

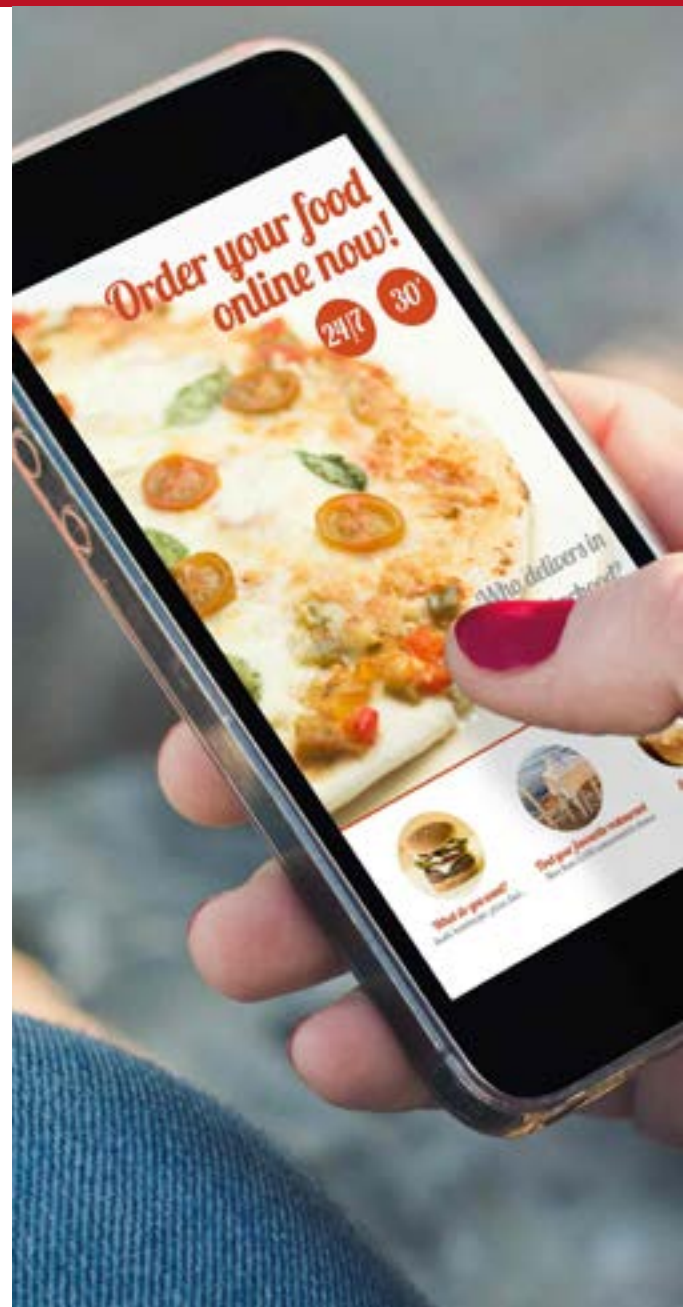
Foodservice Updates

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Building a stronger virtual brand

In the third-party delivery world, it can be easy for a restaurant brand to get lost – or even just diluted in a sea of other dining possibilities. Uber Eats recently announced that it is weeding out several thousand virtual restaurant listings that are basically replica menus being promoted under different virtual brands, Restaurant Business reports. This is allowing some restaurants to occupy a larger digital footprint than they merit, while crowding out smaller restaurants. While the step is a positive for smaller restaurants with a single brand, it also underlines the power of branded apps for restaurants looking for footing in a crowded market. According to the research site FinancesOnline, the number of people using food delivery apps in the United States is expected to reach 54 million this year, up from 44 million in 2021. Restaurants must have a strong online presence, and yet it's becoming more difficult (and important) to stand out. As a recent whitepaper from Fast Casual emphasizes, relying on third parties for digital ordering can cost restaurants money and opportunity. Bad service from the third-party provider can be perceived as a negative experience with your restaurant. By farming out the ordering and delivery process to third parties, restaurants also lose valuable customer data they could use to build loyalty with their guests. If you don't already have your own branded app, consider partnering with a provider that can allow you to connect with customers, build your loyalty program, sell gift cards, connect with them through geolocation and build an overall online and app-based ordering experience that you can control.



Tech Talk

Guest-facing tech to manage staff shortages and boost guest experience

Short on staff? Whether you are or not, tech tools may help you reorganize tasks so you do the most with the people you have on hand – and support them in ways that promote retention. Take the burden off of staff (and give guests some freedom to order and pay when they like) by enabling table payment via mobile phone or tabletop kiosk. Tie this to a guest's loyalty program data so when they order, they are receiving targeted recommendations that complement their favorite dishes and may help you boost check totals. The targeted communication can help provide the quality experience a guest might otherwise appreciate in a server. QSRweb.com suggests that pizza restaurants (and even some other restaurant types) could also benefit from a grab-and-go setup that requires little staff intervention: They can simply place a customer's pizzas in a warmer that can be unlocked by the person's mobile app when they come to collect their pizza. Where is your restaurant especially labor-heavy right now? Could technology lighten the load?



Tap into tech to avert future risks



The past few years have delivered a combination of challenges that would have been difficult to predict. But imagine if you had had some information on hand in 2019 that allowed you to proactively make critical business decisions in 2020? By using technology to tap into the probabilities of an event, your business can better prepare for the different risks it may face. Predictive analytics is one tool that can help operators get a better handle on everyday food safety and quality risks, as well as how risks like climate change and extreme weather could impact the safety and supply of key ingredients down the line. As a recent report from Restaurant Technology News explains, predictive analytics uses advanced data analysis to predict the future based on probabilities, then refines those predictions using machine learning and artificial intelligence. It could help restaurants pinpoint potential threats, like pathogen-related outbreaks, before they occur, then take preemptive action to keep their business and guests safer.

Food Trends

When food is medicine

As consumers seek more functional benefits in the food and drink they ingest, grocery companies are seizing an opportunity that can apply to many restaurants too: marketing food as medicine. Foodservice Director reports that following last year's White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health, the grocery delivery company Instacart recently announced two initiatives to "enhance collaborative care, promote healthy choices and deliver nutritious foods." In practice, this means Instacart tools will allow healthcare providers to literally prescribe food products to patients much like they prescribe medication. The grocer Food Lion also opened a "food pharmacy" this year. If your restaurant brand is focused on delivering fresh, nutrient-dense foods, there may be opportunities for your business to find new income streams or forge new community partnerships with other organizations eager to support public health.



Don't get slimed

Warming temperatures call for cool drinks. What's a lot less appealing is the idea of bio-slime sneaking into beverages because you're not up to date with the cleaning of your ice machines and soda guns. Regular cleaning of this equipment can be overlooked, especially when labor is tight – and these items are often cited in restaurant inspections as a result. Each day at closing, soda guns should be cleaned, ice wells emptied and sanitized, and ice machine surfaces wiped down. Each week, spray and wipe down the surfaces inside coolers as well. If these are trouble spots for you, consider a training update for team members who need a brush-up on cleaning procedures and frequency.



#FoodSafety

#FoodSafety

Food safety focus areas

Three years since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we're still living in times where food safety and cleanliness represent the hospitality a restaurant offers. But knowing where to focus can be challenging amid labor shortages. To help operators zero in on the areas that deliver the greatest benefit, Steritech developed a poster to promote the top four critical cleaning tasks in fast casual, quick service and casual restaurants. In fast casual restaurants, for example, it focuses on nonfood contact surfaces, food contact surfaces, general facility cleanliness and pest entry and harborage, then lists specific examples of what those categories cover and what best practices to follow to keep those areas clean. The Steritech website includes [downloadable posters](#) if your staff could benefit from such reminders.



THE CLEAN 4: FAST CASUAL RESTAURANTS CRITICAL FOOD SAFETY CLEANLINESS TOUCHPOINTS

When it comes to food safety, cleaning can have a big impact! Focus on these 4 areas, which Steritech data shows are the top concerns for fast casual restaurants.

1 Nonfood-contact surfaces

WHAT IS IT?

Items that don't touch food but can impact food safety through proximity or cross-contamination

EXAMPLES

Cooler handles, equipment knobs, buttons, under cook lines

2 Food-contact surfaces

WHAT IS IT?

Surfaces that touch foods during their preparation or serving

EXAMPLES

Pots, pans, knives, scoops, ice machines, fountain soda nozzles, soda guns

Foodservice Updates

What to do when it's this profitable to quit

Retaining staff is more difficult in an environment that is especially rewarding for the voluntary quitter: Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that as of February, people who switched jobs saw their pay increase by 7.7 percent (compared to a 5.6 percent rise for staff who stayed in their role). While it's true that people who switch jobs generally gain in pay, the increase is normally around .7 percentage points – not 2.1. So getting staff to stick around is more challenging now. However, retaining these people may have just as much to do with communication as with wages. To smooth relations with your team, make sure you have a vehicle for communicating with them in a timely way about everything from shift updates to menu changes so they aren't caught by surprise – particularly if you're operating several restaurants and have staff working at a combination of them. The Rail also suggests restaurants keep all policies, procedures in a digital format so information is easy to access and doesn't fall through the cracks or get misinterpreted. Then provide some outlets to allow your managers to focus on the individual: Have a weekly or monthly one-on-one chat with each employee in neutral territory so they feel free to voice any concerns and discuss development opportunities. At the same time, also provide a means of allowing staff to share a problem anonymously via a physical or virtual suggestion box. Finally, encourage a fun, communal spirit on your team by gathering them for regular meals where you can set the scene for people to get to know others outside of their roles on staff.



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