

Foodservice Updates

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Take cues from your customer experience

We're living in an age of customization and personalization. Consumers want experiences that are in line with their preferences – or to at least feel heard by those providing them. You likely aim to provide that kind of experience for your guests, but what about for your staff? The culture you cultivate for your team will be reflected in the experience, good or bad, that they extend to your guests. So approach your staff as if they are an additional segment of your customer base. Are you giving them opportunities to feel heard – and in a variety of ways? According to CREATE's recent Future of Foodservice Report, Florida-based Smokey Bones has conducted a weekly virtual town hall meeting with its managers throughout the company since early on in the pandemic. The sessions provide opportunities to share business and functional updates, as well as to field questions from managers – and difficult questions are welcome. Other ways to enhance two-way communication: Have staff answer a quick pulse-survey question at the start of each shift and then share any corrective actions you're taking in response to their feedback. Give them opportunities to make suggestions about what they would like to see – there may be an easy change you can make that you hadn't previously considered. Make it a priority to hire from within and make sure your existing staff are told about new opportunities for advancement. While employee turnover is known to be high in the industry, you can make it less of a problem for your business if you prioritize improving communication and engagement with your team – much like you'd do with guests you're hoping will return frequently.



Tech to track and protect order accuracy

You're likely having more guests passing through your restaurant – in person and via delivered orders – than usual at this time of year. The added pressure on your staff can cause errors to happen more easily, and if those errors involve a menu item being inadvertently given to an allergic guest, it could pose a major problem for your business. Lean on tech tools to keep everyone on track when things get busy. A recent report from Restaurant Technology News suggests using tech tools to get real-time food safety reminders and updates to employees via their smartphones. It can help them keep critical information in mind and help you address any problems with noncompliance right in the moment. Your technology can also help you keep track – of order accuracy, ideal staffing levels, and performance. Collecting data in all of these areas will help you more readily identify where your weaknesses are.



Check up on your data protection

At a time when restaurant operators are being stretched, it's easy for things to fall through the cracks. As you have adapted your business in recent months and years to accommodate mobile orders and off-premise dining, have you compromised at all with regard to your methods of securing the guest data you manage? One restaurant consultant interviewed in a recent Hospitality Net report indicated that since the start of the pandemic, he has seen more restaurants cut corners on online security in an effort to make tech-driven conveniences available to guests. Threat actors tend to look for easy targets – ensuring your business has up-to-date protections in place can help you avoid being in that position amid the sharp rise in online transactions you've likely been processing.





Mushroom and Bacon Lasagne

Ingredients:

- 4 Barilla® lasagne chef sheets
- 1 ½ lb. bacon, diced
- 1 Medium onion, diced
- 1 lb. mushrooms, sliced
- 1 ½ Cup frozen peas
- 15 oz. Ricotta
- 2, 28 oz. Cans San Marzano tomatoes, crushed
- 2 Tbsp. balsamic glaze
- ½ Cup White wine
- 1 Cup Mozzarella, shredded
- ½ Cup Parmigiano, grated
- ¼ Cup parsley, chopped
- Salt & pepper to taste

Tempting winter warmers

Comfort food continues to be a big draw for guests right now. As you serve up warm winter dishes, consider what items help you generate the most benefit from your inventory and labor. What is simple to prepare without skilled staff? What is a good for a crowd – yet also presents well when frozen and served later? What will allow you to use ingredients that you also use in salads, appetizers, sides and other entrées?

Food Trends



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 425° f.
2. In a skillet over med./High heat add bacon. Cook for 3-4 min. or until golden brown.
3. Remove bacon from the skillet and retain the bacon fat. Add olive oil to the skillet with onion. Cook for 1-2 min.
4. Add mushrooms. Cook for an additional 2-3 minutes then add wine and cook until wine is reduced. Add tomatoes and bring to a simmer.
5. Spray ½ hotel pan with cooking spray.
6. Pour 1 cup of sauce mixture on the bottom of the pan.
7. Add peas and bacon to the sauce.
8. Layer with lasagna sheet, then top with 1 cup of sauce, ½ cup ricotta, and 2 tbsp. of parmigiano.
9. Repeat for 2 more layers.
10. On the top layer add remaining sauce, parmigiana, and mozzarella. Cover with foil.
11. Bake for 1 hour, then uncover and bake for 10 min. Let rest for 15 min. Drizzle with glaze and garnish with parsley.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla

Find your easy wins

As you monitor and measure your food safety, there may be issues that surface time and again. As you plan new initiatives to make improvements, it can help to start with the low-hanging fruit – the areas of your operation where your team is more likely to generate some early, easy wins. As Chris Boyles of Steritech said in a recent food safety webinar, getting a win on your first initiative can help you build the momentum and staff engagement you need to see other initiatives through. Other ways to build some momentum down the line: Try doing a small-scale pilot with a cross-section of your team prior to a larger launch. These people may become your best advocates, persuading skeptics to get on board.



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Keep asking why

The root cause of a repeat food safety problem may not be what you think. When something goes wrong, looking a few layers beneath the surface to understand it. For example, perhaps a drink dispenser isn't being cleaned as often or as effectively as it should be. Why is it not being cleaned properly? The scheduled team isn't doing it. Why not? Well, they are almost entirely new to the business – maybe their training hasn't sunken in. Or, maybe they have been distracted by other tasks. Maybe they are intimidated by the manager working at that time and didn't want to ask. Maybe the solution needed to clean it simply isn't at the right concentration. Asking why a problem is happening – and then applying that same question to your response until you land on a clear cause – can help you determine the best corrective action. The cause of the problem may be several steps removed from the manifestation of that problem.



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Does your energy use support – or hold back – your sustainability goals?

The pressure on restaurants to minimize waste and maximize resources goes well beyond food. Restaurants use substantial amounts of energy, particularly in months with extreme weather. If you're heating outdoor spaces this winter to accommodate more guests, your energy budget will be straining that much more. So, much like you would do with the SKUs you order and the menu items you prepare, measure and monitor your energy activity. Conduct regular energy audits with your utility company or an independent expert who can advise ways your business conserve energy and monitor usage. Schedule preventive maintenance – taking care of your relationship with your service provider can help ensure you're taken care of when you need help more urgently. For any equipment that is likely going to need replacement parts in the coming months, have backup parts on hand to minimize any downtime that would otherwise result. If, like many other businesses within the

hospitality sector and beyond it, you have set sustainability goals for your restaurant, your approach to energy conservation can support those goals. They can also be a compelling part of the story you share with guests who are monitoring their own energy usage more closely these days, as well as looking to support businesses that do the same.



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:

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