



'Workforce Menu' of Our Cloud Kitchen Will Continue Post COVID: Paresh Mishra, EsSELworld Leisure

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ESSELWORLD LEISURE **FOOD WHARF KITCHEN**



With restaurants opening up in Maharashtra, EVENTFAQS Media reached out to Paresh Mishra, Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing, EsSELworld Leisure Pvt. Ltd. to know how they are planning the re-opening. In this conversation, he talks about his expectations from unlock, objectives of their new cloud kitchen, total revenue, future opportunities and more.

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When lockdown was announced in the country, we were only hopeful about the well-being of our guests and staff. With a positive approach, we have designed the Standard Operating Procedures and guidelines as per the Government directives which EsselWorld and Water Kingdom try to follow. We are also in the process of designing SOPs for our Merchandising and F&B divisions. We hope to re-open our parks and hence we are running training programmes for the SOPs with each department to ensure that all safety measures and precautions are taken care of, when we open.

Meanwhile, we have activated a cloud kitchen for our in-house F&B brand of Water Kingdom, Food Wharf Kitchen, which is operating out of Worli and has been delivering food across the city. With new additions to the menu which are not usually found in Mumbai, we hope to see a good response from Mumbaikars as they have always been very experimental.

Several restaurateurs have taken the catering/ home chef/ home parties route. How did you pivot during the lockdown? What were the objectives and how have the offerings borne fruit?

Food Wharf Kitchen started its operations in 2004 at Water Kingdom, where we catered to corporates, schools, colleges and other social gatherings, while also serving Water Kingdom guests, an equivalent of 5,000 meals a day to 2.5 lakh meals per year. With Unlock 5.0 in the country, we realized that along with our popular delicacies and cuisines of this kitchen being missed by our patrons, there is also a need for catering services for larger groups or social groups who would be served with utmost care and sanitization, keeping in mind the new norms. Hence, we started our cloud kitchen out of Worli and have been providing meals in MMR region since August 26, 2020.

Are some of the offerings here to stay post the COVID-19 crisis too? Do you see them augmenting your total revenue?

Currently, we are delivering from door to door, and have been serving large groups of corporates and societies. Infact, we have also designed a Workforce Menu specially for the staff of bigger organizations who need to order in bulk. It will be a new offering and we would continue to offer this menu even post the COVID-19 crisis. Bulk orders have always helped in giving us additional presence, so yes, it will help in augmenting the total revenue.

By when do you see the guest numbers returning to normal?

Since we started our kitchen, we have been seeing a steady growth in the number of orders on a daily basis. We are hoping to see a normal number of orders coming in post October. Also, since our park is currently shut, we hope to re-open and return to normal numbers by Diwali or November this year.

Is catering the next big opportunity for aspirational restaurant brands? Could this have been adopted earlier? Why wasn't it done?

The F&B production and service business simply means offering food services in a closed environment for a large set of people. However, with the new normal, this sector surely has a new approach. With social distancing and sanitization in mind, and the number of people being served, it gives scope for newer opportunities to cater to larger formats in the market. So yes, it surely gives impetus to aspirational restaurant brands. This format could not have worked earlier because the hospitality industry was booming with each day with new restaurants opening up in the city. However, post COVID-19, there is a new trend of home-delivery of food. Celebrations still need gatherings and the support of your loved ones; therefore the F&B production and service business comes into the picture, which was otherwise not required earlier even when a group of 10 or more people wanted to dine together.