**CHART Virtual Training Forum (VTF) – Notes on Best Practices**

*Note: Updated information and resources gathered since these VTF notes were taken can be found on* [*CHART’s COVID-19 Resource Page*](https://www.chart.org/training-tools-and-resources/covid-19-resources.html)

**Hospitality from Behind a Plexiglass Screen**

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 *(and see ADDENDUM from Thursday, May 21, 2020, below)*

**Trying to Maintain the Hospitable Feel While Following COVID Health Guidelines:**

* When your team is wearing masks and gloves, service feels so impersonal and clinical. You can’t see a smile behind a mask – need to use tone of voice, laugh, etc. to let people feel the hospitality. Use waving and thumbs up. Body language is more important now.
* Make instructions for customers very clear so people know what you want them to do. People do not feel comfortable when they do not know what is expected of them – do they wait outside? Do they need to text when they arrive? Where should they stand? Most people want to follow the rules, but have no experience with this situation and so customers need clear directions.
* Try to not give customers an opportunity to unknowingly (or consciously!) break rules. Take away outside seating if you can, or place items on seats where they should not be sitting (use items appropriate to your them, so it looks like décor), or at the very least put up signage.
* Give managers authority to be creative. Each space and clientele may have different needs and approaches. Give managers a forum to share what they are doing with other managers to help stimulate new ideas.
* Train employees how to be gentle when advising customers that they are not following distancing guidelines. Your team may be anxious about their own vulnerability, or aware that some customers may get agitated if other customers are not distancing properly. Coach them on how to handle the communication so as not to increase hostilities or embarrass customers.
* Update your Website. Make sure instructions are clear on how people can order, how to pay, where to pick up, and hours that you are open at this time. Make it easy for them to immediately see that they are looking at your COVID-modified hours, menu and procedures. You would be surprised how many restaurants are closed or have modified menus that are NOT noted on their websites, and it is very frustrating for guests to get far into the ordering process before realizing their choices are not available at this time.
* Answer Your Phones! Even if you want guests to order on-line, many will call first to see if you are open, or just because they are more comfortable ordering that way.
* Train your team to be overly friendly and enthusiastic, over the phone and in person. People need a friendly voice and personal interaction more so now while they are isolated so much of the time.

**Pick-up/Curbside Process:**

* Use dining room to stage to go food – either just for your team if they are delivering it curbside or to make more space if customers are coming in to pick up their own.
* Take outdoor heating lamps inside to dining area staging area to help keep orders warm.
* Speed up the pick-up process in any way you can to cut down the amount of time it takes and the number of people waiting to pick-up.
  + Reprogram POS to take drink orders and add anything extra when order is placed to speed up the pick-up process.
  + Add exact times for pick-up so that food and drinks are not ready too early and sitting there.
  + Take people’s names to help them find the order – make it more personal and easier to find than a number they have to remember or confirmation email they have to find.
* Try to create a natural boundary between staff and customer, like a counter or table, so distancing is built in and feels more natural.
* Change staffing to make sure your best people and enough staff are there at busiest times. Have one person assigned to tablets taking delivery orders, one assigned to curbside pick-up, etc. Having enough trained staff keeps them from getting frazzled and short-tempered.

**Other Considerations:**

* Put out videos for teams every few days. Do more live video meetings. Short 10 – 15 minute updates as things are changing so quickly.
* Teams in areas that are harder hit by COVID may have higher levels of anxiety and need more support.
* “Textedly” platform – using it for better communication with employees to let them all see what the company is doing and why – for their protection and for guest protection.
* Writing handwritten thank you notes and putting them in the to-go bags.

**Make it Clear to Staff and Customers What Sanitation Steps You are Taking**

Clean is the new hospitality. Cleanliness is the new delighter. Maintaining good hospitality today includes making the customer feel safe and letting them know what you are doing to sanitize your store.

* Advertise what your company is doing to increase sanitation:
  + Little Caesars has ads out that show pizzas delivered from oven to pizza box by conveyer belt – never touched by hands after it is cooked.
  + Marriott is installing electrostatic de-foggers – a fog-gun that kills COVID. Delta uses it too. Read the article [here](https://www.hotelmanagement.net/operate/marriott-institutes-new-cleaning-protocols-cleanliness-council).
* Add tamper Evident labels on all carryout food items.
* Attach a flyer to to-go food explaining what you are doing for sanitation and safety.
* Move POS stations outside so customers do not have to come inside to pay and pick up.
* Note exact places to stand so customers maintain proper distancing.
* Take unnecessary items out of the guest rooms so there are fewer touchpoints.
* Add hand sanitizer wipes next to the remote in a hotel room or next a POS or other high touch areas.
* Add info to your website showing what is being done to increase sanitation. (NOTE: Should you change website photos to show people in masks and wearing gloves?)
* Clear gloves – some time they may look to a customer like your staff is not wearing gloves. May need to switch to blue gloves.
* Every 30 minutes, stop everything and have everyone wash hands, wipe everything down, etc.

**Other Considerations:**

* We moved very quickly from trying to use greener and safer cleansing agents to bleaching *everything*. We need to manage over-use of chemicals and how safe they are for your people, your customers and the environment
* Are we bringing back the straws? Will we only use individual packets of condiments (not on table – only on request)? Is it the end of the printed menu? Will we move away from environmentally friendly to go back to disposable?
* Will people prefer places that smell clean? Will we make an effort to not mask the scent of cleaners?
* Ecolab has a product – ozonated water – that sanitizes and disinfects even though it is a very green environmentally friendly sanitation product. Test results are due to be reported in the next few weeks.

**ADDENDUM**

**Hospitality from a Safe Social Distance**

Thursday, May 21, 2020

* Single Use stylus for digital check in.
* PPE – how to communicate with guests about required PPE. Disney hiring people whose sole job is to walk around and make sure people are wearing masks correctly.
* Training team on sanitation of communal workstations – wipe down after every use.
* Body Language Training –
  + Institute a standard greeting – put hand over heart and say “pleased to meet you” or whatever, to signal to the guest that you are not shaking hands and take the awkwardness out of it.
  + Looking for other more informal things to replace high five, but want options so not everyone is not doing same thing (bumping elbows, Kid ‘n Play kick step foot tap, keep hands clasped behind back, etc.)
  + Be aware of international implications of gestures (No single finger guns but double finger ok? Salutes, peace signs, etc.)
  + Social cues – smiling needs to be projected a little more (smile bigger), tone of voice will be very important. Gestures should be more pronounced, tone of voice more cheery and theatrical.
  + Show team pictures of people smiling and not smiling behind masks to show them that it is noticeable.
  + Put picture of smiling face on nametag or button pin that they wear. People also really like to know what each other looks like for future when they meet again.
* Better signage – Guest will feel more comfortable if they know expectations. People want to do the right thing and are uncomfortable if they don’t know what is expected of them, so “hospitality” now includes making sure guest is not ill-at-ease not knowing the process or worse, feels bad if you have to correct their behavior.
* Website should list process, if guest temp will be taken and that they will not be admitted if over 100ish (exact temp threshold varies), or if you want them to wait in car until table ready, or if only one entry and one exit, etc.
* Disney Springs – Communicated in advance “what to know” in writing and graphics and videos to prepare people on what to expect.
  + [Disney](https://www.disneysprings.com/reopening/)
  + [Disney 2](https://disneyparks.disney.go.com/blog/2020/05/welcome-back-heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-phased-reopening-of-disney-springs-at-walt-disney-world-resort/?CMP=KNC-FY20_WDW_ACT_CFL_DSFL_NA_COVID|G|5201042.DD.AM.06.01|MWU3N6C|BR|435701338959&keyword_id=kwd-299536746926|dc|disney%20springs|435701338959|e|5238:3|&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIlce0suK96QIVDLLICh2nYAqrEAAYASAAEgJy2_D_BwE)

**Misc:**

* Ventilation systems are going to be huge – upgrading filter systems
* Some rules say restaurants everyone over 3 have masks on unless they are eating.
* Provide envelopes for people to put masks in while they eat.
* Asking team to change mask every 2 hours.