

Foodservice Updates

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Fix your feedback loop

“More reviews equal more success.” That’s what restaurant consultant and coach Ryan Gromfin told FSR Magazine recently, adding that operators need some kind of well thought-out system for generating reviews – whether it’s a simple reminder on a guest check, or better yet, a text or email reminder that is automatically sent after a visit. What kind of structure do you have in place? At a time when consumers are heavily researching their dining options online, ironing out any weak spots in your feedback loop can give your business a much-needed boost. First, make sure your business has an updated profile on the main review sites including Yelp, Google and OpenTable. Next, ask and you shall receive: Post a request for reviews on your website, social media channels and on table cards if you have a dining room. If you can, use an automated system for requesting reviews electronically – if a guest receives a prompt on their phone that includes a link to where they can post a review, you make it easy and quick for them to help. (If you offer them loyalty points or another incentive for taking the time to share their thoughts about you, all the better.) If you get a less-than-positive review, make sure you respond professionally and helpfully – a quality response to a negative review can neutralize it. Promote your positive reviews as testimonials on your website and social media.



Contactless payments aren't just sanitary

Sure, the ability to pay for an order without touching a credit card keypad is appealing during a pandemic. But offering these payments provides other critical benefits to your business. They can integrate with your loyalty program to automatically track not only a guest's visits but their specific tastes, while also expediting payments and table turnover – a needed benefit at a time when dining rooms have limited capacity. They are also more secure. As the Restaurant Technology Guys report, when a customer pays via Apple or Google Pay, their credit card information is not shared on a restaurant's system – and therefore wouldn't be accessed in the case of a data breach.



Compliments to the robot

Could ghost kitchens become more the rule than the exception in the wake of COVID-19? It's difficult to argue with the numbers. Automated kitchen technology systems are demonstrating how kitchens can churn out dozens of dishes per hour with minimal assistance from staff. (Kitchen Robotics' newly released Beastro robotic kitchen, which claims to be the "world's first robotic dark kitchen," was designed to handle the planning, preparation and delivery of up to 45 dishes per hour – and only requires assistance in the plating of dishes and the refilling of feeders, the company says.) At a time when it's difficult to not only find labor but also to quickly shift gears and guarantee safety if and when an employee becomes sick, the automation of kitchen tasks could be worth the investment – or at least some exploration. (In case you missed it, U.S. Foods launched a ghost kitchens program recently to help operators create new revenue streams.)





Bayou BBQ Shrimp

Ingredients:

- 5 teaspoons Paprika
- 5 teaspoons Chipotle Chili Powder
- 5 teaspoons Ground Cumin
- 5 teaspoons Sugar
- 2 tablespoons Chopped Garlic
- 1 tablespoon Salt
- 5 pounds Peeled and Deveined Medium Shrimp, 31/40 count
- 1 cup Butter
- 2/3 cup LEA & PERRINS WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
- 5 tablespoons Lemon Juice
- 2/3 cup HEINZ KETCHUP
- 5 tablespoons Water
- 5 each Scallions, sliced
- 20 each French Bread Slices, toasted

Heat things up



As the weather cools, it's time to crank up the heat on your menu. That's especially true if you're among the many operators looking to extend outdoor dining as late as possible into the colder months this year. Add spice and other smoky seasonings to your marinades and sauces to elevate the depth, flavor and warmth of the meat, poultry and seafood on your menu. It can help you create the feeling of curling up by the fire.

Food Trends

Instructions:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the paprika, chili powder, cumin, sugar, chopped garlic and salt.
2. Add the shrimp and toss to evenly coat.
3. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium high heat.
4. Add the shrimp and cook until the shrimp just begin to turn pink (3-4 minutes).
5. Add the Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice, BBQ sauce, and water and continue to cook for another 2 minutes or until the shrimp are done.
6. Place the shrimp onto serving dish, garnish with chopped scallion and serve with the toasted bread slices to mop up the sauce.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Kraft Heinz



When employees feel ill, understand the symptoms

Count on it: Someone on your team is apt to come down with an illness this winter. How should you prepare? And how do you know if it's flu or COVID-19, which requires a different kind of response from you? First, make sure you and your team are clear on how symptoms of the flu differ from those of the corona virus and other milder illnesses. While there are strong similarities between COVID-19 and the flu, COVID-19 can involve some odd ones, like the sudden loss of a person's sense of smell. As a recent New York Times report advises, this is the year to urge everyone on your staff to get a flu shot as an extra precaution.



#FoodSafety

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Don't let COVID-19 weaken supply chain security

The corona virus has strained the supply chain and added uncertainty to restaurant operators who need a steady supply of certain ingredients. Just make sure that supply chain pressures don't result in cutting corners on supplier safety. Team Four can help you connect with reputable suppliers – but if you find other contenders, asking some key questions can help you discern their stability and reliability when it comes to food safety. State-foodsafety.com advises operators to ask for information about a supplier's food safety standards, as well as about how long the company has been in business, how it transports food, and how it would handle any problem that arises with a supplied product.



Foodservice Updates

Make your business lockdown-ready

COVID-19 is not done with us yet, as recent virus spikes and tightening local restrictions around the country have demonstrated. While everyone wants to avoid a repeat of this past spring's restrictions, if you were suddenly faced another four- to six-week lockdown this winter, could you power through? What would your

top concern be? The restaurant industry management platform Restaurant365 asked this question recently in a large survey of operators that included independent restaurants, restaurant groups, fine-dining and quick-service establishments, and full-service franchisees and franchise brands. The top concern – for nearly 26 percent of respondents – was generating enough revenue to break even. So what can you do now to fortify your operation and make sure the items you are offering are generating the largest-possible profits for you? Are there profits lurking on your menu that you could promote a bit better? Now is the time to identify which items give back to your restaurant.

Sure, you might be able to tell right away that your bar menu and desserts are money-makers. Can you reinvent those items for take-away? There are likely other items that may not seem profitable on the surface but save you money because they minimize preparation time and ingredients. The app Eat says high-profit menu items that are often overlooked include, among others, low-prep dishes, nose-to-tail items, foods that minimize waste, and foods perceived as value items.



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