shortly after COVID-19 appeared on our radar, so did "contactless" service. And while restaurants quickly pivoted operations to their drive thru or pick-up counter, they still had an employee handing each customer their order. Or, they placed it on a cubby or shelf, where other customers might pick it up to see if it was theirs, leading to **frequent order mix-ups** that cause rework and waste. It also raises red flags for wary customers concerned about the risks of **unnecessary handling**.

Most automated order pickup solutions are naturally "contactless." Your employee places the order in its own secure compartment, and moves on to the next. Your customer or delivery driver comes in, heads straight to the device and gets self-serve, scan-and-go pickup – with no need to talk to an employee.

This contactless process gives customers reassurance that their order has had minimal touches. It improves order accuracy, since each order is secure in its own compartment. It also reduces crowds in the lobby, because customers and delivery drivers know exactly when the order is ready for pickup thanks to email, text or in-app notifications.



# 4

## Eliminate front lobby bottlenecks



As your digital sales increase, you'll likely see more foot traffic in your lobby for off-premises order pickup. This can create some **awkward situations** as carryout customers bump into delivery drivers, while dine-in customers may be confused about where to get in line to order or get a table.

In the meantime, customers outside see the crowds and get the impression that there's a long wait for a table. Not the look you're going for!

You can also use your order pickup solution to **divide and conquer traffic bottlenecks** in your lobby. By installing your solution away from your main service counter and registers, you can divert takeout customers and delivery traffic away from dine-in guests, improving the overall experience in the lobby.

Some order pickup solutions also help you manage order pickup crowds by automatically sending text or email notifications **precisely when the order is ready for pickup**. That means customers and delivery drivers can time their arrival more efficiently, **knowing their order will be ready when they get there**. They just skip the POS line and go straight to their order in its secure compartment. Delivery drivers love how it saves them time, and food delivery services often incentivize operators who reduce driver wait times.

From March 16  
to May 5, **Wingstop**  
**digital orders grew**  
from just over **40%**  
**to nearly 65%**  
of sales.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "Wingstop Inc. Provides Business Update and Reports Fiscal First Quarter 2020 Financial Results." May 6, 2020

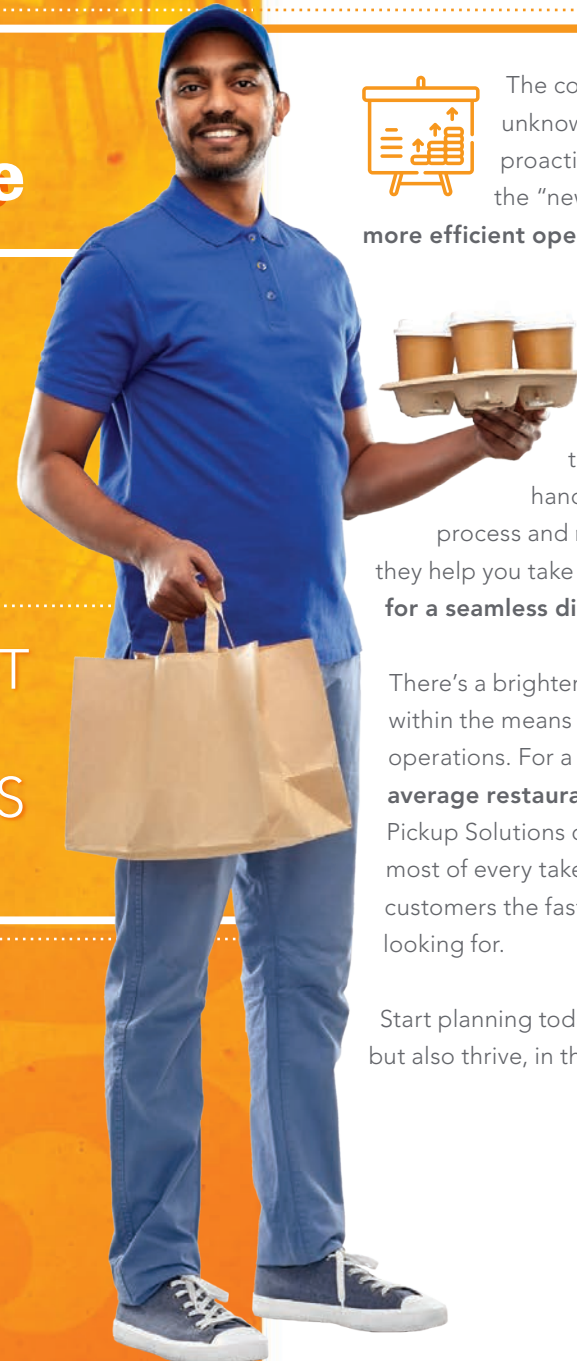


# 5

## Make a plan to survive, then thrive



EMBRACE THE MASSIVE SHIFT TO OFF-PREMISES DINING AND OPTIMIZE CONTACTLESS ORDER PICKUP



The coming months will clearly bring a lot of unknowns for operators. But there are many proactive ways to set your restaurant apart in the “new normal,” while creating a **leaner, more efficient operation.**

Apex Order Pickup Solutions give busy customers and delivery drivers **contactless, self-serve order pickup**, with the reassurance that their order has had minimal handling. They simplify the employee’s process and make their work more enjoyable. And they help you take advantage of the growing **demand for a seamless digital journey.**

There’s a brighter future ahead, and getting there is within the means of many restaurant and foodservice operations. For a subscription cost equivalent to an **average restaurant labor hour per day**, Apex Order Pickup Solutions can help your operation make the most of every takeout and delivery order, while giving customers the fast, contactless experience they’re looking for.

Start planning today to help your brand not just survive, but also thrive, in the post-COVID-19 future.



## TALK TO THE EXPERTS AT APEX

Let's talk about a plan tailored to your needs for making self-serve, contactless order pickup a focal point of your future growth strategy. Email us at [info@apexsupplychain.com](mailto:info@apexsupplychain.com) or call **800.229.7912** to get started.



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