

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS IN A PANDEMIC

ANDRIY NIKOLENKO, student

NATALIYA M. VLASHCHENKO, Associate Professor, PhD in Economics,
Scientific Adviser

MARYNA V. RYZHENKO, Associate Professor, PhD in Education, Language
Adviser

In order to strengthen quarantine measures due to the threat of the spread of coronavirus in Ukraine, the government has banned establishments to receive visitors in restaurants and cafes. Catering establishments can work only on a take-out basis and deliver food to your home if their employees are provided with personal protective equipment.

"We were waiting for such a turn of events, although everything happened a little faster than we planned," says Libkin.

The restaurateurs were really waiting for the crisis, says head of the Restaurant Consulting company, Olga Nasonova. "From the beginning of March, it became clear that the virus would not bypass us," she says. "Italy has become the main reference point for what to expect."

Now restaurateurs are trying to negotiate with landlords to reduce rental rates during the quarantine period. But few people succeed, says Nasonova.

Some restaurateurs are faced with the need to shut down their establishments for the first time. For example, the co-founder of the holding of emotions Fest! Andriy Khudo opened his restaurant Kryivka in Lviv 13 years ago, he never closed. "It is symbolic, but reasonable for saving tens and hundreds of lives," Khudo admits.

Restaurateur Dmitry Borisov calls on government authorities to consider the possibility of introducing tax holidays for the restaurant business. According to him, at least 10-15% of a restaurant's proceeds are usually used to pay rent. A closed restaurant cannot fulfill the obligations of these payments.

"It is very important that while the establishments are" in suspended animation ", the landlords enter into their position and do not begin to give premises to other companies behind their backs," Borisov notes.

The government has banned restaurateurs from accepting visitors in establishments, but it is possible to work in the mode of delivery of food by couriers. "Delivery is the key to partially saving the restaurant sector for those who have it and who have something to deliver," says Nasonova. "Bars and coffee houses, for example, have nothing."

Indeed, almost all establishments declare their intention to work in this format. "We will work with all the services on delivery, some of our establishments will also deliver food," says Khudo.

Dmitry Borisov promises to make delivery from his restaurants free. At his restaurant on Shota Rustaveli in Kiev, you can take your order with you, adds Borisov.

McDonald's will only close the lounges. "The experience of other countries has shown that when restaurants are closed, McDrive and delivery continue to work, since their work allows you to comply with the necessary safety standards," the press service of McDonald's Ukraine noted.

But this is only a partial solution to the problems.

According to Konstantin Merkulov, director of the Vapiano chain in Ukraine, the volume of harvested products will have to be adjusted.

Humenny says that the delivery will not be able to compensate for anything globally. "Restaurants need to do something about personnel and floor space costs. They will have to compete in delivery with optimized companies with only kitchens and global delivery services," he says.

If we take into account the commission of the aggregator, the courier's salary, the cost of one-time packaging, the profitability of delivery is several times lower than the profitability of visiting a restaurant, - explains Dvorskaya.

Almost all of them will suffer from restaurant restrictions their employees. After all, staff are sent on vacation en masse, sometimes at their own expense. According to Olga Nasonova, only 20-25% of all employed in the industry will remain working during the quarantine period.

If the blocking of the work of the institution drags on for several months, and the pandemic does not slow down, a serious economic crisis is coming, which will affect not only HoReCa, Borisov is sure.

According to Nasonova's estimates, about 2% of establishments will not survive quarantine. "In the next month, about 40 establishments (2% of 2000) may leave the market," she says.

At the same time, quarantine can also have a delayed negative effect - in six months we can expect the closure of about 250-300 restaurants in Kiev alone, says Nasonova. In a positive scenario, she said, "only" 100 establishments will be closed.

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