

Foodservice Updates

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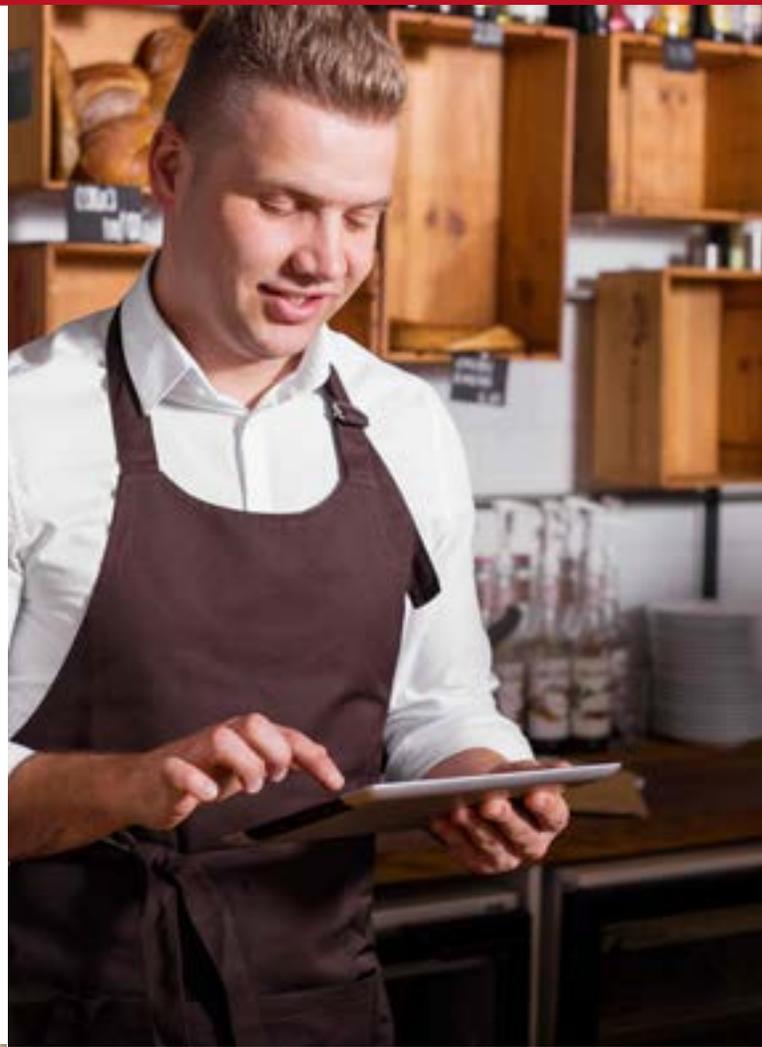
Build your omnichannel experience – on TikTok and beyond

Your guests – and sudden boosts in sales – can come from unexpected places. That’s especially true at a time when a restaurant can be observed from afar in a range of online channels, unbeknownst to an operator. Take the recent example of the struggling Las Vegas restaurant Frankensons suddenly becoming a viral sensation after it emailed out a plea for visitors. It caught the attention of a social media influencer who visited the restaurant, loved the food and posted a glowing TikTok review. Now, the owner of Frankensons has a better problem – trying to meet the steep rise in demand for his food. An MGH survey published in late 2022 found that 53 percent of millennial TikTok users had visited a restaurant after seeing it on the social media platform. Research from TouchBistro about the state of the restaurant industry this year indicated that while Facebook is the most popular platform for social media promotion for restaurants (62 percent of operators report using it for marketing) and Twitter isn’t far behind at 59 percent, only 40 percent of restaurant operators report using TikTok for promotion. When you consider your marketing efforts for the year, think about the stories you can tell, what makes your brand special, and how you can translate it using videos, photos and words through a mix of channels – including but not limited to social media. Your most loyal new guests might find you where you least expect it.



Harness your tech to predict what's ahead

Restaurant technology is not only about helping an operator respond with speed and precision to what's happening in the moment; it's also about predicting and preparing for what is likely to happen in the near future. In a recent report from FSR Magazine, the CEO of the restaurant Bartaco said that technology such as predictive prep lists, dynamic pricing and smart kitchen display systems will be critical to helping operators preserve margins without passing excessive costs on to guests this year. All of these solutions are about anticipating demand and preparing for it. How well does your current tech setup allow you to anticipate what's coming – and rapidly change course as needed?



Track your tech spending and ROI

As restaurants progressively become more like tech companies that happen to serve food, a restaurant's technology spending and tech-driven earnings will take on ever-greater importance. According to a recent report from Nation's Restaurant News, the average "digitally sophisticated" restaurant chain spends approximately 2-4 percent of their sales on technology. This calculation can be difficult to come to for a restaurant with dozens of pieces of software and peripheral equipment, but consider it something to work toward – particularly as you look to invest in new tech. Knowing your return on investment for your existing tech stack can help you ask critical questions when the next tech-driven solution comes around.



Food Trends

Protein+™ Penne with Shrimp in a Tomato Basil Cream Sauce

Ingredients:

- 20 oz. Barilla® Protein+™ penne
- 1 lb. Shrimp (p/d), sliced in ½ lengthwise
- 3 Tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 Garlic cloves, minced
- 28 oz. CAN San Marzano tomatoes, crushed
- 1 Tbsp. Oregano, crushed
- 1 cup Heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp. Butter
- ¼ cup Fresh basil, sliced thin
- Salt & black pepper to taste



Instructions:

1. In a skillet over med/high heat add ½ of the olive oil and shrimp. Season with salt, pepper, and cook for 2-3 min.
2. Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions
3. Remove shrimp from the skillet and add remaining oil, onion, oregano and garlic. Cook until onion is translucent, about 2-3 min.
4. Add the tomato sauce and bring to a simmer. Add cream, butter, and return shrimp to the sauce.
5. Drain pasta and add to the sauce. Add ½ of the basil, and mix well.
6. Garnish with remaining basil.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla

Pasta that works a little harder



Pasta can feel like the ultimate winter comfort food – but it doesn't have to be purely about indulgence. That's never been more true now that there are so many pasta varieties that closely mimic the flavor and texture of traditional pasta while packing in extra nutrition. In addition to whole wheat pasta, consider protein-fortified options made from lentils and chickpeas, or fiber-rich soba noodles, to boost the health of your pasta dishes and provide some extra satisfaction to vegetarian guests.

Managing allergens and allergic guests

In 2023, the FDA began recognizing sesame as an official allergen, triggering a response in some restaurants that has surprised some consumers. As a recent report from Fast Company indicates, sesame seeds are so prone to cross-contamination due to their small size that it's challenging for restaurants and food producers alike to guarantee their absence from foods. So instead, sesame is being added to recipes where, in many cases, it wasn't present before, in order to provide greater clarity to consumers about the presence of the allergen. This leaves allergic guests – who can be especially loyal to restaurants that support them – with fewer options and at potentially greater risk for consuming a cross-contaminated food. If you're looking for ways to abide by the new rules while offering options to allergic guests, the group Food Allergy Research & Education may be of help.



#FoodSafety

#FoodSafety

Protect your staff from common safety hazards

In the past few years, food safety has taken on elevated importance in restaurant kitchens. But efforts to comply with new regulations and guest expectations may make it easier to overlook other kitchen hazards that can have a significant impact on the health of a business. Specifically, some of the top risks to restaurant staff are slips, trips and falls due to slippery walking surfaces or obstructions, or cuts and burns from kitchen equipment. At a time when restaurant labor is precious and no operator can afford to lose a good employee to injury, make sure your staff receives the training and ongoing reminders they need to minimize these risks.



Foodservice Updates

Could tab management help you?

We've all had this experience in a restaurant at some point: The food has been eaten, beverages consumed, and all that stands between you and the next item on your agenda is your bill – if only you could get the attention of your server. This experience was the topic of a recent article in the Washington Post in which a diner praised the food and service of a certain restaurant she had visited, then walked out without paying when she was unsuccessful in hunting down her server or her bill in the empty dining room at the end of the evening. She emailed the restaurant later and settled up – but it's a shame that the experience at the tail end of this person's meal (and not the quality food and service leading up to it) was what this guest remembered. If making these final guest impressions positive is a challenge in your restaurant, tab management technology may help – and in the process, allow you to alleviate labor challenges and increase bill totals. It can help you take advantage of impulse orders – and extra round of drinks mid-meal, or a dessert, for example – that might be reconsidered if a guest is unable to flag down a server in the moment. It allows a guest to settle up whenever they choose – and not let any delay in receiving their bill tempt them to tip less than they otherwise would.



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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