

Foodservice Updates

Week of:
October 3, 2022

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Give yourself a culture check

Restaurant culture is a frequent news maker right now, and as evidenced by the popularity of the drama series *The Bear*, it's a source of entertainment too. Against the backdrop of workplaces of all kinds being reinvented to suit employees, restaurants – and their reputations as high-pressure environments that can be tough on employees – are coming under increased scrutiny. Changing the industry's reputation for the better can start with individual restaurants making decisions that support career longevity so you can retain the staff you currently have. As we approach the time of the year when seasonal illness begins to ramp up and holiday gatherings are being planned – both of which put additional strain on restaurants – give your culture a health check. Take care of your team by regularly giving them an outlet to share feedback and ask for support or help without judgment. Make sure they have time and space to rest between shifts. Review your policies for sick leave and overtime so you can anticipate challenges and make fair decisions. Train staff regularly to keep them motivated and engaged. Get to know them as people. As part of your daily conversations, ask what they'd like to learn and encourage them to set written goals to prepare them for positions of increasing responsibility in your business. Give them incentives to keep going by rewarding the stand-out performance of individuals and teams. Then make it worth their while to stay – through a bonus or other benefit for those who stay past a certain period of time.



Make guests feel more comfortable with sharing data

For restaurants, guest data is the key to better sales, menu development and loyalty. But in an age of increasing cyber risk, what if some guests don't want to share their information – or are turned off when you ask for it? First, make it easy and fast for them to share it, without a lot of discussion, clicks or scrolling required. Clarify how you will and won't be using their information – and what benefits they will receive as a result, including special discounts, shorter wait times, member rewards or customized offers. Finally, make them feel safe – not only through your use of secure technology but also by ensuring their interactions with your staff feel genuine. Collect only the information you need and reinforce your commitment to protecting their safety and privacy.



Serve guests better with a single glance

Personalized service and lower costs can go together. As operators look for ways to provide the customized approach guests want at a time when they are running with a slimmed-down crew, facial recognition is one technology gaining momentum. While the technology has been around for a while, consumers may be more open to it now as part of the wave of restaurant tech we have experienced in the past couple of years. As a recent Nation's Restaurant News report indicates, the technology can help a guest dodge a long line, and with a glance at a kiosk, see their loyalty program profile, past orders, allergy information, accumulated rewards and payment information. What's helpful is that the facial recognition technology can be integrated into an existing POS without being prohibitively expensive. It's been appearing with increased frequency at quick-service and fast-casual brands, as well as entertainment venues like casinos.





Bibb, Avocado, Tomato Salad, with Dairy-Free Ranch Dressing

Ingredients:

Bibb lettuce, washed and torn, as needed
Avocado, sliced, as needed
Cherry tomatoes, quartered, as needed
Charred corn, as needed (optional)
Kosher salt, to taste
Ground black pepper, to taste
Dairy-free Ranch Dressing, as needed (recipe follows)
Chives, minced, as needed (optional)
Dairy-free Ranch Dressing (Yields 2 ½ cups)
¼ cup Silk Original Almondmilk
1 cup Vegan mayonnaise
1 ½ tsp. Apple cider vinegar
1 tsp. Lemon juice
3 ea. Garlic cloves, finely grated
1 Tbsp. Chives, minced
1 tsp. Dill, dried or fresh minced
¼ tsp. Oregano, dried
¼ tsp. Mustard powder
¼ tsp. Onion powder
¼ tsp. Paprika
Kosher salt, to taste
Ground black pepper, to taste

Where can you cut the dairy?

As consumers have moved plants to the center of the plate, their embrace of flexitarian options has extended to dairy alternatives. Even if your guests can tolerate dairy in their diets, they may still be curious about dairy alternatives and looking to try them – particularly as the tastes and textures of alternatives dairy products including milk, yogurt, ice cream and cheese have improved in recent years. These more shelf-stable options can help you stretch your inventory as well. Consider non-dairy alternatives in sauces, dips and dressings as a starting point.

Food Trends



Instructions:

To prepare the Dairy-free Ranch Dressing:

1. Mix all ingredients together. Add more Almondmilk to thin consistency or more mayonnaise to thicken consistency. Season with salt and pepper to taste
2. Set in the refrigerator for 3 hours.

To serve:

3. Assemble salad – top lettuce with avocado, tomato and corn. Drizzle with dressing and garnish with chives.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Danone

When teaching food safety, start from scratch

It's unlikely that anyone on your team comes to work looking to do something wrong. But mistakes happen, and when they occur because staff assume they know how to complete a task but aren't doing it correctly, it can be difficult to get them to adjust. One example is handwashing – even though it might seem like common sense, it's often done inadequately and the consequences to your food safety can be significant. You can reinforce a learning culture by starting with the assumption that no one knows the proper protocols for what they're about to be taught. Have regular reviews of what your team needs to know, identify key food safety metrics to reach, and clarify that assessments of their performance will be tied to these metrics. Bring in some targeted coaching to help reinforce areas where metrics aren't measuring up.



#FoodSafety

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You have a food safety plan, but...

Does it actually reflect the team you currently have and the functions it serves? In a recent food safety webinar for foodservice professionals, the majority of attendees surveyed said that while they have a food safety plan, their plan doesn't flex based on who at the company is involved and what their functions are. At a time when responsibilities are shifting and you're likely having to complete more tasks with fewer people, it's important to view your food safety plan through that lens. Where do you need to make adjustments to your team's responsibilities to ensure you're not letting food safety slip?



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Optimize your resources

Back in August, a survey of restaurant operators by the National Restaurant Association found that 65 percent of respondents did not have sufficient staff to meet guest demand. That means there are a lot of restaurants having to streamline tasks, adopt new technology to offset labor loss wherever possible, and make tough decisions about where employees are truly needed most in the business. If you're struggling to do as much as possible with far fewer staff resources than would be ideal, start with that last point.

Considering the people you have available to you, what is the most important function for them to serve? Talk to them about how their skills can best support the business in those places. Then get creative – or even ruthless – about making changes in other places. A recent Reuters report indicated that restaurant brands are taking such steps as introducing new equipment that can accelerate or automate aspects of cooking and cleanup, using more speed-scratch ingredients,



and changing preparation procedures so that any time spent waiting for food to cook is time spent completing tasks that previously would have been handled separately at the start of a shift. Scrutinize any wasted labor at each step of a shift. When you look at the preparation of each menu item and your needs to keep your operation clean and safe, where is there room to optimize the staff resources you have on hand? Across a shift and across a restaurant chain, all of those labor efficiencies add up. You may be able to operate with less staff than you had previously thought.

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