Moving Forward: A Roadmap to Safely Re-Opening Your Store
Webinar Chat Transcript & Additional Resources
May 29, 2020

Panelists:

- Michael Paulus, Resident District Manager, Chartwells Higher Education (Dining Services), Bowling Green State University, Ohio

- Ruthann Manlet, Associate Director, Facilities Management, University of Minnesota and 2019-2020 APPA President (Leadership in Educational Facilities)

**Due to the overnight situation in Minneapolis and on her campus, Ruthann sent notice and regrets that she would not be able to join as a guest panelist**

- Available store members jumped in at the last-minute to share their perspectives:
  - Debbie Cottrell, UMHB Campus Store, University of Mary-Hardin Baylor, TX
  - Barry Waters, CMU Bookstore, Central Michigan University

## TOPIC #1 CAMPUS PLANNING: Occupancy, Plexiglass, Fitting Rooms, Other Areas?

### Andy Dunn:
Debbie, how big is your store?

*(Note: this was answered verbally by Debbie on the recorded webinar)*

### Jill Farley:
Debbie, how did you determine 25 people could safely physically distant in your store?

### Debbie Cottrell:
I reviewed how my store is laid out and started with the max number of 50 and whittled it down. We have temporarily closed our dressing room, and we removed all the seating that was in place in our store giving us additional social distancing space. We have a couple of cash registers that are mobile, and we have moved one of those, plus we have removed some of our apparel fixtures again providing us with more space.

### Jessica Traver:
Anoka-Ramsey College in Minnesota: We did outside PSEO/Rental Book Drop-Offs this month also.

### Loreen Maxfield:
The standard in other retail has been 5 people per 1000 sq ft

### Pinney Johnson:
Loreen, does that 5 include personnel?

### Loreen Maxfield:
No, it does not include personnel.

### Andy Dunn:
My team is dealing with the fact that 5 ppl per 1000 sq ft will cut our revenue projections by 50-60%. I'm in the process of reforecasting my 20-21 year...ugh!

### Faryal Abu-Sharife:
We are allowing 40 people in at one time with a staff member at the door counting customers in the store
Andy Dunn: I'm working on building sneeze guards and Mike is right...plexiglass is hard to find. If you see it in now...BUY IT NOW!

Jill Farley: Lexsand is comparable to plexiglass which is a brand name.

Andy Dunn: We will clean fitting room after each use and isolate items not bought for 24 hours

Loreen Maxfield: Our vendor also suggested tempered glass.

Faryal Abu-Sharife: The change rooms at the UBC bookstore will be closed as is our upper mezz area.

Steve Wenger: We have done our own plexiglass and are also doing all of it for the rest of campus, with facilities doing the installs. We have made them movable. We have a laser engraver to do the cutting and this has been a great business for us to the campus to provide at an economical price and again show our value to campus.

Cassie Wherry: What about public bathroom in the store?

Jill Farley: We have a single entrance...how can this be managed?

Andrew Connolly: We purchased/installed our plexi barriers in early April well before reopening, anticipating the local run on the product by other retailers. We hung ours from the ceiling rather than drilling into the counters for support. It is a very clean look, and easily removed if life eventually returns to normal.

Andy Dunn: We will have one door for entry and one door for exit with a student worker at each door talking to each other over walkie talkies so we know when to let more customers in.

Peter Salce: I purchase plexi from Displays2Go and Prism/RBS

TOPIC #2 SPACE UTILIZATION:

- Best practices? Reconfigurations? How do you do “6 FEET”?
- Clear, Specific Guidelines: Floor Tape & Decals & Welcoming Signage

Marlin Kinzer: hope to distribute all web orders outside via trailer storage and covered shelter. Considering web order only for certain date range as well as counter service. No self-service texts this fall.

Andy Dunn: We already have BOPIS...but we will be aggressively marketing this option and having the pickup area outside in front of our store.
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ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS from other sources:
ACHA: American College Health Association Guidelines, May 7, 2020
- Maintain at least 6 feet between workstations / workers
- Identify frequently touched areas (doors, cabinets, etc.) and investigate options to implement no/reduced touch options such as door removal, card access, foot-operated door pulls/pedals, or sensor-triggered doors
- Remove high-touch items (magazines, common pens, etc.)
- Reconfigure all waiting and other areas to promote physical distancing
- Create hand sanitation stations

ZenGenius.com (Visual Merchandising & Event Design)
- Prop your entry doors open for easy / hands-free access

NRF: National Retail Federation (nrf.com)
- Consider one-way only directions and signage

TOPIC #3 OVERLAPPING SERVICES: What can stores learn from Dining Services?

Ruzzle Co: What application are you using for mobile ordering, Mike?
Robb Faust: Mike is securing technology through Transact, a division of CBord.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS from:
ACHA: American College Health Association Guidelines, May 7, 2020
- Eliminate reusable kitchen items (flatware, dishes, cups) and cleaning tools (sponges, brushes, towels) and replace with single use options
- Replace shared appliances with single use or no-touch options (coffee makers, ice/water dispensers)
- Require all customers/diners to wear face masks or covering while in the facility

TOPIC #4 SANITIZING & CLEANING: Inventory, Campus Resources

Andy Dunn: We will be allowing returns as normal, but we will disinfect and isolate product for 24 hours and then reshel.  
Christina Wonsey: Completing our first virtual buyback today: Students get Zoom meeting time show books, ISBN condition etc. Then drop on specific day drop books in bins in parking lot monitored by staff and pick up envelopes with cash. 
Jill Farley: Is anyone using UVA lighting - is this a viable sanitization option?
REFERENCES:

USNews.com, April 28, 2020

NRF.com National Retail Federation, May 21, 2020
https://nrf.com/blog/retail-design-post-pandemic-world

Loreen Maxfield: We have a drop box outside the store for rental drop off. It looks like a library drop off box.

Scott Chapman: We sent out many, many emails on our rental returns and waived the non-return fee portion but did charged simply the difference between list price and the rental fee and surprisingly, we did not hear any complaints. We progressively stepped up the urgency in our emails as we approached the extended rental return date. We did not send out prepaid labels and we are a quarter school, so we were dealing with Winter quarter rental returns and our Spring rentals are due mid-June.

Peter Salce: I would like to know how these returned items are getting sanitized as well?

Andy Dunn: Peter, I'm working with my facilities to figure out the best way to disinfect. Some things we're looking at is steaming, some kind of Lysol product, heat

Rachel Giardino: Clothing returns? Is anyone allowing these? How do you sanitize if at all?

Andy Dunn: Rachel...yes, we will allow apparel and gift returns. We're still reviewing how we will disinfect. We will isolate items for 24 hrs before we restock it.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS from other sources – for apparel:

NRF.com National Retail Federation
- Encourage customers to use hand sanitizer/wipes/masks before & after trying on items.
- Remember to determine a procedure for disinfecting jewelry, eyewear, etc.

“Reopening with Hope” Webinar from Bob Phibbs, retaildoctor.com
- Gap’s dressing rooms will be closed. Returns will be quarantined for 24 hours before being placed back on sales racks.
- Saks Fifth Avenue will keep dressing rooms open, but fewer will be available and they’ll be cleaned after each use. Items tried on or returned are being taken off the sales floor for 48 hours.
- Target has closed fitting rooms. Returned clothing items are being quarantined for 3 days before placing them back on the sales floor.
- Macy’s will also open fewer dressing rooms with frequent sanitization and will hold aside returned and fitting room merchandise for 24 hours before bringing it back to the sales floor.

dianne: We plan to quarantine clothing and gift returns for 24-48 hours.

Pinney Johnson: It seems CDC has changed info on how long virus can be on different materials (clothing, cardboard, counters) Anyone have an update on that?

Anna Pavlik: We're planning an isolation approach as well.
Jessica Traver: We quarantined rental returns for a week, then checked them in. We’re still getting Rental books mailed back to us and are quarantining those packages for at least a week before opening them and checking the rentals in.

**TOPIC #5 RETAIL ENVIRONMENT:**
- Store Hours, Customer Safety, ADA Compliance? Backrooms, Handling Cash, Masks
- Different Ways to Shop: BOPIS and Curbside Pickup

Peter Salce: Has anyone temporarily stopped taking cash?

Cassie Wherry: In what way do you adjust store hours? What is the rationale for the open hours?

Pinney Johnson: So, so, so many bags and masks and gloves showing in landfills - just dropping even on the ground in parking lots. I think part of communication is customer bring their own reuse bag with them to shop

Andy Dunn: our ecommerce revenue has gone up big time. In March we saw a 44% increase, April was a 103% and May is currently at 117% up

dianne: Has anyone found a good resource for masks that don’t fog up eyeglasses? I have several mask vendors, but none offer this product.

Cathy Dawson (Evergreen): Our loading dock is 2 stories down....

**ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS from other sources:**

*NRF.com National Retail Federation:*
- Notify vendors of re-opening, and any revised protocol as it relates to store entry, deliveries, paperwork, etc. Identify which vendors and or distribution centers are functioning, and the extent to which they may be delayed or limited in their operations. Establish contingency plan for vendor disruptions.
- Ensure staff has sufficient time to rest, sanitize and restock inventory.
- Consider how your anti-shoplifting procedures might change in the COVID-19 era.
- Establish procedures for processing, handling, and disinfecting returns and exchanges. Consider requiring returned items to be sealed and stored separately. Quarantine returns for a safe time period before returning them to the sales floor.
- For Curbside Pickups: Determine communication protocols for customers when they arrive to pick up items. Do they email? call? text? click a code online? Make sure you have clear signage, so customers know where to go and what to do. Determine if this is a temporary solution or potential permanent service. Everything “could change once doors open and [retailers] try to balance curbside orders with in-store operations.” Curbside is less expensive than delivery but still involves greater costs and use of labor than in-store pickup. If potential service, consider that customers should belong to a loyalty program in exchange or pay a fee to get the service.

*ZenGenius.com (Visual Merchandising & Event Design)*
- Consider updating your merchandising standards to highlight new products and communicate an easy-and-safe shopping experience
TOPIC #6 STAFFING & TRAINING: Protect & Prepare

Your staff are your biggest asset and taking care of them is your top priority.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS from other sources:

ACHA: American College Health Association Guidelines, May 7, 2020:

- For Supervisors:
  - Encourage those with increased risk of severe illness or over the age of 65 to continue to work remotely.
  - Consider phased return of employees to no more than 30% of workforce at a time, staggering every 2-4 weeks for full return.
  - Stagger shifts to reduce the number of people in the workplace at the same time.
  - Allow those who can work effectively from home to be the last to return and/or delay their return to the campus.
  - Ensure single occupancy in work rooms.
  - Post and promote prevention strategies: wash hands frequently, stay 6 feet apart, know the signs/symptoms, etc.

- Avoid office gatherings, break rooms, and unnecessary visitors in the workplace.
- Stay home (or leave the workplace) and notify supervisor if symptoms develop.
- Wear masks or face coverings in all public spaces and spaces used by multiple people.

NRF.com National Retail Federation:
- Consider offering seniors and other high-risk individuals exclusive early hours.

COMMUNICATE TRUST & TRANSPARENCY

“This is your opportunity to communicate good things your store is doing. Don’t go dark. Now’s the time to be in front.” - Bob Phibbs, retaildoctor.com
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPA.org: Leadership in Education Facilities  search “COVID-19 Resources & Guidelines"

ChartwellsHigherEd.com
  BGSU Path to Open  (downloadable PDF at nacs.org/educationevents)
  BGSU Delivery Robot https://new.bgsudining.com/starship-bgsu/

NACS.org
  Previous Education http://www.nacs.org/educationevents/online.aspx
  The Hub (for NACS members) – search for “reopening” https://thehub.nacs.org/home

ACHA.org (American College Health Association) Guidelines
  “Considerations for Reopening Institutions of Higher Education in the COVID-19 Era”

RILA.org (Retail Industry Leaders Association) “Open for Business”
  https://www.rila.org/shop-safe

CUPAHR.org (College & University Professional Association for Human Resources)
  “Checklist for Health and Safety Planning as Business Resumes”
  https://www.cupahr.org/knowledge-center/covid-19-resources/

NRF.com (National Retail Federation) “Operation Open Doors Checklist”
  https://nrf.com/resources/operation-open-doors

ArentFox.com Video: “What Fashion & Retail Companies Need to Know Before Reopening”

Retaildive.com “What Retail Could Look Like When Stores Reopen”

Retaildoctor.com - Bob Phibbs Webinar “Reopening with Hope”
  https://retaildoc.wistia.com/medias/m3pscboq59j

Kroger’s Blueprint for Business

Target’s SAFE Retail

Home Depot’s COVID-19 Update and Response

Nike
  https://www.nike.com/covid-19-response