SURVIVING AND THRIVING DURING COVID

General mindset:

• Assume we may see 2-3 years of partial openings and re-closings (hopefully more localized and shorter in the future)
• What we need to do to survive now will help us on the path to pivoting so we can thrive in the “new normal”

Key principles:

• Make yourself an essential part of the “war effort”
  • Ideal: supply essential industries/people
  • More likely: Makes lives of everyday people easier, supplying essentials or tastes of normalcy
  • Always a “serve the community” mindset
• Figure out how to do it in a contactless/virtual manner
• There are no easy answers -> this is a moment for personal innovation, creating new models, being scrappy
NATURAL HEALTHY/SUSTAINABLE FOOD COMPANIES RESPONDING TO COVID

Customers (of all ages) are adapting to ordering food and beverages online with curbside pick up or delivery and via new channels. Healthy and natural foods are uniquely positioned to continue to promote health and wellness in their communities, but they must adapt.

- Don’t rely on old business models and rules. Instead, consider your entire operation and your unique skills/assets, and ask: what needs in the COVID world might we solve?
- Some best practices:
  - Start from perspective of “what will build and support my community”?
    - Feed frontline workers -> address gaps in what everyday people might need
    - Don’t be afraid to visibly provide some offerings for free or discounted -> this will have lasting benefit
  - Look for partnership opportunities with other local/regional businesses (other product/restaurant companies, suppliers, distributors, key retailers) -> especially with “serve community” lens
  - Communicate what you are doing – frequently, with regular updates. Come from the heart, from service to the community, but also your own desire to survive.
  - Emphasize safety/sanitation – communicate sanitation practices (social media, email, texts, letters, etc.)
  - Streamline offerings and make use of current inventory and your suppliers/supply chain
  - Make it easy to order/purchase online and safe to pick up or offering free (low-cost) delivery in a limited radius provides convenience for customer and provides a job
  - Pilot new offering/channel with an audience you know well that can provide a base
    - Current loyal customers
    - Affinity group (church, school, hospital)
    - Create your own channel if necessary -> then build from there
Instead of opening their next pop-up, they created a subscription box which includes the latest grocery items and Pop Up Grocer merchandise. 10% of sales are donated to Feeding America.

Pop Up Grocer is a traveling pop-up grocery store, showcasing hundreds of products from 150+ of the most innovative and exciting food, beverage, home, pet, and body care brands today. Their next pop-up store was set to open this spring in Austin, Texas.
“We went from operating as a bar izakaya, with just 2 percent of business being pick-up, to a bodega slash prepared foods and takeaway spot slash wine shop. We reached out to our farms and purveyors to ensure they would still be able to supply us, reconfigured our kitchen, set up a little photo studio in the dining room, built a standalone to-go website, and bought a pile of to-go wares.”

“We had to adjust our menu, thinking about what would travel well and could be reheated easily.”

“We launched the [Dig Acres Farm Box](https://www.bonappetit.com/story/food-businesses-covid-19) on March 28th, which allows us to bring in produce from our suppliers and directly distribute to customers. We’re trying to fill in that spot when you’re running low on groceries. We saw how people were stocked up on pantry items but were trying to figure out how to get fresh vegetables.”

“We’ve started to think about the future of Dig when this is all over. We’re asking ourselves how we can support small and diverse farmers, how can we help people cook food that makes them feel good. It’s not about going back to what we were before, but building a better food system moving forward.”
ANETTE – CURBSIDE TAKEOUT

Instructions:

• Place your order online or by calling. All payment will be handled ahead of time.

• When you come to pick up your order, please bring a piece of paper with your first name and last initial on it, so that we can identify you when you arrive without you rolling down your window.

• Once you pull into the parking lot south of Annette, look for the sandwich board sign and park there.

• We will bring your food out to you and leave it on the hood of your car for you to grab and go.
PINEAPPLE COLLABORATIVE – ORGANIZING FOR COMMUNITY

Pantry staples, made by women

https://www.pineapplecollaborative.com/reads/the-guide/community-bulletin

“We had the idea to create a (non-exhaustive!) community bulletin board, both to create awareness for campaigns in our community and provide meaningful opportunities for us all to give back in this dire time. If you’re looking for ways to support restaurants, producers, and hospitality workers — or if you’re looking for guidance and support yourself — this is a good place to start. We’re continually updating the board as more tips roll in.”
BUY ONLINE PICK-UP ON FARM (BOPOF) – COMBINING FORCES

In addition to traditional CSA shares/boxes, farms are using their open space to comply with social distancing requirements. Order online, pick up on site at the farm. Offering farm products and items from other small food businesses.

WHITE LOTUS FARMS

Along with their own baked goods, microgreens, and dairy products, WLF offers food items from local businesses such as The Brinery, the Detroit Mushroom Company and Juicy Kitchen café.

GREEN THINGS FARM COLLECTIVE

Pre-CoVID, Green Things Farm formed a collective with farmers from the Land Loom, Feral Flora, and Ann Arbor Seed Company to increase their offering diversity.

They have since teamed up with other local food and beverage businesses such as Sand Hill Apiaries (honey), Whitney Farmstead (maple syrup), and Hyperion Coffee (and others) for their online order/farm pick up offering. They even sell some of WLF’s bread.
RESOURCES

Good Food Jobs, RESOURCES for Hospitality/Restaurant/Bar/Coffee/Catering Individuals & Businesses
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QZyl4NcSbZMlJGN4w1WA3z0A7wb2NVgQpaF4OdOGq1U/edit

Ship Anywhere Good Food List – growing list of good food companies that will ship directly to your door
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IS8y_Ybl679vBml6Cnn1ZilrK-hvk2D69LWkJR1pFQ/edit?fbclid=IwAR03yHCnPJUErV_Nyi34XJxWaOc8Nm6Smijv7J700Dr9OCnRxvZI_FAGM#gid=0

Michigan resources
https://www.localdifference.org/resources
https://detroit.eater.com/