Fat Hippo

Fat Hippo continues its good kind of gluttony during Lockdown thanks to QikServe

Ultra-cool burger chain Fat Hippo has five restaurants across the North East of the UK and a fleet of mobile catering vans available to hire for events all year round. In usual circumstances the brand would be serving customers in packed restaurants and at private parties as well as the region's best foodie events; bringing the good kind of gluttony to its fans.

The Challenge

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the business followed others around the country, closing its doors in order to comply with health and safety regulations. In the weeks following, its team began to plan, not only how to reopen safely, but how they could use the time to build on and develop the business.

Prior to lockdown the business had realised a strong delivery trade through Deliveroo, however its digital ordering and collection trade was minimal, and not something the team put great marketing effort into. Now though, cost-cutting was essential for protecting the future of the business; taking the focus away from Deliveroo — and the associated commission fees — was identified to reduce costs.

The Solution

Before deciding how best to grow its collection service, the team took the time to review what brands that had remained open were doing. Which were succeeding? What was working well, and what was clearly not? It seemed many businesses were relying on phone orders, but Fat Hippo wanted to avoid the time expense of running a phone ordering line and felt that it wasn't the most convenient way to manage customer satisfaction. It soon became apparent that they needed a way to give customers flexibility to order in their own time. Not only did they want to avoid the issues that running a phone line caused, but to make it possible to capture orders days in advance. The system they wanted

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The Results

would imitate table bookings, making Fat Hippo able to go into a Friday or Saturday night service fully booked.
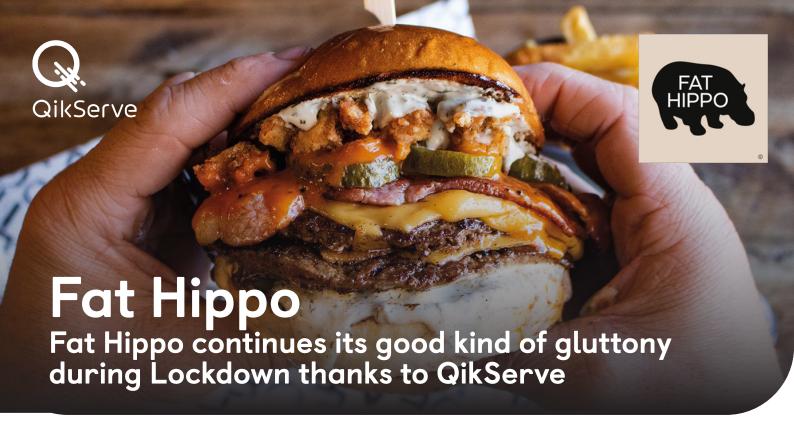
Fat Hippo found the answer to these challenges, plus other benefits in QikServe's QikOrder platform. At the start of May, the company launched a fully branded online ordering portal, built seamlessly into its existing website. It communicated the new service to customers by saying that, "through a well-managed, contactless, collection operation they are able to operate safely for both our staff and customers."

Customers jumped at the opportunity to get their hands onto Fat Hippo's burgers once again. Within a month, more than 5,000 orders had been placed and more than 10,000 burgers flipped and collected. The success of the restaurant ordering platform led the company to expand its service to its fleet of vans; helping them take to the road, provide catering services safely, and serve an additional 700 burgers in just three weeks. It also convinced them of the benefit of launching their own ordering app, also through QikServe.

The team has run a bold social media programme, using strong CTAs to persuade

customers to download the app and use the service, and offering a mixture of promotions and competitions to engage followers. It also has plans to launch a merchandise store in the next few weeks, capitalising on the popularity of the brand.

As Fat Hippo looks forward to the reopening of restaurants and beyond, it intends to continue this push, driving traffic to click and collect, serving those customers nervous or unable to eat out. On top of this, it plans to make use of another QikOrder service, 'Order to Table', allowing customers and staff to easily observe social distancing while dining in.

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In their own words...

"If you're looking at a sustainable solution to keep business turnover up during the current climate, then click and collect is the answer. Without COVID-19, it might have been another year before we made the decision to launch our own digital ordering service, but no doubt, when we did, the results would have been just as positive. Because it's zero commission, we're essentially selling our food at the dine-in price and making the same margins. Right now, that's literally saving our business.

During lockdown, QikServe has made it possible for us to generate revenue, true, but equally important, it's allowed us to stay connected to our customers and impart some joy during this difficult time. If one thing is clear from this experience, it's that it's essential to adapt and to continue driving business forward, even when things seem bleak."