

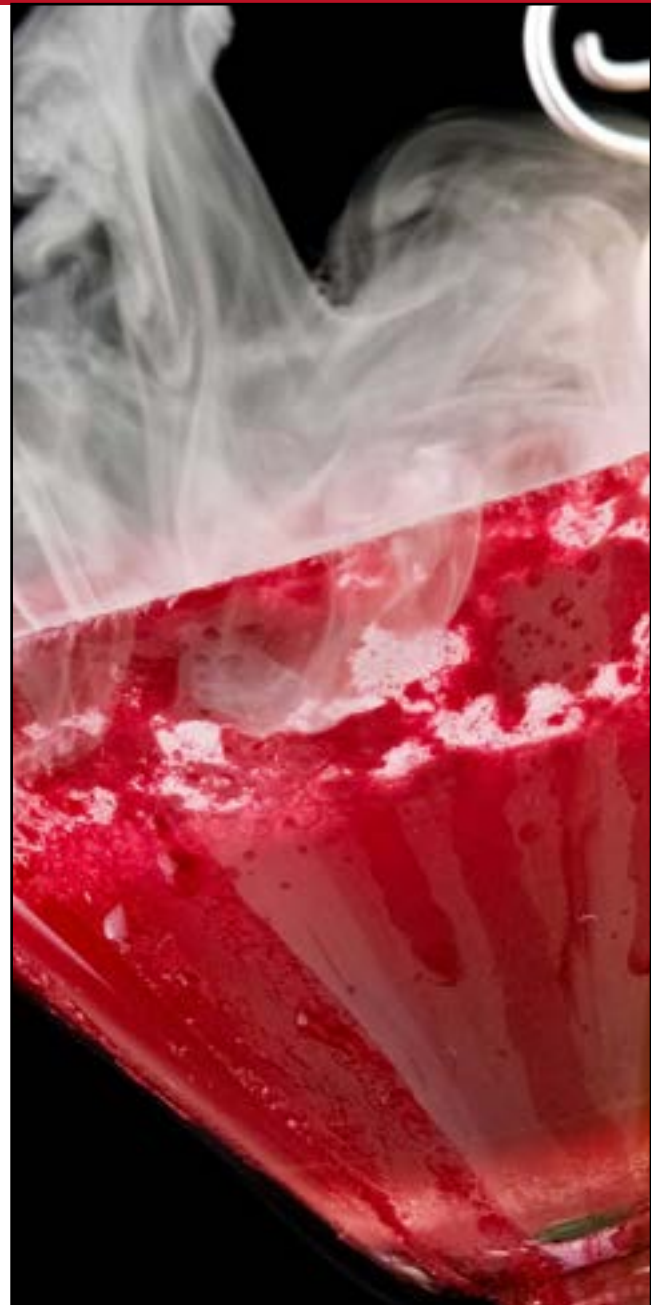
Foodservice Updates

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Be a destination for alcohol-free beverages

Chances are you're serving more guests who are abstaining from alcohol these days. Whether for reasons related to wellness or simply a decrease in social pressures to consume alcohol, more consumers are opting for non-alcoholic drinks. In fact, research from Statista found that global revenue in the non-alcoholic beverages market has been climbing for the past seven years and is forecast to reach a new peak in 2027. Yet despite that upward trend, many menus still play it safe with non-alcoholic beverages – staying in the neighborhood of sodas, flavored coffees and teas, or a few simple stand-ins for alcohol. But there is a thirsty market for concoctions that aren't simply alcohol substitutes but are worth the visit in their own right. As a recent Eater report says, the latest incarnations of non-alcoholic drinks break the boundaries of traditional cocktail culture. Case in point: The Sun Ship, a signature drink of Ghost Note Coffee in Washington, D.C., is "technically a coffee beverage, but you would be forgiven for forgetting that there's espresso in it — there's also coconut water, lime, and smoked grapefruit rosemary syrup. It's refreshing with strong citrus notes, but the rosemary adds a deep herbal aroma to it." These drinks call for a chef's sensibilities around flavor complexity – and as a result, they can help justify prices more akin to those typically charged for conventional cocktails. What can you do to make your non-alcoholic beverage menu worth a special trip – or at least a second glance?





Tech Talk

Struggling with employee theft? Tech tools can help.

Employee theft is a common problem in small- medium-size businesses. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 75 percent of employees have stolen from their employer at least once. It can be of particular concern in restaurants: One report estimates that quick-service restaurants, in particular, lose up to 7 percent of their sales to employee theft. There are plenty of ways for restaurant employees to steal from their employers – even if you are processing far fewer cash transactions than you used to. While the tech-based tools and systems you have adopted in recent years may not have been introduced for the purpose of identifying employee theft, they often provide that benefit by helping you get to the root of the problem more quickly and preventing theft from continuing. For example, a recent report from QSRweb.com says your tech-based systems for managing inventory and invoices can alert you to the theft of food and other supplies. Your POS may also help you detect voids, cancellations or other manipulations of your sales. At a time when loyalty programs are so widespread, your loyalty program can help you identify users who are generating more frequent discounts and reward points than would be legitimate. Informed use of security cameras can also discourage theft of cash and supplies. Of course, having a culture that is sensitive to the causes of employee theft can go far in preventing it, as can making staff aware of your policies in handling it if and when it happens.



Want to improve your food safety? Start by talking about everything else.

It may sound counterintuitive: You want to train your staff to improve in a particular aspect of food safety, so why not drill down on that problem so you can address it? According to a recent podcast interview with Tia Glave and Jill Stuber, cofounders of the consulting firm Catalyst, you get a lot farther by building interpersonal connections first. In their work with food safety leaders, Glave and Stuber recommend focusing on three P's – who their employees are personally, who they are professionally, and what their priorities are. When your staff feels like you are invested in those dimensions of their lives, they tend to be far more open about information they are collecting on the job – details that can help you identify food safety issues and understand personality traits that may be posing problems on the team. From there, you have a better chance of identifying how best to present lessons to the team, helping them understand why they are important, and motivating them to improve.



#FoodSafety

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Build your brand's crossover appeal

In the social media age, businesses have opportunities to build their brand personality in multiple directions. When restaurants and other foodservice businesses can do this, their brands can become much more than the food and drink they serve. Further, they can increase their market share and public exposure at a time when competition is tighter than ever. Consider how large brands have managed this successfully (and surprisingly) in recent months – there may be lessons there for businesses of all sizes. For example, a Nation's Restaurant News report mentioned efforts by brands including Taco Bell, Chick-fil-A and, notably, Starbucks, to launch consumer packaged goods. Starbucks, for one, collaborated with Stanley on a “winter pink” 40-ounce insulated tumbler to help promote the brand's winter menu. The tumblers, priced at \$49.95 and sold at Target in numbers limited to just a few dozen per store, motivated consumers to line up at Target stores in the early-morning hours of January 3rd. (Those who weren't lucky enough to snag a tumbler from Target have since taken to eBay, where the cups are reselling for \$350.) The mania over a tumbler may sound ludicrous, but consider it an inspiration for how you might expand the reach of your brand with the right partnerships and online promotion – particularly if you're trying to strengthen your connection to the TikTok generation. Even if you're running a small regional business, what complementary businesses might help you build your brand through new collaborations and promotions?



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