

Foodservice Updates

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Know your plowhorses from your puzzles when it comes to staff

You may be familiar with the menu engineering model that guides restaurants to categorize menu items into one of four buckets: stars (top-selling, high-profit items), plowhorses (popular items that aren't necessarily high-profit), puzzles (items that sell and make a profit but aren't consistent) and dogs (lowest performing, lowest profit items). A webcast from US Foods encourages operators to think of labor in the same way, categorizing employees according to their productivity and alignment with your culture.

Like your menu items, your staff behave and respond in different ways – some demand (and deserve) your attention and resources, while others are best guided out of the business before they damage the morale of others. Specifically, an “A” employee is aligned with your culture and highly productive, a “B” employee is aligned with your culture and not as productive, a “C+” employee is not aligned with your culture and isn't as productive, and a “C-” employee is productive but creates a counterculture in your organization. There is power in knowing where each person sits at a given time. Your A players – your stars – are those you want to keep at all costs, so direct your resources toward them to help them develop and secure their loyalty to your business. B employees could be up-and-coming A's with some additional training from the A's. C+ players could be new employees – they may have the right attitude but they need help to become more productive and aligned with your culture. The C- players may well be good at what they do, but they are dangerous because their attitudes can work against the business. Are you taking stock of where your staff fits? Doing so helps you continuously recalibrate so you can maximize your sales and service while weeding out detractors.



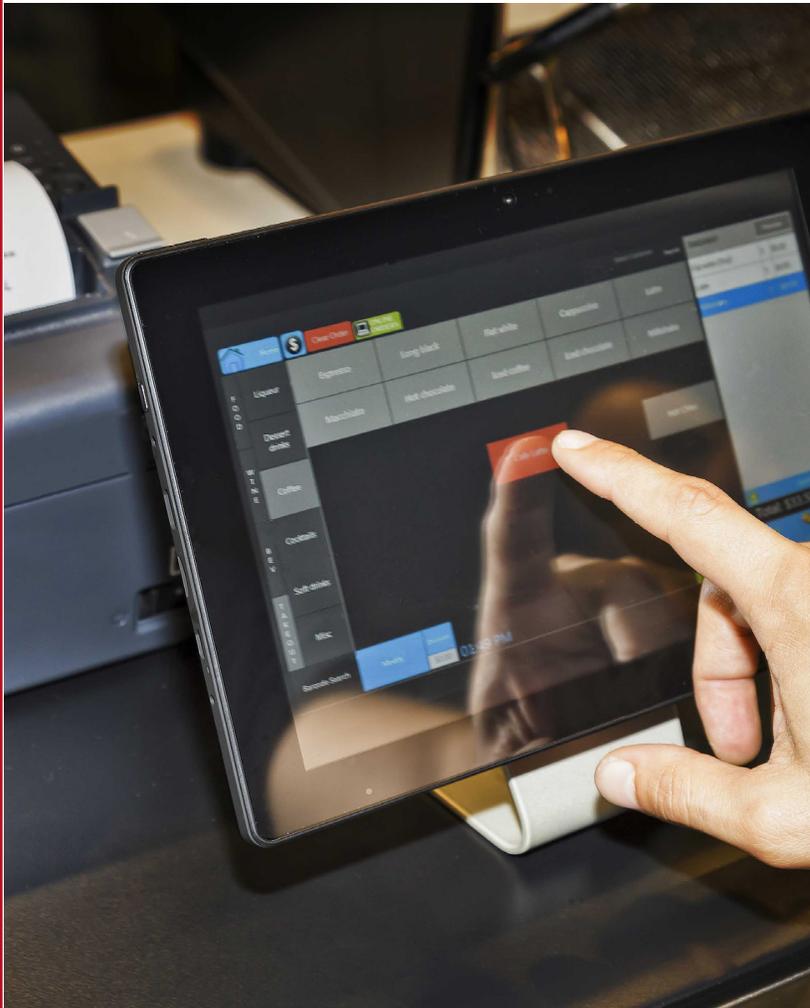
Use tech as a retention and sales-driving tool

In an industry that struggles to attract and retain staff, having to assign tasks that are not simply repetitive or dangerous, but which also simply keep people from the profit-making areas of their work, can make it difficult to keep your best employees. A talented general manager, for example, likely didn't join the business for their love of paying invoices or reordering supplies. Automating such tasks has benefits beyond boosting the efficiency of your business. After all, when your senior-level staff can move repetitive admin off their plates, they have time to focus on developing new marketing ideas, helping chefs bring new menus to fruition, greeting guests and correcting problems that stand in the way of positive online reviews.



Harness your data

Data management is one of the most important things you can do for your restaurant – to support the business right now and to protect its future. But losing ownership of valuable data, or not connecting the dots within it, can be a missed opportunity for many restaurants. Perhaps due to partnerships with certain third-party vendors, you are not able to market directly to your guests – or understand who they are. Or maybe your guests order your food from a wide range of sources and as a result, you may have a number of different pools of data floating around independently – not being informed by the others. How well does your POS help you harness every piece of guest data you can grasp, from every place your guests order from you, and then make informed decisions about how to reach the people who support your business?



Food Trends

Red Wine Roasted Pork Tenderloin

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs Boneless pork tenderloin
- 1 cup Ken's Metropolitan Select Red Wine Vinaigrette
- 1 oz Oil
- 2 cups Mashed potatoes
- 2 cups Roasted carrots



Instructions:

1. Place pork into a resealable plastic bag and pour Ken's Metropolitan Select Red Wine Vinaigrette (KE1052) over top. Squeeze out air and seal bag; marinate 2 hours to overnight.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Preheat grill to medium heat and lightly oil the grate.
3. Remove pork from dressing (reserving dressing) and place onto grill to mark.
4. Once marked, remove from grill and place pork into a baking dish along with marinade.
5. Bake in preheated oven, basting occasionally until the pork reaches an internal temperature of 145°F, about 1 hour.
6. Let the roast rest for 5 minutes before slicing and serving. Serve with mashed potatoes and roasted carrots.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Ken's

Mix up your marinades



Adding depth, variety and global flavor to your menu can be as easy as changing up the rubs and marinades you use to prepare poultry, beef, pork and seafood. Whether you use a labor-saving pre-made marinade, or tap into ingredients like honey, red wine, bourbon or even coffee that you already have on hand, you can offer exciting options with minimal waste. In its annual What's Hot forecast, the National Restaurant Association predicted that cuisine featuring the flavors of Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and South America would be on-trend. What ingredients in your pantry can you use in a rub or marinade to weave some global tastes into a wide range of dishes?

Nudge frontline workers to enhance your food safety culture

Frontline workers embody your restaurant's food safety culture – but what they represent to the public isn't always understood at the top of the business. A recent webinar from Food Safety Magazine indicated that senior leaders in an organization tend to rate their culture as 68 percent more mature than their frontline colleagues do. That's even though frontline managers make up 60 percent of the workforce and manage 80 percent of it. To bridge the disconnect, experts on the webinar advised gentle nudges to steer frontline food safety in the right direction. These nudges could include physical markings on floors and walls, group handwashing stations that make activities like handwashing more social, daily routines in which staff must answer a food safety question or provide input and the supervisor responds with positive feedback or an action item they are taking as a result, social normative messages that provide feedback about the team's overall knowledge about a particular area of food safety, or social recognition – like a time-off savings account that can be tapped by a team that wins a contest around food safety.



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How do you assess delivery safety risks?

Cold winter nights are just right for restaurant delivery. How confident are you in the food safety commitment of those bringing food to your guests? Whether they are third-party vendors or your own staff, their approach to transporting food can impact everything from the temperature at which an order is received, to whether the food of an allergic guest is safely kept separate from other items. Any new packaging you have introduced in recent months can call for additional adjustments in how orders are handled. What mechanisms do you have in place to assess your delivery safety risks so you can make adjustments as needed?



Foodservice Updates

Next-level personalization

In these uncertain economic times, there has been a lot of talk about how restaurants must build value into the experience they offer guests. This isn't simply about making guests feel they are getting a good deal, but about making the experience feel like it's well worth the cost – or that it easily justifies the decision to choose your restaurant over the one across the street, or over preparing a meal kit at home. Delivering that level of experience increasingly requires restaurant operators to anticipate their guests' needs before those guests even know what their needs are. Collecting and dissecting data to deliver ever-greater levels of customization and personalization can help. As a recent report from Modern Restaurant Management says, technology is enabling operators to capture details about guests at every point of their experience – so they can know that one guest is allergic to dairy, or that she likes eating at a certain table. This also means that a server is equipped with food and drink upsell suggestions based on a person's previous order. So a server may not necessarily offer the same special to every table anymore but instead can make a targeted seafood suggestion that complements the wine that guests at one table have ordered the past three times they have visited your restaurant – then promote plant-based specials to the vegetarians at the next table. This deeper level of personalization extends to a restaurant's communications with guests too, so you have a range of targeted promotions going out to subsets of your email or text distributions. This year, how can you make your in-person and electronic outreach to guests feel more personal and less one-size-fits-all?



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