

Reopening Specialty Coffee

New Practices after COVID-19

May 20, 2020

As New York City begins to carefully open back up, shop owners are beginning to imagine what that should look like for specialty coffee. What is the safest way to provide coffee service and still remain connected to our communities? How can we best protect our employees? What does this mean for our food service? And beyond the crisis, what are best practices for the future? Jane Kim Design (JKD) has created this guide to help share best practices and also provide our perspective as designers. Coffee shops have been grappling with this question for weeks in other parts of the country so we've attempted to learn from them and also address the unique challenges that shops in New York City face. JKD has renovated more than ten specialty coffee shops in New York City and we hope to add to this important conversation. As our understanding of the coronavirus changes over time, we too must adapt to how we interact in public. This document will be revised and updated as we learn more over time. Reference links can be found at the end of this document.

Here we will outline two phases for re-opening: a minimal contact strategy for immediate use called "Door Service"; and a second strategy for resuming service within the cafe space, which we refer to as "Limited Service."

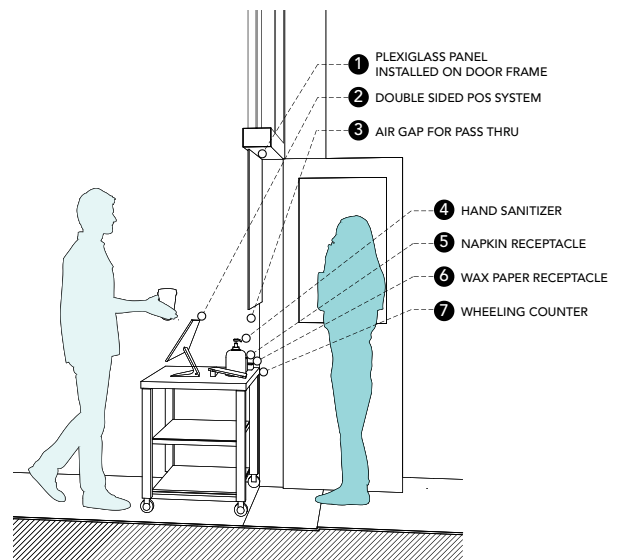
Door Service

Wrecking Ball Coffee Roasters in San Francisco did not close at all during this crisis. Co-owner Nick Cho has published detailed information on how they modified their shops for Door Service. Door Service brings the whole service counter to the entry door to limit contact between the customer outside and the staff inside the shop. A sheet of plexiglass with a pass-thru at the counter separates the customer and barista to limit air contact between the two.

All customer interactions happen at this counter. Customers place their order, pay, and wait for their coffee here. Coffee is delivered with milk, sugar, and/or straw as requested so the customer does not touch anything that comes from a bulk container. Customers are encouraged to pay via credit card to limit the handling of money. Wrecking Ball Coffee innovated the use of wax paper, allowing each customer to take a small, post-it sized sheet from a stack on the counter so they can avoid touching the credit card screen while paying, reducing points of contact on surfaces between customers. This set-up allows one to two employees to run the shop assuming slow customer traffic.

Best Practices for Door Service

- 1. Plexiglass panel reduces air contact between server and customer.*
- 2. Reduce points of contact between server and customer, i.e. drink placed on counter for customer to pick up.*
- 3. Reduce points of contact for customer and touchable surfaces:*
 - Drink filled with condiments in advance.*
 - Straw inserted by server.*
 - Separate credit card screen, or all inputs are by server.*
 - Open trash can outside.*



Cleaning and Sanitizing

Customers feel comfortable in a space knowing that the employees feel comfortable there. This includes regular sanitizing of surfaces and employee hands following CDC guidelines at a minimum. Face coverings have been recommended in all instances where people cannot maintain six foot social distance so employees should wear face coverings when they are interacting directly with customers.

Signage

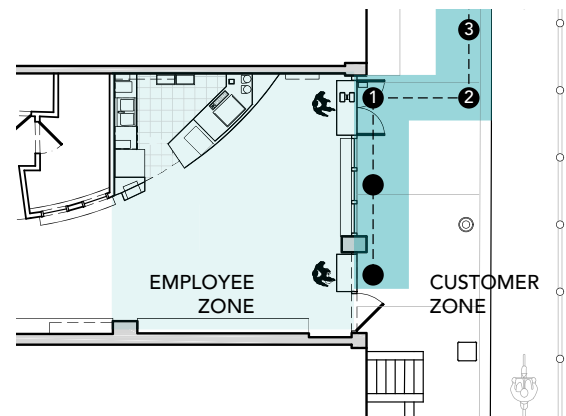
Large, clear signage explaining the new ordering and pick-up system should be created. It should be easy to read when standing on the sidewalk. The clearer the set-up, the fewer questions customers will have. Staff should be trained to help customers navigate the new system.

Sidewalk Management

New York is a dense city. Sidewalks generally don't have a lot of extra space. It is very important to manage sidewalk traffic with place markers on the ground so that customers maintain six foot social distance between each other and with passers by. This is important to the customers and to the neighborhood as a whole. When customers start to overflow the sidewalks it may be necessary to explore expanding waiting space into the street with cones at unused parking spaces or to explore expanding to a Limited Service set up as described below.

Case Studies

At Everyman Espresso in the East Village owner Sam Penix enacted Door Service with a separate ordering and pickup location. This spreads out customers as they are waiting for their orders. There are two sets of double doors at this location. One set of doors is transformed into the ordering counter. A removeable sheet of plexiglass will be installed above this counter since it is the main point of contact with the customer. The second set of doors is used for picking up orders, employee entry, and deliveries.



Door Service at Everyman Espresso on 13th Street

At Chalait on the Upper West Side owner Michelle Puyane is experimenting with a similar Door Service setup. Like many NYC shops, there is only a single door to the space, so they needed to create a service counter that was moveable to allow for employee and delivery access. The sidewalks outside of Chalait are wide and generous, and their location on the corner provides more than fifty linear feet of street frontage. Customers can easily line up at safe distances along the storefront and neighbors on the sidewalk have plenty of space to walk by.



Door Service mock-up at Chalait UWS

Limited Service

With Limited Service, the customer enters the space to wait on line, but there is still a clear separation between customer space and employee space. Customers are limited to three inside the space at a time. Customer flow should be considered so paths do not cross. This will help to maintain social distance as people move through the space.

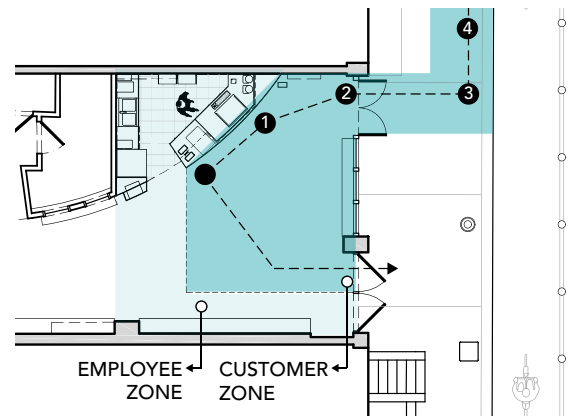
Plexiglass barriers are recommended between employee space and customer space when there is close interaction. Interior spaces do not circulate air as quickly and freely as being outside so once customers start entering the cafe space, air should be leaving the employee space into the customer space and out through open doors. Existing HVAC ductwork can be modified so that air flow goes through the employee space out into the customer space.

Work spaces should be modified so that employees can maintain the six foot social distance while working. As illustrated on the right, the existing layout of the cafe does not need to change when there is only one employee. When a second employee is working a new checkout table is needed to increase the distance between the two employees to at least six feet.

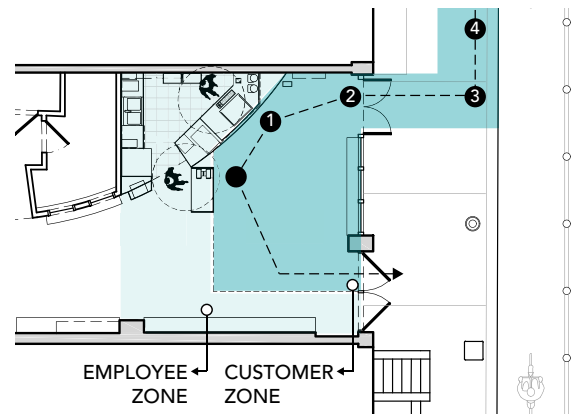
We welcome feedback at hello@janekimdesign.com. As shops begin experimenting with these and other strategies, we will update this document to add new ideas for managing this crisis together in the future.

References

- <https://www.wreckingballcoffee.com/blogs/news/covid-19-update>
- <https://medium.com/@nickcho/we-turned-into-a-walk-up-window-cafe-9c29c5416e33>
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- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>



Limited Service with one employee at Everyman Espresso on 13th Street



Limited Service with two employees at Everyman Espresso on 13th Street