

Foodservice Updates

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Fine-tuning your sales funnel

Hopefully, you have a robust loyalty program in place that is rewarding your best guests with offers that suit their tastes and arrive at times of the week when they are most apt to crave what you offer. But your business may have been serving these guests for years to build these sorts of connections. Wouldn't it be nice if you could fast-track the process with other potential guests – especially with occasional guests who may just need a little extra nudge to become frequent visitors? Having a thoughtful sales funnel can help you capture these leads and draw them in more successfully – and it's something that more restaurants are focusing on this year, according to Modern Restaurant Management. Building awareness of your brand is the first step – by finding where your ideal guests are spending time and discovering businesses, then carefully curating posts or other public outreach that shows your restaurant at its best and incorporates your story and brand values. Then entice people to visit, like through an image of a great new special or a video of your staff getting your outdoor dining area spruced up for guests. Then offer an incentive for people to visit you, ideally within a limited time frame – maybe with a free mimosa for moms booked for your Mother's Day brunch or another offer suited to your ideal guest. Once you have the person's attention, keep it by encouraging them to provide their email address to book their table or stay up to date with new offers via your email newsletter – you can nudge them toward your loyalty program here too. Make it clear how their return visits will help them accumulate rewards and motivate them to return soon by giving them a limited time to act. If you're already taking these steps to help spread the word about your restaurant and boost traffic, are there points along the line where you can provide a little extra inspiration for people to pay you a visit or place an order?





Tech Talk

Where can your tech ease guests' pain points?

When you read your restaurant's guest reviews, where do you see opportunities to improve your hospitality? If negative feedback tends to be more about the speed and ease of your service than about your menu, you may be able to make some marked improvements to their experience using tech. For some guests, it may not take much to tarnish an otherwise positive dining experience: Perhaps they have to wait for their check when they are eager to leave, are unable to easily split the bill when dining with a group, come in starving and don't know when their order may arrive, have a less-than-smooth ordering process on your website or mobile app, or struggle to find a member of staff when they have a problem with their meal. Looking at your guest journey, both in your dining room and offsite, where are people apt to hit snags? Can your current tech stack help streamline those issues? At the same time, consider how you can tap these tools to gather feedback from guests at the precise point when it is most helpful to your business – like immediately after guests finish their meal, or, in the case of a problem with an order, an alert in the moment.



Meet your need for clean, plentiful ice

The warmer months are coming – and as various regions of the country experience sweltering temperatures more often, guests will be craving icy beverages and cold foods from your business. You will need a reliable supply of ice to ensure you can meet the demands of warm weather. Now is a good time to make sure you're ready to do so safely. First, assess how well your ice machine will be able to handle your anticipated needs for ice in the months ahead. What does your historical guest data (as well as any predictive data you can access) tell you about your likely needs for chilled beverages and food? If you have an older ice machine, how can you accommodate any of its limitations through pre-emptive service or revised workflows during a shift? While bacteria and mold can grow in an ice machine regardless of the temperature outside, heavier use of these machines in warm weather requires more frequent cleaning and sanitization – something that may not be happening as often as it should. Your employee training procedures can ensure this task stays on track, while also helping your staff use your ice machine in ways that limit the risk of cross-contamination.



#FoodSafety

Foodservice CEO

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Managing the cost of wage changes

For years, restaurant operators in many states have faced the prospect of ballot initiatives aimed at raising the minimum wage and eliminating the tip credit. This year could be especially eventful. Wage-related ballot measures are planned in Michigan, Arizona, Ohio, Massachusetts and Connecticut, and are pending in a number of additional states. (Recently passed measures have strong potential impacts: The one passed in Washington, D.C. in 2022 requires business owners to eliminate the tip credit and raise service employees' wages from \$5.35 an hour to \$16.10 by 2027. Sean Kennedy of the National Restaurant Association said the D.C. measure could have such consequences as reduced restaurant workforces, higher menu prices or added surcharges, and fewer restaurant openings – and similar results are likely happening elsewhere too.) For restaurant operators struggling to eke out a profit, such efforts can ignite a scramble to identify places to shave costs. At a time when restaurant tech is making it possible to scrutinize expenses, are you using the tools at your disposal to identify and eliminate any hidden waste and the costs that result from it? Analyze your labor costs per hour across your business to ensure you understand how they compare to your other expenses and overall revenue. Where can you make adjustments to scheduling to ensure that your staffing closely reflects the ups and downs of your traffic? There may also be opportunities to train staff on additional tasks so that the people you have on board are ready to handle a range of responsibilities and don't have unnecessary lulls during a shift. This can feed into their development as well, which can help you better manage turnover – another regular expense you may be able to take steps to reduce. Finally, if you have any manual processes in your front and back of house, flag the ones that you can automate or delegate to tech-based tools. This will lighten the load on your staff too.



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