



cranbrook  
**chamber**  
of commerce

The background of the entire image is a photograph of a woman with long brown hair and black-rimmed glasses, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt under a denim apron. The setting is a restaurant with warm, golden lighting, wooden walls, and a bicycle hanging on the wall in the background. Other patrons and tables are visible but out of focus.

# Resilience & Recovery: Restaurant Growth & Opportunity



# 9 Opportunities Arising from Pandemic Trends

# Your next customer is hyper-local.

Living patterns have changed.  
It's time to market to people who live,  
walk or drive by your business.

Before COVID, many restaurants relied on business clients. It's time to switch up your marketing to focus on neighbours, not just workers.

Think of the people that live in the community, walk their dog nearby, drive their kid to school, or visit the local gym. These need to be a bigger target for marketing investments.

Regularly change A-boards and window signage to attract those folks with a small investment.

Geo-target your social media ads to capture those nearby.





# ~~Time = Money~~ Time is for Connecting.

Everyone is looking at their  
time differently.

Masks, bubbles, party size limits:  
We've had 2 years of being apart while British  
Columbians were dreaming about getting together.

It's time to celebrate that restaurants are places for  
connecting. Offer lunch or after work specials.  
Promote a lunch service in an hour guarantee.  
Talk about your offers for parties and small groups.

# Take Out is Here to Stay.

Food to go responds to the way people are living in our fast paced society.

- Even before the pandemic more people weren't making the time dine in.
- Market gains were being made by meal kits and grocery store take and bake.
- Availability of good restaurant take out earns back some of these customers.
- If your kind of food doesn't do well in take out containers, consider take and bake, frozen and fresh grab and go or meal kits for top items.





# Customers want to see your local Foodprint.

With food and transportation costs rising,  
your menu prices likely have to rise too.

Customers don't want to just see higher prices.  
They want to see new value your menu.

**This means:**

- Showcasing your local suppliers;
- Providing more details on your menus;
- Talking about your local impact with pride on your social media.



# Stop trying to be all things to all people.

Lots of menus have gotten very large over the years to target a range of tastes and meal parts. But now that stuff is hard to get and prices are climbing, it's time to dial it in.

Look at your menu with an eye to being the best of what you are. Concentrate on bringing your inventory down. Remove take out items that don't travel because they don't bring in return business.

## Have some menu items that don't sell often but have a following?

Create a weekly or daily special and use them as a tool to attract those customers using your social media channels.

Go old school with "Steak Sundays".

Have items you only offer 1 day a week as a continuing special.

# How do you streamline your menu?

- Focus on a core menu that maximizes ingredients and reduces food waste.
- Cost test dishes to ensure consistency and cost control.
- Align your social media with your menu: take photos, post regularly and tag farmers, fishers, local producers.
- Identify or create items for a permanent take-out menu.
- Think about offering seasonal and weekly features that take into account supply chain, price and availability.

## Make it Personal.

- Focus your marketing efforts on local channels.
- Enhance your company and your team members in your social media presence.
- Update your outdoor signage: a-boards, coroplast, door & window signs.
- Use every opportunity to target prospective employees.





# Share the Right Information, Regularly.

Keeping our business info up to date on Google, website and social media often ends up on the bottom of the list. With changing regulations and staffing challenges, making sure your information is correct on all the platforms you use is essential.

It's okay to dump some channels as long as you use the ones you have effectively. Update your hours, menus and specials so that people can find the correct info and have a solid experience from when they look for you online to when they arrive for their reservation.

# Activate your service hours.

**Look at your core busy hours and switch your business hours to match!**

Daylight hours are attractive because they allow guests the potential to sit outside, enjoy the relative comfort of outdoors and dovetail with other exercise and social activities.

Think less late night dining experiences and more late lunches and happy hour experiences. Expanding what you do with the afternoon and happy hour doesn't mean deals. Be creative with tasting flights, pairings, charcuterie boards and shared tasting menus.

Late lunch specials. Tasty brunch offerings.

With staffing challenges on the rise, it's important to do more with the hours you are open.

Expect less business from the 9 to midnight unless your business is in a really urban environment.

**Chick-fil-A closes on Sundays and they make more money because of it. We can all learn from that.**





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**What's Next?**

# Building Guest Confidence

**After 2 years of pandemic life,  
guest outlook is finally shifting.**

## **What are you doing differently to connect with customers?**

Is it time to bring back bar seating or paper menus?  
Can you keep your entry and reservation process streamlined?  
Have you updated staff job descriptions to address new work flow?

### **Challenges that impacted guest levels include:**

- People working from home.
  - Travel restrictions.
- Older diners not confident going out.
- Objections to vaccine passports and mask mandates.
  - Larger families not meeting the party limits.

Making sure that you are addressing customer the challenge of your particular business in your physical space is essential to bring those “missing” customers back.

# Leveraging Pandemic Gains

**Some pandemic gains will help your profitability by becoming permanent.**

**Are you taking advantage of the policy changes?**

**Wholesale Pricing on Alcohol:** Have you reviewed your wine list to make sure you are taking the best advantage of Wholesale Pricing?

**Permanent Redline Extensions:** Have you applied for your patio extension through your city and the LCRB?

**Alcohol for Take Out:** Are you offering wine, beer or single serve cocktails with your take out menu?

# Tackling Labour Shortage

## The pre-pandemic **labour shortage** is back.

With increased early retirements, there are less than 2 people joining the workforce for every 3 that retire. That's a 34% gap before you account for job specific shortages!

**AND** 34% of the restaurant workforce is young workers. With less young workers entering the workforce, we are even more impacted by the shortage.

The BCRFA and Chambers of Commerce are advocating to provincial and federal government to reduce the red tape and processing times for skilled foreign workers. And making a strong push for a province wide "recruiting" campaign for tourism and hospitality.

# Engaging Employees

**Future proofing our workforce is proactively answering the question:**

**How am I making staff feel engaged and recognized?**

Every leader and manager in our industry is part of our industry reputation as employers. We've had to overcome challenges with reputation after a lot of cooking shows exposed bad kitchen culture. Combine that with COVID shutdowns and being a frontline workforce that faced a bunch of COVID customer aggression, we have work to do!

Today, we need to focus on rebuilding our industry reputation as innovative and exciting employers.

We need to create new engagement with young workers and support new employee management/training tools .

# Team Building, Training & Recognition

**Acknowledging pandemic loyalty matters.**

**Can you incorporate team building, training and recognition into your future planning?**

**Cross-Training and Leadership Training:** Leadership training is a valuable skill that builds staff confidence. Cross-training can help build skills and help with staff shortages. These are both an asset to your business success and your employees growth.

**Team Building:** Common pressure can build a team – but recognition of the effort keeps the team together. Now that restrictions are lifting, conducting a team building or team wellness event would benefit your long term staffing outcomes.

**Pandemic Learnings:** Have you asked your team what they learned from the pandemic and how it can help you shape your workforce going forward?



# Anticipate Staff Shortages

- Make sure you have a contingency plan in place to ensure your business will be able to continue to operate with staff off sick
- Review your COVID protocols and procedures in your business to make a strong Communicable Disease Plan
- Stagger breaks and do as you can to prevent social gathering of employees

## **Return to work:**

After 5 days of quarantine and the active COVID symptoms have ended, an employee can return to work with a well fitting mask for the next 5 days.

# 5 Days for Everyone

This is for part-time and full-time.

Part time: 5 x average days work. People who work 4 hour shifts – would be eligible for 5 x 4 hour shifts. If they work, 6 hour days, they would be eligible for 5 x 6 hour days.

## [Employment Standards Act: Illness or Injury Leave](#) [Act Part 6, Section 49.1](#)

- Each employee is entitled to 5 days per calendar year.
- An employee who takes paid sick leave on a statutory holiday that they are scheduled to work would be entitled to an average day's pay for both the statutory holiday and the paid sick leave.
- Paid sick leave is “wages” under the ESA, so it would be taken into account in calculations for vacation pay, statutory holiday pay, etc.

The BC Employment Standards Branch (ESB) website provides information on the new paid sick leave entitlement, including eligibility criteria and how to calculate an “average day's pay”. If you have questions please contact the ESB toll-free by telephone at: 1-833-236-3700, or visit the ESB website [HERE](#).

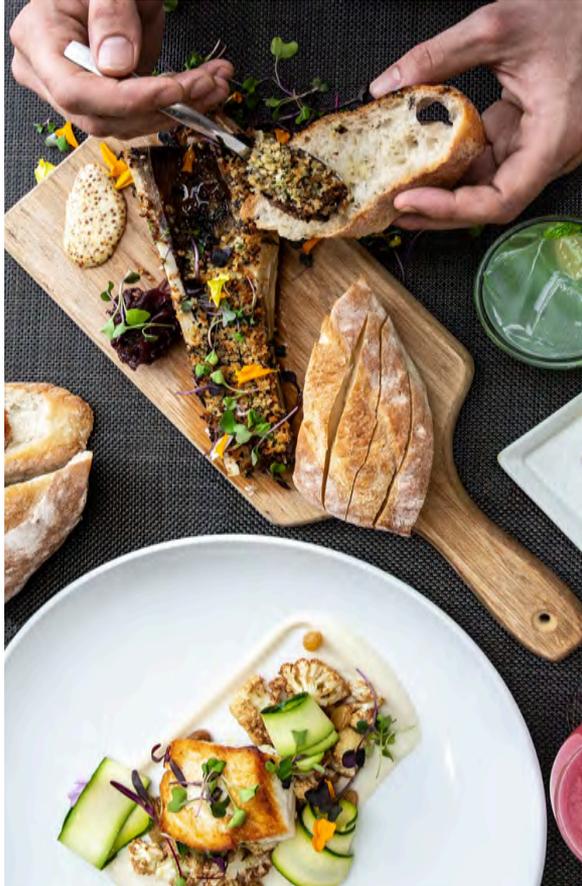


# Bring More to the Table:



- Be transparent about what you believe in. This mattered to Millennials before: it matters to everyone now.
- Recognize your staff and your community support in making your business possible.
- Share your commitment to supporting local suppliers, food & beverage on your menu and on social. 2021 was terrible on all our farmers, harvesters and processors.

**Support other local businesses. We need to support our neighbours, friends and farmers so they can support us.**



# BCRFA Tools & Resources

Best Human Resources Practices  
for the Restaurant Industry

Illness and Injury Leave

Hospitality Regulations  
Made Easy in BC

Social Media Engagement: @BCTastesBetter @BCRFA

Foreign Worker Recruiting:  
Brij Rathi Consultancy 780-953-9090

HR Guidance:  
Gillian MacGregor  
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