

With the aim of supporting small businesses to adapt to the new normality

CaixaBank and elBullifoundation organise virtual campus for the catering sector to help restart businesses following COVID-19 crisis

- ***The financial institution launches an initiative aimed at 100,000 of its customers in the restaurant and catering sector to help them analyse the situation of their business and seek the best management formula in the current context.***
- ***Ferrán Adrià and the elBullifoundation team will lead the course, which will take place from June to December in two stages, focused on restarting businesses and improving their day-to-day management.***
- ***CaixaBank and elBullifoundation joined forces in 2015 to develop joint projects with one main aim: innovation in the catering sector.***

Barcelona, 26 May 2020.

CaixaBank, Spain's leading retail bank, and elBullifoundation have organised the first digital catering programme in Spain delivered by a chef to help companies resume their businesses, which came to a halt as a result of the confinement measures taken due to the health crisis caused by the coronavirus.

The bank, chaired by Jordi Gual and with CEO Gonzalo Gortázar, launches this initiative with the aim of helping SMEs and self-employed workers that are part of the catering sector to overcome the crisis caused by COVID-19. Ferrán Adrià and his elBullifoundation team will deliver free digital seminars every week, from 15 June to the end of the year, providing CaixaBank customers from the catering sector with the knowledge and tools needed to move their businesses forward.

Around 100,000 restaurateurs will be given the opportunity to participate in the course, access to which will be offered to those that meet the profile by business advisers from CaixaBank's network of branches across the whole of Spain.

"Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, at CaixaBank we have been working hard on launching projects that help our customers. With regards the catering sector, we have been by their side providing access to financing or reducing PoS terminal fees, as well as launching

a package of support measures for the family economy. Now the time has arrived to reopen businesses, and in addition to the difficult economic environment, there has been a complete change in the catering sector's market conditions. As a result, we would like to help our customers in the catering sector to successfully adjust to the new normality by providing them with the knowledge to face and overcome these difficult times”, said Juan Alcaraz, CaixaBank's Chief Business Officer.

Ferrán Adrià, the project coordinator, stated that “the programme presented is an intensive virtual campus for restaurateurs whose businesses performed well before the pandemic and to which we intend to provide guidance that concentrates on how to approach restarting each business in the current crisis period and which will help us face any other type of crisis in the future with further guarantees.”

Two stages of guidance: restarting business and improving management

The course content shows how to develop and maintain the business of an SME in the catering sector through the aspects in which they most struggle, such as setting strategies and management. The seminars, which will be interactive and involve all participants through questions and answers sessions as required, are distributed into two stages of guidance. The first will focus on restarting business following the crisis, and the second will specialise in improving its day-to-day management based on the acquired knowledge.

In the first stage, an analysis will be conducted of the economic and sectoral context in Spain, and emphasis will be put on the importance of management as the key to success via the Documento de Identidad Empresarial (Business Identity Document), which will be the new reference tool in the sector to simplify the understanding of a company by way of learning about and reflecting on its characteristics.

In addition, it will focus on the current situation of each type of business when it comes to facing the new challenges. The financial situations of each project, the possible scenarios in each case, the new budgets that will allow adapting a business to the current situation and the measures to provide it with the required liquidity will be studied in these sessions.

Meanwhile, Ferrán Adrià and his team will break down how to achieve an effective management of a business in times of crisis. The importance of strategic, financial, commercial and team management, the management of operations, and marketing, as well as the new trends, creations and future innovations, will be studied in this work block.

Subsequently, the second stage will concentrate on delving further into the guidance provided in the first stage, and it will involve solving queries forwarded by the participating customers.

The course will be delivered via the bank's online platform *CaixaBanklab – campus*.

CaixaBank and elBullifoundation: concentrating on the sector's needs since 2015

CaixaBank and elBullifoundation joined forces in 2015 to develop joint projects with a main focus: innovation in the catering sector.

The collaboration between the two companies sought a new formula to promote innovative projects. As a result, CaixaBankLAB was created, a web portal where entrepreneurs can find useful information about the projects and activities jointly carried out by CaixaBank and elBullifoundation. The aim of this initiative is to apply creativity to specific projects that lead to innovation, and it focuses on helping the initiatives of professionals in the catering sector and its related industries.

Since both companies joined forces, CaixaBank has contributed actively to the development and continuous training of the sector via sessions, conferences, courses and workshops throughout Spain. In the last year the financial institution coordinated over 50 events across Spain with the presence of Ferran Adrià. More than 3,000 customers have attended sessions in which the chef has detailed the sector's keys strategies from different viewpoints: bars, restaurants, designations of origin, etc.

Since 2015, both companies have also collaborated on the preparation of academic material that focuses on training and business development. Among them stands out the Bullipedia project, in which elBullifoundation conducts a historical and scientific study in support of the agricultural sector -a segment in which CaixaBank highly specialises, via AgroBank-; or the different guides created to train bar and restaurant owners, such as *Mise in Place* and *Food and Beverage*.

A contingency plan to be #ByYourSideNowMoreThanEver

Under the hashtag #ByYourSideNowMoreThanEver, CaixaBank has taken the necessary measures to stay by the side of its customers, shareholders, employees and society in general, as we face the coronavirus pandemic. As a socially responsible bank, its commitment drives it to seek the best possible solutions so that together we can reactivate the economy.

As a provider of essential services, the bank has provided its customers with the largest ATM network in Spain, with more than 9,000, and the largest branch network, open for essential procedures, and where it has applied all the safety measures needed to protect the health of its customers and employees. The commercial network has been operational at all times, with over 90% of the network providing service to its customers and society. Likewise, the branch service has been maintained in 97% of more than 2,000 cities, towns and villages. In addition, the bank has improved the CaixaBankNow online banking service, available in web

format or through the mobile application, which allows customers to carry out practically all their banking from the comfort of their home.

Furthermore, CaixaBank aims to serve as a key player in ensuring the recovery of the Spanish economy is as fast as possible, providing credit and supporting companies' and individual's needs. Since the beginning of the state of alarm through to 23 April, the bank has awarded €14 billion in loans to the business sector. In addition, since the launch of the ICO COVID-19 credit facilities through to 28 April, CaixaBank has processed 128,700 applications from its customers for a total of €11.14 billion, exceeding the assigned quota.

CaixaBank has also put in place a support plan for small businesses that includes specific financing, discounts on PoS terminal fees and the launch of a new e-commerce technology solution to help boost online sales.