

The Hibachi Grill Consult for America

Small Business Case Competition



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AMERICA**

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Case Overview

Introduction

While a financial crisis was no stranger to most small businesses, COVID-19 provided entirely new challenges for the backbone of America's economy. While restaurants slowly started recovering through services such as GrubHub and Uber Eats, not all businesses could easily transition to such a model.

Margaret runs a The Hibachi Grill in the Philadelphia area. As a hibachi restaurant, the majority of the restaurant's value proposition is centered around the experience of coming to the restaurant. As such, her status as an experience-based restaurant creates further challenges with COVID. Margaret is concerned about how she can not only effectively re-open once her state (Pennsylvania) relaxes coronavirus restrictions, but also survive in the meanwhile.

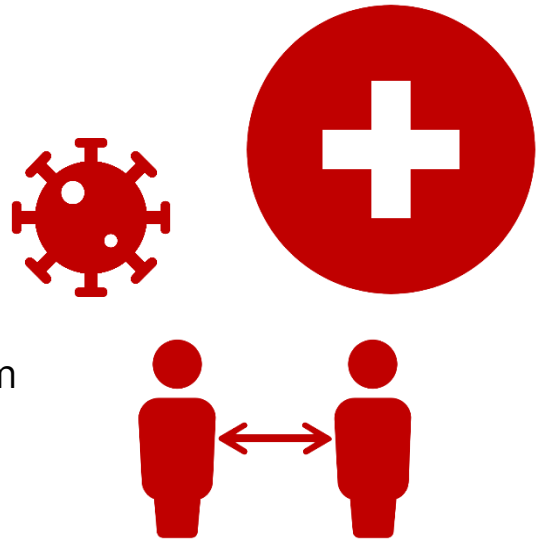
Your Task

As a pro-bono consulting group, your team has been retained by The Hibachi Grill to create an overarching strategy to help Margaret reopen and sustain her business. Your proposal should include a timeline of succinct recommendations. She expects you to use both qualitative and quantitative thinking in your work. Your team is welcome and encouraged to use outside resources beyond this packet.

Three Key Challenges

Health and Safety

First and foremost, Margaret needs to ensure that her chefs, waiters, and customers are kept safe. Because of her restaurant's layout [Exhibit 1], she is confident that she can effectively run three grills that are all 8 feet apart from each other, thus abiding by the CDC's recommendation of 6 feet distancing. The food, however, is prepared approximately 3.5 feet away from the consumers from behind a grill. Margaret has explored protective options such as shields around the grill, but she is generally unaware of how to effectively implement this.



Suggested Questions:

1. How does Margaret build prevention into her restaurant?
2. What risks exist with coronavirus? What happens if a consumer or worker gets sick?
3. What legal issues should Margaret be aware of?

Finance & Marketing

At the end of the day, Margaret is running a business. She needs to pay her workers and bring in revenue. Margaret is also curious what kind of model she should implement: with reduced demand, how does she estimate how many chefs and wait-staff to re-employ?

Furthermore, in order to bring in revenue, Margaret needs help to effectively market her restaurant as an attractive option and the COVID response measures she is taking.

Suggested Questions:

1. How should Margaret re-evaluate her costs? Is there a business model for profitability?
2. How can Margaret effectively market her business?



Culture

Margaret firmly believes in a business philosophy of people over profits. The final piece that Margaret would like to evaluate is how to maintain the close relations her team has had since the founding of her restaurant. Whether it is new forms of team building activities, connecting remotely, or increasing morale, Margaret does not want to lose her biggest asset of her employees.

Suggested Questions:

1. How does a small business team build in an era like COVID?
2. How can Margaret explain to her employees that their jobs are relatively insecure?
3. What tactics can The Hibachi Grill use to keep morale high?

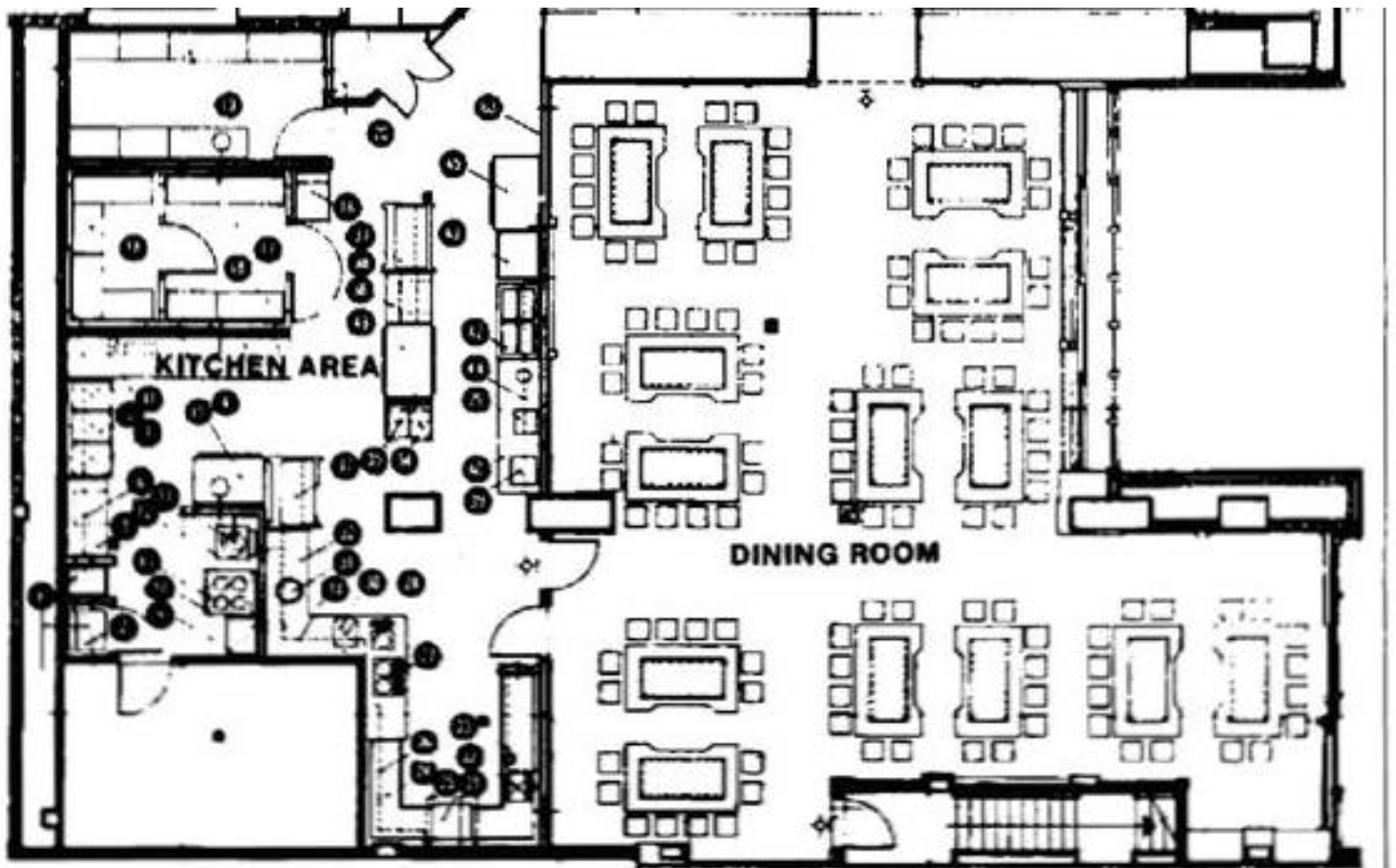
Other Considerations

Margaret has been eyeing an opportunity to enter the online delivery segment. Should she forgo in-person operations entirely? If so, how does she transition her experience-based business to an entirely “self-service” model?



Exhibits

Exhibit 1



The restaurant is sectioned into a kitchen area and a dining room. Each dining room comes equipped with a grill for the chefs to live cook on and seating for each family or party to enjoy the show at.

The kitchen is where the food is prepared prior to being grilled. As evident from the map, the area is rather crowded with multiple chefs frequently working at a time.

Image adapted from Professor Juran's operation's casebook

Exhibit 2

The menu page features a light beige background with decorative elements. At the top left is a black and red geometric design. On the right side, there are illustrations of a bowl of ramen with chopsticks, a plate of sushi, and a teapot with cups at the bottom. The menu items are listed in a script font with prices in red.

<i>Appetizers</i>	
Edamame	\$ 5
Sea Food Sampler	\$10
Scallion Pancakes	\$11
<i>Lunch Menu</i>	
Hibachi Vegetable	\$17
Hibachi Meat	\$22
Sushi Rolls (6 pcs)	\$ 7
Sushi Platter (4 rolls)	\$18
Hibachi Sushi Combo	\$19

The Hibachi Grill Pricing

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