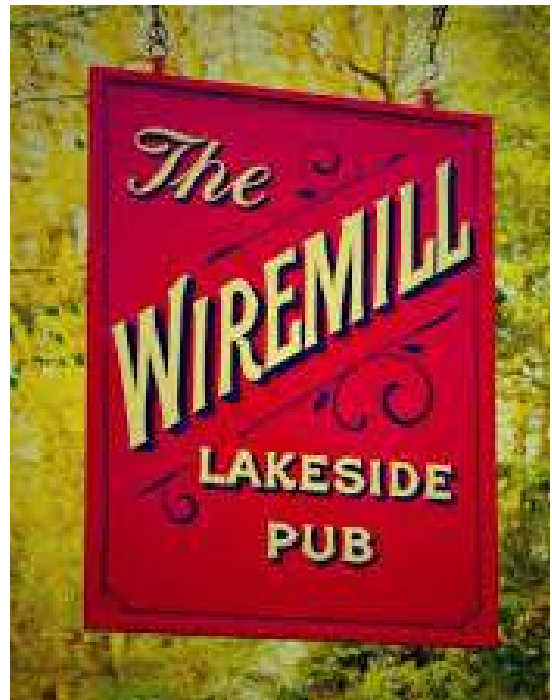


The Wiremill: Using online ordering to help the less fortunate

In February 2020, staff at The Wiremill Lakeside Pub & Inn were welcoming customers into their cosy bar and restaurant. Six weeks later that all changed – as it did for thousands of other pubs and restaurants – in March.

Unlike many, The Wiremill remained open. It did this carefully, by investing in technology that can help it manage takeaways, and with a lot of consideration for the health and wellbeing of staff and customers.



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The Challenge

“We didn’t offer takeaway or delivery before all of this, we were a gastro pub, a destination and food business primarily. After the government mandated that restaurants and pubs close, our immediate concern was protecting our staff. We’ve had to place them on furlough, but four of them have decided to stay with us on a voluntary basis. They’ve moved into the pub hotel and are helping us as we adapt to the crisis.

Once we knew we had to close we went into research mode. Like others, we can’t afford to close completely for months so we’ve looked at every angle of the market, trying to find a way that we can remain open in some capacity so as to help people in need and get the business out of furlough. We don’t want to take money from the government when that money is so badly needed by the NHS and others.”



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The solution

"We've decided to dedicate a large chunk of our time to helping those in need. To do this, and to stay open, we need to be making some money; we're doing that by offering takeaway packages to the local community. We found a great deal for an online ordering system with no-set up fees or commission costs and we've launched an online ordering portal for customers. People can order food staples – things they are craving – and toilet rolls.

Everyone gets a gift voucher for when they return after the pandemic, and there are also surprise treats. Last Sunday we put Yorkshire puddings in for free, and we'll be putting chocolate eggs in at Easter.

When customers place their orders online, they select a collection slot and tell us their car registration number and colour. They then back into our dedicated parking bays and open their boot – we can then deliver packages into the car without any need for person-to-person contact."



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The results

"It's really been amazing. We've been taking it slowly, not overcommitting to anything so that we can get used to the workload and ensure we meet requirements. On the first day, for instance, we stopped at 30 orders; we would have been taking a hundred orders a day if we hadn't limited ourselves. We're gradually increasing the number of orders we're taking as we find the right balance."



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In their own words

"If we could offer just one piece of advice, it's this: put people first, not profit.

You should investigate online ordering and find ways of staying open, but make helping (staff, community, key workers) people the reason you're doing so. We are doing this to make a difference, to help vulnerable people and to be a part of the community. There are elderly people who say they're ok, but they're not. If you can help them, you should.

After all of this is over, we will keep a takeaway service, that's for sure. But I think changes will be felt wider than just at a business level."

Tim Foster, Co-Founder, Yummy Pub Co.



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