

Foodservice Updates

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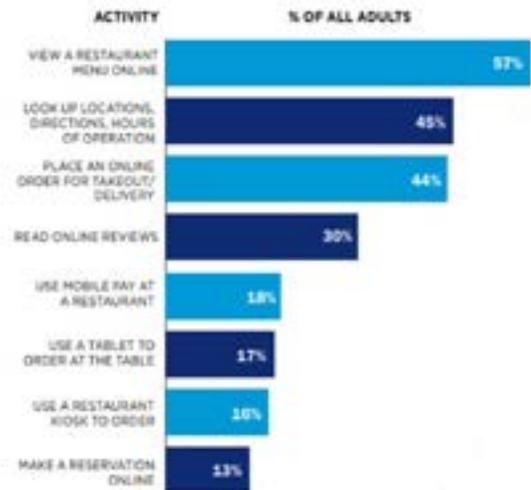
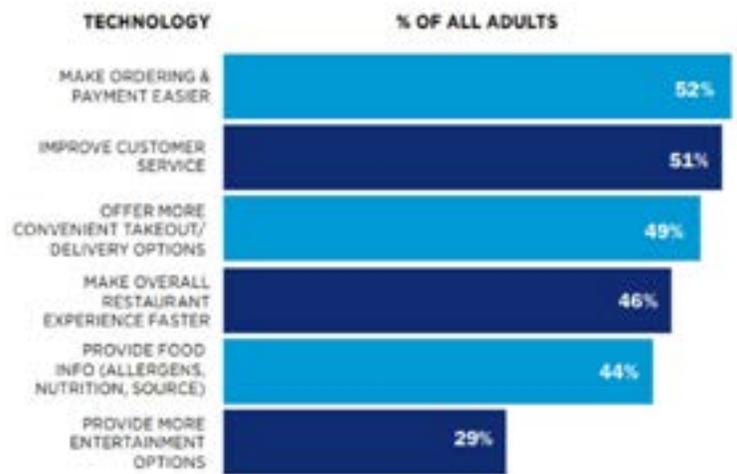
Recovery in reverse?

In a recent legislative update from Washington, Sean Kennedy, the National Restaurant Association's executive vice president of public affairs, said the restaurant industry had lost 45,000 jobs at the end of August. Further, new vaccine and testing mandates at businesses with a certain threshold of employees on staff could also make already-challenging staffing conditions even more difficult. To be sure, this is not exactly the Covid-19 recovery that restaurant operators had in mind – but there are efforts underway to try and change that. Industry advocates are urging lawmakers to continue to replenish the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), though Kennedy says it appears that members of Congress don't want to add any Covid-recovery measures to the \$3.5 trillion infrastructure spending plan in process, which is focused largely on climate initiatives, paid leave, childcare, education and healthcare. Because funding the spending plan will impact businesses in the restaurant industry, however, Kennedy is urging operators to add their names to Restaurants Act, a grassroots organization for the restaurant industry that is looking to generate broad support from the restaurant industry in order to urge lawmakers to continue to fund the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. (The fund closed to new applicants in May and according to a recent announcement from the Independent Restaurant Coalition, 82 percent of independent restaurants are concerned they may close permanently if the fund is not replenished.) You can join or learn more about the effort to refill the fund at Restaurantsact.com.



Tech Time

Restaurants' adoption of technology has accelerated steeply during the pandemic – and has also been responsible for keeping many operations running at a time when dining rooms were either closed or restricted. Recent research from PYMENTS and Paytronix illustrates how profound that shift has been: It found that of the \$435 billion consumers spent on online food orders in 2020, 61 percent was spent at restaurants that had offered only sit-down dining before the pandemic. Are you interested in adopting more technology to improve how your operation runs? Here's a look at the areas in which consumers have used technology most frequently in the past year to support their dining experiences, as well as where they would like to see restaurants incorporate more technology, according to a February 2021 survey from the National Restaurant Association:



Tech-based equipment management

Restaurant technology is making it easier for operators to offload all sorts of manual processes that consume time and resources. If the maintenance and repair of your appliances and other equipment are requiring more intervention from you than they should, you can now delegate these tasks to a growing number of companies that consolidate information about your equipment in one place – so you can more easily keep track of warranties, arrange servicing and handle other tasks required to keep your facility operating as it should. The Spoon recently highlighted one such company, 86 Repairs, which digitizes information about all of a restaurant's equipment, allowing operators to book service people, troubleshoot problems and keep track of warranties in a single dashboard.





I'll drink to that

At a time when consumers may need a little extra incentive to dine out at restaurants, the experience you offer plays an increasingly important role. Your beverage menu can help enhance your restaurant experience, all while helping you boost check-totals. Try elevating your alcoholic and non-alcoholic options with indulgent after-dinner drinks, warm seasonal concoctions and memorable presentations – elements your guests wouldn't necessarily go to the trouble to recreate at home (and in many states, may not be able to order to-go).

Food Trends

Spicy Chocolate Martini

Ingredients:

- 1 Bistro Collection® Baileys® Dark Chocolate Swirl Brownie
- 2 Tbsp Chocolate syrup, plus more for drizzle
- 3 oz Half and half
- 3 oz Pepper vodka
- 2 Tbsp Whipped topping
- 1/4 tsp Natural cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp Cinnamon, ground



Instructions:

1. Roll small balls out of the brownies, working the frosting onto the outer layer. Dust with cocoa powder.
2. Lace inside of martini glass with chocolate syrup.
3. Mix chocolate syrup, half and half and pepper vodka together in a shaker filled with ice. Shake and pour in the prepared glass.
4. Top the drink with whipped cream and then dust with cocoa powder and cinnamon. Serve with brownie truffles on the side.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Sara Lee Bakery



Track Covid-19 on your team

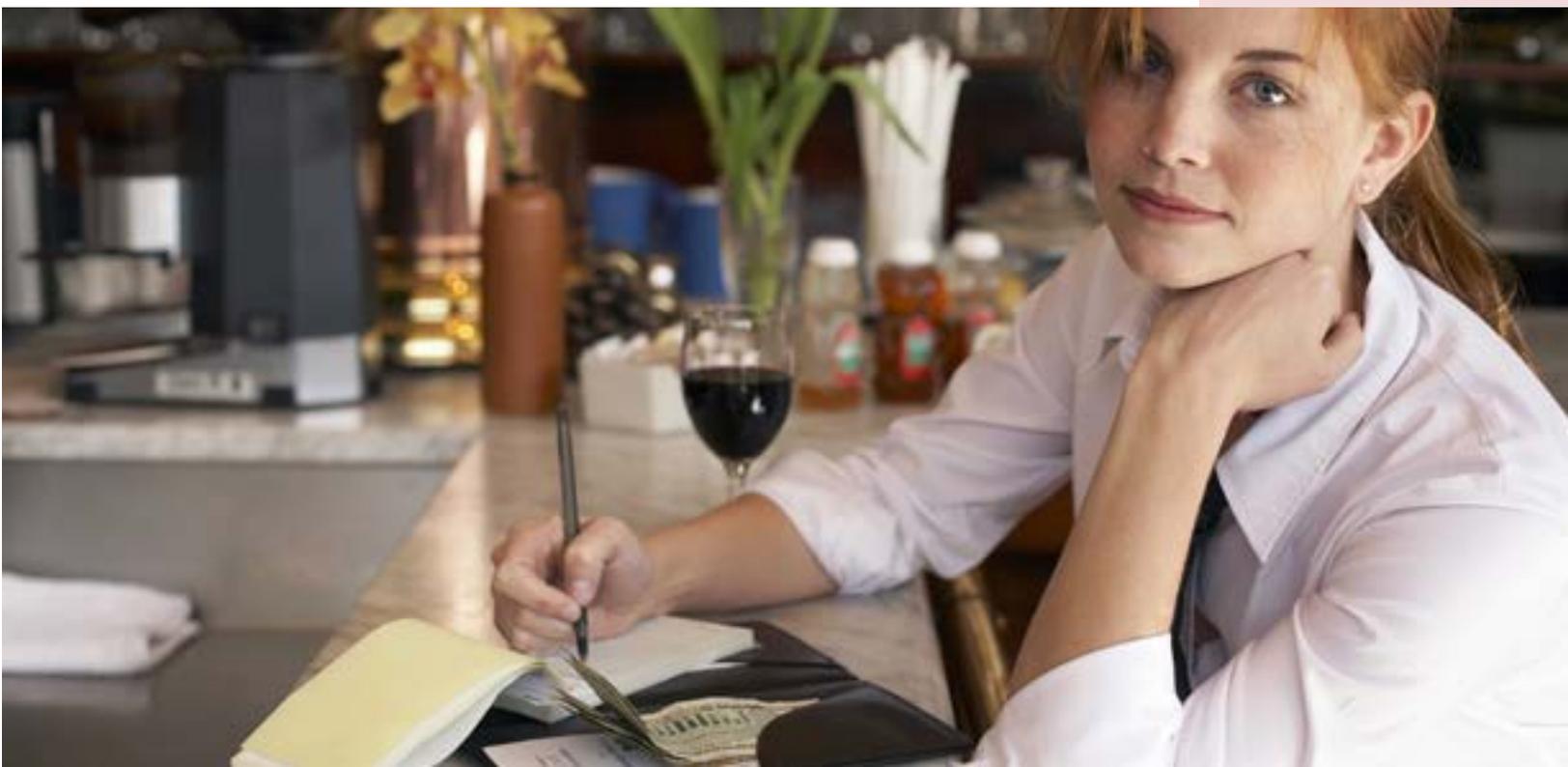
As flu season dovetails with the Covid-19 delta variant in the coming months, you can expect a rise in employee illnesses and even just false alarms that nonetheless require you to exercise extra caution when serving guests. The reservations platform Resy recently announced it is offering a free way for restaurants to track employees' proof of Covid-19 vaccination, test results and other details used to track symptoms of illness. Restaurant Business reports that Resy has partnered with Clear to offer Clear's Health Pass technology through 2022 to restaurants using Resy.



#FoodSafety

Support staff mental and physical health

Restaurant workers are expected to be helpful, caring and upbeat – but that can be a tall order at a time when restaurants are under great stress and many customers are behaving badly. Taking steps to protect the mental and physical health of your team can help you retain your existing staff and attract new people to your restaurant. First, provide a supportive environment where your team can acknowledge mental health challenges and feel it's acceptable to talk about them with a manager and ask for time away from work to manage them. If you can, seek out discounts to local gyms, yoga studios or other facilities that can help your staff blow off steam – or offer to host a group fitness class for your team on a regular basis. You can also turn to help from apps designed with hospitality professionals in mind. Two are Sanvello, which provides support for a range of mental health concerns, and Ben's Friends, a substance abuse support network for people in the industry.



Foodservice Updates

Eliminate the reasons for employee turnover

The restaurant industry is still trying to climb its way back to pre-pandemic employment levels. According to research from the National Restaurant Association, the industry is still about one million jobs shy of the 12.3 million jobs it offered before Covid-19 hit. Throughout the pandemic, many news stories have said the high rate of restaurant employee turnover was due to staffers' unemployment benefits surpassing their restaurant earnings. But according to a recent report from Restaurant Dive, the reality is more complicated than that, and a combination of factors are responsible for escalating employee turnover: Among them are a shift of workers into other professions, a shortage of people with cooking skills and increasing reports of abuse on the job. But there are steps restaurant operators can take to help mitigate some of those problems at their own businesses. Restaurant Dive suggests adopting tech tools like on-demand pay apps, which tend to offer more flexibility on pay schedules. Further, it advises operators to be clear in job postings about wages, schedules, benefits, room for advancement, and incentives such as employee referral bonuses. Overall, put yourself in the shoes of a potential employee, who wants to work in a safe environment, understand their responsibilities on the job, be paid on time for shifts completed, and be granted some flexibility if and when their personal lives require it.



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