

# Foodservice Updates

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## Would your guests subscribe to you?

As restaurants look for new ways to boost guest loyalty and ensure steady traffic in 2022, subscription offers have become more commonplace. Brands including Panera, Pret A Manager and Taco Bell have all extended subscription offers to guests – and now Sweetgreen is testing a \$10 subscription offer that allows guests to get \$3 off their orders within 30 days of their subscription purchase. Forbes reports that the offer is the latest phase of Sweetgreen’s initial loyalty program, launched over five years ago, which rewarded customers with \$9 in credit for every \$99 they spent in restaurants or on the app -- a program more akin to the punch-card loyalty programs of the past. Subscription offers are worth considering because they may keep a brand more front-of-mind for guests at a time when restaurants need the assurance of steady traffic. Each month, the guest is reminded that there is value in returning to you. At the same time, each of their return visits can yield helpful data that allows your business to craft future offers to that guest – data you would not have if you simply issue a blanket discount after the guest reaches a purchasing threshold not connected to details about their past purchasing behavior. What items on your menu tend to bring customers back? Does your coffee attract people on their morning commute? Does your soup-and-sandwich combo generate reliable lunchtime traffic? Or perhaps there are profitable parts of your menu that you’d like guests to support more steadily. These could all be areas worth testing with a subscription offer.



## Could tech reduce your liability?

As restaurants strain to manage the ongoing labor shortage, as well as guest concerns over health and safety, technology may be able to provide some relief from the responsibilities associated with those concerns. Jim Balis, managing director of CapitalSpring's Strategic Operations Group, recently told FSR magazine that robotics and AI can help reduce liabilities associated with safety and sanitation while automating tasks so that hours and staffing can be reduced. There is no risk of a missed shift, for example, and labor costs can remain fixed. Digital tools can help you improve line checks, conduct self-assessments and audits, monitor equipment, and track how well you're adhering to cleaning and sanitation protocols. This year, more restaurants that are struggling to meet demand amid labor shortages will be turning to tech. When you're short on staff, which parts of your operation become most vulnerable to health and safety hazards? Could any of them be automated or outsourced to a tech-based solution?



## Tech tools to attract, onboard and retain staff

Replacing an employee can be an expensive task for restaurants – according to the Center for Hospitality Research at Cornell University, the cost of employee turnover averages around \$5,864 per person for a typical front-line employee. That expense is all the more debilitating when staff leave frequently. You can minimize those challenges if you can find staff who are a good fit for your business from the start, then ensure they have a smooth onboarding process. New research from the HR tech provider Sprockets suggests a number of tech tools operators can consider for help. Among them: JazzHR and TalentReef can help you track applicants and data based on your specific needs so you can better target applicants suited to your business. Spark Hire and Honeit can provide interviewing support, including tools to help you get a better sense of a candidate's personality and store the comments they share. Finally, your training program can pave the way for a productive employee relationship (or provide a reason for a new staffer to disengage). Eloomi and Axonify can guide you through the process of developing a program that works for you and also track an employee's progress.





## Chicken Romano with Bruschetta Topping

### Ingredients:

#### Bruschetta Topping

- 5 cups EL VERANO SALSA STYLE DICED TOMATOES
- 2 teaspoons Garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons Balsamic Vinegar
- 3 tablespoons Fresh Basil, chopped
- 1 teaspoon Kosher Salt
- ½ teaspoon Pepper

#### Chicken

- 1 cup Flour
- 1 teaspoon Salt
- ½ teaspoon Pepper
- 6 tablespoons Olive Oil
- 10 each 4 oz. Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast 12 each Large Eggs
- 1 cup KRAFT GRATED PARMESAN CHEESE
- 1 teaspoon Garlic Salt
- 2 teaspoons Chopped Parsley

## Put your ingredients to work

Trying to push your ingredients a bit farther these days? Whenever you add new items to your menu, consider how parts of each dish could do double – or triple – duty as elements of dishes in other menu categories. Your vegetable soup could elevate the flavor of a pasta sauce. Your black bean salad could be served not only on top of greens, but also as a vegetarian topping on nachos or as a colorful side to your chicken or salmon entrée. Do you have enough workhorse ingredients in your inventory right now?

# Food Trends



### Instructions:

Prepare the bruschetta topping:

1. Combine the diced tomatoes, garlic, balsamic vinegar, basil, salt and pepper. Hold for service.

Prepare the Chicken Romano:

2. Season the flour with the salt and pepper.
3. Dredge the chicken breast with the seasoned flour
4. Whisk the eggs with 2/3 cup parmesan cheese, garlic salt and parsley.
5. Add the oil to skillet over medium heat. (cook in batches if needed)
6. Dip the floured chicken breast into the egg mixture to coat evenly and then place them into the heated skillet.
7. Cook on each side until golden brown and cooked through. About 4-5 minutes on per side.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Kraft Heinz



## Safety through transparency

Want to improve your safety? Focus on improving your transparency. By having an operation that is open with vendors, suppliers and customers about your safety practices, you're creating the conditions for improved safety. There are a number of actions you can take to improve your transparency: Trace (and minimize) your menu's links in the food supply chain so you can tell a less complicated story about how you're sourcing your menu. Be open with nutritional information and allergens on your menu – One Dine suggests offering a QR code on your menu that links to detailed information about menu items. Make your kitchen more visible – if you physically remove the barriers between staff and guest, you build trust and also reinforce your commitment to operating safely and efficiently. Finally, admit to mistakes when they happen – that could mean responding honestly and professionally to a negative review, or acknowledging steps you're taking proactively to improve your operation's safety based on audits or self-assessments.



**#FoodSafety**

# #FoodSafety

## Protect safety with just-in-time alerts

The pandemic has been a two-year practice in adjusting to new recommended safety practices – and it's demonstrated the need for restaurant operators to be able to get information out to staff in real time. In other words, posting flyers on employee bulletin boards has officially become obsolete. Do you have tech tools in place that enable you to push safety alerts and other information out to employees instantaneously via their smartphone? In addition to helping protect food safety and ensure your team is on the same page about vaccine-related regulations in your area, it could also help you empower your team to take greater responsibility and initiative in upholding health and safety protocols in your business.



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## Plant-based proteins steal the spotlight

Not so long ago, plant-based proteins were considered solid supporting players – available as options for vegetarian guests tagging along to restaurants with omnivores but not necessarily tasty enough to be promoted as entrées worth seeking out in their own right. That has changed in a big way. Plant-based proteins have improved in taste and variety, consumers have become more aware of beef’s significant carbon footprint, and operators have struggled to source animal proteins. This has all resulted in plant-based proteins growing in demand for consumers and restaurant operators alike. This year, some restaurant brands aren’t only sourcing plant-based proteins but are also innovating their own varieties and testing them with guests. Chipotle, in particular, recently developed its own vegan chorizo made with peas, chipotle peppers, tomato paste, crushed garlic, Spanish smoked paprika and extra-virgin olive oil. Sean Cash, an economist with the Friedman School of Nutrition Science at Tufts University, told the Washington Post that more restaurant operators are “seeing it as a necessity” to offer plant-based proteins and that these options may help give restaurants a critical bit of extra pull with potential guests. This year, take a closer look at plant-based proteins worthy of occupying the center of the plate – whether as sourced replacements for chicken, beef, pork or seafood, or as combinations you develop in-house. Are there opportunities for you to enhance your selection and offer these proteins as customizable additions or substitutions on standard menu items?



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