

# Foodservice Updates

Week of:  
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## What's for breakfast?

Hopefully, your guests are thinking of your business when they ask that question. According to Technomic research published this past summer, breakfast is the only major daypart that has been growing as compared to the same period a year prior. The first meal of the day provides a good opportunity to deliver a positive experience to guests, offer value and build loyalty. (After all, even when consumers are pinching their pennies, they will still pick up their favorite cup of coffee on the way to work.) To make the most out of your morning traffic, you might refresh your menu. If it makes business sense and you are able to execute some new additions well, consider how you might incorporate more on-trend tastes, whether through offering a hot honey breakfast sandwich, weaving more global spices into your breakfast bowls, or, if you operate in an area with a rich culinary heritage, creating a new take on a classic regional dish.





# Tech Talk

## Relieve the tech-driven tension in your restaurant

Over the past several years, restaurant operators have had to manage a delicate balancing act: Assess and adopt new technology to make business run more efficiently, but do so in a way that engages employees and guests and avoids alienating them. It's a challenging task to handle when there is often little time in the midst of running a restaurant to sit back and consider the broader picture. As a result, operators may find themselves drowning in too much tech, losing the human touch with guests, and possibly turning off staff who assume they will be replaced by automation. If this sounds familiar, it may be time to reframe your business's relationship to your tech, emphasizing that it's not there to take over, but rather to provide a new level of background support that makes it possible for you to provide the best human support you can. A recent report from Modern Restaurant Management provides some suggestions. Think about what you want to provide for your guests – is it friendly service with a personal touch, or do people simply want their food fast so they can get on their way quickly? Build your tech strategy around that. When considering new tech tools or systems, involve your staff in choosing them, giving the people who will be using the tech an opportunity to test it out, ask questions and raise concerns. Then, when training staff on your tech, help them understand the “why” behind it by taking them through each step of the guest journey and demonstrating how the tech supports it.



## Keeping food containers contaminant-free

After several years in which many restaurants suspended their sustainable packaging efforts in the interest of protecting health and safety, sustainability strategies are again on the upswing. But as restaurants bring back reusable containers for food and drink or introduce them for the first time, they will have new food safety risks to manage. If you're allowing guests to refill their own food or drink container, bring in their own non-disposable container for refilling by your staff, or simply return a used container to you for use with another guest, you may need some safety nets in place to ensure you prevent cross-contamination. For example, a report from the 2020-2023 Conference for Food Protection suggests some methods for preventing contamination, including gravity-fed dispensers (portion-controlled or not), single-use utensils for transferring food into the guest's container, or the use of single-use disposable liners (or washable intermediary containers) that allow employees to transfer food or drink into a guest's container in a low- or no-waste way. In any case, it will be important for the guest's container to not touch the food or drink dispensers themselves and for staff to take extra precautions with reusable containers when there are allergens present.



**#FoodSafety**

# Foodservice CEO

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## Prices at their peak? Find creative ways to boost winter traffic.

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If you're among the vast majority of restaurants that have had to hike prices in recent years, you may be wary that your prices are about to hit their ceiling. As Deutsche Bank's Lauren Silberman told Restaurant Dive recently, while price increases have given operators a cushion to protect against the impacts of negative traffic, consumers' sensitivity to prices is likely to erode this year. This calls for operators to think strategically about driving repeat business and building loyalty. During the winter months, when consumers may need an extra nudge to eat out, try tempting people with a variety of draws. National food holidays can provide some motivation for both your chef and your guests – and in February alone, there are days dedicated to celebrating such diverse ingredients and dishes as Nutella, bagels, pizza, tortellini and potatoes. Participate in your city's Restaurant Week – or partner with other restaurants in your city to create one. Host an event that celebrates winter (with heat lamps and s'mores on your patio) or shield from it (in igloos with a menu of hot seasonal beverages). Keep people interested in your new offerings (and encourage them to return again soon for their favorite dish) by creating limited-time winter menus featuring seasonal ingredients. Make it appealing for people to enjoy your food away from your restaurant – by promoting your catering menu, offering a family-style meal bundle available for takeout, or promoting a special delivery-only entrée or beverage.



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