

# HOW TO THRIVE IN THE ‘NEW NORMAL’: WHAT WILL CONSUMERS DEMAND?

**D**elivery and curbside pick-up recently became mandatory for both operators and consumers as a result of COVID-19. But as the country begins the slow process of reopening, it will be critical for restaurants to recognize changes that will linger long after. Consumers who never used restaurant or grocery delivery have tried it during their shelter-in-place time. And many consumers will continue this behavior even after restaurants open for dine-in business.

Operators should reevaluate the menu and reinforce their takeout and delivery strategy because it's now likely a vital component of their business. During the crisis, social media posts proved that packaging plays a significant role in how consumers rate their off-premise experience. While many consumers posted pictures and positive comments about establishments that provided a well-packaged meal that looked and tasted good, plenty of others took to social media to complain about poor experiences. In a time when diners were looking for information for excellent food delivery, online reviews and social media posts became even more critical than ever before. That won't likely change in a post-COVID-19 world, so restaurants need to make sure they're doing everything they can to provide a top-quality takeout and delivery experience.

With a robust off-premise program, restaurants can significantly expand traffic and demand. Using the right package will ensure an excellent experience for the customer, which will, in turn, generate repeat orders and can even garner social

media praise and recommendations that far outperform any paid advertising expenditure.

## Critical features of packaging designed for hot to-go food should include:

- Leak-resistant, tight closures to avoid messy spills en route.
- Special features to keep fried foods, both hot and crisp.
- Reclosable bases and lids made with dishwasher-safe, reusable materials.
- The ability to withstand temperatures to 230 degrees Fahrenheit under a heat lamp or in the microwave.
- Capable of consumer reuse and recycled after multiple uses.

Foam and paper packages can rarely handle these critical characteristics. Rigid, polypropylene plastic containers, with hinged or separate bases and lids, provide the

performance and protection needed to deliver excellent meals. Entrees and sides in rigid plastic packages will arrive with taste profiles comparable to what consumers enjoy in the restaurant.

## What about fried foods?

Even though consumers can get just about any cuisine delivered to their homes, the classic french fry remains at the top of the list for the most ordered side item. Anchor Packaging, based in St. Louis, has embraced the challenge of preventing fries from becoming soggy and cold by the time they reach the consumer.

French fries are just one of the many fried foods that Anchor's Crisp Food Technologies® containers keep hot and crispy. These containers, available in hinged and separate lid-base options, maintain the taste of fried entrees and sides for up to 30 minutes using a patented convection cross-flow design that relieves mois-

ture and condensation while maintaining food temperature. More than 16,000 locations have tried these products and, having found them to be more effective than any other package, continue to use them to grow their businesses today.

The launch of the new, clear Fry Baby™ hinged container in early 2020 is specifically intended to hold an order of fries, chicken strips, egg rolls, and other fried side items. It is the lowest-priced item within Anchor Packaging's Crisp Food Technologies® product line, costing less than some paper containers—making it a cost-effective solution for restaurants.

Making the right packaging solutions part of the takeout and delivery strategy enables restaurants to confidently offer more of the foods consumers crave while delivering on their expectations. A great meal will lead to repeat orders, customer loyalty, and raves on social media about where to get great food.

