



Clover Restaurant Holiday Guide 2020

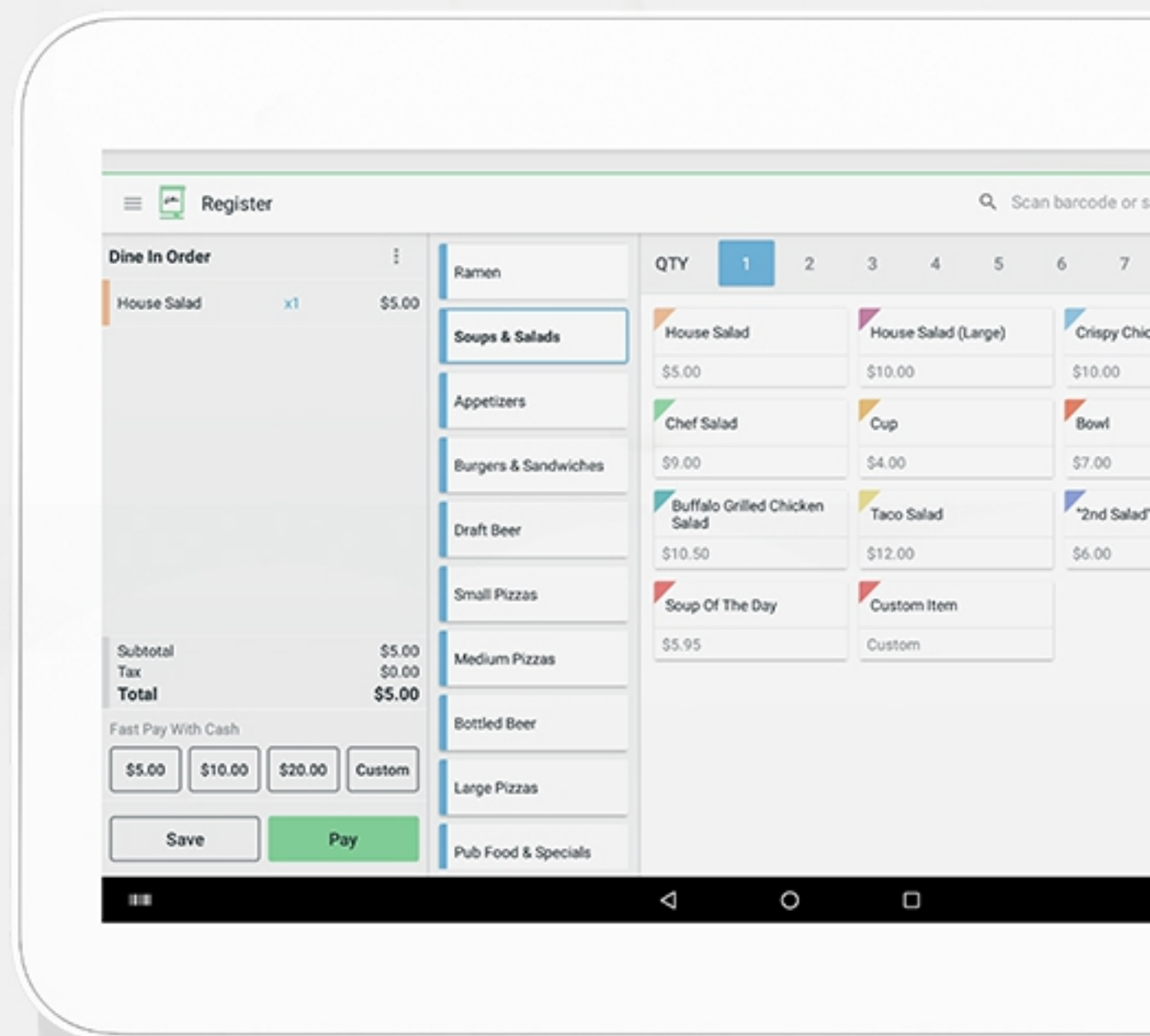


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Welcome

Holiday season 2020 will look very different from past years due to COVID-19 and the economic uncertainty the pandemic triggered. But life and business must go on. With fresh, out-of-the-box thinking and strategy, restaurants can turn a challenging situation like the pandemic into an opportunity not only to make their guests feel safe, but also to recapture the warmth and good feelings of the holiday season, even in one of the toughest years in living memory.

We designed this guide to help you prepare your restaurant for this unique holiday season.



2020 Timeline

Holiday promotions are starting earlier and earlier. This “holiday creep” began several years ago, as retailers began pushing Black Friday deals even before Thanksgiving.



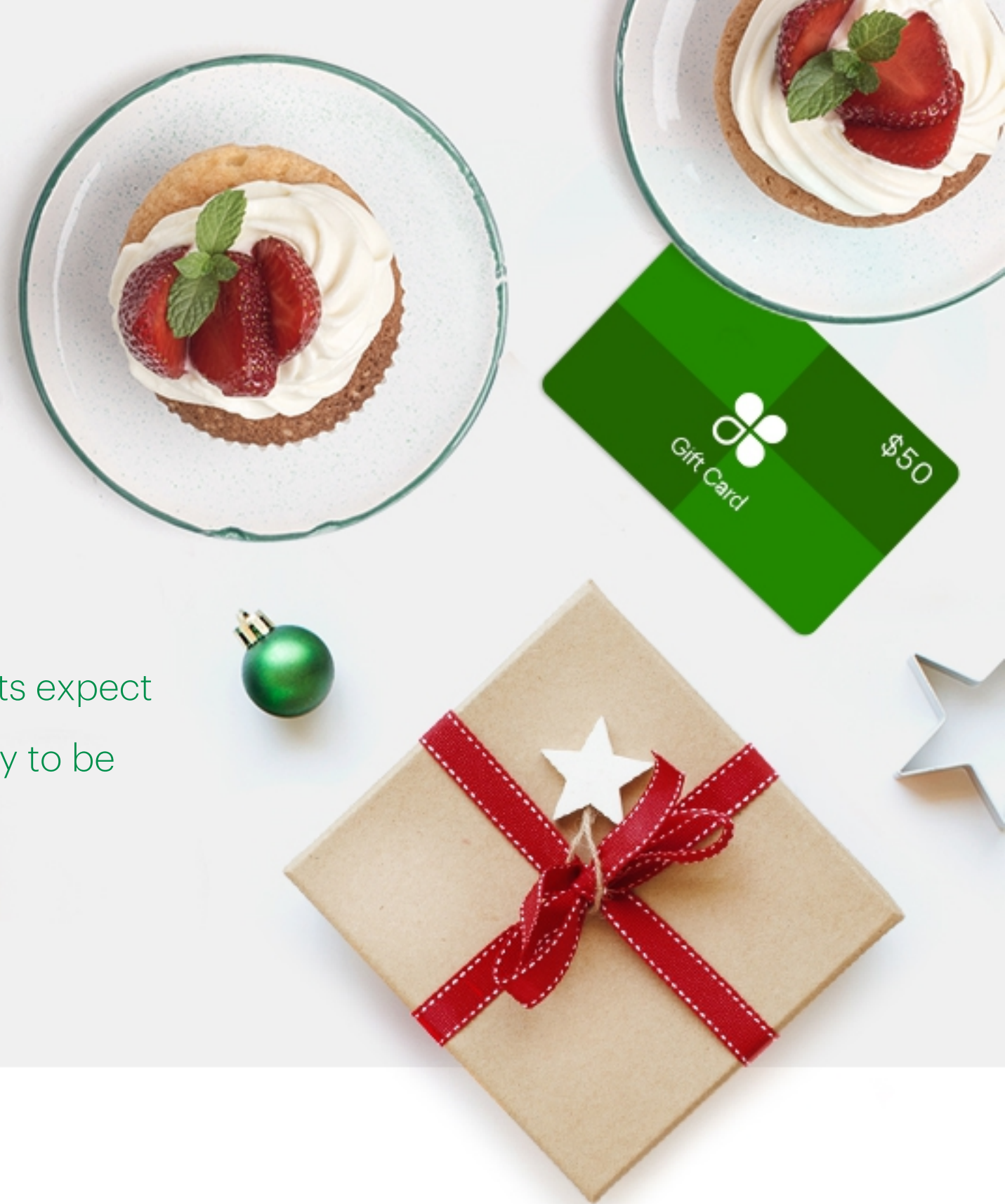
Coresight Research predicts an early start to holiday shopping this year. This is partly due to Amazon postponing Prime Day to the fall and other retailers trying to compete. But **Black Friday** and holiday shopping in general will look different this year, as fewer consumers plan to shop in person and retailers focus on selling online versus in store.

On top of that, many **retailers plan to close this Thanksgiving**, giving their employees the full day off. Depending on how these employees and their families decide to spend the holiday, it could create more opportunities for restaurants. After all, many people still dine out or order delivery for special occasions, even during the pandemic. Thanks to pent up demand from the pandemic, consumer spending at restaurants increased 103% on Mother’s Day Sunday and 63% on Saturday, compared to average daily revenue throughout the pandemic, according to **an analysis of transaction data** at 48,000 restaurants.

With promotions starting earlier and some consumers spending more conservatively this year, it’s smart—and recommended—to start planning your holiday strategy and building anticipation now.

The Guest Experience

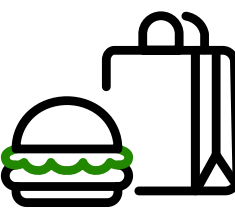
Whether online or in-person (as conditions and safety allow), guests expect personalized experiences. Personalization and localization are likely to be big differentiators for restaurants this holiday season.



A **rewards program** is a great way to inspire customer loyalty and learn more about your guests. Drawing on guest data, even the least tech-savvy restaurant owner can create a winning holiday strategy. If you're concerned a few dozen roasted turkeys might not all sell out, you can always focus on side dishes. And if you're able to **ship pies or other desserts**, you can encourage customers to mark the holidays from a distance by sending loved ones a favorite dessert.

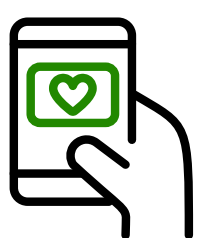


Gift cards are another way for customers to spread holiday cheer to others. Customers spend **an average of \$59 more than the value of the gift card** when they redeem them, so they can generate additional revenue, too. E-gift cards are a fast, convenient gift for family and friends near and far. Customers can purchase online, without having to visit your physical location.



If you suspect that holiday gatherings will be smaller this year with fewer people traveling and some customers only celebrating with those in their household, you could create customizable meal packages available to go. Restaurants tend to promote holiday dinner menus, but some customers might enjoy a festive holiday brunch available for takeout or delivery.

If you've opened your dining room or are planning to, make sure you're following local guidelines on safety and hygiene, and be ready to adapt if those guidelines change.



Features like **Scan to Order** (see next section) can minimize interactions between staff and guests to keep everyone safe. If you can also offer curbside pickup or delivery, these options might appeal to people who aren't comfortable with dining in.

Online Commerce

Depending on local ordinances and case levels, some of your guests may plan to order holiday meals online versus dining on the premises. In fact, Statista predicts that **online food delivery will reach over \$26 billion** in revenue this year. Having a functional and well-designed **online presence is more important than ever**.

If you don't have a website and need one fast:

Take your business online with Clover.

Clover can help you **set up a menu page** for your restaurant so customers can always find the information they need.

Enable online ordering.

Even if your dining room is open, some customers may want to order takeout or curbside pickup. Services like **Clover Online Ordering** help restaurants meet demand for online ordering without giving up a large chunk of sales to third-party ordering sites or apps.

Add other features.

Scan to Order allows customers to view your menu and place orders on their phones. This can help reduce labor and create operational efficiencies. It also enables you to highlight holiday specials at the top of the menu and turn tables faster on busy holidays by allowing guests to complete payment up front.

If you already have an ecommerce site but want to up your game:

Put online ordering front and center.

Many customers who access your website will want to order takeout or curbside pickup, so make sure those links are easy to find and require minimal steps. Check out our handy **Clover Online Ordering ebook**.

Make it mobile-friendly.

Google reports that over half (51 percent) of holiday purchases last year were made on a mobile device. Does your website load quickly and display correctly on iOS and Android devices? Try this **test from Google**. If it's not mobile-friendly yet, **these tips can help**.

Spice up your offerings.

Themed subscriptions, gift food boxes, branded merchandise, and take-and-bake goodies such as cookie dough or frozen pizzas are just a few options. Also consider partnerships with other businesses whose products might complement yours.

Person-to-Person Communications

Consumers are spending more time online since the pandemic started, so email and social media are important ways your restaurant can stay top of mind this holiday season. These channels are also an important reflection of your brand.



Email

Email marketing gives you more control than social media, because you aren't subject to the whims of a social media algorithm that makes your posts less visible to followers.

Ask customers to opt in.

You need permission before adding someone to your email list so you're not spamming them. However, you can create incentives for email signups such as promoting exclusive discount codes to email subscribers or doing monthly drawings for freebies.

Segment your customer lists.

Mailchimp and other email marketing providers let you create multiple email lists so you can target the right message to the right group. For instance, you could segment your list to target your most loyal customers and send exclusive offers to them.

Personalize your emails.

The majority (70 percent) of operators surveyed by **Nation's Restaurant News and Epsilon-Conversant** said personalization is either very or extremely important in their marketing messages. Use your customer's first name in the email subject line or the opening. For customers who haven't provided a name, choose a fun catch-all like "Pasta Lover," "Burrito Buff," or whatever makes sense for your brand. You can also send an **automated birthday greeting** (perhaps with a promo for a free dessert or appetizer) if you're collecting birthday information.

Social Media

Food is a highly visual medium, so make sure you have eye-catching photos to make guests' mouths water whenever you communicate with them via email or social media. Drive anticipation for your holiday offerings with beautiful images of your holiday specials and gifts. Photograph your food alongside props like Hanukkah gelt, paper snowflakes, or Christmas tree ornaments. And if professional photography doesn't fit your budget, you can create festive holiday images with the right lighting and free editing software. Check out these **food photography tips** from a professional.

Make it human.

Social media is an easy way to forge human connections with customers, especially when you show some personality and make it fun. Fun photos or videos of your employees wearing holiday-inspired masks or Santa hats remind your followers that there are real people behind the business.

Listen before you post.

Don't treat Twitter or Instagram like a billboard for your business. Follow and interact with your customers, suppliers, and other local businesses. **Listen** to what your followers post and respond to their posts. What holiday traditions are they excited about? Are they celebrating differently this year? Genuine interaction and conversation will make your posts feel more human.

Consider boosting key posts with paid social media.

Brands will be posting a lot this holiday season, so if you really want to ensure that prospective customers see your posts, consider budgeting for **paid social media campaigns**. Use targeting to ensure that your paid posts reach people in your geographic area who fit your ideal customer.

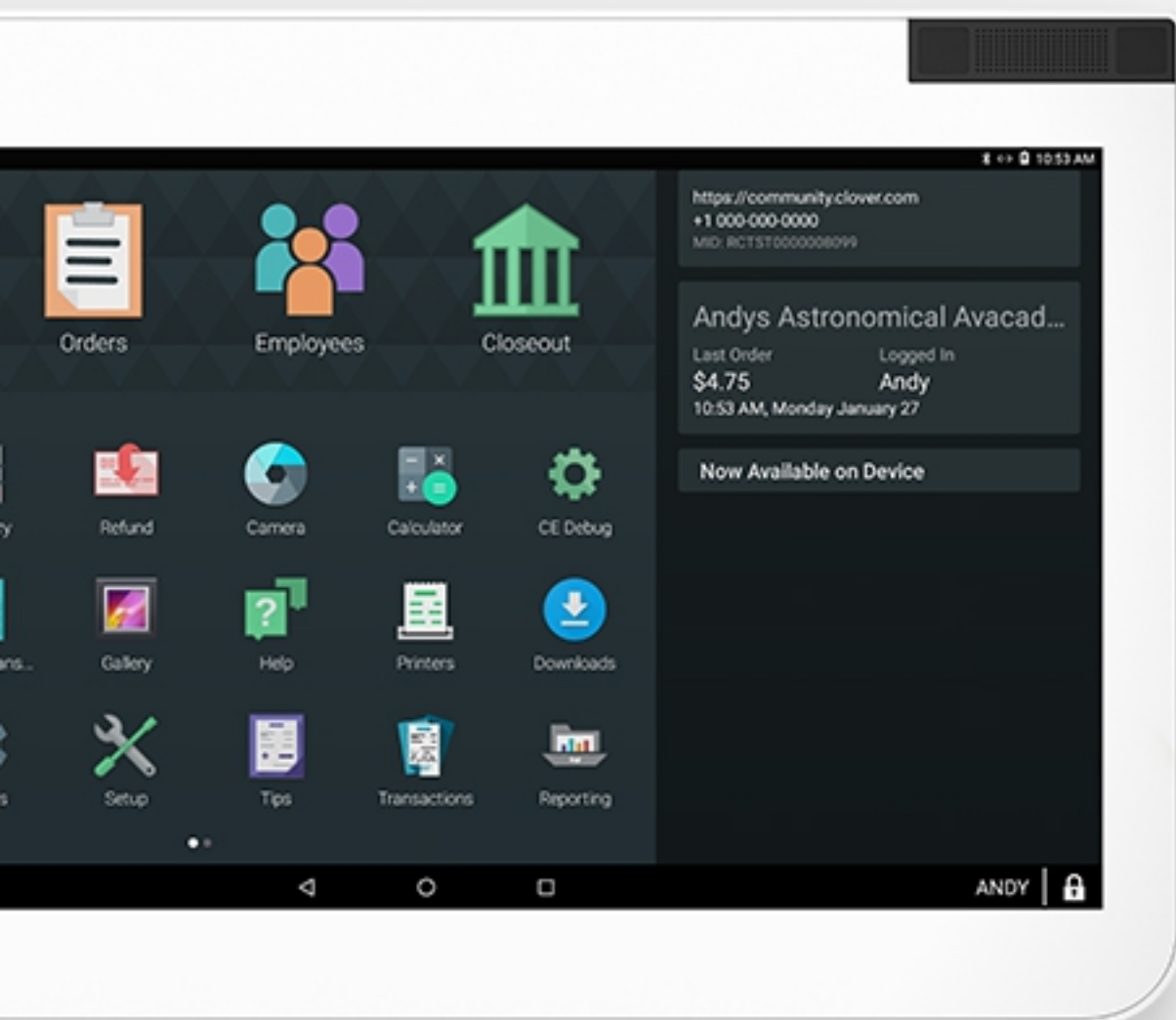
Schedule posts.

The runup to the holidays can get hectic. **Schedule posts** in advance so they publish at the right times for your customers. However, don't just set it and forget it. Check in regularly to reply to comments and engage with your community.



Inventory and Supply Chains

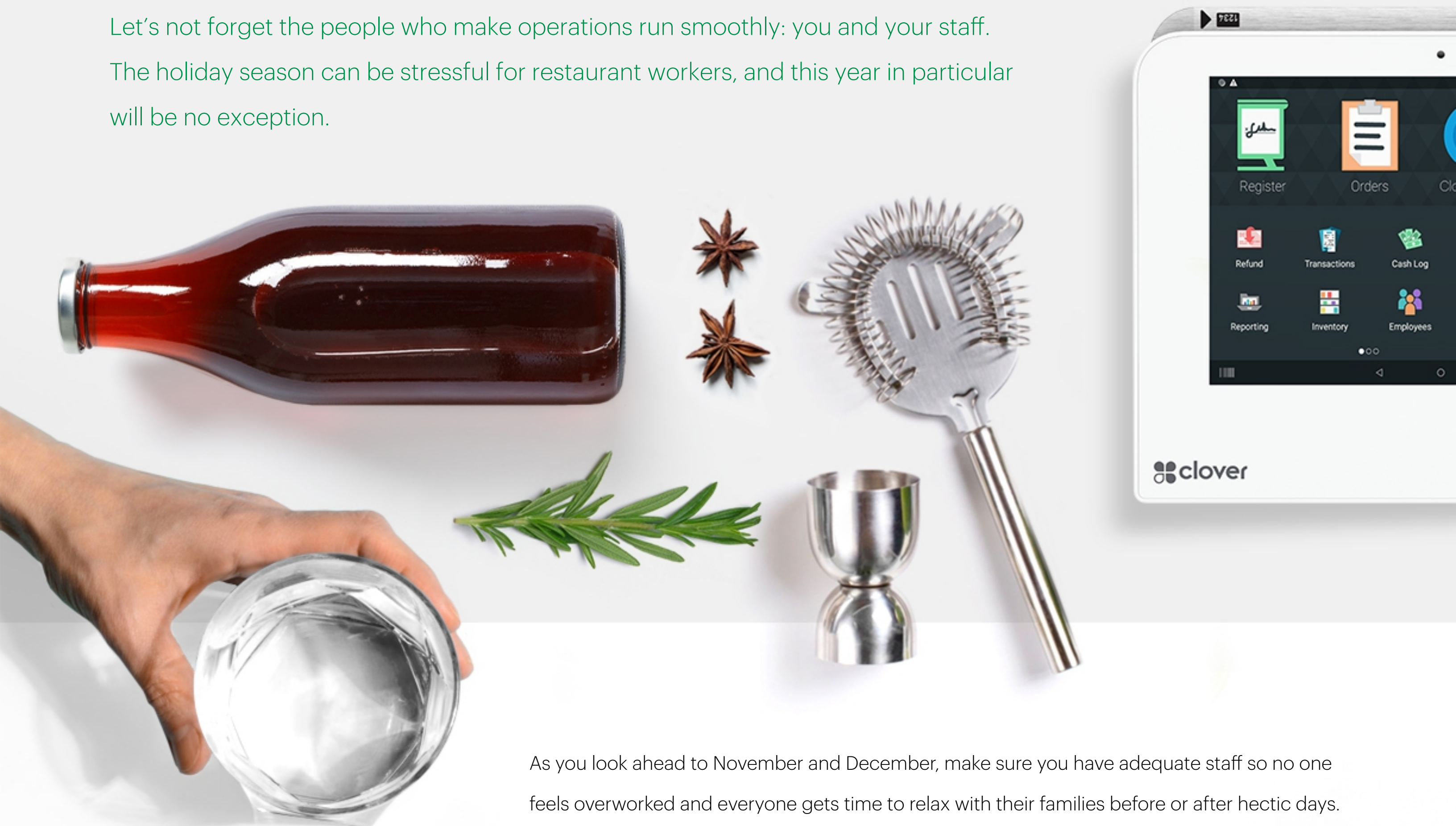
Inventory management is always important during the holidays, but it's especially crucial this year because of the uncertainty brought on by the pandemic. Encourage your customers to pre-order their holiday meals or make reservations well in advance so you can predict demand and order accordingly.



In addition to carefully planning your menu, look at the systems that support your inventory. As we saw with grocery stores earlier this year, supply chain issues and heightened demand can throw a wrench in menu planning. Are you able to source ingredients locally so that shipping delays won't impact your holiday menu? Do you have alternate suppliers you can use if an order is delayed? Is your chef good at improvising if you run out of a key ingredient? These are the questions to start asking now.

The Human Factor

Let's not forget the people who make operations run smoothly: you and your staff. The holiday season can be stressful for restaurant workers, and this year in particular will be no exception.



As you look ahead to November and December, make sure you have adequate staff so no one feels overworked and everyone gets time to relax with their families before or after hectic days.

Build some contingencies into your staffing plan for those times when employees aren't feeling well. This year it's extra critical that employees who might be sick stay home. Cross-training employees can give you more flexibility in staffing when someone is out sick.

You also don't want to over-staff and have employees standing around with nothing to do, so create a plan for slower periods. Are there other tasks employees can do when there's lower demand? Or should they plan for the possibility of going home early?

Food is central to many holiday traditions. With some creative thinking and advance planning, your restaurant can help customers celebrate the season in new ways while enjoying the foods they and their families love.

Your Holiday Checklist

Here's a checklist for restaurant owners preparing for the 2020 holiday season. Print it out and keep it handy!

Guest Experience

- Dress up your website, social media platforms, emails, as well as your physical location in your favorite holiday style
- Think of creative promotion ideas that appeal to your customers
- Don't forget gift cards, whether physical or digital ones
- Be sure to promote your loyalty program!

Online Commerce

- Be sure your website is mobile-friendly and can accept online orders
- Consider adding special holiday products to your website
- Test your delivery and shipping mechanisms

Marketing

- Keep building your email list and social media following
- Engage with your social community, respond to their posts and interact with them
- Create enticing imagery for email and social media
- Consider partnering with other businesses in your local community

Inventory And Supply Chains

- Encourage guests to pre-order holiday meals and make reservations early so you can order accordingly
- Have a plan B in case a supplier can't deliver what you need

Staffing

- Schedule adequate staff for the coming months
- Have a plan in place for times when an employee calls in sick, including cross-training employees so they can cover for each other

Additional Resources

Contactless Payments

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Clover Online Ordering

→

Scan To Pay

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Clover Gift Cards

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Disclaimer

The content provided in this guide is for informational purposes only.
Nothing contained herein should be construed as medical advice.
Please refer to www.cdc.gov and www.who.int for further information
with respect to the coronavirus and COVID-19, and steps you can take
to mitigate the related risks.