

Foodservice Updates

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Focus on retention

Restaurants are facing a retention crisis as much as a hiring one, according to a recent report from QSR Magazine. Specifically, it mentioned how a study from messaging platform Medallia Zingle found that 68 percent of U.S. hospitality workers said their organization was working with fewer staff today than before the pandemic. Further, it found that 38 percent of hospitality workers were considering, or already had plans to, leave the industry within months. Hiring and onboarding staff consumes resources that operators lack right now – so what are the best ways to retain the people you hire? To be sure, compensation is part of it, but other factors are just as important. The pandemic is demonstrating the need for restaurants to offer opportunities to build longer-term careers. Within your operation, are you helping your staff cross-train and gain new valuable skills? Do you have a practice of trying to promote from within? Considering how the pandemic has magnified the need for flexibility, can you identify any ways in which you can bend a little bit in response to staff needs? Finally, employees who feel listened to feel more valued – so survey them formally and informally on a regular basis. If and when someone valuable to your team resigns, ask for a casual exit interview so you can understand why the person is leaving – and try to implement some changes based on their feedback. Who knows? You may even be able to retain them as a result of asking for their feedback.



Could digital signage work for you?

Nearly every aspect of restaurant operations needs to be flexible right now – and your technology is no exception. Having a means to get information to customers in real time can help you make sure people are informed about what's happening in your restaurant, including changes to anything ranging from your menu to your operating hours. Digital signage can help you by providing a flexible tool to get information out to customers as they need it. You can promote limited-time offers that help get excess menu items out the door faster, or upcoming events at your restaurant. If you're looking to hire new staff, digital signage can help you get the attention of the people who already support your restaurant and believe in your brand. And speaking of your brand, your digital signage can be used to reinforce your business values and express appreciation for both customers and employees at a challenging time for the industry.



Better management of kitchen backlogs

As restaurants try to manage with fewer staff, it's become more important for kitchens to have clear direction about what needs to happen when – especially as restaurants bring in new and growing streams of business. A new report on 2021 performance and 2022 priorities from 65 respondents at 59 fast-casual and quick-service restaurant brands indicated that 87 percent of respondents are looking for improved visibility into kitchen production backlogs. Kitchen display systems are a key growth area in restaurant technology right now because they can enhance the efficiency of a kitchen and potentially allow it to process more business with less staff. For restaurant operators, one of the main lessons to emerge from the pandemic is the need for diversified income. Do you have the tech tools to help you organize and prioritize those streams from a single dashboard? They may help you serve guests more efficiently and require less labor than you'd normally need.





Campanelle with Ground Beef, Chorizo and Plantains

Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ Box Barilla® campanelle
- 1 Tsp. Cumin powder
- 10 oz. Ground beef
- 1 pkg. Sazon
- 10 oz. Chorizo
- ½ Cup Parmigiano cheese, grated
- 2 Tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil
- ¾ Cup dry white wine
- 1 ½ Yellow onions, small dice
- 1 Cup pasta cooking water
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ Cup olives with pimento, sliced thin
- 2 ripe plantains, small dice
- ½ Cup cilantro, chopped
- Salt & black pepper to taste

Changing shape

At a time when there's so much pressure to simplify menus and do more with fewer ingredients, planning a menu can feel restricting for chefs. One thing that may help lend new interest to a recipe is bringing in a variety of ingredient shapes and textures. A different pasta shape can make a dish feel more upscale, while swapping in quinoa or freekeh for the noodles in a dish can make it an appealing option on your salad menu.

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Instructions:

1. In a skillet over medium heat add olive oil, onion and garlic. Cook for 1-2 min.
2. Add chorizo and ground beef. Brown and break apart.
3. Add plantains and cook an additional 1-2 minutes, then add white wine and reduce by half.
4. Add olives, cumin, sazón, salt, pepper and mix well.
5. Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions. Reserve a cup of the pasta cooking water.
6. Add the reserved cooking water to the sausage mixture, followed by the drained pasta.
7. Finally, add ½ of the cilantro and ½ of the cheese to the pasta.
8. Mix well and garnish with the remaining cheese and cilantro.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla



Time for a food-safety refresh

Ongoing supply chain and labor challenges mean that many restaurants are trying to accomplish more tasks with fewer resources, but your food safety is one area where you can't cut corners. As you try to operate in the leanest way possible, food safety tech can help you offload processes that are necessary and also require more labor hours when done manually. Looking across your operation, are there any remaining paper-and-pen processes that could be converted to digital? Are you receiving text or email alerts about the need to complete tasks on time? Can you log photos or other evidence of compliance as needed? Talk to Team Four if you need help in assessing where and how digital processes may help enhance your food safety. Difficult as the current environment is for restaurant operators, it could also be an ideal time to press the reset button on your food safety program – and to reinforce your commitment to it as you onboard new staff.



#FoodSafety

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Protect your poultry

Campylobacter and salmonella are the top causes of foodborne illness in the U.S., and recent reports of high amounts of poultry contaminated with these pathogens mean restaurant operators should be especially vigilant about safe poultry preparation. Always place raw poultry on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator to prevent it from dripping on other items. Poultry should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165°F. As barbecue season approaches, try to ensure the poultry you serve is eaten promptly to keep it out of the temperature danger zone (between 40 and 140°F) and refrigerate it after two hours – one hour if it is sitting outside in warm temperatures.



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Low-pressure customization

It's one of the paradoxes of running a restaurant right now: Accommodate the preferences of your guests – but do so with a smaller staff, a slimmed-down menu and an unpredictable supply of ingredients. While that can be challenging for sure, there are simple ways to give guests the range of options they crave without stretching your inventory to its limit. Looking to your spices, sauces, dressings and condiments can help you create many variations on a dish and offer the customization guests are demanding – all without requiring a lot of staff training or consuming valuable real estate in your pantry. Try changing up the seasoning and dipping sauces on your appetizer menu to create a new special, using a popular soup to transform the flavor of a pasta dish, or looking to various combinations of condiments and global spices to add a range of international flavors to your burger menu. Even minor tweaks to a marinade can change the experience of an entrée. Turning to these options can be a labor saver, as well as a tool to save time on staff training. As you look across your inventory, what shelf-stable ingredients could you use to create multiple menu items that are new to your guests?



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