

Upholding hygiene and safety in the HORECA sector post pandemic

By Fanis Papakostas, chairman, European Tissue Symposium

With bars and restaurants opening up across Europe, it feels like life is finally returning to some semblance of normality. The HORECA sector has been badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is now crucial to explore what needs to be done in order to restore the confidence of consumers and – to quote the recent G7 communique – “build back better”.

Keeping staff and customers safe has always been fundamental in the hospitality sector. Covid-19 has served to shine a light on the importance of proper hygiene practices and has prompted some marked shifts in consumer behaviour as a result.

We were lucky enough to be exposed to some of the latest insights into what HORECA customers are looking for during our recent Virtual Summit '[Tissue Paper, The Smart Choice](#)'. The event gathered expert microbiologists and sustainability managers through to researchers and HORECA specifiers who shared their knowledge and advice.

Euromonitor (leading research company), provided some fascinating insights into consumer behaviour post pandemic. It emphasised how the general public now has a heightened interest in hygiene and cleanliness both at home and in public places. People are looking for reassurance.

Countries around Europe have set in place a range of new guidelines for keeping staff and customers safe in a HORECA setting – including three golden rules of good ventilation, the wearing of facemasks and the frequent washing and drying of hands. Hand hygiene is a particularly essential part of total hygiene and proper hand washing and drying can significantly reduce the transmission of pathogens in public places. Proper hand washing and drying is of course essential in kitchens and food preparation areas but also in public washrooms.

Consumers want measures that will keep themselves and their families safe. They have especially embraced the superior hygiene properties of paper tissue for drying hands and wiping down tables and surfaces and this is reflected in the rise in demand for paper towels and tissues across Europe over the past 18 months.

Euromonitor also observed how consumers are becoming increasingly ethical, and so welcomed the fact that paper tissue also ticks all the right boxes for sustainability. It is clear that people are increasingly inquisitive and hungry for information and that they are influenced by the views of family and friends as well as social media.

Hospitality businesses need to recognise how these new consumer attitudes towards hygiene and sustainability are having an impact on the pace of recovery. They need to take action in responding to consumer expectations. Tips on how to do just that were provided by Mark Ind, general manager at Chilworth Manor who has a wealth of experience in the HORECA sector. His summit session offered a down-to-earth perspective on building a hospitality business on a bedrock of customer and staff safety and shared sound advice on how his business has adapted to meet customer expectations in the new normal.

If you have missed the summit first time around and want to get the lowdown on how to ensure that your business survives and thrives in the post Covid world, then [click here](#) to view the virtual summit expert presentations.