

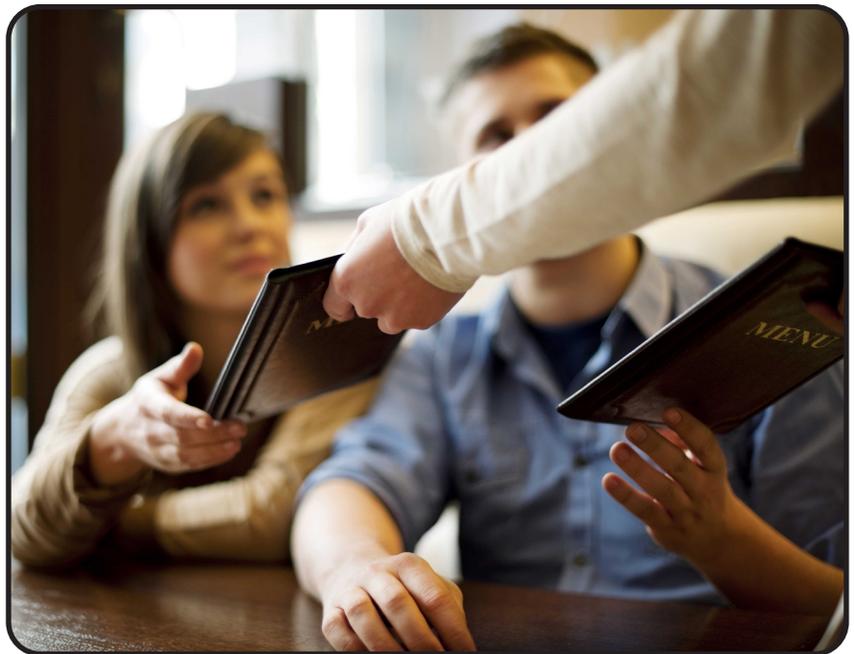
# Foodservice Updates

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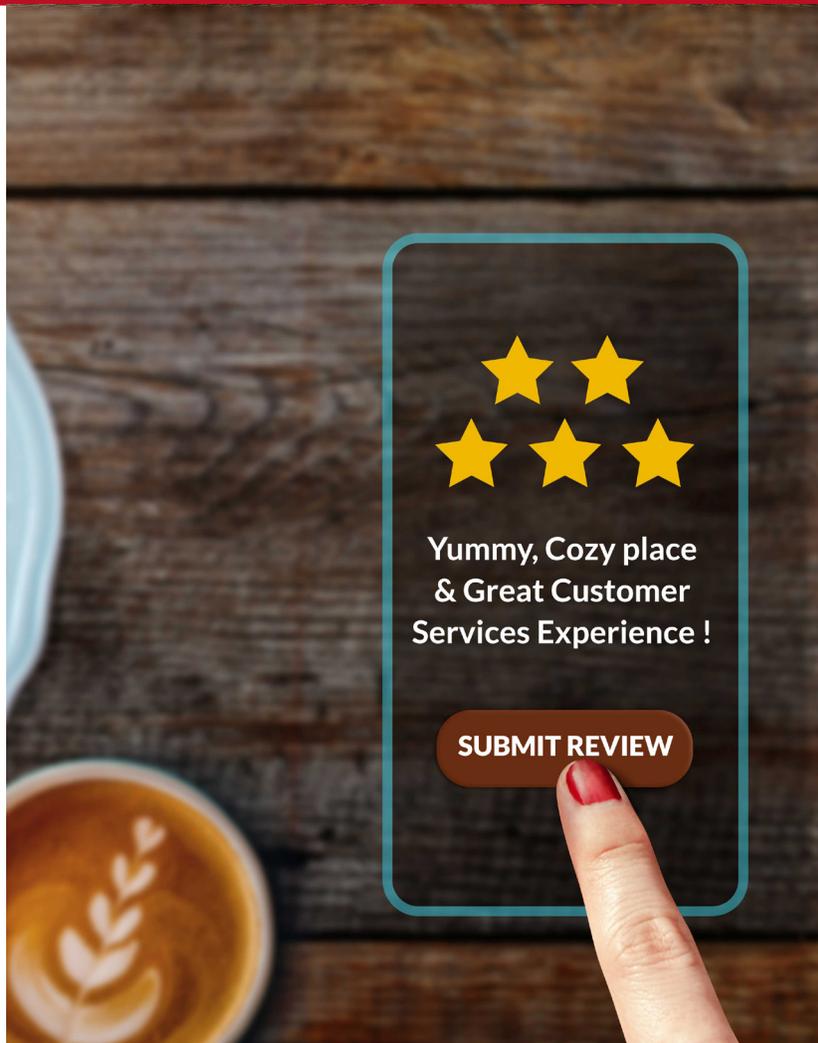
## Restaurant-specific responses to inflation

To be sure, restaurants are still feeling the pain of inflation -- even more so than other sectors of the economy. In the last quarter of 2022, some operators scaled down their hiring plans, even over the busy holiday season, according to a report from Alignable. But a recent report from CNBC indicates that inflation impacts large, national or international brands differently than it impacts smaller independent brands -- and surviving this period of high inflation is about all of these businesses leaning on the different advantages they possess. For instance, powerful brands like Starbucks or Domino's can use their size and buying power to leverage better prices on ingredients -- but being nimble enough to make quick menu changes can be far more difficult for them. On the flip side, while independent brands may lack the resources and buying power of larger brands, their reputation for authenticity can benefit from public goodwill. Consumers tend to want to support small businesses in tough economic times. With that in mind, restaurants can lean into their unique advantages -- large brands can play up the value they can offer right now, while smaller ones may have more leeway on price if they can promote the authenticity of their brand and the people behind it.



## Polish your digital presence

A strong digital presence is important to the vast majority of consumers looking for a restaurant. According to a survey of 1,000 consumers by the tech company HungerRush, 85 percent of consumers say it's important to them to find reviews and other information about restaurants online when determining where to dine. Looking beyond your app and website, what does a Google search on your restaurant reveal about your business? If you have been slow to respond to online reviews – or the information about your restaurant is simply inconsistent or out of date across different online channels, use any quiet periods you have this winter to follow up on – and neutralize – any negative reviews, as well as update basic information about your menu, hours and takeout/delivery availability.



## Considering a drive-thru? Lean in to critical tech

Adding a drive-thru, or a second one, has the potential to be a sales winner for restaurants at a time when the demand for convenient, off-premise dining continues to be high. A&W franchisee Anthony Walker told Restaurant Dive recently that after he added a second drive-thru lane at this restaurant in 2020, the project paid for itself within a year. But since a long, slow drive-thru lane can also provide visual evidence of a kitchen struggling to keep up, drive-thru operators need the precision, speed and menu awareness that technology can deliver to optimize this income stream. Ensure your menu translates well to the speed needs of the drive-thru (i.e. offering lots of customizable choices may be better left to dining room guests). Rely on your POS for the finer details of your historical sales to better understand when new ingredients are needed or when dishes should be pre-cooked or pre-staged for coming orders. Tech can also bring precision to your measurement of a dish's ingredients so your staff isn't accidentally wasting food amid the hustle and bustle of the lunch rush. Finally, outdoor staff, equipped with tablets, can help you move through drive-thru orders more quickly and direct traffic to nearby parking spaces and clear space in the drive-thru line.

# Food Trends

## Hail Caesar Rotisserie Roasted Chicken Sandwich



### *Ingredients:*

- 1 Ciabatta roll, or focaccia roll
- 2 fl oz Table Side Caesar Dressing (KE0814)
- 5 oz Pulled rotisserie chicken, warm
- 3 slices Avocado
- 1/4 cup Roasted tomato
- 1/2 cup Arugula

### *Instructions:*

1. Cut ciabatta in half and brush with Table Side Caesar Dressing on both sides.
2. Top with chicken, arugula, avocado and tomato.
3. Cut and serve with your choice of side.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Ken's

## Chicken out



New takes on the chicken sandwich are on-trend this year – and you can likely offer something fresh by taking cues from your existing menu and using spices and global flavors in new applications. For example, some of the flavors already present in your salad selections might help you entice guests to try your sandwiches instead (and minimize your use of lettuce during the current shortage). Consider a Mediterranean chicken sandwich with roasted vegetables marinated in Greek lemon vinaigrette or create a creamy chicken Caesar salad in sandwich form. On-trend Southeast Asian flavors could work well on your sandwich menu too: Experiment with coconut, citrus fruits, cilantro, mint and basil.

## Prioritize transparency in the New Year

Times of high inflation and consumer demand place added pressure on suppliers to deliver to their customers. Even if you pride yourself on your restaurant's safety practices and record, your business is only as safe as its supply chain. Protecting it, and, by extension, your own ability to ensure quality for your guests, comes down to transparency. How well do you trust each link in your supply chain? Where can you develop a better relationship with certain suppliers? You can digitally manage your supplier certifications and flag any potential gaps for further investigation – or to simply prompt a conversation that can help you build trust with suppliers.



**#FoodSafety**

## Supporting staff to protect safety

Your food safety record is in the hands of your staff – and any employee retention problems you’re experiencing can chip away at your restaurant’s institutional knowledge. What’s more, poor retention creates a greater likelihood that risks will be overlooked and cause problems. Taking some simple steps to retain staff can have a positive knock-on effect on your safety. Help your team avoid burnout this winter: Using scheduling software that allows staff to select and swap their shifts can help, as well as having (and communicating) a clear policy ensuring that everyone is healthy when they come to work. Finally, know what boundaries you’re unwilling to cross to accommodate a demanding guest – standing up for an employee can go far in protecting morale and retaining your overall team.



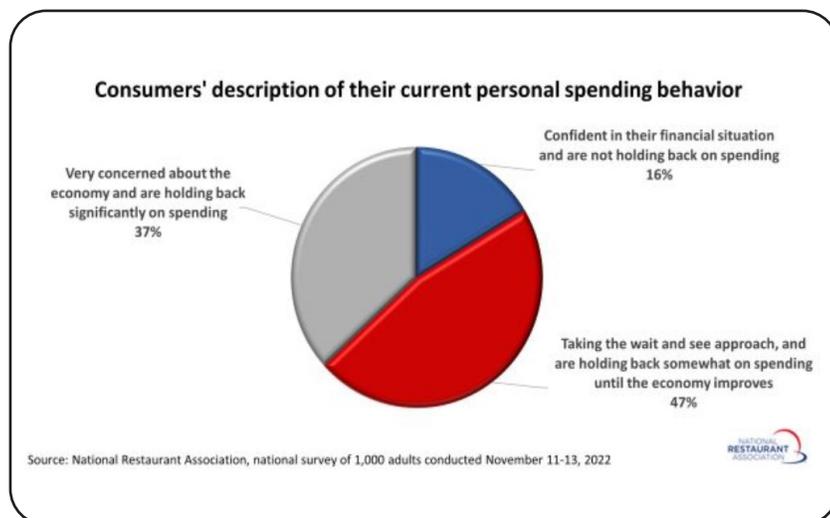
# Foodservice Updates

## Restaurant spending: Behind the numbers

On the surface, recent economic data from the National Restaurant Association and the U.S. Census Bureau was encouraging: November marked the 23rd consecutive month of employment growth for restaurants, and as of October (the latest month research was available), sales at eating and drinking establishments were continuing their gradual climb. Sales had increased 1.6 percent over the previous month, marking the third consecutive month of sales gains and continuing a general upward trend evident for many months prior to that.

But adjusting for menu price increases revealed that sales had actually remained flat between April and October of this year. This reflects what more recent research from the National Restaurant Association uncovered about consumer spending behavior at the moment: 37 percent of consumers are very concerned about the economy and are significantly holding off on spending as a result, while 47 percent are taking a wait-and-see approach and holding back somewhat on spending until they feel more confident about where the economy is headed.

Consumers are spending at restaurants; just expect them to continue to prioritize value in the coming year. Price increases are an inevitable part of doing business right now, but you can help guests see them as justified: Double down on personalized loyalty promotions, creative experiences, and combo offers that leave guests with the impression that their dollar will stretch farther with you.



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](http://www.teamfourfoods.com) and [www.valuefour.com](http://www.valuefour.com)