



INTERVIEW WITH TOMASZ KORFEL
RESPONSIBLE FOR PRODUCTION AND LOGISTICS AT
THE TRENDY LAJKONIK HOUSE OF BAKERY, KRAKOW

COOPERATION IS THE
KEY TO SUCCESS.

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Tomasz Korfel is a Polish chef responsible for production and logistic at the trendy pastry & cafe chain Lajkonik, operating 16 outlets in the Krakow area. The company wanted to open four new stores by the end of 2020. Tomasz is still investigating how to make it happen since the pandemic has complicated those ambitious expansion plans.

Because of the pandemic, they had to close around one-third of the locations, but even the ones that are still open can operate only with 40-50% of the capacity. That has, of course, affected the turnover profoundly.

Besides, Tomasz also had to make some changes on the product offer such as adding everyday bakery products, which customers can buy to take away, so to avoid larger stores or crowded places.

Furthermore, Tomasz has also reduced the offer for cakes since consumers are getting more attentive to spend control, and the demand for pastry has decreased.

The shops in Krakow city are affected the most since it is a tourist city, and tourism stopped abruptly after the outbreak.

“I SPEND MORE TIME THAN EVER BEFORE MANAGING WORK AND EMPLOYEES - THE SITUATION IS VERY DYNAMIC.”

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Despite a decreased turnover, the need to be flexible and respond quickly to the situation means that Tomasz has considerably less time now than before the pandemic. He can not run a long term planning and has often to change operation from one day to another.

Tomasz is particularly concerned about business continuity, especially on how to maintain the availability of raw materials used to make the final products.

Lajkonik is known for setting the trends; hence they search for raw materials from around the world and which are unique and very original.

Not only suppliers are reducing their stocks, but also the logistic chain has been affected, chiefly from countries like Italy or Spain from where they source selected raw materials.

Likewise, the hygiene in the shops and the protection of the own staff is a significant concern for Tomasz.



"WE OFTEN COMPETE AND FIGHT FOR CLIENTS, BUT NOW THIS NEEDS TO STOP BECAUSE EACH OF US NEEDS TO ENDURE THE CRISIS AND NETWORK IS SOMETHING WE ALL REQUIRE! COMPETITORS MOTIVATE ME TO WORK AND BECOME EVERY DAY A BIT BETTER, SO IF MANY OF US DISAPPEARED, IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTOR!"

BEING ADAPTIV

Lajkonik Bakery was not offering any delivery before the pandemic. Still, now they felt the need to give it a try and started cooperating with an external company that delivers the products within a radius of 5 km from each shop. This will probably remain in place also after the lockdown since no one knows when will want to get back to normal.

For the time after the pandemic, Tomasz is also reflecting on the offer: Whether consumers will want premium products and whether they will be able to afford them is something that he cannot answer yet.

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"DESPITE THE CRISIS, THE CUSTOMERS STILL WANT SMALL PLEASURES, CERTAINLY THEY WILL NOT GIVE UP COFFEE PAIRED WITH SOMETHING SWEET."

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Nonetheless, Tomasz looks with confidence in the future. "I think the economic aspect will affect their shopping choices, but customers will not give up coffee paired with something sweet.", so Tomasz.

He also believes that consumers will stick to the classic recipes, the ones they know and loves. It will take time before they will be looking for new culinary adventures again. He thinks chefs will have to seek for traditional, proven and known products. It will take a while before they can develop new products and, even then, they will have to watch if the customers are ready for them.



TOMASZ KORFEL
LAJ KONIK HOUSE OF BAKERY
KRAKOW, POLAND
WEBSITE: LAJ KONIK-PIK.PL

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