

# Foodservice Updates

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## Reframing the restaurant work week

Labor attraction and retention isn't getting any easier for restaurants. According to a Bureau of Labor Statistics report released in January, quit rates for the accommodation and foodservice industry increased from 4.8 percent to 6.9 percent over the previous year, a larger spike than any other sector listed. As the pandemic has amplified restaurants' labor challenges, businesses across the industry have been taking a range of approaches to attract and retain staff. According to research from Black Box Intelligence, pay increases are only part of the solution. Offers of sick days, paid leave and variable pay are also on the increase in an effort to improve restaurant workers' quality of life. Dig, the chain of approximately two dozen local, farm-sourced restaurants in the Northeast, has been taking cues from the pandemic-era offerings of corporations and giving their staff the option of a four-day work week. According to a Fast Company report, Dig experimented with the offering while they were running a smaller number of restaurants during Covid lockdowns. Staff were given the option of working one less day than they would normally, but the same number of hours across the week. As Dig offers a 40-hour work week, this has meant that participating staff work 10-hour shifts. While it may not work for every restaurant or every employee, Dig leaders say that the workers who have chosen to stick with the schedule have reported having better work-life balance and more time for responsibilities outside of work. (In fact, in an internal survey of 45 people who have participated in the changed work week so far, 87 percent said they would recommend the new schedule.) Looking at your shift schedule, staff needs and restaurant tasks, what might you adjust to offer better work-life balance to staff without sacrificing business needs? Even on a small scale, could you take any cues from businesses in other sectors that are known for strong attraction and retention of staff?



## No soggy fries with this tech

As restaurants adjust their service models and real estate footprints to better accommodate off-premise orders for the long haul, they are also gaining new options to maintain the quality of their food in transit. A recent trend report from Nation's Restaurant News mentions the Swedish company Dometic, which has launched a temperature-controlled delivery box designed to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Innovations like this could give restaurant operators more freedom to offer popular menu items that lose quality quickly when wrapped in traditional takeout packaging (and may have been removed from off-premise menus as a result).



## Using tech to enhance customer control

Consumer customization isn't going away. In fact, looking beyond your menu to give your customers even more options to customize their experience may help you gain a competitive advantage. Tech is enabling those changes. According to Dana Macke, the director of trends for the Americas at Mintel, current efforts to expedite delivery are going to evolve into efforts to offer greater flexibility. That means that going forward, restaurants will be able to give customers greater control over when their delivery order arrives, for example. We can also expect greater use of predictive technologies to help restaurants ensure their guests' orders are tailored to their schedule and needs. Can you enhance the customization of your customers' ordering experience?





## Protein+™ penne with ground turkey

### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ Box Barilla® protein+™ penne
- 10 Oz. Ground turkey
- 4 Tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 Garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 ½ Cups carrots, sliced on the bias
- 1 ½ Cups zucchini, small dice
- 28 Oz. Canned crushed tomatoes
- 1 ½ Tbsp. Fresh oregano, chopped
- ¾ Cup parmigiano cheese, grated
- 1 Tsp. Sumac
- Salt & black pepper to taste

## Push the boundaries of protein

Consumers are eager to eat alternative proteins. The research firm NPD group found that in April 2021, shipments of alternative protein products from food service distributors to commercial restaurants had climbed by 60 percent year-over-year. Further, a report released in January from The Good Food Institute predicted there would be continued diversification of alternative protein sources in the months ahead. As consumers and restaurants seek out more sustainable sources of nutrients, how far are you stretching the boundaries of what protein looks like on your menu? In addition to substitutes for animal protein, think about naturally plant-based sources including beans, seeds, grains and fortified pastas.

# Food Trends



### Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400° f.
2. Toss carrots with 1 tbsp. Of extra virgin and sumac. Roast in the oven for 5-7 min.
3. Meanwhile, place a pot of water to boil and cook pasta according to package directions.
4. In a skillet, sauté garlic with the remaining olive oil for one minute, stir in the oregano, cooking for an additional 30 seconds.
5. Add ground turkey over medium/high heat and cook for five minutes, seasoning with salt and pepper.
6. Add zucchini and cook for an additional minute. Add tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Add roasted carrots.
7. Drain pasta and toss with sauce.
8. Remove from the heat and top with cheese before serving.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla



## One-and-done washing

At a time when energy prices are high and it's more important than ever to make efficient use of labor and time in restaurants, your equipment needs to do its job well. When it comes to cleaning tableware, how well does your dishwasher do? Is it ever necessary to rewash items or polish them by hand? Depending on what kinds of new foods you're bringing to the menu, you may need to make some changes. A recent Restaurant Business report says that beyond proper racking and scraping of tableware prior to loading in the dishwasher, you may need to consider new washing products that are designed to remove high-protein foods or other foods that call for tableware to be washed differently.



**#FoodSafety**

# #FoodSafety

## Look at safety through a new lens

Even as the pandemic wanes and many cities relax their vaccine mandates, restaurant operators continue to be in a difficult position – managing consumers and employees who are concerned about Covid on one hand, as well as people who are determined to resume life as it was before the pandemic. If you find yourself in this position, do as much as you can to get out in front of the challenge: On your website, social media, front-door signage and menu, post clear, brief, easily digestible information about your safety policy – and surround it in welcoming terms. Your safety standards are about taking care of your staff and everyone who enters your restaurant so you can continue to serve your guests the food they love. If needed, a member of staff can help reinforce the message as guests enter your facility so you can avoid having to confront someone after they have bent the rules. Online, have some boilerplate language ready to respond to the trolls – and again here, surround your policy in welcoming, neutral language. For as many guests who boycott your business over safety rules, you are likely to attract many others who will go out of their way to support you because of them.



# Foodservice Updates

## What does your packaging say about you?

Before the pandemic, restaurant delivery packaging was making strides toward sustainability as greener containers, no-cutlery-included policies and reusable containers were all on the rise. While those efforts stalled a bit amid lockdowns and supply chain challenges, industry analysts expect sustainable packaging to rebound in a big way this year. It helps that consumers have expressed greater willingness to pay for it than in the past: A McKinsey study found that 60-70 percent of consumers said they would pay more for sustainable packaging. Further, how the packaging communicates sustainability is important too: Approximately 35-36 percent of the survey respondents said they would buy additional sustainably packaged products if they were more available in stores, available for more products, and better labeled to indicate green packaging. In terms of materials used, consumers are interested in recyclable and recycled plastic packaging, fiber-based packaging, higher levels of recycled content in the products they use, and increased compostable packaging options. In your business this year, how can you improve your sustainability and communicate it through your packaging? Consider not only adopting new packaging materials but also offering reusable options, labeling the green packaging you use to demonstrate your efforts to guests, promoting those efforts on your website and social media, and encouraging guests (via your website and digital ordering channels) to be mindful of the environment when using takeaway packaging.



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](http://www.teamfourfoods.com) and [www.valuefour.com](http://www.valuefour.com)