

Foodservice Updates

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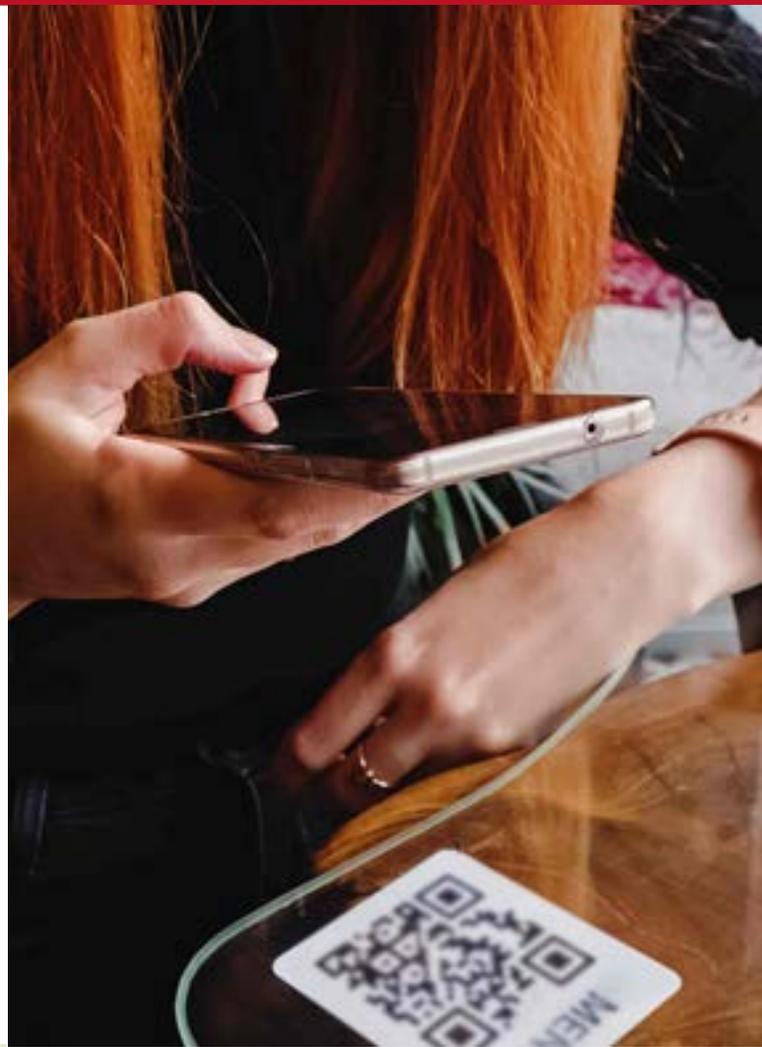
Restaurant investment via crowdfunding on the rise

For restaurants, the past two years have taken creative problem solving to a new level. That has extended to how new and existing restaurant projects are being funded. Higher numbers of restaurants have been inviting loyal guests to help fortify their business for the long haul by becoming investors – the number of restaurant crowdfunding projects on Kickstarter alone grew from 3,400 in mid-2019 to nearly 4,000 in January of this year. The timing makes sense, considering the vast number of restaurants that have been looking for business loans and the smaller pool of large investors available to support them. Further, a restaurant’s loyal guests know first-hand how the business makes a positive impact on their community. If you’re interested in learning more about the possibility of asking guests to support your business in this way, there are a range of contribution models that have come about to help, including Honeycomb, which allows a donor to potentially earn a return on their investment, unlike the lower-stakes, Kickstarter-type models in which someone makes a donation and gets a free meal or merchandise in return. Of course, this also means that operators have more local eyes on them as they run the business day to day – though small restaurant investors may also view their investment as less of a wealth-building scheme than a means of paying it forward.



Can technology help you cover more ground?

If you're struggling with labor right now, are there front-of-house tasks that can be offloaded to technology? Consider each step of the guest journey. In your dining room, can you encourage guests to use a QR code to view your menu, place a customized order and, later in the meal, order refills or dessert? Off-premise, can a customer just as easily navigate your site or app with a minimum of scrolling? Do you make it possible for them to make substitutions or additions? Implementing technology to make ordering and payment more seamless, as well as to automatically route orders to your kitchen, can greatly ease the burden on any front-of-house staff (and help you turn tables/orders more quickly too).



Make your digital rewards different

If you have a loyal base of customers, they are likely expecting you to have a digital rewards program that makes their patronage all the more worthwhile. But as these programs have become so widespread, it's also become more difficult for operators to make them stand out. Research from Pymnts.com predicts that this year, restaurant brands will find more sophisticated methods of driving personalized messages and offers to guests in ways that don't sacrifice profitability. That could mean offering menu items that are exclusive to loyalty program members, or simply gamifying your program with contests and virtual rewards. Late last year, Chipotle, for one, started offering achievement badges in its rewards program. They have no monetary value but have still resulted in a spike to loyalty program membership, according to a company spokesperson.



Whole grain spaghetti with mozzarella stuffed meatballs

Ingredients:

- 20 Oz. Barilla® whole grain spaghetti
- 20 Oz. Ground beef (80/20)
- 8 Oz. Italian sausage, off the casing
- 5 Tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ Cup onion, chopped
- 3 Garlic cloves, chopped
- 32 Oz. San Marzano tomatoes, crushed
- 4 Slices white bread, no crust, diced
- 1 Cup parmigiano cheese, grated, divided
- 14 Oz. Bocconcini mozzarella
- 1 Tbsp. Parsley, chopped
- ¼ Cup basil, sliced
- Salt & black pepper to taste

Great grains

Eating more whole grains is an important step to improving health – they deliver fiber, vitamins, minerals and protein to our diets, all while offering an antioxidant boost. Since whole grains also make a dish more satisfying, they are an easy choice for consumers – they don't feel like a sacrifice. If your guests are looking for ways to improve their health, help them customize an entrée with whole grains such as quinoa, brown rice or pasta made from whole grains.

Food Trends



Instructions:

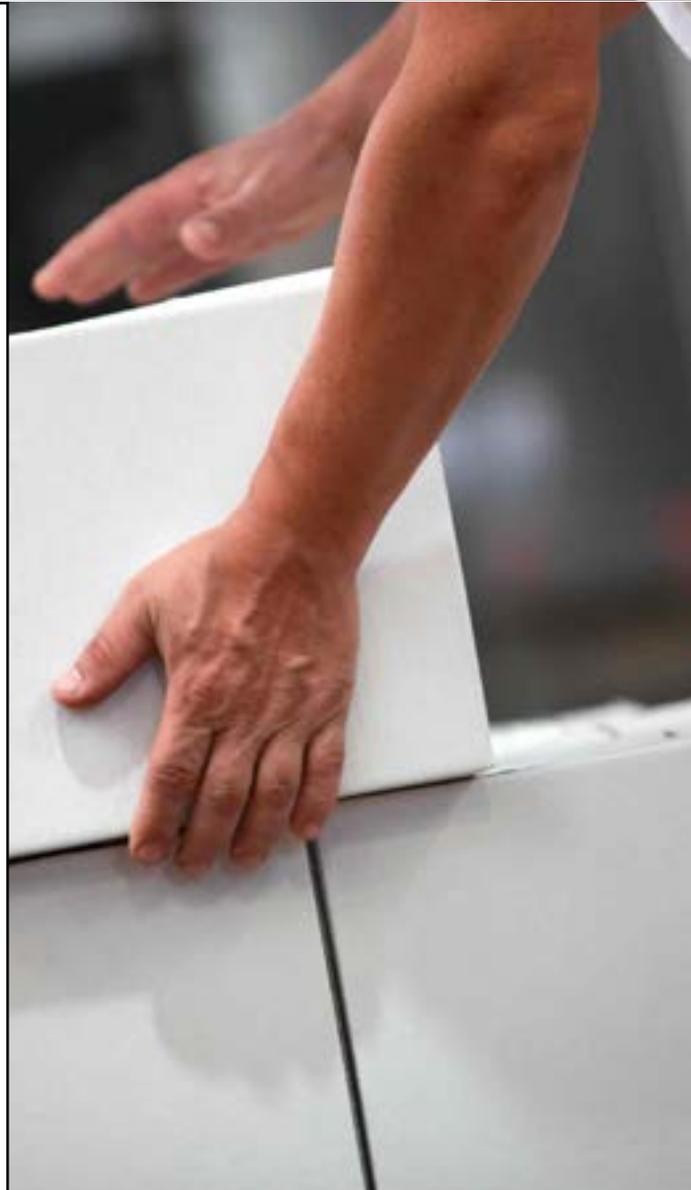
1. In a sauce pot, gently fry the onion with olive oil for five minutes. Add 1 clove of chopped garlic, keep sautéing and one minute later add crushed tomatoes.
2. Add one cup of water, a pinch of salt and pepper and bring to simmer.
3. While the sauce is simmering, soak bread in water.
4. In a bowl, combine meat, 1/2 cup of parmigiano cheese, parsley, 1 clove chopped garlic, and soaked bread [squeeze out excess water].
5. Mix and when all comes together shape 1-inch size meatballs around mozzarella balls. [Very important to not over-mix]
6. Add meatballs to tomato sauce, simmer until thoroughly cooked, about 15 minutes.
7. Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions.
8. Drain pasta and toss with meatball sauce.
9. Finish with sliced basil, remaining parmigiano cheese and a drizzle of olive oil before serving.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla



Avoid overexertion injuries

Labor shortages are difficult enough to manage right now – you don't want to risk having a valued team member need time off to recuperate from an injury on the job. Overexertion injuries are among the most common injuries restaurant staff have but you can minimize their severity by ensuring heavy items are stored and moved properly. Store heavy or frequently used items at a level between hip and chest height – and try to eliminate any repetitive bending and lifting from the floor. Use carts to move heavy items, but when items must be carried, lift with the knees and position items in front of the body if possible so no twisting is required. If your staff needs to pass plates through windows, ensure the openings don't require awkward postures that can cause injury.



#FoodSafety

Beware of plant-based pathogens

Your staff may be familiar with the key foods that tend to pose the greatest risk of foodborne illness, but if your menu is changing to accommodate more plant-based ingredients, your team may need to brush up on the pathogen risks of plant-based foods. This is especially true if the foods aren't cooked prior to service and therefore provide a more fertile breeding ground for bacteria. Items like tofu; rice; cooked pasta, chickpeas, beans and lentils; herbs and spices; nuts and fresh produce all carry foodborne illness risk. Make sure your staff knows how to prepare and store these items, as well as what signs indicate that something needs to be discarded.



Foodservice Updates

Pushing plants on your menu? Watch your language.

Chances are you're offering more plant-based options on your menu nowadays – whether due to supply challenges, escalating food costs, evolving guest preferences or some combination of the above. At a time when uncertainties abound, it's helpful to be able to successfully steer guests toward the items you prefer to sell – and some new research has shown how simple changes to menu language can lead guests to choose plant-based dishes more frequently. World Resources Institute researched the reaction of 6,000 people in the U.S. to 10 menu descriptions. A number of them generated some dramatic results. For example, when guests read the text, “Each of us can make a positive difference for the planet. Swapping just one meat dish for a plant-based one saves greenhouse gas emissions that are equivalent to the energy used to charge your phone for two years. Your small change can make a big difference,” they chose a vegetarian dish 25 percent of the time. That's more than double the rate of guests who were shown no message at all. Another phrase, “Ninety percent of Americans are making the change to eat less meat. Join this growing movement and choose plant-based dishes that have less impact on the climate and are kinder to the planet,” resulted in 22 percent of guests opting for a plant-based dish, again far higher than those shown no messaging. Related messages about the taste of the food and the need to protect the planet for future generations also led to more guests selecting vegetarian meals. How do you explain plant-based options on your menu? If you currently stick to plain labels – vegetarian lasagna, veggie burger, etc. – you may not be driving as much traffic to those items as you potentially could.



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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