

Foodservice Updates

In This Issue

- [Tap into plant power](#) | [Gain fans with your football-season food](#)
- [Uniform safety](#) | [Clean up your root vegetables](#) | [Make training more interactive with tech tools](#) | [This kitchen tech is a powerful guest satisfaction booster](#)

Balancing automation and labor

Could automation be the answer to perennial labor challenges in restaurants? As the opportunities for restaurant automation increase and pressure remains on operators to manage tasks with the support of a smaller-than-ideal staff, it's natural to ask the question. How you answer it could mean the difference between attracting talented employees and losing them. While it may be tempting to envision running your business without having to worry about an employee calling in sick or forgetting their shift, the human touch is something that guests and restaurants want. Recent research from PYMNTS found that only a small portion of guests enjoy using QR codes (17 percent) and kiosks (18 percent) for ordering instead of menus and counters – and while younger consumers are more interested in these tools, almost 60 percent still enjoy the experience of interacting with waitstaff. Automation can help you make those interactions better by allowing your staff to spend less time on tasks that the guest doesn't even see. A recent report from Modern Restaurant Management advises operators to focus on hiring talented people and automating inventory management, food preparation and other unseen tasks that support staff but don't replace their interactions with your guests. Finding the right balance between those parts of your business is where you can deliver the personalized, convenient experiences that will most delight your guests.



Tech Talk

Make training more interactive with tech tools

People learn in different ways – and the tools you use to reinforce food safety skills can help you make the lessons stick. Restaurant Technology News suggests using virtual reality headsets to role play different scenarios with staff. Having them take part in exercises that feel real can help muscle memory kick in. Ongoing reinforcement is helpful too – and leveraging their smartphones can help you make sure they always have the information they need. Send employees reminders and just-in-time updates via their phone, or simply allow them to use their phone to access a bank of helpful food safety information when they have questions.



This kitchen tech is a powerful guest satisfaction booster



There is a big opportunity for restaurants to improve their off-premise guest satisfaction – and the accuracy and timing of kitchen fulfillment is at the heart of it. That’s according to restaurant commerce platform Qu’s 4th annual State of Digital survey, which included responses from 85 fast casual and QSR brands representing over 30,000 locations. The survey found that many of these brands are seeing 15 percent lower guest satisfaction on orders, largely due to inaccuracies in orders and the timing of them. Using a kitchen display system to manage order flow, throttling and employee tasks can help, particularly if you’re integrating orders from multiple streams and would like to be able to not only manage order accuracy better, but also to steer guests to other ordering channels when one channel is overloaded.

Gain fans with your football-season food

What is football season without the food? Whether your guests are indulging in their favorite appetizers at tailgates or around the TV, you can give people an extra reason to come together this fall. Try putting your own spin on some of the classic, craveable items of the season – or weaving in ingredients that are plentiful, in-season and less expensive. A recent report from Foodservice Director suggests guacamole elevated with roasted tomato and bacon, as well as pork and sweet potato quesadillas.



Uniform safety

Aprons and other pieces of the employee uniform can send a helpful subconscious message to the wearer that they are about to handle food, chemicals or start another restaurant task that demands their attention. But these pieces of equipment can also be sources of contamination if an employee absentmindedly wipes their hands on their apron after cutting chicken, brings their hat into the restroom, or is wearing items that aren't clean. Make sure your training practices dictate your policy around this equipment – how to wear it, when not to wear it, where to store it and what your expectations are around having clean equipment to wear.



#FoodSafety

Clean up your root vegetables

Root vegetable season is here – and while the colors, flavors and nutrient content of this produce can elevate your fall and winter menus, these items also require some extra care to protect food safety. Most of the bacteria on produce comes from the soil that remains on their surface, so root vegetables need attention here. Even if you will be peeling and cooking these items, they need to be cleaned thoroughly first. Shortly before preparing root vegetables, remove any soil, then scrub them with fresh water to dislodge pathogens that may have accumulated in the vegetable’s crevices. You may want to use an additional cleaning solution for vegetables as an extra precaution.



Foodservice Updates

Tap into plant power

Although many consumers are still watching their wallets and trading down on restaurant experiences, plant-based foods could be one of restaurant operators' secret weapons to drive traffic and build loyalty. According to a new report from the Good Food Institute, sales of plant-based proteins (specifically plant-based meat) are rebounding in U.S. foodservice. Further, the people buying these foods make about 30 more trips to restaurants every year and spend about \$400 more than the average foodservice guest. That's a valuable segment to target and transform into loyal visitors. The research found that about 10 percent of U.S. consumers bought plant-based meat alternatives at a foodservice location last year, but the vast majority did so just once, so there is a lot of opportunity for restaurants that present plant-based foods well to capture and expand market share. Restaurants offer the kinds of elevated dining experiences that can make plant-based meat alternatives (along with plants in their natural form) shine. Operators can innovate with seasonal vegetables in ways that are still surprising and craveable to guests and exceed what a person is apt to prepare at home. As you look at the plant-based options on your menu in the months ahead, where is there an opportunity to bring in traffic and improve loyalty?



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:

1-888-891-3103 or visit our web site at www.teamfourfoods.com and www.valuefour.com