



# BEYOND COVID-19

THE SHAPE OF FUTURE WORKPLACE CATERING

  
vacherin



# Introduction

The contract catering landscape is changing. At Vacherin we have instigated changes for a more fluid and flexible approach to meet the fast-changing needs of our clients and our customers. Covid-19 has accelerated this shift.

We've taken stock of the impact of the pandemic on the workplace, catering services and wellbeing – and we trust that our predictions and proposals will support our clients as they assess future working patterns, re-evaluate their workplace strategies and devise their plans to maximise the potential from their prime real estate.

This document sets out our vision for the future of workplace catering. Whilst the pandemic has had a devastating impact on the hospitality industry and its employees – it is a catalyst for change and for realising the plethora of exciting opportunities and a new approach to the world of work.





# CHARACTERISTICS *of the new workplace*

We've tuned in to numerous webinars and devoured industry publications and reports, but most importantly we've talked to you, our clients, to gain a better understanding of the material differences that lie ahead. The general consensus is:

## 5 YEARS OF CHANGE HAS HAPPENED OVERNIGHT

**Less desks,  
more drop downs**

**Flexible work  
arrangements**

**Increased face to face  
meetings to maximise  
time whilst in London**

**More meetings,  
less formality**

**“Work-free zones”**

**Irregular hours  
and shift patterns**

**More  
collaboration  
spaces**

**Lower headcounts  
on any given day**

**Activity based working**

“.....”  
Work is something you do,  
not somewhere you go  
.....”

## THE OFFICE WILL BE THE CENTRE OF

1. Culture
2. Collaboration
3. Clients
4. Creativity
5. Coaching
6. Connection

“.....”  
the current crisis offers opportunities to  
reshape the workplace and create spaces  
that are meaningfully centred on the  
human experience.  
.....”





# WHAT DO *employees want*

The enforced period of working from home has undoubtedly caused employees to review their workplace priorities and needs. With the help of Maslow we propose their needs from their catering service as follows:





# THE STATS

What workers miss about working in the office:

“Interaction with colleagues continues to be the thing we miss most about office life – with 72% missing face to face chats and 61% missing face-to-face collaboration with colleagues”

62% miss a clear separation between work and home life, and 40% miss a clear structure to the day”

Our assumption is likely to be that it's the older workforce that miss the face to face interactions...but that's not the case at all. According to the results of a World Economic Forum survey from 2019, 72% of Gen Z prefer face to face conversation.





# Client DRIVERS

We've seen the evidence that the majority of staff wish to continue to work from home, either permanently or on a more flexible basis. This is countered with the anecdotal evidence from our clients who have shared that

- Productivity and turnover is less than it was before lockdown
- Creativity and business development has stalled
- The development of staff, particular those at entry-level and middle-management has suffered due to the lack of engagement, encouragement and mentoring from their more experienced peers.

Our clients are eager for staff to return, albeit they recognise this will be on a flexible basis and headcount on any given day will be significantly reduced. They recognise that the combination of flexible working, a great workplace culture and facilities that meet the needs that we've detailed above will set their business apart.





# RETURN *on Investment*

We have devised catering solutions that meet the changing needs and priorities of our client organisations and their people – and we propose that the success and benefits of the catering service are measured accordingly.

Traditionally, cost per head has been the main matrix for gauging the subsidy; we propose that other KPIs come into force such as:

**Participation levels**



**Frequency of face to face contact within the catering**



**Seat occupancy in work-free zones**



**Leesman Index and/or WELL Building Standard**



**Employee wellbeing**





# WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN FOR WORKPLACE CATERING?

## Flexibility

With staff working more flexible days and hours, this culture of flexibility needs to extend across the organisation – including catering.

Without a guaranteed building population catering output will be unpredictable so in the interests of managing your costs, food waste and maintaining exceptional standards we propose to move to an increasing on-demand solution which in itself can take on many guises:

### CALL ORDER

Why not? Think Leon, Tossed and Coco di Mama where the dishes are made to order to the customer's specification. If the ingredients aren't used, they're almost certainly not wasted

Our hot food proposition moves away from the canteen style counter service, instead choice of hot dishes every day, all customisable and cooked to order – and ordered via tech. A menu will run for a full week and we can guarantee menu fatigue won't be an issue because we'll offer a number of concepts each day.

Taking this to the next level, we anticipate a future need and desire for

### TABLE SERVICE

This is the solution to tick all the boxes regarding the social interaction, creating a destination, maximising time whilst in the office and making the most of the catering space.

Table service will encourage small or larger team gatherings (particularly on 'all-hands days' – see below), informal meetings and also the use of the café/hub/restaurant for hot desking in between meetings, rather than using a traditional desk.

Table service can be offered café-wide or for a section of the catering space only

### BOOK A TABLE

Whether it's for eating, meeting or hot-desking, we're confident that to maximise prime London space, the cafes will be viewed as an extension of the office floors and activity-based work should be encouraged. The use of technology to book desks and track their usage can be extended to the catering areas – and booking information will provide us with useful data to assist with staff cover and purchasing levels.

### ANYTIME, ANY PLACE, ANYWHERE

The flexible offer will extend to delivery to desks, floor hubs, tea points – made possible by app technology. Whilst this might be viewed as counter-productive in encouraging social interaction, it brings all-important convenience to time-poor staff who have scheduled back to back meetings whilst in London.

The same service can be extended to meeting rooms whether it becomes the default option for ordering refreshments or is utilised for impromptu meetings when catering hasn't been preordered.

With the increasing use of food delivery services at home, this solution for speedy, customised food at the touch of a button has become the norm for many. It's another example of how we can bring the home experience to the workplace.

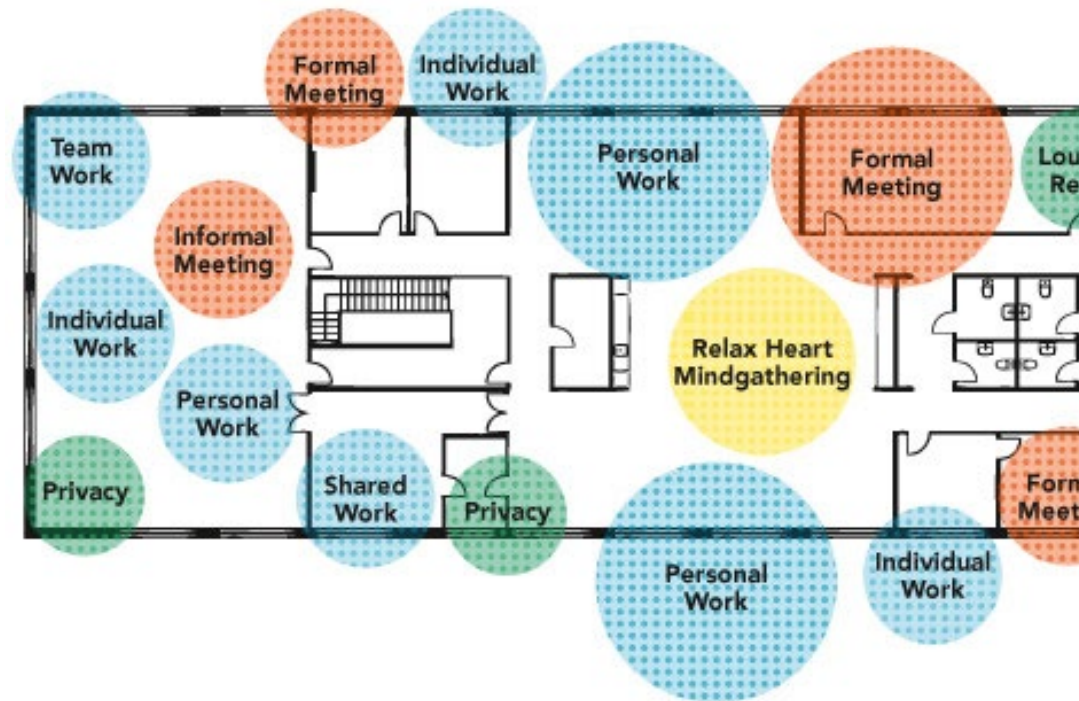
### LONGER HOURS

If staff are working more flexible hours: earlier starts, later finishes, compressed weeks – they'll need the same food, drink and overall workplace experience whatever the time of day. Some businesses may decide to open the office for longer hours but on less days. Whatever the new way of working, catering will need to follow suit.

# The Physical ENVIRONMENT

These significant changes to the service and the need for a more flexible space will, we believe, transform how catering areas are designed. We anticipate that over time, our clients will deviate from the default serveries and traditional seating areas. Instead we anticipate:

1. The flexibility of counters, to be replaced with plug in and play moveable pods – for daytime foodservice and evening bars and food stations.
2. Zones to accommodate activity-based working: lounge areas, pods, call buttons for table service, screens to create meeting rooms and semi-private dining rooms.
3. Design features to create dual daytime and evening ambience: this could be through lighting, digi screens with corporate messaging or news channels during the day, becoming a digital photo screen for events.
4. Design to accommodate town halls and conferences within the catering area as businesses may decide that a dedicated large space for occasional gatherings is an unnecessary luxury.







## Social

Interaction with colleagues is the main thing that staff miss when working from home. As a 'destination' the office will be the hub for gathering, socialising and reinforcing the culture of belonging to an organisation.

With the likelihood that flexible working will increase, the opportunities to bring teams and larger groups of employees together will reduce, so it's more important than ever that social gatherings are valued by staff and meaningful.

## “ALL HANDS DAYS”

A day when everyone, as much as is practically possible, comes together – possibly in conjunction with an all-hands meeting. It's likely that the all hands day will become synonymous with a staff social to close the day, and many clients have shared with us that their organisation will be looking to us for creative ideas for these. The justification for this is to ensure that the visit to the office is a wholly positive experience and that staff leave feeling connected with their peers and invested in.

## SERENEDIPITOUS ENCOUNTERS

Let's encourage those all-important water cooler moments that are devoid when working from home. By making the catering areas work-enabling zones and promoting all-day usage, the social interactions will increase.

Pre-Covid we were already moving away from the more traditional meal times with all-day opening hours and grazing offers. We see this trend increasing further as the catering spaces become significantly more multi purpose.

## CREATING EXPERIENCES

Back to Gen Z (and Millennials for that matter) who want experiences over things. Experiences are also more shareable, in person and on line – and this applies to all age groups. We see an increase in the demand for us to help our clients create social experiences for their staff – with the experience being a catalyst for engagement and interaction. We don't mean ping pong tables and beach huts, rather educational activities or entertainment with the added bonus of food and drink to match the subject matter.

# Wellbeing

The pandemic has focused the nation's attention on the importance of health and wellbeing – and with the notion that the office may well become the one stop shop, employees may rely on their employer to provide them with the support needed to achieve their health goals. Alongside ever-evolving healthy eating concepts\* we are able to provide group or one to one nutrition consultations and workshops, onsite and digital content, health check ups, healthy eating plans and onsite cardio, yoga or pilates classes.

\* At Vacherin our ethos has always been to offer our customers food choices. It may well be that their visit to the office is their once or twice a week opportunity to indulge in a meal that they haven't had to cook themselves – and we will promote that a visit to the café is a well-earned treat.





# Convenience

“a quarter of households are spending increased time cooking together, and 33 per cent said mealtimes have become more of an occasion.

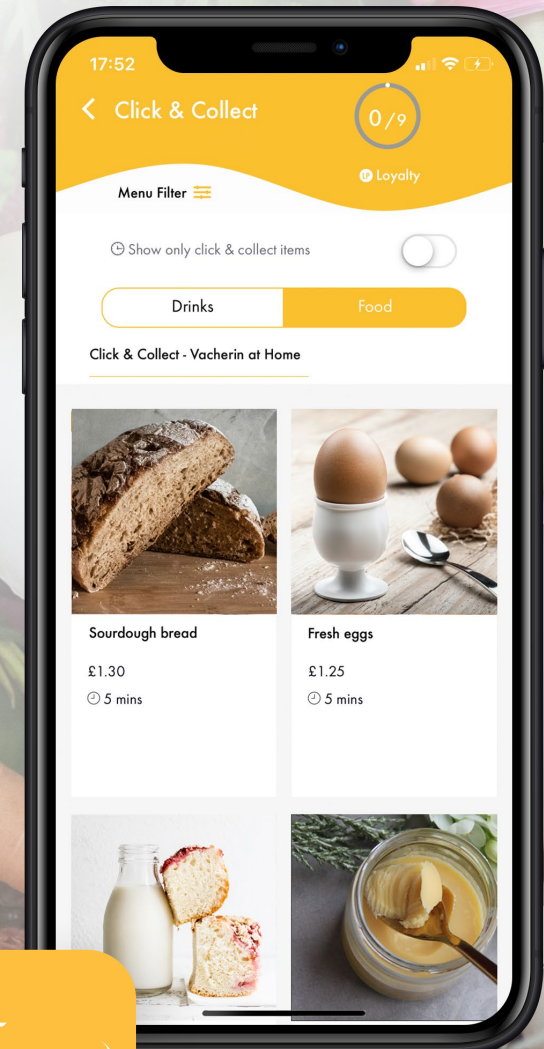
As a result, two-fifths enjoy cooking more now than they did before, with 89 per cent vowing to continue making food from scratch once the restrictions are lifted.”

## The Independent April 2020

This is music to our ears, and an outcome of lockdown that we wish to encourage.

We see the future workplace transitioning into a one-stop shop, for convenience and to enhance the overall experience – again reinforcing the office as a destination. With our access to some of London’s best food suppliers, Vacherin is delighted to announce the launch of Vacherin at Home will be the go-to for delicious fresh, seasonal and local produce plus occasional bakes and preserves made by the on-site team. Products will be uploaded daily on the app and available to order, plus an area of the café will be transformed into a **mini market**, open for business during café hours. The ability to buy our produce, to take home will save the last-minute dinner-dash to the local shop and the quality will fuel the enthusiasm for cooking, gained during lockdown.

We’ll add value to the mini-market with recipe cards, suggested wine pairings and information on the suppliers and food provenance.



# Mini MARKET

Pantry					
Doves Strong flour - 1kg	£2.00	Pasta sauce	£1.80	Silken tofu - 349g	
Doves self raising flour	£2.00	Oatly oat milk	£1.95	Ramen noodles - 500g	
Wholemeal strong flour	£2.00	Olive oil - 500ml	£2.80	Soba noodles - 250g	
Paella rice - 1kg	£5.75	Doves dried yeast - 125g	£1.53	Coconut milk	
Rummo pasta	£1.60	Gochujang korean hot pepper paste - 500g	£4.47	Cornish sea salt - 225g	
- linguini		Sriracha chilli sauce - 300ml	£2.13	Himalayan course sea salt - 500g	
- sedani		Hot pepper sauce	£1.38	Peppercorns - 100g	
- penne		Polyflora honey - 340g	£3.83	Pomegranate molasses syrup - 300g	
Lentil vertes	£5.80	Ponzu japanese dressing - 300ml	£3.12	Chorizo tapas dulce - 225g	
Risotto rice - 1kg	£6.80				
Paella rice - 1kg	£5.76				

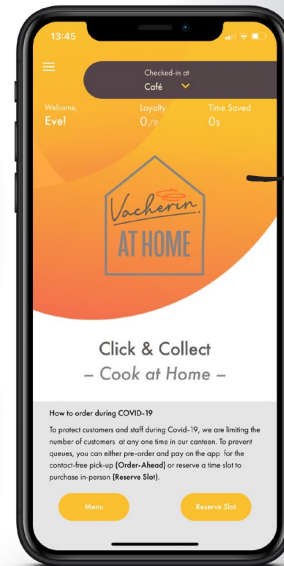


# Mini MARKET

			
<i>Fridge</i>			
Estate dairy chew valley milk - 2L	£2.10	Parmesan - 120g	£2.90
Greek yoghurt - 500g	£1.95	Vegan parmesan - 150g	£2.25
6 Free range eggs	£1.30	Arran oak smoked cheddar waxed - 220g	£3.99
Bellavaire salted raw milk butter	£2.30	Halloumi	£2.60
Antipasto mini selection	£1.71	Sourdough starter	£5.00
Hummus - 500g	£2.20	Capers	£1.20
Porchetta and grill sausages	£6.50	Olives	£2.80
Buffalo mozzarella	£2.90		

# COOK AT *home*

Vacherin at Home will also denote our soon to be launched **cook at home** concept. A boxed meal for one, two or four with all the ingredients needed to cook a quick, wholesome, fresh meal for friends and family. Via a QR code linked to the Vacherin at Home page on our website, our customers can access the ingredients, allergens, nutritional information and the all-important recipe.





# Hospitality

The pandemic halted face to face meetings, client entertaining and networking events. We're confident that whilst the efficiencies of Zoom meetings have been acknowledged, digital can never fully realise the benefits of gathering in person. That said, hospitality will re-emerge in a different format for two reasons: firstly to provide very clear reassurance to the recipients that the environment, and the food and drink is safe; and secondly to continue the cost savings that companies have benefited from during lockdown and beyond. We see an exciting future for hospitality, with the principles of flexibility and social interaction mirroring those of staff catering

## VACHERIN MENUS, DELIVERED-IN

For our clients who do not anticipate fine dining or events volumes to merit a full-time chef and front of house team, we will be offering a high standard of hospitality menus, produced at a central London CPU by a Vacherin chef - made to order and delivered in. The menus are designed for ease of finishing by the café chef or a Vacherin chef from Premier Crew.

## NOWHERE IS OFF-LIMITS

To maximise space, to embed a culture of informality or simply for convenience - we predict that hospitality will have less boundaries and refreshments will be offered throughout the building - either preordered or on demand

## BENTOS, BOXED AND BESPOKE

Uncovered, self-serve buffet menus are unlikely to be reinstated any time soon. Even post Covid we question whether there will be an appetite for this style of eating so our chef development team are creating breakfast, working lunch and snack menus, creatively presented as an all-in-one meal.

Via the app technology guests can be invited to pre-order their own menu choices or the host can order for all individual attendees. We had already moved towards significantly more customised menus for individual guests to meet the ever-increasing requirements to accommodate allergens, lifestyle preferences and healthy eating programmes. This boxed meal will provide guests with the reassurance that their food is safe and that any allergen risks have been mitigated.

By moving away from buffets and serving food to order, the over-production of food and subsequent food waste is more easily controlled.

## CALL ORDER FOR HOSPITALITY

Let's revisit the flexible offer for staff dining that we've set out on page 9. The call-order menu for the staff restaurant can be available for app-ordering in meeting rooms and impromptu tea, coffee and snack orders can also be ordered in the same way.

With the likelihood that staff will be in the London office on fewer days, we can support by helping to provide the best experience possible, maximising their time and offering food and drink that truly caters for their needs.