How do I...?

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How to Implement Health and Safety Routines for Food Service via IT

Maintaining a safe workplace is crucial for the health of your employees and the success of your restaurant. Even better, is having the ability to promote the fact that established health and safety standards are being met in order to reassure customers of the safety of their dining experiences; to boost transparency of health and safety in food service.

To create a safe work environment, start by assessing your customer's preferences and restaurant's needs to establish an encompassing safety and health policy. Communicate with your coworkers and employees to make sure everyone understands the policies and is on the same page. You'll also need to identify federal and CDC guidelines to ensure your restaurant is adhering to current standards of health and safety. Finally, you will want to curate a mobile application that will further help keep employees and restaurant-goers assured of their health and safety.

Research Local Guidelines

Gather information about locally enforced guidelines to establish minimum health and safety expectations.

1. Research your area's restaurant safety and health guidelines.

Be sure to look at laws and regulations at both the national and local level as there may be slight differences to consider. To make sure your business is in compliance, reach out to the government organization in charge of workplace safety standards in your area. They can provide information about how to meet standards for your specific industry.

- For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides detailed information about safety laws and regulations for different industries on their website.
- Your local department of labor might also provide information and resources on workplace safety laws in your area.
- The CDC is an additional resource for information relating public health and COVID-19 guidelines and considerations.

2

Collaborate With Team Members.

Use your network to brainstorm ideas and get a sense of what is and isn't working for others.

2. Meet with other members of your team to discuss.

Collaborating with your employees and friends in the industry is necessary to effectively brainstorm ideas and develop strategies for addressing your company's and customer's concerns. It is very likely that they will be able to provide additional insight and experience as you begin to think through solutions for your own business.

Step

3

Make a List of Standards.

This list will encompass what standards you and your customers want to see included in your mobile application.

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3. Identify a list of essential health and safety standards to routinely check for through the application.

Once you have an idea of which safety issues you need to address, write up a detailed list for how you will deal with them. Your list should include information such as:

- A statement of your commitment to the health and safety of your employees and customers.
- Specific procedures you plan to put in place, such as routine inspections, daily temperature checks, sanitation of kitchen and dining spaces, mandating social distancing, and promoting mask wearing.

4. Get help from an external safety professional if necessary.

If you have a small business and can't afford to have a dedicated safety director on staff, or if you need to deal with particularly complex issues, you may need to bring in outside help. Consider working with a safety consultant or getting help from a professional organization in your industry.

Step

5

Listen to your people.

Take imput from those who experience your restaurant most closely.

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5. Listen to your employees and customer base.

Ask your employees and customers for feedback about the proposed solutions. Invite them to make suggestions on how to improve them. Listen to any concerns they bring up and talk about how you plan to address them to ensure everyone is comfortable.

- This is important both with regard to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic specifically and with more general health and safety practices.

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Step

6

Make Your Mobile Application.

Input your list of standards into your mobile app to make your standards transparent to customers.

6. Research currently available applications or partner with an app developer.

Do your research to curate a mobile application that is reminiscent of the University of Michigan's ResponsiBLUE application. The goal is to openly demonstrate to customers that your restaurant is 'health and safety' conscious and is successfully adhering to your list of standards as identified in Step 3.

- As an alternative, if you already use a QR code to provide menus or access to your restaurant's website, check to see if you can include a similar link to your health and safety assurances.
- Ideally, the application would prompt the restaurant manager or owner at the beginning of each day to check off the items on the list. The results would then be available for customers' viewing.

In Closing…

You need to take particular care in developing a list of health and safety standards which are informed by federal guidelines and the CDC. This list should also reflect the input of your employees and customers whose preferences are individualized to their experiences at your restaurant. Customers in other areas, visiting other restaurants may have differing opinions. Translating that list into a publicly accessible mobile application or equivalent will help to boost transparency of health and safety in food service.

About the Author

Savannah Major, Student, +Impact Studio

savryma@umich.edu

Savannah Major is a third year law student at the University of Michigan Law School. Major received her Bachelor of Science in Biopsychology, Cognition and Neuroscience also from the wonderful University of Michigan. Although she intends to finish her JD, Major intends to move away from the law and pursue a career more oriented toward consumer marketing and her interest in creative writing.