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Shops Sputtering Back Into Gear

Damages assessed amid happy reunions

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The people who serve Wall Street its turkey sandwiches, bottled water, haircuts and manicures yesterday embraced familiar faces whose names they didn't even know.

At Champs Gourmet Deli on Exchange Place, four workers reached across the counter to hug a woman toting a briefcase.

"We're happy that the customers are safe," said Champs owner Vincent Signorile as he looked on. "We don't want to lose more business. . . . We lost our customers and our business."

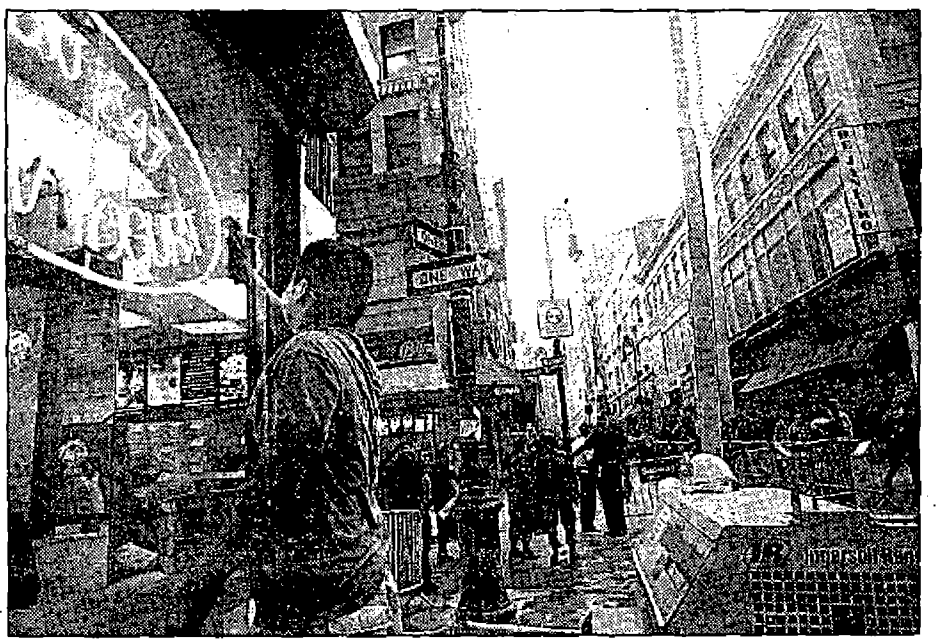
Champs' other location, at the corner of Rector and Trinity streets, had broken glass and water damage in last week's terrorist attacks. Signorile said he has no idea what its future will be.

For the delis, dress shops and hair salons that operate within the world's largest financial community, questions continue to loom about their fate. Many spent yesterday cleaning up, assessing inventory and fielding "thank yous" from customers they'd sheltered in basement kitchens and storerooms.

Workers at Health King, a fruit shake and yogurt shop on Nassau Street, scrubbed windows and freezers covered in a grayish-brown matter. All it took was a yogurt machine to take owner Sam Alherish back to last Tuesday.

The machine remained lit on "standby," exactly how he'd left it when police told him he had one minute to leave.

"I didn't expect this much damage," he said amid tracks of mud and toppled containers. "I can't open today."



On Nassau Street in lower Manhattan, a worker cleans his storefront yesterday for the first time since last Tuesday's attacks. Yesterday marked the first day since the attacks that many area shopkeepers were able to return to work.

Newsday Photo / Mayita Mendez

Businesses also had problems fielding deliveries. "This morning, no newspapers, no bagels," said Monica Park, a Manhasset resident who owns a downtown convenience store. "But the stock market's open, so we're always open."

Timothy's coffee shop served only coffee and juices, no bagels or breads. "The pastry delivery didn't get in," said district manager Michelle Everett. "I'm surprised they let me in."

Others complained that security had been made too tight, restricting both worker and customer access. Police officers and National Guardsmen in camouflage gear asked for employee identification cards.

"Mayor Giuliani urged us business owners to get ready, but we had such a hard time," said Champs' Signorile. "They wanted an employee ID. This is a deli. We don't have that."

Down the block at New Image Hair Design, a hair and nail salon, owner Pasquale Caputo worried about meeting next month's rent bill of $2,200.

"I hope there are relief loans," he said. "I expect 45 to 50 percent of my customers [to come in]. Hopefully, they're all OK."

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