

Foodservice Updates

In This Issue

- Double down on loyalty | Flex with plant-forward pasta | Don't keep food safety behind the scenes | Taking care of the team | It's time to turn on Google ordering | Build a stronger real-time data foundation

Restaurants, reinvented

The combined challenges of the pandemic, inflation, supply chain problems and labor shortages have made it clear: To survive and thrive in the years ahead, restaurants will need new ways of operating. The good news, according to the National Restaurant Association's 2022 State of the Restaurant Industry report, is that two key customer demographics are particularly welcoming of the changes. Specifically, adults born between 1980 and 2003 (Millennials and the older edge of Gen Z), as well as a fair share of Boomers, are embracing the efficiencies that technology is bringing to the ordering, purchasing and collection process, while also demonstrating an open-mindedness about the role restaurants can fulfill in their lives. For example, these consumers see restaurants as meal partners. Even if they're planning to eat at home, they may still look to restaurants to provide a part of that meal or a kit that makes it easier to prepare their full meal. These customers place high value on takeout – and 94 percent of millennials said they would order a wider array of to-go foods if they were packaged to preserve them better (70 percent are even willing to pay more for upgraded packaging). Millennials and Gen Z, in particular, like alcohol with their order too, giving operators some room for creativity with promotions for higher-margin drinks that customers don't want to prepare at home. They're open to buying subscriptions for restaurant meals or opening house accounts that offer a discount for prepayment. Importantly, they also like the efficiency of tech-enabled ordering and payment – and that extends to ordering through virtual assistants. All told, the definition of a "great" restaurant experience is changing – and those changes bring greater efficiencies and possibilities for restaurants, amid the challenges.



It's time to turn on Google ordering

Have you enabled Google ordering, essentially making it possible for people to find your restaurant and place an order without leaving Google to do so? In recent weeks and months, a couple of industry insiders have said they consider it a no-brainer for driving revenue, and for good reason: restaurants have a massive potential audience in people who search Google for dining suggestions, commission fees are lower from Google ordering than those charged by third-party providers, and Google isn't trying to get into the restaurant business (and, importantly, control the data of restaurant customers). While you make it possible for guests to order directly from Google, also make sure your Google-able information is up to date – and encourage happy guests to leave you a review to boost your presence on the search engine.



Build a stronger real-time data foundation

Artificial intelligence is set to transform the front and back of the house – both out of efficiency and, due to the labor crunch, necessity. It can help operators manage inventory, monitor waste, identify staffing inefficiencies, adjust production pacing and direct more targeted menu suggestions to guests. But as futuristic as it sounds, it's only an extension of (and as good as) the data your business has collected about these parts of the operation. Even if your restaurant has no plans to adopt AI tools, it's important to be able to collect real-time data to build a stronger base for the decisions your business makes day to day. In practice, that could mean tracking sales of each menu item in real time so you're aware of which customers are ordering them when, if they're returning for them repeatedly, and if they might pay more for a premium special or cocktail designed with that item in mind if they receive a targeted offer from you beforehand





Mushroom mezze rigatoni with Cajun chicken

Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ Box Barilla® mezze rigatoni
- 1 Lb. Boneless skinless chicken thigh, small dice
- 5 Tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 Garlic cloves, minced
- 3 Cups shitake mushrooms, sliced
- 3 Cups cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 ½ Cups portabella mushrooms, diced
- 1 ½ Tsp. Fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 ½ Tsp. Fresh oregano, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning
- 3 Tbsp. Unsalted butter
- 2 Cups heavy cream
- 1 ½ Cups chicken stock
- 1 Cup parmigiano cheese, grated
- ¾ Cup balsamic glaze
- ¼ Cup micro basil
- Salt & black pepper to taste

Flex with plant-forward pasta

You're likely serving more flexitarians these days – or people who simply want to increase their intake of vegetables in interesting, satisfying ways. Plant-forward pasta dishes are a great alternative for these guests because they can pack a dish full of nutrients without feeling restrictive. They're also easy to adapt and customize with whatever vegetables happen to be available and in season (or with chicken, seafood or sausage for those who want a little meat).

Food Trends



Instructions:

1. In a large bowl add chicken, 1 tbsp. Of olive oil, garlic, Cajun seasoning, salt and pepper. Allow chicken to marinate, refrigerated 30 minutes to overnight.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat add 1 tbsp. Of oil. Cook chicken approximately 4 minutes or until chicken starts to brown.
3. Add the rest of olive oil and butter. When the butter is melted add the mushrooms, cooking them for 1-2 minutes before adding the thyme and oregano. Cook for an additional 2-3 minutes until mushrooms begin to brown.
4. Add heavy cream and chicken stock. Mix together and cook for an additional minute.
5. Meanwhile, place a pot of water to boil and cook pasta one minute less than the package directions. Drain and mix with mushroom sauce.
6. Remove from heat, add cheese and salt and pepper to taste.
7. Top rigatoni with a drizzle of balsamic glaze and pinch of micro basil.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla



Safe Dining **GUIDELINES**

- Hand sanitizer and sanitary wipes are available inside the front entrance
 - Limit your party to 6 people
 - Wear a mask when not eating or drinking at your table and wear a mask whenever a staff member arrives to the table
 - Put your mask on whenever you leave the table
 - Please follow proper social distancing. Do not approach other tables.
 - Please wash your hands!
- Thank you for helping us stay safe!

Don't keep food safety behind the scenes

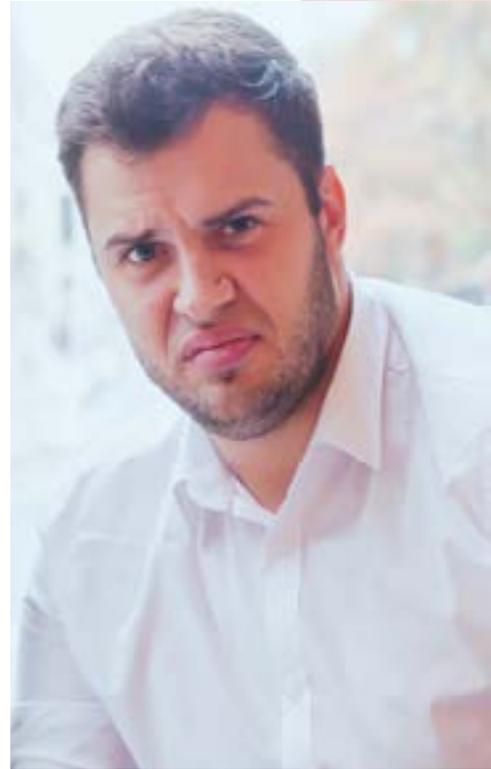
The pandemic has heightened consumer consciousness of the origins of restaurant food, as well as the safety practices used to protect it. If you're among the growing number of operators running a ghost kitchen or similar space that keeps your back-of-house operations behind the scenes, it's all the more important to find ways to be transparent about your food sourcing and safety practices. Your website and social media channels are the virtual windows overlooking your kitchen. Update them with lists of local suppliers, allergy information, health inspection grades, news about digital tools you adopt to monitor food safety, and photos of your safety practices in action.



#FoodSafety

Taking care of the team

At a time when poor guest behavior related to Covid restrictions often makes news, restaurant operators have been placed in the challenging position of trying to take care of staff and provide guests with good service (even if their behavior isn't the best). A new study reinforces that when operators visibly take care of staff safety, it can have a strong positive spillover effect to guests and build trust with them: Research from Qualtrics found that 30 percent of consumers have moved their purchases in the past 18 months to less-familiar brands because of the stricter safety protocols they use. Further, 22 percent of consumers have avoided businesses that gave guests doubts about their commitment to keeping their people safe.



Foodservice Updates

Double down on loyalty

Whether you're participating in a Restaurant Week or developing other events designed to draw traffic during normally slower periods this season, now is a good time to fine-tune your loyalty program. It can help you capture the higher volume of guest data coming to you and turn an occasional guest into a regular one. What's more, it may help you ride out otherwise challenging market conditions. Paytronix research found that loyalty program members were responsible for a larger proportion of total sales after the onset of the pandemic, and that the top 10 percent of loyalty guests were responsible for more than half of all spending for eight months in 2020. Further, according to Waze, 40 percent of consumers feel their participation in a restaurant loyalty program would encourage them to spend more on their food orders. But at a time when consumers are receptive to loyalty programs, it can also be difficult for restaurants to make their program stand out. To do so, focus on deeper personalization. That could mean using Bluetooth technology to automatically identify a loyalty program member and pull up their most recent orders, introducing a gaming promotion to drive traffic during certain periods, or simply rewarding customers with more of what you know they love. Dunkin Donuts, for one, sends "Year in Review" emails to its DDPerks members based on their yearly purchases and activity. It's simple and it brings people back.



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:

1-888-891-3103 or visit our web site at www.teamfourfoods.com and www.valuefour.com