

Foodservice Updates

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Find hidden profits in your food waste in 2023

A single restaurant can produce approximately 25,000-75,000 pounds of food waste each year – or for perspective, nearly the maximum weight capacity of a semi truck. That waste eats into your profits – and while restaurants have been adopting more tools to minimize waste, as well as forging more partnerships to find uses for excess food, most restaurants still have room to improve their waste monitoring and management. That's particularly true as restaurants stretch to operate with smaller staffs at the moment. Tracking waste can easily slip in the midst of a busy Friday night dinner shift. But consider it one of the key steps you take to get a handle on your costs in 2023 – and even small steps can help you make progress. Tony Smith, cofounder and CEO of Restaurant365, advises restaurants use a food waste log to quickly record food waste when it happens – the who, what, how and why – and then analyzing it later. It can be a digital document or even just a spreadsheet hanging in the kitchen. The log can provide a starting point you can use to track patterns in waste that then dictate changes you need to make to operational tasks as varied as planning your menu, determining serving sizes (and if you need to adjust sizes or upcycle an item in an effort to upsell it) training your team, or adjusting food orders. From there, comparing your theoretical and actual food costs on a regular basis and focusing first on the areas where they are farthest apart can help you minimize your biggest pain points when it comes to food waste.



Explain what's in it for them

What goes for your food safety management program also applies to your technology: When your team understands why you're enforcing a process or using a particular tool, they are more invested in using it and making it work for them. Your staff may have good reasons to resist the technology you introduce – perhaps they think it's too complicated to learn, or maybe they feel it's there to put them out of a job. But in truth, restaurants that use technology to truly support their staff gain the most from their tech and team alike – by offloading repetitive tasks, making existing tasks easier/faster/more efficient, or allowing staff to focus on more customer-facing responsibilities. Make sure your staff sees how the new scheduling software will allow them to swap shifts quickly or get paid faster. Show them how the inventory management system helps them avoid having to return to a guest's table and apologize that an item isn't in stock. Or how the kitchen display system helps them impress an allergic guest by getting an order precisely right each time.



Don't neglect the softer side of tech

Chances are good that your restaurant has felt some urgency to adopt new technology in the front and back of house in the past two years. But the focus on having the right combination of technology can make it easy to ignore some foundational human elements that, if not in place, may prevent you from getting the experience and efficiency you're after. Specifically, is your team on board with the changes you're making? Do they know what problems your technology is there to help solve or simplify? Do they understand how your new tools and systems work – and if not, can you provide clear training to support them? If you're just beginning to review options, involve team members in the process of selecting new technology to help ensure they are invested in the result. Finally, to what degree can you rely on your tech vendor for training, repairs or basic support when something goes wrong? Making sure your employees can get guidance in using new tools and systems should be a key part of your investment.





Spice up your menu

According to research from Mintel, 75 percent of consumers enjoy spicy foods to some degree, with 29 percent happy to turn up the heat on the menu as high as possible. Is there room to add some spice to your menu options? The National Restaurant Association predicts that variations on sriracha will be among the top trends on menus in 2023 – and sriracha’s moderate spiciness can be a safe way to weave more heat into your menu. Consider using it in marinades for chicken or dressings on salad, in condiments like ketchup and mayo, or even on your cocktail menu to add some zing to your beverage options.

Food Trends

Sriracha Chicken Wrap

Ingredients:

10 ounces Dannon, Oikos, plain fat-free Greek Yogurt
2 ounces Sriracha Hot Sauce
1 tablespoon Garlic, dry, granulated
1 tablespoon Onion, dry, granulated
1 tablespoon Canola Oil
7 pounds Chicken, cooked, diced, cooled
4.25 pounds Cole Slaw mix
16 ounces Dannon, Oikos, plain, fat free Greek Yogurt
¼ cup Sugar, granulated
½ cup Sesame oil
¼ cup Soy sauce
¼ cup Rice vinegar
2 teaspoons Ginger, dry, ground
½ teaspoon Garlic, dry, ground
½ teaspoon Salt, kosher
50 each Whole Wheat Wraps, 10 inches or 2 oz grain equivalent.



Instructions:

To prepare the Dairy-free Ranch Dressing:

1. Mix yogurt, sriracha, garlic, onion, and canola oil in a large bowl/Cambro/hotel pan. Mix well.
2. Add cold cooked chicken to yogurt/sriracha mixture.
3. Mix well until chicken is coated in sauce.
*Hold cold, below 41 degrees, until ready for assembly and service.
4. Place coleslaw mix in a large Cambro or bowl.
5. In a medium-sized bowl, mix yogurt, sugar, sesame oil, soy sauce, rice vinegar, ginger, garlic, and salt.
6. Whisk until it forms a smooth sauce.
7. Add sesame yogurt sauce to coleslaw mix.
8. Mix well.
*Hold cold, below 41 degrees, until ready for assembly and service.
9. To assemble wrap: layout wraps in a large area to form an assembly line.
10. Top each wrap with 1/2 cup slaw and 2 ounces of chicken.
11. Roll to form a burrito and seal.
12. Make as close to service as possible, wrap can be held, cold, up to one hour.

*Hold cold, below 41 degrees, until ready for assembly and service.
SERVING NOTES: to make it a 1 cup serving of vegetable per wrap, double the slaw and following ingredients. Add 1 cup of slaw and 2 ounces of chicken to each wrap.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Danone

Helping food safety feedback sink in

Managers have to deliver negative feedback sometimes. Maybe there is a food safety task that is a repeat problem – or perhaps a team member has a hard time getting it right. Managers stand the best chance of having any negative feedback sink in and result in corrective action if they surround any negative feedback with a greater amount of positive recognition of what a person is doing well. Recognition is one of the seven food safety pillars that the food safety consultancy Steritech uses to evaluate a restaurant's food safety management. Ironically, it tends to be a weak area for many businesses, even though it often provides the motivation needed for change to occur. You can build trust across your team by weaving thanks and recognition into the fabric of the training and support you provide. Thank people for keeping your business safe and encourage (and reward) your team members who recognize and reinforce it with their peers too.



#FoodSafety

SAVE your food safety culture

Even if your business has a strong food safety record and culture, the rapid turnover of a workforce can chip away at it if you don't take action to protect it. A report from Food Safety Magazine encourages businesses to rise to the challenge in four steps using the acronym SAVE: Standardize your processes across your locations and production zones. Automate processes where possible in an effort to simplify your training and compliance procedures. Validate the effectiveness of hygiene protocols and compliance using tools that can keep you on track. Finally, educate people across your organization about the "why" of food safety – it helps people retain both the training material and your expectations of them when it comes to protecting the business.



Foodservice Updates

Tap into the efficiencies of catering

When the economy is struggling or feels uncertain, marketing budgets can take a hit as business owners tighten their belts. Still, it continues to be important to get the word out about your restaurant – even if you don't have the budget you'd like at the moment. It may help to look at your existing streams of income and focus on building up those that are inherently helpful in marketing your restaurant. Catering is one likely possibility. It can be a valuable tool for growing brand awareness – all while allowing a restaurant to maximize efficiencies when it comes to inventory and staffing. Rob McColgan, CEO of Modern Restaurant Concepts, said in a recent interview with Modern Restaurant Management that he sees catering as an essential marketing component that helps drive the overall success of his restaurant's brands. It can open doors for a restaurant trying to gain traction in new markets, as well as allow a business to access new pockets of guests at scale. Even though business catering may not be back to pre-pandemic levels, this simply means there are other potential opportunities restaurants can now tap into for group business. Consider the social gatherings happening in your community – book clubs, community service meetings and school-related gatherings, to name a few. These outlets can serve as free marketing opportunities that organically drive interest and help spread the word about your business.



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