

Foodservice Updates

In This Issue

- Could your best customers be across the country? | Practical
- produce | Real-time food safety training | A changing approach to
- mental health | Put your marketing on autopilot | Can you call
- tech support?

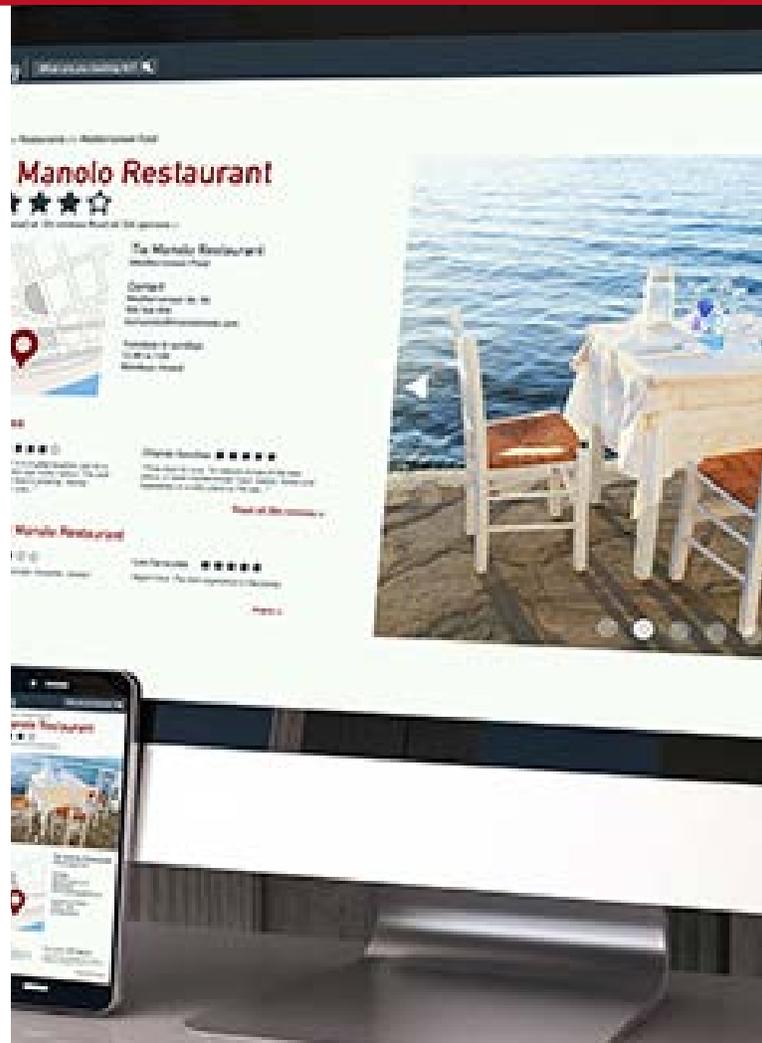
Finding the line between a deal and a splurge

The value menu looks a lot different nowadays at a wide range of quick-service and fast-casual brands. McDonald's, Denny's, Burger King and Domino's are among the companies that are skinning down their most economical meals. The changes have included decreasing the number of chicken nuggets from 10 to eight, removing price caps on value-menu items and raising the prices of individual items across the menu, according to a recent Wall Street Journal report. Consumers are noticing the changes and facing a decision: Is this restaurant meal worth a few extra dollars (or a little less food) if I can find something less expensive at the grocery store? For some restaurants, this may mean recasting menu items as something special vs. a means of saving money. Understanding your menu cost has become more important than ever in the midst of inflation and supply shortages. Last year, restaurant prices increased 6 percent, the highest jump in nearly 40 years. But just as important as pricing could be how you're presenting your menu items and promotions to your guests. Mine your data to better understand the dishes your guests love and when they are ordering them. What drives them to order from you? Is it convenience? An end-of-the-work-week treat? Tapping into what motivates them can help you frame your menu in a way that makes the decision to place an order an easier one for them – even if the bill is a little higher right now.



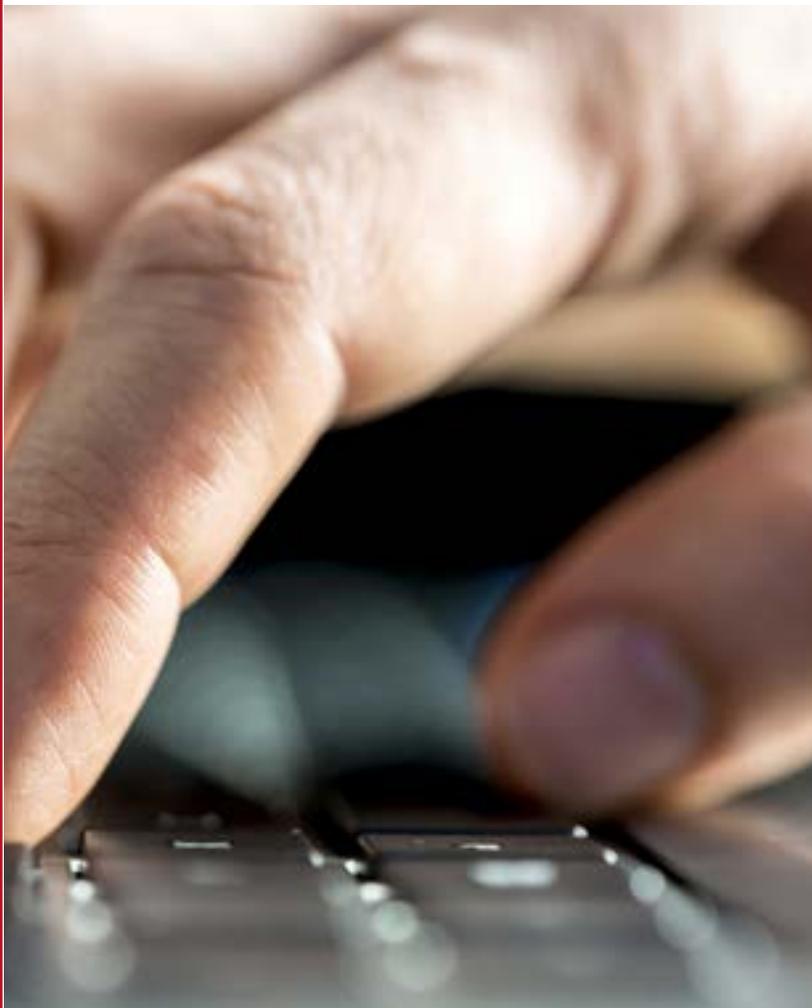
Put your marketing on autopilot

Customizing guest promotions – and ensuring your outreach is frequent enough to help you track (and even help form) their habits – provides important leverage when so many other facets of running a restaurant can feel difficult to control. If you can automate your outreach, that's all the better for ensuring consistency and minimizing the amount of labor needed to manage it. Customer engagement platforms now bring together email, retention marketing, and SMS and push notification capabilities under one umbrella. Next-generation loyalty marketing is taking automation a step further: Nation's Restaurant News reported that tech innovations are making it possible for operators to conduct A/B tests of messaging, offers and distribution channels – then automate the winning variant. It removes the guesswork (and a lot of the manual work) from the process, making it possible for restaurants to quickly pivot to marketing approaches and offers that have the best chance of success.



Can you call tech support?

In the past couple of years, one might say that a good percentage of restaurants have become tech companies that just happen to serve food. As more businesses adopt QR codes, contactless payment, automated food preparation and other tech-centric capabilities, the growing potential for technology glitches can make it difficult to do business. If and when you have an outage or other tech-related problem, what kind of help is available to help you get back on track? There are a number of start-up companies focusing on just this right now (Chicago-based Science on Call, which provides 24-7 tech support, is one of them). As your tech stack evolves, having reliable off-site support you can contact day or night with questions or problems will become all the more important.





Whole grain rotini with Plantains and sausage

Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ Box Barilla® whole grain rotini
- 10 Oz. Chorizo
- 10 Oz. Italian sausage
- 2 Tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Cup Yellow onion, small dice
- 2 Garlic cloves, minced
- ½ Cup Green olives with pimento, sliced thin
- 2 Ripe Plantains, small dice
- 1 Tsp. Cumin powder
- 1 Packet Sazon
- ½ Cup Parmigiano cheese, grated
- ½ Cup Dry white wine
- ¼ Cup Cilantro, chopped
- Salt & black pepper to taste

Practical produce

Amid food shortages, every chef welcomes an ingredient that is readily available and less susceptible to market fluctuations. It's a good time to fill your toolbox with some flexible, practical ingredients that can stretch your inventory. One example: plantains. They tend to be plentiful and affordable, and they add interest to dishes ranging from appetizers to entrées to desserts. But their best quality may be that they can be cooked at any stage of ripeness – so you can adapt them to changes in your menu, to shifting patterns in customer traffic and even to earlier- or later-than-expected shipments to your facility. Can you identify more powerhouse ingredients with similar qualities that might help you spread your inventory farther right now?

Food Trends



Instructions:

1. In a skillet over medium heat add olive oil, onion and garlic. Cook for 1-2 minutes.
2. Then add chorizo and sausage. Brown and break apart.
3. Add plantains; cooking an additional 1-2 minutes.
4. Add white wine and reduce by half.
5. Add olives, cumin, sazón, salt and black pepper. Mix well.
6. Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions, reserving 1 cup of the pasta cooking water.
7. Add 1 cup of pasta cooking water to the sausage mixture.
8. Drain pasta and add to the sausage mixture.
9. Remove from the fire and add ½ of the cilantro and ½ of the cheese and mix well.
10. Garnish with the remaining cheese and cilantro.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla



Real-time food safety training

Covid-19 has made consistent food safety training both more critical and more difficult as operators have tried to adjust to evolving regulations and procedures, as well as increased employee turnover. If your training practices have suffered due to Covid-19, you're far from alone: A recent study of quick-service operators by NSI International found that more than half of operators said they had had to cancel or delay training due to the challenges of the pandemic. The lack of on-demand training, as well as inconsistency in the quality of courses, has created the conditions for increased food safety risks, it found. If you're still relying heavily on manual training aids and in-person coaching to onboard staff, ask us how you can better automate these tasks this year – or deliver real-time training updates remotely in case of absence.



#FoodSafety

A changing approach to mental health

As labor challenges in the restaurant industry have persisted, mental health has taken the spotlight. How restaurants help employees manage the stresses of the work, which have surged during the pandemic, will play a role in their ability to retain and attract staff as we move out of it. While some restaurants are approaching this by offering more flexible schedules, family-friendly hours and insurance or well-being benefits, a Denver restaurant made news recently for hiring an in-house, full-time therapist to help employees with mental health challenges day to day. While it may sound like a measure unlikely to become commonplace in restaurants, most restaurants can expect employees (and potential employees) to scrutinize how they treat mental health concerns going forward – and whether newly improved policies are actually practiced within the business. How are you addressing mental health concerns in your business?



Foodservice Updates

Could your best customers be across the country?

What if your customers could be anywhere in the country – or even the world? It's an appealing thought at a time when operators are struggling to manage high inflation, supply chain fluctuations and general uncertainty in the market. But the creative solutions that have come out of the industry in the past two years have the potential to transform the industry into one of greater opportunity for all. In a recent segment on CNBC, Joe Ariel, the CEO of Goldbelly, discussed how the Omicron variant and inflation concerns have triggered a surge in food e-commerce. He expects more companies – his among them – to take an omnichannel approach to food sales going forward. Imagine if a family was craving a wide selection of regional specialties – Philly cheesesteak, New York cheesecake, Chicago pizza – and they could enjoy authentic versions of them at the same meal? Or perhaps your restaurant gets a lot of summer traffic and guests who have been coming to you for years want to be able to enjoy your food year-round. Are there stars on your menu – memorable entrées, secret sauces, special desserts – that you could serve to a worldwide audience with the right marketing and packaging? How can you take what you do best and get it out to your best customers?



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