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iFood delivers on sustainability

The global pandemic has given a hard shakeup to almost every industry, but the restaurant trade has had it harder than most. Sadly, many food businesses have not survived. Those that remain have made big changes to the way they operate.

In Brazil, COVID-19 has accelerated a sharp shift to online food delivery. Before the onset of the pandemic, iFood was the country's leading food delivery service and one of the largest online food delivery companies in the Latin American region. In 2020, the company skyrocketed from 34 million monthly orders to 60 million.

COVID-19 has been the catalyst for this transformation, changing food delivery from a convenience service to an important, everyday part of people's lives. And as a leader in the sector, iFood has a strong sense of responsibility to also lead the way in shaping this growing industry and ensuring that its business is conducted with the highest standards of sustainability and business ethics.

Protecting planet and people

As a leader in an exploding sector, iFood has both the opportunity and the responsibility to demonstrate that fast growth need not come at the expense of the planet. iFood is committed to having a positive environmental impact. By 2025, iFood will generate zero plastic pollution in its delivery operations and make 50% of its deliveries with non-polluting modes of transport.

Restaurant partners can order sustainable packaging from the iFood shop. This option is plastic free and made from renewable materials like paper, sugar cane and cassava fibre. In the last year, the company has piloted an opt in/ out solution that give customers the option to refuse unwanted disposable items like cutlery, straws and cups, plus an option to choose more sustainable packaging. At the same time, customers can scan a QR code on their packaging and initiate an automated WhatsApp conversation that explains how to dispose of materials responsibly.

Making the last mile sustainable is important, too. Since October 2020, over 2000 couriers in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have registered for a low-cost electric bike rental scheme that gives them sharing access to 1000 e-bikes. A pilot programme offers a similar scheme with electric motorcycles, with potential to scale up.

Learning to lead

iFood has recognised the enormous impact of education on the people of Brazil in creating opportunity, prosperity and inclusion. In the next five years, iFood is committed to training and employing 25 000 people in technology, preparing 5 million people for the future of work, and training 5 million public school graduates in STEM and technology.

To reach Brazil's customers, iFood needs feet on the ground. Delivery partners can access online training modules covering topics like responsibility in traffic, operating specialist equipment, society and personal development, and financial literacy. In 2020, 54 000 drivers enrolled in the programme. The scheme has been a popular success, with 99% saying they'd recommend it to colleagues.

Restaurant partners can also benefit from iFood's education programme. iFood has partnered with Escola Conquer to provide free online courses to restaurants on topics like marketing, digital transformation, finance and consumer trends. With more and more traditional restaurants adopting iFood's platform, this support has been crucial in helping thousands of restaurants to rapidly adapt and continue in a tumultuous commercial landscape.

Opening doors

Education and training programs are at the heart of iFood's ambitious inclusion strategy. By 2023, 50% of leadership positions will be filled by women and 30% by black people.

To develop the right candidates, iFood offers women the opportunity to participate in a leadership accelerator program. Transgender colleagues receive support through finance for hormone treatment, surgery and legal support. And as the use of AI technology grows in more and more areas, half of the company's AI training programme participants will be women, people of colour, and drivers.

We are yet to see what a post-pandemic world will look like for the hospitality industry. But through the efforts of companies like iFood, consumers can continue to support and enjoy their favourite restaurants while making a positive social and environmental impact.

About Prosus:

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The group is focused on building meaningful businesses in the online classifieds, food delivery, payments and fintech, and education technology sectors in markets including India and Brazil. Through its ventures team, Prosus invests in areas including health, logistics, blockchain, and social commerce. Prosus actively seeks new opportunities to partner with exceptional entrepreneurs who are using technology to improve people's everyday lives.

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Today, Prosus companies and associates help improve the lives of more than two billion people around the world.

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