

TOGETHER LET'S MAKE

# MENUS WORK HARDER



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

**EGG SOLDIERS**  
FOOD CONSULTANTS

TOGETHER WE CAN GET

# BACK IN THE GAME



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**Now is the time to make your menus work harder than ever before. We understand that it has been a difficult time to review your menus in the new world and a lot of operators are unable to test their menus in the way they did before.**

Bigger brands who have access to a host of experts in-house are navigating their way through these trying times. We wanted to offer up expert advice to our independent customers who may not have had the luxury of this support in-house. With consumer's eating out mindsets changing in the new world, new McCain-commissioned insight from Egg Soldiers Food Consultants reveals how to re-engineer your menu and simplify operations.

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Egg Soldiers, the specialised strategic food consultancy, is run by experts in the world of food. Specialising in concept creation, menu development and restaurant operations, they have worked with and helped develop industry leaders – from Leon Restaurants to Heston Blumenthal's The Fat Duck.



***“Planning and engineering your menu in a data-driven way and working well with your suppliers to maximise menu potential will be essential in these uncertain times. This is why we’ve partnered up with McCain Foodservice as industry leaders to share our knowledge and insight and ultimately help food businesses succeed”***

Toph Ford, Co. Founder of Egg Soldiers



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# Menu Re-ENGINEERING

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## WHERE TO START – MENU ANALYSIS

Our industry has always adapted to changes in society and advances in the way we live, eat and drink. In times of social transformation, it's important to ensure that your business is forward-thinking and built to anticipate the coming changes i.e. ready for the new world of hospitality.

There will be inevitable differences in general consumer behaviour following coronavirus – examples might include a greater awareness of social distancing and people avoiding large gatherings, potentially less international travel and more 'staycations', a greater interest in food provenance and awareness of what we

eat, a decrease in income for many, and a need for even more convenience such as contact-less (and delivered) food and for cashless payment options. Whilst considering these factors, it's important to remember that consumers will still expect a good experience when eating out.

Planning your business proactively will help you stay a step ahead of these changes. Simplifying your operation, via a re-engineered and refined menu that is full of blockbuster, sales-driving, high-margin dishes will be more vital than ever.



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Before you begin your menu re-engineering, ensure you understand your business' data first – analysing your numbers will be vital in helping guide you on what to change and what to keep. Combining simple analysis with the expert knowledge you already have of your business will give you the best chance of making the right decisions.

*Toph Ford & Stefan Cossier from Egg Soldiers have put together a quick-check analysis guide, and two simple tools to help you on this journey.*

- ✓ *Which dishes are selling and which are not? Look at both the sales numbers and cash profit from each dish*
- ✓ *Which dishes are firm customer favourites and which ones might need some improving?*
- ✓ *Which dishes or ingredients have high waste?*
- ✓ *How many ingredients are only used in one dish?*
- ✓ *Are there any operationally complex dishes i.e. heavy prep or 'service killers'?*



# DISH SCORECARD

A dish scorecard can help you get an objective view of dishes and create an action plan for each dish, and the final menu as a whole.

The general idea is to get a simple and clear understanding of the dishes that deserve your time and effort and those that don't. Below is a guide to the questions you should be asking yourself. You can adjust these to suit your type of business and food offer.

This is your first step to knowing which dishes to keep on the menu, which ones to tweak or improve, and which dishes should be removed (plus whether these dishes need replacing or if you're simply going to reduce the overall menu - we'll give you more tips on this in the below tactics checklist).

Dish name	Commercial		Operations		Consumer attitude and view of your food			Action
	GP	Sales	Prep & service complexity	Does it travel?	On trend	British / Ethical	Good unique experience (theatre)	
	%	£	Easy / Hard	Delivery / collection / outdoor -friendly	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	



## 2 X 2 GRID

A 2 x 2 grid is a simple way of plotting your dishes to find out how well they're doing - it works alongside your scorecard to give you a fully informed visual idea of your menu performance.

You can change the axis to give you the answers you need - from quality, to operational simplicity, to popularity, margin or sales. You could even create several 2 x 2 grids to help you build a great menu analysis model.

**MORE POPULAR**



### More popular but lower GP dishes.

Can you value re-engineer the dish?

Is there an opportunity to add more value to the dish and claim a higher price?

### Dishes in this box are popular and have a good GP.

Don't forget to keep improving these dishes so they don't stagnate! They are your blockbusters.

### Less popular and lower GP dishes.

Here is an opportunity to swap out dishes and try something new. Or simply remove the dishes and reduce the menu size.

### Less popular but higher GP dishes.

What can you do to make these dishes more appealing? Look at how they compare to trends. Look at menu wording - could it be off-putting or unfamiliar?

Is the price point right - does it give good value?



**HIGHER GP**



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# The important questions

Let's tackle some of the common questions and decisions facing all hospitality businesses right now. We'll then build on the solutions for these as part of our tips and tactics guide for re-engineering your menu.

### **Should you re-introduce your old menus – yes, no or maybe?**

Your customers will be excited to have their favourite dishes available again, but this will only last so long, so you'll need to have some newness lined up to excite and entice both loyal and new customers soon. This doesn't need to be wholesale changes; 1 or 2 new dishes may be all you need. Customers will be enticed by these and then likely order their usual dish anyway – or they'll come back because of the newness you were shouting about; that's why industry leaders innovate regularly.

You will have lots to think through as you plan the best next steps for your business, so use the great UK supply chain that is available to you for menu development help, by sourcing new menu items from specialist experts.

Brew City and McCain Appetisers can increase your average order values with minimal complexity, for example, innovative sides and add-on dishes. The McCain range will help maximise your revenue with premium snacks or side orders. For example, our mustard-coated dill pickles or sweet and salty onion straws work brilliantly as big flavour side orders, but work equally well as a value-add burger toppers.



*Brew City Mac N Jack, IPA Fries, Fiery Jalapeño Slices, Gouda Mozzarella Bites and Salt and Pepper Potato Pops*

### **How do you create more appealing dishes?**

Now is the time to focus on great quality, recognisable dishes with your own added twist/touch.

With disposable incomes under pressure, consumers will often hold off on big expenditures like holidays abroad, preferring to spend on smaller treats, such as a meal out, instead.

Introduce special 'secret' house sauces, dressings or seasonings that your customers can't get anywhere else. You can also look at dishes that are difficult or time-consuming to make well at home, for example a slow-cooked piece of meat or a technique that is tricky to perfect such as an interesting dessert. These ideas will help you create a memorable and ownable experience.





*Chips topped with chili*

## **How do you make dishes work harder?**

Cross-utilising ingredients and components across various dishes is essential. Aim to use ingredients more than once across your menu. Increased usage means increased volume and helps limit wastage. You could introduce 'add-ons' to extend 1 dish into 2 or 3, for example, topped fries, and ensure the toppings are components from elsewhere on your menu - this could be a cheese sauce or grated cheese blend, pulled meat or your signature sauces.



**Q How do you create more profitable dishes and menus?**

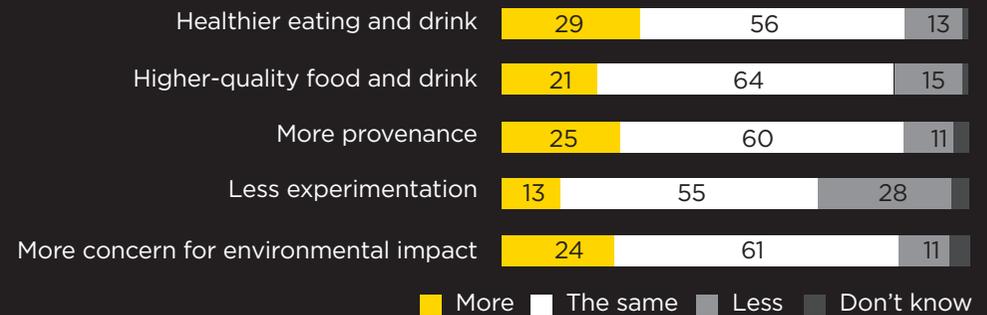
The simplest and quickest approach is to look at upsell opportunities – training your waiting staff to suggest side dishes that match the mains or asking guests if they’d like to add a component. This could be as simple as adding bacon to a burger or a sauce to a main course.

Make sure all your dish costs are up to date. Take any time you have now to review both your suppliers and ingredient pricing.

Do not drive quality out of dishes though – this can often be a knee-jerk reaction but it’s not a good long-term strategy and your customers will react if they feel the quality is slipping. Dishes must deliver your quality standard.

Consumers report being less experimental with food and drink during lockdown. Potentially operators could use this as a hook to drive footfall once reopened.

**Compared to how you used to eat and drink three months ago, do you think you do more, less or the same of the following:**



# TACTICS FOR SUCCESS

Now you can use your data and outputs from the analysis tools to aid your menu re-engineering journey. Our list of tactics and tips will guide you on the areas you should be thinking through – during the process of making these decisions, ensure you focus on your main business goals.

When it comes to menu re-engineering, be realistic – your menu should be designed around the expectation of changes to consumer behaviour – need to social distance and reluctance for human contact.

- **Great quality**
- **Value for money**
- **Consistency is key**

There will inevitably be a general reduction in your customers' disposable income; however, even though less will be spent on big ticket 'luxury' items, people

still want to treat themselves to experiences and to small indulgences, even during economic downturns and recessions.

Cash-strapped consumers want to treat themselves to something that lets them forget their financial problems, so let's ensure you're ready to provide this.

**Our tactics and tips are the final checklist touches to help you re-engineer your menu.**

# Do some RESEARCH

Before you start looking at your menu, make sure you do some simple research first.

- **Look at your local and competitive markets** – have competitors re-invented themselves or have they closed, and how will this affect you? There will be learnings and opportunities to take – how can you react and what should you change? What is the plan for your local customer base (i.e. the offices, colleges, shops etc) – are they fully up and running or have they unfortunately closed?
- **Look at what other popular venues and food brands have on their menu** – will these dishes work on your menu? You need to be offering what people WANT to eat. Sounds obvious, but even more important than ever, you cannot afford to have any duds on your menu, just because they've always been there. Be ruthless.

Look at the research available on top-selling dishes and include your version of these on the menu – simply surfing the main menus on Deliveroo and JustEat is a great source of favourite dish information.

- **New revenue channels** – explore all opportunities, from totally different styles of food or menu categories, to a full delivery service. The idea is to future-proof your business.
- **Day-parts** – if you haven't already, how can you make you business an all-day offer? This needs to make sense labour-wise, but if you're an evening and lunch-focussed business, can you introduce a simple breakfast or brunch menu (test the water on a Saturday or Sunday) and utilise your current ingredient portfolio?



### *Reduce AND Refine your menu*

Concentrate on your blockbuster dishes (what you're known for, or want to be known for – remember that 80% of spend is often on 20% of the menu) and the dishes that are simple to prepare and serve, ideally by a single person in their own segregated workspace. A reduced menu, full of the most exciting, healthy-margin dishes is where you should start. Reducing your menu also has the added benefit of reducing your prep time and wastage.

*Recognisable, comforting food* is likely to be what customers seek out first. The dishes that remind them of how things used to be and make them feel comforted and safe – comfort doesn't mean boring though; think classic British to global street food options. From Mac n Cheese, to Fried Chicken, to Burgers & Fries, Slow-roasts and Chicken, Falafel or Halloumi Salads, all with your twists and signature touches to make them ownable to your menu.

### Value

Consumers are likely to become more aware of value and want to ensure they get the most bang for their buck. This does not mean your dishes need to be cheap or overly large portions.

Value means that a dish delivers on the experience and quality promise for its price point. Quite often a restaurant's most expensive dish is its most popular, as customers associate it solely with your menu and view it as great quality and therefore value. See 'add-ons' and 'bundle deals' below for a supporting value tool.

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### 'Add-ons'

Upselling! As highlighted in our Q&A, this is a great tool to drive sales and ATV, while keeping the operation simple – so worth a mention again. What easy-to-prepare, healthy-margin Sides, add-ons or bundle deals can you introduce? Starting with great-value main meal prices will drive your value-for-money message, the addition of add-ons will then put the extra spend in the hands of your customer. Use the McCain Menu Signatures Breaded Mozzarella Cheese Sticks as an add-on perfectly paired with tangy tomato dip.



# Time to ALIGN WITH TRENDS

Delivery is clearly the biggest trend right now. However, the trends consumers have been excited by over the last few years have not disappeared, so don't forget them when planning your menus. Here are a few to consider:

- **The Experience** – this is the heart of any great restaurant. Make sure your customers can experience the best of your brand, whether it's online, on social media or in ordered food
- **Communication** – talk to your customers through every channel available to you. Tell them what you're doing and why
- **Plant-based** – a category or even menu of its own, which will need both healthy and indulgent dish options
- **Free-from** – give your customers choice, even if it's only 1 or 2 dishes to start with. Think low and no carb, dairy free, gluten free. Either select dishes that naturally deliver this or let the expert suppliers like McCain take this hassle and worry away from you. They've done all of the testing and accreditation on your behalf, so you can serve free-from meals with confidence
- **Health & Wellness** – include options on your menu, but ensure you balance with the comforting, indulgent treat dishes that your customers will crave



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# Time to ALIGN WITH MORE TRENDS

- **Sharing** – whether small plates or large dishes to share, sharing options give customers a quick and easy choice on the menu and allow you to plan your prep. Great for families and home delivery, and for bundle deals
- **Street food** – take flavour and ingredient combination inspiration from the amazing street food markets we have across the UK
- **Freshness and flavour punch** – think savoury, sweet, spicy, sour and pickled i.e. craveability. Use recipes from cuisines that relate easily to this such as SE Asian, Mexican, Modern Indian etc. Your street food research will give you great examples of this
- **Value** – while thinking through the above points, ensure that all dishes deliver on value vs. price point



*ITALIAN BEEF POUTINE: FRIES topped with SLOW-COOKED Hereford BEEF & oozy CHEESE SAUCE COATED WITH HERBS, PICKLED RED ONIONS AND CRISPY ROSEMARY*



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# THINK BRITISH

If there are any positives to take from the current crisis, it is certainly how our country has pulled together and the pride we have in our people (led by the wonderful key workers). We are also witnessing clear improvements in environmental damage, very much due to the lack of travel and transport of goods. This all points to an increase in the demand for locally grown produce, supporting our UK growers, farmers and manufacturers, while helping the environment and reducing carbon footprint. This is an opportunity to work with suppliers who source from British farms, and proudly tell your customers about it. McCain source and manufacture in the UK and with 250 British farms and a number of longstanding partnerships spanning three generations of farming families, they are committed to using British potatoes wherever possible. This will be more important to your guests and the planet than ever before.



# Delivery

If delivery wasn't already the future of hospitality, it certainly is now. It will be a vital source of revenue for most hospitality businesses in the here and now, but it will also help to future-proof your business – having a great delivery offer could help see you through these times. A great delivery menu will follow the same core tactics as your eat-in menu, but also requires careful additional planning. For example, travel quality is vital – only include dishes that will still be great after they've been on a scooter ride. This means robust ingredients that will not suffer from going limp or soft during the journey. If unavoidable, consider packing these items separately, away from the main hot component to avoid sweating. Use the specialist supply chain that is available to you; these suppliers have invested their skill and development time already to create menu items that are perfect for delivery. McCain SureCrisp have been specifically designed and tested to keep their crispness and quality through the delivery process. The game-changing clear-coat fry allows you to offer a consistently crispy fry across delivery, takeaway and in restaurant. Stays crispier than uncoated fries up to 20 minutes in a closed delivery bag, allowing you to deliver further in non-contact delivery.

# LEAN on YOUR SUPPLIERS

With a need to ideally reduce labour, look to utilise your suppliers' skill-sets and your wholesalers' knowledge of what is available to you. We're all in this together, so you'll be surprised how eager your supply base is to help you. Let our expert UK supply chain support you. Getting in touch with suppliers will also simply be a chance to check in on them and see if they're good to go when you are.

McCain Foodservice Solutions pride themselves on developing expert products that help you overcome specific challenges like soggy delivery fries with the revolutionary SureCrisp range. The McCain Chef Solutions Simply wedges reduce preparation time in the kitchen with great-quality potatoes simply peeled, sliced into wedges and blanched ready for use as side of plate or as an ingredient. McCain are providing ongoing support with tools to help in challenging times. [Click here for practical ideas for now and insights for the future.](#)



Mr. Thai VEGAN topped Sweet Potato Fries

# CROSS-UTILISATION IS KEY

Making your ingredients and dishes work harder will be vital, and will help reduce waste also. Set yourself a target that an ingredient or dish component needs to be used in 2-3 dishes minimum, otherwise it doesn't make the cut. How can you utilise your recognisable dishes more – take your Chicken Wings and create 2 sections (1 for dipping and 1 for tumbling) with your own house-made sauces, create premium topped versions of your Mac n Cheese, or breadcrumb it into nuggets and serve as a starter and side dish? Extend your fries into a selection of loaded options, using components from elsewhere on the menu, such as cheese sauce and cheese blends, house-made sauces and chilli beef brisket. Utilise that brisket chilli and create Chilli Beef Croquettes.

When serving recognisable dishes, it's vital you then add your own personal touch or twist, to make it yours. This can be a simple sauce, garnish or house-made pickle.

### *Outsourced VS. in-house made*

Another opportunity to help you reduce labour costs. The skill and trick here is to source great pre-made base items from specialist suppliers and then add your own simple in-house touches to make it ownable to you. For example, sauces, garnishes, different ways of preparing and cooking etc. Make sure your recipes are special/secret and not something that can easily be made at home or found elsewhere.

### *Ingredient Format*

The easiest place to start is fresh vs. frozen. By using frozen items you can reduce wastage, as long as you can still deliver the quality. Select the best frozen food available, and balance this with freshly prepared ingredients across your menu. Let the expert suppliers take some of the prep pressure away. This will be another vital tool in helping you deliver consistent dishes.

### *Don't Forget the Kids*

With the increase in delivery likely to continue, families will be eating together more often. So remember to offer good children's options, or food that is great for sharing with the family.



### *OPERATIONS*

A reduced team may be your choice or something you have to deal with if staff are not available when you re-open. Operational planning must go hand in hand with your menu re-engineering. Aim to keep your relaunch menu operationally simple.

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### *GET YOUR BUSINESS 'NEW WORLD' READY*

Think cashless, contactless takeaway, mobile ordering services (click and collect) and contactless service in general with entryway pick-up points etc. You need to ensure your customers feel safe. With health and safety in mind, take learnings from food retail who have led the way over the last 6 weeks – with sneeze screens at counters, distancing when paying, managing queues outside etc. Plus look after your team, with distancing plans in the kitchen.

# SUMMARY

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- ✓ Reduce and refine your menu with blockbuster dishes – full of the most exciting and healthy margin dishes
- ✓ Use recognisable, comforting food to make consumers feel safe and comforted
- ✓ Upselling with add-ons will drive sales and ATV putting the extra spend in your customers hand
- ✓ Talk to your customers through every channel available to you. Tell them what you're doing and why
- ✓ Include options on your menu, but ensure you balance comforting, indulgent treats with healthy options
- ✓ Sharing options give customers a quick and easy choice on the menu and allow you to plan your prep
- ✓ Take flavour and ingredient combination from amazing street food markets
- ✓ Aim to use British produce as this is more important to guests than ever before
- ✓ Delivery is the future for hospitality, invest in travel quality items that won't suffer from going limp on the journey
- ✓ Partner with suppliers that are experts in their field
- ✓ Cross utilisation of ingredients is key to waste reduction
- ✓ Source pre-made base items to reduce labour costs and add your own simple touches to make it ownable
- ✓ Select the best frozen food available, and balance this with freshly prepared ingredients across your menu. Let the expert suppliers take some of the prep pressure away
- ✓ Use cashless, contactless takeaway, mobile ordering services (click and collect) and contactless service to get your business new world ready

McCain Foodservice Solutions has commissioned a range of practical insight documents with industry experts to help you navigate your path to re-opening, along with great financial deals that will really help you get back in the game.

**Follow us on Instagram** to access the latest support or [click here to download the documents.](#)



# Our Range

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Skin-On Thin Cut 4x2.27kg  
Skin-Off Thin Cut 4x2.27kg  
Skin-On Medium Cut 4x2.27kg  
Skin-On Julienne 4x2.27kg  
Traditional Chips 4x2.27kg  
Gourmet Chips 4x2.27kg



Sweet Potato Fries 4x2.5kg  
Gastro Chunky Chips 4x2.27kg  
Rustic Skin-On Chips 4x2.27kg  
Sweet Potato Rustics 4x2.5kg  
Crispers 4x2.27kg  
Skin-On Julienne 4x2.27kg  
Smiles 10x907g  
Southern Fried Lattice 4x2kg  
Savoury Herb Dice 4x2.27kg  
Southern Fried Wedges 4x2.27kg  
Southern Fried Spirals 4x2kg  
Roasts 4x2.5kg  
5% Fat Skin-on Wedges 4x2.27kg  
Mozzarella Cheese Sticks 6x1kg  
Chilli Pepper & Cheese Nuggets 6x1kg



Quick Cook Delights Medium (7/16) 6x2.49kg  
Quick Cook Delights Thick (9/16) 6x2.49kg  
Oven Chips 6x2.5kg  
Jackets 3x1.62kg  
Simply Dice 4x2.5kg  
Simply Wedge 4x2.5kg  
Simply Mash 4x2.5kg  
Simply Roasts 4x2.5kg



Thin Fries (3/8) 4x2.27kg  
Medium Chips (7/16) 4x2.27kg  
Steak Cut Chips 4x2.27kg  
Thick (9/16) 4x2.27kg  
Chippy Chips 4x2.27kg  
1/4 Lb Veg Burger 3x10x113g  
Multiserve Wheatgerm Fibre Cheese & Tomato Pizza 1x12  
Grande Wheatgerm Fibre Cheese & Tomato Pizza 1x8  
Rosti 6x1.52kg  
Mini Waffles 10x907g  
Hash Browns 8x1kg  
Roasts 4x2.27kg  
Hash Brown Nuggets 10x1.36kg  
Country Style Diced Potato 6x2.27kg  
Sauté Potatoes 6x2.27kg



IPA Fries 4x2.27kg  
Salt & Pepper Potato Pops 5x2.5kg  
Fiery Jalapeno Slices 3x1kg  
Gouda & Mozzarella Bites 3x1kg  
Frickles 3x1kg  
Mac n Jack Bites 3x1kg  
Tomato & Mozzarella Arancini Bites 3x1kg  
Onion Straws 3x1kg



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E: [foodservice@mccain.co.uk](mailto:foodservice@mccain.co.uk) T: 0800 146 473 (GB)/1800 409 623 (ROI)