

Chris's Corner: Our Corona Virus Reality

I can't say in our business we have a Corona Pandemic Response to email to call our customers. I am not saying its not reassuring, but it is kind of cliché at this point.

We are open for business, as we were originally classified as essential and we now are classified as life sustaining.

Thus far, I am happy to report no one officially or unofficially has questioned this classification and for that we are grateful. All my employees are carrying a letter from me addressed to "whom it may concern" in case they get stopped going to or going home from work.

I find it comforting to know we have enough name recognition within the community at large that people understand what we do and that, at least, somehow, they can see how we fit into the food supply chain.

Overall, our business is fairly dramatically down, as we do a lot of business with schools, they're closed, and restaurants, they're limited to take and many of chosen to simply halt operations.

I really feel for our restaurants and I wish them all the best during this difficult time in our mutual histories.

We still are taking care of those restaurants that need us, hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, jails, prisons, convenience stores, bakeries, delis and supermarket accounts that need us etc.

As a point of triage during with public health crisis, we have been to forced to prioritize our call schedule based upon public health considerations. What numbers are impacted by an operations issue? We are focusing on food safety issues as well. Do we have a sanitation issue with a dishwasher where it isn't sterilizing the wares properly and safely? Are cooking and holding temperatures up to code? If customers have multiple units, or redundancy, they may have to wait slightly longer than they're used to in dealing with us.

All of my technicians have long been trained in food safety best practices and understand now, more than ever, to follow them to the letter. They're also practicing personal hygiene habits over and above their normal good practices. They understand, if they're sick, they need to let us know and we will work with them to get through it safely.

I am blessed to say all of employees understand the importance of what we do and are continuing to do in face of some degree of personal risk. When we run out of calls to do in a day, because we are slow, they are voluntarily going home and losing hours. Of course, I have instructed them all, including office personnel, to apply for partial unemployment benefits.

This is a tough time for the world, not just me, you and our businesses. We can't take it personally; that makes no sense. We will get through this.

At times I start to do the math in my head and calculate the difference in loss from a total shutdown and being open and slow and then I remind myself that what we do really does make a difference in the world and this too, shall pass.

Best wishes,

Chris Hefner