

Foodservice Updates

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Now is the time to iron out off-premise snags

As the easing of restaurant dining restrictions in states across the U.S. has given restaurants a bit of a reprieve from the plethora of economic challenges COVID-19 has caused, it may be difficult to even stop for a moment and ponder the challenges ahead. But as temperatures cool around many parts of the U.S., potentially making outdoor dining less appealing, restaurants will need an airtight off-premise sales structure to sustain business. Many are struggling with that. In new survey research released by Upserve, 47 percent of restaurant operators who responded said their biggest challenge of the past several months has been shifting to a new business model such as online ordering and delivery. Meanwhile, between February and April, Upserve found that online ordering grew 3,868 percent. As winter approaches, how can you fortify your online business and ensure you're not losing delivery fees to third-party providers? Is your website (and if applicable, your app) easy to navigate for people looking to place an order? Do you make dishes easy to customize due to customer preference or health requirements? Is your menu efficient to prepare and stocked with items that are just as tasty upon delivery as they are served in your dining room? If you offer delivery via third-party provider, are you communicating to customers how much it helps you if they pick up their order instead? Can you entice customers to pick up their order in exchange for a discount or other benefit? People will still crave restaurant food as the virus persists into the cooler months, so how can you streamline the process of connecting them with yours?

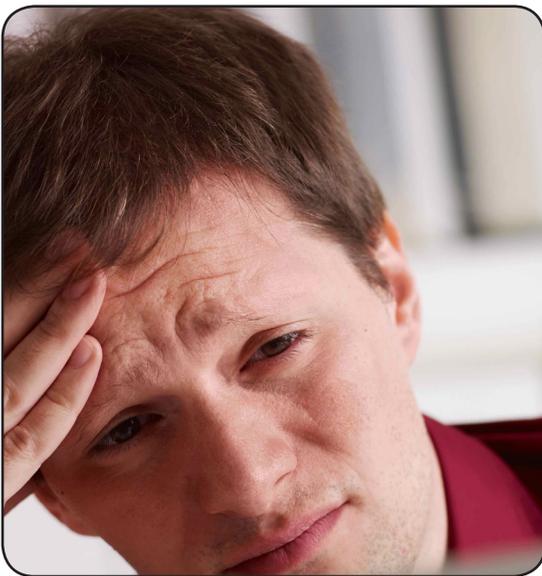


Pivot like a pro

Even for an industry used to having to adapt to change, the past several months have forced restaurants to take a crash course in being flexible: Offer curb-side pickup. Adapt your online systems to accommodate curb-side pickups and deliveries. Offer delivery but avoid having to pay steep third-party delivery fees. Create an outdoor dining area. Adapt your indoor dining area. Train your staff on rapidly developing regulations. Adjust your menu to align with people's changing daily routines and fluctuations in the supply chain. In a Nation's Restaurant News report, the supervisor of restaurant operations for the south Florida casual dining chain Flanagan's credits cross-training, as well as data monitoring, with the restaurant's ability to adapt to the rapidly changing environment in the state. The restaurant has been able to keep many of its employees working by training them to package and deliver food and take phone orders, as well as serve customers arriving for curb-side pickup. As regulations have changed, Flanagan's has relied on data to help determine how many employees they will need where – if regulations call for their dining room to serve at 25 percent capacity, for example, they can look back at their data and assess how they managed staff and service the last time they were at 25 percent capacity. What are your top tools and practices that help you shift gears when needed?



Match restaurant workers with the right roles



Longtime restaurant workers learn a wide range of hard and soft skills that can apply widely within the foodservice industry and outside of it – from team leadership to supply chain oversight to customer care. A new AI-based service called Talent Exchange is helping workers impacted by COVID-19 to quickly find jobs that align with their skillset. Backed by McKinsey & Company, the company counts Starbucks, Mondelez International and Pizza Hut among its participating companies. It may be worth considering if you're an operator helping a longtime team member find a temporary job or if you're scaling your staff back up. Restaurant Business reports that companies can upload a list of information about their furloughed or laid-off employees, then AI can suggest candidates to hiring businesses based on how well they are likely to match a role. Managers can also keep track of where furloughed employees landed so they can reconnect with them down the line.

Boost pickup business by promoting cleanliness

A recent survey of 700 restaurant guests by the restaurant tech company Toast found that restaurant takeout has been more popular than delivery in recent months – and cleanliness is a concern for more people ordering delivery than it is for those ordering takeout. Particularly if you use a third-party delivery provider, customers must not only trust your restaurant staff to prepare and package your food safely but trust the safety of delivery drivers and their vehicles. Promoting your staff's updated safety procedures – right down to the care your team takes in packaging each order and the minimal handoffs between the chef and customer – could be yet another tactic to entice customers to come to you to collect their order instead of opting for the convenience of delivery.



Communicating about COVID across languages

It's more important than ever that restaurant operators convey new health and safety trainings clearly to their team. But what if team members speak English as a second language and miss some of the nuances of language that native speakers understand? Rachael Nemeth, a cofounder of ESL Works, which provides mobile-based English-as-a-second-language training, addressed this challenge in a recent Fast Casual podcast. She estimates that of the 14 million workers in the restaurant industry, one-third don't speak English as a first language. If you employ team members who aren't fluent English speakers, what tools or protocols do you have in place to ensure your training is achieving the desired results and no messages are missed?



Three cheers for chickpeas

Is there anything a chickpea cannot do? Use them in their pure form in hummus or blend them with onions, garlic and spices for nutritious plant-based burger patties. They're even taking the



guilt out of pasta dishes: Try chickpea pasta as a high-fiber, high-protein, low-glycemic, gluten-free substitute for the traditional version.

Is your restaurant ripe for a tech reinvention?

As restaurants have taken steps to keep business running, operators have embraced radical reinvention: transitioning from fine-dining establishments to takeout providers, from selling deli sandwiches to groceries. How can you fortify your restaurant for the future? Now is the time for considering ideas that may have seemed crazy just last year. The restaurant industry



advisory Aaron Allen & Associates found that 82 percent of restaurant positions today could potentially be automated. Though they stressed they aren't suggesting the human element of restaurants be removed, their findings do provide reason for operators to assess how technology brings efficiencies to not only restaurant categories

but to other industries – and anticipate what they may have to do in the future to compete.

Chickpea Casarecce with a creamy porcini sauce



Ingredients:

- 2 Boxes, Barilla Chickpea Casarecce
- 2 Tbsp, Extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Garlic clove, Chopped
- 2 oz, Dried Porcini Mushrooms, Reconstituted in hot water
- 2 Cups, Chicken Broth
- 2 Cups, Heavy Cream
- 4 Tbsp, Black Truffle butter
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Cup, Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese
- 2Tbsp, Italian Flat leaf parsley, chopped

Instructions:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil
2. In a large skillet add the olive oil and garlic and cook for 1 minute over low heat.
3. Add the mushrooms and saute over medium heat for 3-4 minutes, add the chicken broth and the heavy cream and bring to a simmer.
4. Cook the pasta according to the package directions, drain and toss the pasta with the sauce.
5. Remove the skillet from the fire and fold in the cheese, truffle butter and garnish with parsley.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla

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