

Foodservice Updates

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Find riches in the niches

Your restaurant can't be everything to everyone. However, if it zeroes in on its ideal guest and caters to the desires of that person, it can mean a whole lot to a particular kind of person (and inspire their loyalty and referrals in the process). Studies have found that businesses have a 60-70 percent chance of selling to an existing customer, as opposed to a 5-20 percent chance of selling to a new one. Doubling down on doing what you do best for a certain type of guest not only suits the slimmed-down, simplified menus that restaurants are needing to offer right now, but it also supercharges your ability to meet the needs of your most loyal guests and not get distracted by the demands of the rest. Take the example of the Soup Doula, a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based pop-up and soup delivery service. The business is run by Marisa Mendez Marthaller, who works during the day as a postpartum doula for new parents who may find it difficult to prepare nourishing meals for themselves. She sees running a soup business as an extension of the care she provides clients during the day. Not everyone is going to be a Soup Doula customer, but those who are the ideal customers the business wants to serve are apt to buy into the values of the business, go out of their way to support it, and to suggest it to friends who are going through similar life challenges. Isn't this an easier and more rewarding guest base to serve?



Use tech to catch pricing shifts and errors

Food costs are a moving target. Inflation and supply shortages aside, sometimes food distributors of all sizes simply make errors. But in a business that operates on slim margins, even small errors can add up. Your restaurant management software should be able to help ensure you don't accidentally overlook an overcharge buried in a P&L statement listing hundreds of items. Instead of having to rely on cross-referencing with past purchases, your software should be able to highlight items that don't seem right – whether due to a price change or to vendor error – and allow you to set a price limit on ingredients you purchase so you don't inadvertently overpay.



Let staff pick their payday

While the outlook for restaurant labor appears to be improving this year, hiring and retaining staff continues to be a perennial challenge for operators. Recent research from the National Restaurant Association found that 89 percent of operators said labor costs are a significant challenge for them, while 62 percent don't have enough employees to support existing demand. One way operators can appeal to potential staff – and keep them once they are on board – is by using tech software to provide greater flexibility in how and when people get paid. That could mean giving employees the option of direct deposit, a payment card for those who don't have a bank account, or (especially) providing on-demand payment. According to research from the Access Group, companies that provide the option of on-demand pay see up to a 25 percent reduction in staff turnover, as well as 20 percent more shifts worked by users of the service.

Food Trends

Spinach Artichoke Dip

Ingredients:

- 6 Tablespoons Butter, Unsalted
- 16 Each Garlic Cloves, Minced
- 1 Cup Yellow Onion, Small Dice
- 2 Bags (10 oz. ea) Baby Spinach
- 4 Cans (14 oz. ea) Artichoke Hearts, Canned, Drained, Rough Chop
- 4 Cups Dannon Oikos Greek Yogurt
- 1 Cup Feta Cheese, Crumbled
- 1 Cup Parmesan Cheese, Grated
- 1 ½ Cups Monterey Jack Cheese, Shredded
- ½ Teaspoon Cayenne
- 2 Teaspoons Salt
- 1 Teaspoon Pepper



Instructions:

1. Melt 6 tablespoons butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the minced garlic and onion, cook for 3-4 minutes or until onions are soft. Turn heat to medium-high and add spinach. Stir and cook for 1-2 minutes or until the spinach wilts. Remove skillet from heat, and remove the spinach from the skillet; place in small strainer. Once cool enough to touch, squeeze the excess juice back into the skillet. Set spinach aside.
2. Add the onions and artichokes to the skillet and cook over medium-high heat for several minutes, until liquid is cooked off and artichokes start to gain color and onions are translucent. Remove from heat and set aside.
3. In a large bowl, combine artichokes, spinach, Dannon Oikos Greek yogurt, feta, Parmesan, and jack cheese and fold with a spatula until combined. Season with cayenne, salt, and pepper. Serve with pita wedges, chips, or crackers.

Make it your own: flavor inspirations Bacon, Spicy Green Chile, Green Curry, Layered Sun dried tomato Hummus, Onion & Parmesan Recipe and photo courtesy of Danone

When healthy foods
feel like a splurge



Many foods that are popular with consumers right now walk the line between health and indulgence: Take cauliflower wings, black bean burgers or broccoli mac and cheese – all comforting, but without the guilt that can go along with some comfort foods. The dips, spreads and sauces on your menu can also incorporate the best of both worlds, combining flavor and comfort without sacrificing health. Think about weaving seasonal vegetables into colorful hummus varieties or yogurt-based dips, or creating a flavorful dipping sauce with immune-boosting spices.

Check up on your allergen training

Consumers with food allergies are a growing – and potentially loyal – group of guests. But as a recent QSR Magazine report indicates, a large percentage of restaurant staff aren't equipped to identify and serve allergens safely. As this study found, more than 70 percent of restaurant staff believe the food they serve is safe but less than half of these employees had received allergen-specific training. At a time when the FDA's list of major allergens continues to expand with the addition of sesame this year, are your staff aware of new labeling requirements and how to handle allergens safely?



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Looking for a greener clean?

If your restaurant is making environmentally friendly changes like minimizing waste and using reusable, compostable or recyclable packaging products, the cleaning products you use can also be part of the story you share with guests. If you're thinking about adopting greener cleaning practices or finding less toxic products to clean and sanitise your facility, look for the Green Seal, Environmental Choice Program, Greenguard or Chlorine Free Products Association labels on products, or ask Team Four about how you can safely make eco-friendly (and budget-friendly) changes to the products you use.



Foodservice Updates

Step out of your LTO comfort zone

At the time of this writing, grocery inflation was still outpacing menu prices, but it was in decline. Consumer Price Index data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in February indicated that food-at-home prices increased at an annual rate of 11.3 percent in January, down from 11.8 percent the previous month. Comparatively, prices for food away from home climbed 8.2 percent for the same time period. This pricing gap is, at the moment, giving consumers a nudge to buy restaurant meals. Restaurants may have an opportunity right now to entice guests with limited-time offers that stand out and even push beyond what guests expect from a brand. This can work especially well if you have a new item or service model you're testing that needs to make a splash and generate some attention. Take Shake Shack, which recently unveiled its \$20 Truffle Table experience, a limited-time offer designed around its new truffle-related menu items. It includes a table for two with a white tablecloth, fine china, wine, a milkshake of the guests' choice, and a selection of truffle-themed menu items. It's not what guests would expect from Shake Shack – with the possible exception of the milkshake – but it generates interest, feels like a novelty experience, and therefore elevates the offer into something more memorable and special than something prepared at home.



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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