

# Foodservice Updates

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## How do your guests want to hear from you?

The habits and tastes of the couple who dines with you on a Friday night are likely much different from those of the parent who brings his child in for lunch with you on a Saturday. So your outreach to these guests must be different too. As Paytronix CEO Andrew Robbins recently said, "Fifty percent of people are day-dependent. The day they make a purchase is hugely important." Getting the day right when communicating offers to them, he says, can make marketing to these guests 50-58 percent more effective. Your loyalty program, therefore, should be able to make guests feel like you're interacting with them personally (without them noticing you're doing so at scale). For example, if a guest loves getting takeout from you on a Friday night and she tends to ignore emails, you'll have an easier time securing her order if you tempt her on a Friday afternoon with a text message that includes a link to (and even a visual of) her favorite order. It's a much easier "yes" than a blanket email for a new lunch combo deal – though directing that to a certain subset of your guests may work perfectly. When you get guests to sign up for your app or to other forms of communication from you, how far are you able to drill down on their habits and preferences? Consider not just what they like to eat but when, why and how they like to hear from you. More data from them should equal more detailed customization from you.



# ChatGPT: Can it help restaurants?

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is attracting a lot of attention right now for its ability to create brand-new content – be it audio, video or text. Most recently, ChatGPT, text-based generative AI launched late last year and available for free to the public, has garnered news headlines for its ability to write poems in the style of Shakespeare, publish articles, summarize books, create business plans and even pass medical exams. (DALL-E 2 is the equivalent of ChatGPT for image generation – helping restaurant operators visualize the prospective menu items in their heads.) ChatGPT can deliver curated work, all while sounding conversational. There are huge opportunities for it in businesses – but also risks to bear in mind at this early stage. The conversational tone of ChatGPT’s results make it sound confident and trustworthy, but it requires human intervention to ensure accuracy (and no intellectual property should be shared with it). However, it can be a helpful tool to get the ball rolling when you’re drafting job descriptions, vendor emails, marketing plans or social media posts. Generative AI tools from companies including Google and Meta are pushing the evolution of this technology too and are making it possible for restaurants to quickly generate ideas for audio, video or text content that can be used to run their business and market to guests more effectively.



## Is it time to upgrade your app?

At a time when restaurants are trying to differentiate themselves through their loyalty programs and how guests are able to earn rewards through them, it only makes sense that this trend would extend to restaurant apps themselves. A number of major brands are using their apps as vehicles to demonstrate value right now, aiming to entice guests to download the app to access special deals or exclusive service. That includes the ability to order ahead, skip the line while either picking food up or dining in, and access digital-only offers. Many more brands are hinting at their own app developments to come, so watch for how these enhancements begin to change guest expectations for apps and in-app offers.



# Food Trends

## Loaded SUPERPRETZEL® PretzelDogs

### *Ingredients:*

10-12 SUPERPRETZEL® Soft Pretzel Mini Hot Dogs  
1-2 tsp per dog Relish  
1 Tbsp per dog Sauerkraut  
Spicy mustard  
Ketchup



### *Instructions:*

1. Thaw frozen dogs on parchment lined pan about 15 minutes.
2. When thawed bake at 275° F for 8-10 minutes.
3. Heat Sauerkraut.
4. Transfer dogs from baking pan to plate.
5. Layer with sauerkraut and relish.
6. Top with mustard and ketchup, serve.

Recipe and photo courtesy of J&J Snacks

## Rethink bread



Bread is one of those foods that inspire strong feelings in people. But people who love it really love it – and will go out of their way to get it. So why not let that inspire the bread products on your menu? Could you fine-tune your appetizer menu with a salty focaccia? Bake a simple bread in-house to elevate your sandwich menu (and lure bread-loving guests who smell it baking)? Could you even swap out the kind of bread or roll guests expect to see in a dish – and replace it with something fun and flavorful?

## Manage your guests' growing gluten problem

Gluten can be a tricky allergen. Even products labeled as gluten-free, as well as seemingly safe products like meat, may contain trace amounts of the protein. About 7 percent of the U.S. population are either gluten-sensitive or have celiac disease (and rates of celiac disease are rising by 7.5 percent annually). These people may experience abdominal pain, chronic fatigue or diarrhea when they eat gluten. There is gluten-sensing technology in development that aims to make it easier to detect trace amounts of gluten in foods, but in the meantime, restaurants' efforts to accommodate gluten-sensitive guests can go far in earning their loyalty. A recent report from Food Management advises you have a checklist of regularly ordered foods and identify gluten-free items on the list, establish with vendors that you are committed to having gluten-free substitutes available, have a clear system to identify gluten-free items on your menu, and consider having your business validated by the Gluten-Free Food Service, which supports organizations looking to implement gluten-free safety procedures for the long term.



**#FoodSafety**

## What Food Traceability Rule means for restaurants

The FDA's new Food Traceability Rule is taking aim at sources of contamination to reduce the number of foodborne illnesses and deaths in the U.S. It means that food businesses from farm to table will be responsible for adhering to a standardized record-keeping process that assigns codes to potentially risky foods. Items such as eggs, leafy greens, soft cheeses and other items will carry these codes in an effort to more quickly trace these items and remove them from the supply chain in the event of contamination. On March 16th, the National Restaurant Association held a webinar about the new rule, as well as various exceptions to it and strategies to comply.





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## Improve your omnichannel experience

In the past few years, your restaurant has likely expanded the number of sales channels it offers to guests. Many full-service restaurants may have permanently ramped up their delivery and curbside pickup businesses, while quick-service restaurants may have made significant investment in their drive-thru business. But regardless of restaurant category, being able to deliver a consistent brand experience in every available ordering channel is critical – particularly if one channel seems to be getting more focus/investment/attention from guests than others. It starts by having a strong central nervous system in the form of a POS that streamlines all of these different business strands, makes it easy for staff and guests to process orders through them, and has functionality that allows the business to track and prioritize orders and other information in real time. Still, a recent report from Restaurant Technology News says many restaurant businesses are holding off on implementing such an all-in-one tech solution, largely because it might be too difficult for staff to learn in the midst of handling daily tasks and serving guests. However, it says, “utilizing these solutions can eliminate vendor fatigue for hospitality staff and free them up for higher-level activities...These solutions are giving them more time to prioritize, execute tasks, and delight guests, which ultimately increases efficiency and revenue for the business.”



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