

Bistrot pierre Mumbles

UK tourism and leisure Industry - Level 4

Assignment 1



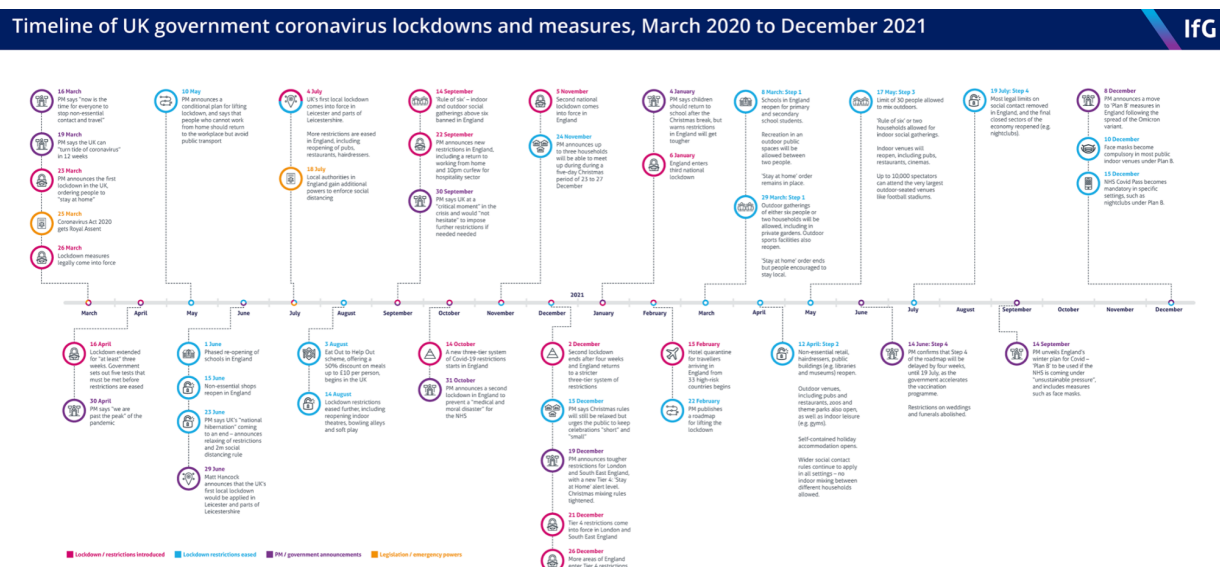
Bistrot Pierre Mumbles is a stylish and modern French-based restaurant located in the oyster wharf complex of mumbles, boasting breathtaking panoramic views of Swansea bay. Bistrot Pierre mumbles whilst technically being a chain restaurant founded by Rob Beacham focuses on its individuality and community aspects which are attributes I witnessed first-hand through my time spent working for this destination.

Image (Tripadvisor 2017)

I have chosen to look at this destination because it is not only a successful Swansea based venue, It also holds strong community ties with regulars through its local downstairs cafe/bar. It offers discounts to NHS, Police and fire services through the blue light program supporting the community and has had to navigate thru restrictions whilst adapting to survive on a larger scale industry collapse throughout the Covid-19 pandemic which took Almost 10,000 licenced premises in 2020 alone (James S 2021) Closing them permanently. This venue dealt with the pandemic by taking full advantage of every restriction, relaxation and opportunity. These key features are a perfect fit for my task which is to evaluate a resort or destination throughout the pandemic.

The covid 19 pandemic was a detrimental issue for the world over, a virus that started thousands of kilometres away swept through the UK bringing businesses and people's lives to a complete standstill. The Covid 19 or SARS-CoV-2 was first acknowledged by the UK government on the 16th March 2020. Followed by the first-ever UK lockdown on the 26th of March 2020. Even until this day the population and businesses have not fully recovered and some never will despite the last official covid related law being lifted in March of 2022.

Image (IFG 2022)



The effect long term is crippling quoting (Pernille 2022) “Businesses big and small have been left with depleted cash reserves and crippling debt as Covid loans as well as contending with a gaping hole of 400,000 job vacancies, as more than 80% of hospitality businesses report they have roles to fill”. This shift in security in the hospitality industry will be felt for years to come and the fallout is still unknown for a lot of businesses.

The pandemic took a large toll both physically and mentally throughout the world, even though the relaxation of restrictions throughout the two years a large part of the population, more particularly the high-risk demographic, generation X, the baby boomers, the silent generation and above were subject to a lot of mental anguish. Businesses like Bistrot Pierre were fighting to survive, navigating restrictions but weren't always receiving the same level of reciprocation from the public. Looking at (Maslow 1943) there are five key levels to Maslow's hierarchy which are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Covid 19 had destroyed the safety and love and belonging aspect of people's needs in turn destroying the self-esteem and self-actualization aspects of people's mental health. This disruption to people's mental health in my opinion played a key part in preventing the return of this demographic to the hospitality industry as the trust had to be rebuilt, whilst even towards the end of the pandemic in 2021 organisations such as the mental health foundation was releasing studies stating “Omicron variant leaves some fearful and isolated at home”(MHF 2021). Studies such as this in my opinion show not only why the hospitality industry has taken so long to recover it also shows a key knock-on effect of the pandemic.

The Governments lockdowns and restrictions affected wales' population and businesses in many stages(Greenking 2020). On the 16th of March 2020, the prime minister told the public to avoid hospitality venues forcing businesses to close all bars and restaurants on the 20th of march before locking down the country on march 23rd. It wasn't until three months later the government allowed businesses to reopen for takeaways on May 22nd, whilst bars and restaurants were only allowed to fully reopen on the 3rd of August 2020. During this time the government designed a controversial scheme called “Eat Out To Help Out” with the intention of boosting the hospitality industry by offering to pay half of Guests meals when dining out to incentivise the public to put money back into local businesses. Others feel it negatively impacted on the situation and that it is part of the cause and effect of the restrictions tightening on the 24th of September including a 10 pm curfew. Whilst a journal study written by Nicolás González-Pampillón Gonzalo Nunez-Chaim (2022) says

“The policy failed to encourage people to go out for other purposes and to eat out after the discount ended”. After the 23rd of October, a fire break lockdown was called for two weeks to help reduce the spike in covid 19, this ultimately failed causing another lockdown on the 5th of November 2021. Restrictions slowly were relaxed with pubs still closed until the 3rd final lockdown on January 4th 2021 and it was not until the 26th of April that restaurants were able to reopen outside after four months of no seated

business. On the 17th of May, 2021 bars reopened indoors with social distancing restrictions in place on the 19th of August beginning the first stage of the final relaxation of restrictions.

Bistrot Pierre like all hospitality in the UK had a long and complicated task to overcome the challenges caused by the pandemic and had to adapt to survive. After the first lockdown, they were faced with mountains of debt which had racked up through bills and lost revenue in all 20 chain restaurants. Bistro Pierre Mumbles was the first venue in the chain to take charge of its own future and fight for survival, Starting on the 22nd of May the restaurant took full advantage of the lifting of restrictions regarding takeaways and completely redesigned their downstairs cafe bar into a walkthrough takeaway venue with social distancing screens and two-meter separating boxes. They also capitalised on their takeaway alcohol licence and became one of two venues in the Mumbles area with this unique feature, despite competition the location and panoramic features gave Bistrot Pierres the edge it needed to monopolise the market (caroline 2021). After a successful start in fighting against the pandemic, the Welsh government announced the opening of restaurants and the introduction of the "Eat Out To Help Out" scheme which gave hope of the hospitality industry returning to normal. Business volume was maxed out with people wanting to take full advantage of the scheme with the only limitations being the government's six persons per table rule. Unfortunately just as hope had returned the government began tightening the rules again creating a 10 pm restriction on the hospitality industry, but just as quickly Bistro Pierre fell back onto their takeaway business to make up for lost revenue it opened its venue to apps such as delivery and Uber Eats creating a second income stream.

On the 5th of November 2020 after a two-week fire break lockdown, the country began its second full scale lockdown. Bistro Pierre was back left relying on its takeaway service for income utilising only management staff whilst workers were put back onto furlough. Workers returned on the 26 of April following the end of the third official lockdown to a reduced service restricted to only outside seating and the rule of six being in place. Bistrot Pierre Invested a large sum of money into creating an outside space to maximise available revenue and trade to the best of their ability. Throughout all these restrictions Bistro Pierre stepped up to the challenge and made the most out of the hand they were dealt. Bistro Pierre opened its doors inside on the 17th of May and continued to operate threw wearing masks, screens and social distancing measures, with the utilisation of mass lateral flow productions creating a safer work environment all the way up to the final restriction lifting on the 18th March 2022.

One lesson learned by Bistrot Pierre and its stakeholders is the diversification of revenue streams, utilising all aspects of the business to both boost Net profit and create a safety net surrounding the business, in case of another global pandemic. They also keep stored PPE "Personal Protective Equipment" to this day, as a back up in a still uncertain future. "The pandemic has brought misery, but it has also brought opportunity" was quoted by author Serena Nanda and J Michael Ryan(2022)

To summarise Bistrot Pierre's experience in the pandemic, despite a government which severely damned the hospitality industry, this business adapted and focused on the positive. Pushing itself to find creative solutions to navigate an unpredictable market in a hostel environment. Despite the efforts of Bistrot Pierre, these innovative solutions were not enough. In November 2021 the bistro chain was bought out by a private limited company owned by Marco white. After the buy out less efficient venues were shut down to prioritise the reinvestment of funds into venues such as Bistrot Pierre mumbles. To this day Bistrot Pierre still fights the repercussions of the pandemic which caused many staff have filtered out due to uncertainty in both the economic and political effects of the pandemic. Original Bistrot Pierre stakeholders may have lost the fight, but the brand and venue still stand strong to this day.

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