Eating Out in the US & UK
COVID-19 Consumer Trends Update

Eager to Go Out
Consumers in the US and UK are keen to get out and dine at restaurants as soon as it’s deemed safe to do so. According to our recent study, 59% of US and 47% of UK consumers plan to dine out at a restaurant within the first month of reopening. Twenty-six percent of US consumers and 14% of UK respondents plan to do so within the first week.

Restaurants should expect to see the strongest comeback from the millennial generation (25-39) and the largest frequency decline from the boomer generation (55+).

Contactless Everything
Contactless technology is high on the list of consumer preferences when dining in again. Precautions include ordering on a personal device, navigating menus and paying on a personal device, with 36% of US consumers and 34% of UK consumers doing so.

Where Loyalties Reside
Consumers rallied to support local restaurants during the height of stay-at-home orders. Forty percent of US consumers indicated they purchased more frequently from local independent restaurants compared to 23% who said the same for national chains. One in three respondents also cited increased loyalty to the brands they ordered from during the same period.

Mixed Take-out Bag
Prior to stay-at-home orders, 95% of US consumers and 87% in the UK reported they ordered take-out at minimum, once a month. That number dropped to 88% in the US and 65% in the UK during stay-at-home orders.

An restrictions ease, the volume of take-out orders is expected to return to levels pre-peak stay-at-home orders with 79% of US consumers planning to order take-out at least once a month. The strongest return to weekly take-out meals is expected among Generation X, with 44% planning to order weekly once restaurants reopen.

Take-out Deal Breakers
Spinning up off-premises operations, or at minimum redirecting all sales to a single channel overnight, was a tall order for even the most nimble restaurateurs. Based on our research, consumers were sympathetic to the challenge. Less than a third of US consumers stopped ordering take-out due to a negative experience. For those that did have strong reactions, reasons varied from menu options to delivery times.