

Foodservice Updates

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When promoting your restaurant, lean hyper-local

The reach of social media can make it easy to reach people far from where your business is operating – and to be sure, it has helped some brands expand to new audiences as a result. But that opportunity for scale can be a distraction if there is more you can be doing to connect with the people who live in your neighborhood. A recent Forbes report notes that more restaurants are refocusing their marketing on their local communities, while also reaping benefits from technology that can capture business from the area. There is good reason for it because local marketing efforts have a lot of potential power right now: Research has found that nearly half of all Google searches include local intent and 97 percent of users search online to find a local business. When they do, nearly 25 percent of all clicks and mobile taps end up going to the first result listed in a local business search. To take best advantage of potential sales in your community, make sure you're appearing high up in local online searches. Your Google My Business listings, use of local keywords, and positive guest reviews can all help boost your local SEO. Think of your local community and culture when you are planning your menu, sourcing special ingredients to feature, and considering who can appear at your events and help you get the word out about them. Mine your data to better understand cultural preferences and seasonal demands as you craft promotions. On social media, use geo-targeted ads and engage with the networks to interact with guests and encourage positive reviews. When global events occur that you want to support in some way, act locally by supporting or promoting a related local cause.



Tech Talk

Use the Internet of Things to stay ahead of risks

How well is your restaurant able to harness real-time data about how it's operating? Right now, devices connected through the Internet of Things (IoT) are making it possible for restaurants to not only generate more revenue, but also avoid costly problems. Consider parts of your operation that customers don't necessarily see, but which are critical to how you operate – like your energy consumption or equipment performance, for example. Sensors connected through the IoT can analyze data from these parts of your business, identify patterns and flag problems or unnecessary down time. As a recent report from Restaurant News says, this can help a restaurant stay on top of equipment maintenance and avoid costly repairs, or help optimize energy consumption so you can avoid an unexpectedly high energy bill and operate with less environmental impact.



Fit-for-purpose restaurant tech



There is no shortage of restaurant tech on the market – so a number of players have been stepping out with more specialized offerings to stand out in the market. These include offerings that aim to facilitate orders in high-volume settings during morning and afternoon rush periods, as well as streamline delivery. Pymnts reports that Toast has launched a solution designed for cafes and bakeries, Oracle has a new offering aimed at independent restaurants looking for a more transparent and affordable tech option, and Uber Eats is expanding its white-label services through a partnership with Deliverect. (The partnership would allow restaurants to integrate Deliverect's online ordering software into their POS system, then have Uber Eats deliver those orders.)

Trends

Boost your communal vibe

With the constraints of the pandemic still in people's recent memories, consumers continue to crave experiences and connection. One way restaurants can provide both is through communal eating – but interpret that in different ways. You might physically seat different parties together for special events like chef's tastings, or simply to maximize space in your dining room. You can also just include more shareable entrées, appetizer platters or beverage samplers on your menu to get people talking and help boost the communal experience of your restaurant. Or, your plating and presentation alone can spark conversation. Consider serving entrées or appetizers on tiered platters, or side dishes on a rotating board that helps everyone at the table experience what you're serving.



Beware of these top food safety violations

When the food safety auditor Steritech analyzed more than 100,000 food safety assessments for quick-service, fast-casual and casual restaurants in the first seven months of this year, they uncovered some common safety challenges. Across the board, the top three restaurant violations relate to the cleanliness of nonfood-contact surfaces (like knobs, cooler handles and equipment surfaces), the condition of nonfood-contact surfaces (like cracked knife handles or rusty shelves), and general facility cleanliness (like residue on walls, ceilings and floors). Steritech says common industry challenges such as training gaps, labor shortages and budget limitations may be behind the findings. If you've been experiencing these challenges, review your schedule and cleaning routine to ensure these areas are being covered, and plan equipment repairs in advance to avoid injuries.



#FoodSafety

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How much does a foodborne illness outbreak really cost?

At a time when restaurants must justify every expense, cutting corners can seem unavoidable – especially in areas your guests don't see or appreciate. Food safety can be one such area – after all, guests are less likely to compliment a safe dining experience than complain about one that makes them ill. But consider the numbers. According to research from the National Institutes of Health, the cost of a single foodborne illness outbreak ranged from \$3,968-\$1.9 million for a quick-service restaurant, \$6,330-\$2.1 million for a fast-casual restaurant, \$8,030-\$2.2 million for a casual-dining restaurant, and \$8,273-\$2.6 million for a fine-dining restaurant. On the lower end, they considered the likely expenses generated by a five-person outbreak with no lost revenue, lawsuits, legal fees or fines. On the higher end, they considered a 250-person outbreak, with 100 meals lost per illness, as well as high legal fees and fines. Talk to Team Four if you'd like to find out how to get more from your food safety program.



Foodservice Updates

Friction-free ordering

We have all been there: It's been a long day, you're hungry, you're craving a meal from a favorite restaurant, and you want it here now. Somehow the effort it takes to order or adjust a past order to your preferences – never mind collect orders from others – feels like more than you want to manage. Wouldn't it be nice if you could skip that first part and allow the restaurant to get a jump start on preparing your dish? This functionality is something that Panera is offering their loyalty club members. The new feature, dubbed Crunch Time Ordering, allows guests to pre-program their favorite meals into their app and set them to be ordered at a set date and time. The app sends the person a reminder to place the order for pickup or delivery, then they just need to swipe a prompt within the app to complete the process. This kind of functionality is something to consider if you serve craveable foods that your guests think about at certain times of the week – like a large coffee on the way to work, a soup-and-sandwich combo for lunch during a busy work day, or a Friday-night pizza to kick off the weekend. Looking at your guests' ordering habits and the preferences of your most loyal fans, are there ways you can remove friction from your ordering process and make it a little easier for people to get the food they crave?



Team Four/Value 4 provides customized Supply Chain Solutions and Business Consultancy to the foodservice owners and operators throughout the United States. To find out how we can help your business save money contact us at:

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