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QR Codes: One Solution to the Post-COVID-19 Dine-In Problem

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Both restaurants and hotels are uncertain as to what their post-COVID-19 industry will look like, but many are working hard to try and find some solutions that will help these industries recover more quickly. One such individual is Professor Cihan Cobanoglu of the University of South Florida, Director of the M3 Center, and a Research Advisory Board member for *Hospitality Technology* magazine.

In this Q&A, Professor Cobanoglu discusses the important role QR codes could play in healing the hospitality industry – specifically when it comes to the dine-in experience – based on their popular usage in China prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

How will consumers act post-COVID-19?

The Coronavirus has changed how consumers behave. In the post-Coronavirus world, consumers will be more self-conscious about where they dine and what they touch. They will want to know that the restaurants they visit are sanitary. So, restaurants will need to highlight their sanitation practices and communicate them clearly to guests.

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What kind of sanitation practices might become popular?

Guests will want to know that employees who are working in the restaurant are healthy. Daily temperature checks – perhaps even daily COVID-19 testing of employees at first – could happen.

What will dine-in look post-COVID-19?

Contactless service will be a key point for restaurants to adopt. Thus, restaurants would do well to eliminate paper menus which may transmit viruses. Instead restaurants could provide guests with QR codes at the table that act as both a menu and as a payment method. Restaurants in China have been using QR codes in this capacity for some time and they have some great benefits: digital menus can be sorted by most popular dishes, allergens, price, and more. For example, diabetics will be only shown meals that are low in sugar or sugar-free. When it is time to pay,

there will be no need to pass a credit card or cash to the server. Instead, a second QR code will allow the diner to pay via mobile phone. Another advantage: This technology is not expensive or difficult to implement.

What if diners do not have smartphones?

Some restaurants have indicated that they are installing large digital screens in their restaurants so that guests can see menu items without having to touch a physical menu. Similarly, guests could look at a menu on a digital screen before entering the restaurant, deciding what they want before sitting down.

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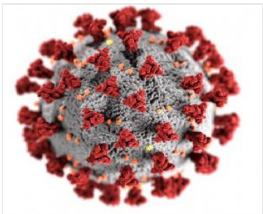

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