

TOGETHER LET'S GET

Back in the Game



LeVERAGING OUTDOOR DINING

to re-open profitably and maximise guest experience



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When re-opening your restaurant after Covid, leveraging your outdoor space can be a great way to drive foot traffic into your venue while allowing your guests to feel safe and comfortable.

“DURING COVID, SEATING (PEOPLE FORCED TO SIT) BECAME A FOCUS. WE ENSURED THAT ALL TABLES WERE CONDUCIVE TO SEATING AND DINING AND THIS HAS IN TURN INCREASED OUR FOOD SALES DRAMATICALLY AND WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE HERE TO STAY”

SAYS JUSTIN TYNAN, THE GENERAL MANAGER OF MANLY WHARF HOTEL.



While it sounds like a great idea, extending your service into the outdoor space can be daunting with a million questions arising on how to make this possible in a profitable way. Here are a few tips and guiding principles that can help you make the most of your outdoor space in a way that works for you and your guests.

1. READ, READ AND READ

Get started by gathering all the information available on outdoor seating, understand the government regulations on expanding into the outdoor space, what permits will be required

and how you can go about securing them. Once you've looked at this, you can evaluate if this is an option for your business.

2. BUSINESS MODEL CHECK

Run a fact check on your business model to understand if it can support extending your outdoor seating in a profitable way. Try and answer the following questions with a rational and objective lens:

- How many tables can you accommodate outdoors ensuring you can meet the safety and hygiene requirements set by the government?
- How many staff members would you require to service the kitchen and this area effectively?
- Does your current food and drinks menu work with the outdoor seating or does it need adjustments?
- What kind of operational, marketing and overhead costs will you be looking at once you open your outdoor space for dining?
- What is the occupancy rate and average transaction value of each table that you require to recover costs and potentially make profits?
- What does the worst-case business scenario look like? Is it manageable? Is this still a viable option for you?

3. CREATE A COVID-SAFE ENVIRONMENT

- Implement hygiene and safety measures ensuring you have adequate supplies and PPE gear for staff, tables placed at the right distance, signs and messages across the venue for guests.
- Implement regular cleaning and disinfecting practices.
- Ensure your staff are feeling well when they come to work and maintain a roster with back-up staff to allow for contingencies.
- Review the guiding principles for each region as established by the government across VIC, WA, NT, ACT, NSW, SA and QLD and ensure your venue is compliant.

4. THE PERFECT LAYOUT FOR THE PERFECT EXPERIENCE

- Before you start designing your outdoor space, consider what you want to achieve with it. What is the purpose of this outdoor space and how can you create this while staying on-brand? Do you want this to be a formal seating space or a lounging space? Think about how your guests should feel when they see the space and what you want them to do once they are in. This will help you bring the right mood and atmosphere to life with the right furniture and ambience.
- Understand the importance of your location and its uniqueness. Embrace your surroundings and integrate it into the furnishings/styling or the mood you create for your guests.
- Creating a great atmosphere sometimes comes at the price of reduced number of tables but it surely helps create memorable and on-brand experiences making it important to strike the right balance.



5. WEATHER-PREPAREDNESS

Think about how you would transform or shelter this space should the weather-gods not be in your favour. Being prepared for hot, rainy and

windy days will ensure that you can operate un-interrupted. Fans, heaters, umbrellas are a few basic items that can keep the party going.

6. AVOID THE PESTS

Much like the weather, pests and insects are likely to crash a party unannounced.

- Vet your surroundings to understand what kind of animals, birds and pests are likely to invade and prepare for them.
- Secure the parameter of your outdoor area in a way that can pose as an obstruction to animals around the area. Animals may approach if they smell food so be sure to clean out leftover food from tables as quickly as possible.

- Spray your outdoor areas to prevent the influx of flies, bees, wasps and mosquitoes.
- Store away fresh foods in secured containers.



7. ADVERTISE AND SET THE RIGHT EXPECTATIONS

- Now that you are ready to roll out the red carpet to your outdoor dining, get ready to make some noise. Use your local media, social media, website and your loyal customers to get the message out.
- Let your guests know what your outdoor dining has to offer and what they can expect without misguiding them. Remember, you'd rather surprise than disappoint them.

8. START SMALL, LEARN AND EXPAND

When in doubt, start small. Implement your conservative plan, monitor and learn. Take feedback from your customers and identify

how you can turn tables faster or add more value to your outdoor space in innovative ways.



If you are looking for the perfect fries that compliment your outdoor menu,
we have a great product range to help you get started.

YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUT OUR SUPPORT TOOLS TO HELP YOU GET

Back in The Game

FASTER AND STRONGER.

If you'd like to discuss further on how we can support your business,
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References: <https://restaurant.opentable.com/news/tips/10-tips-to-start-and-expand-your-outdoor-dining-experience/>;
<https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/144/how-to-create-a-profitable-patio-space.html>