

Foodservice Updates

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Winning the race to restaff

As restaurants reopen again in a big way, they are facing yet another unprecedented challenge, though one that probably would have been welcome last spring: having to hire new staff to handle a steep rise in business at the same time as all of the other restaurants in the area. Not only are restaurants having to make themselves appealing to customers beginning to venture out again right now, but they are also having to put their best foot forward for potential foodservice employees who can have their pick of employers. As a recent New York Times report suggests, at a time when an extra dollar or two could mean the difference between attracting an employee and not, it's important to understand what your competitors are paying. Is there room for you to partner with other restaurants in your area to exchange ideas, share staff or pool resources that could drive interest in your businesses? Consider paying referral bonuses to existing employees who recommend another staff member once that person has been on your team for a set period of time. Take another look at your needs – could you hire someone inexperienced but eager and train them instead of holding out for a more experienced person who meets a longer list of criteria? Also assess the benefits (financial and non) that you're able to offer, from meals to career development opportunities to loyalty bonuses for employees who stick with you for a while.



How intelligent is your restaurant?

Imagine if your kitchen technology could let you tap into the cooking expertise of chefs from around the world. Artificial intelligence is now powering intelligent restaurants like a new one in Naperville, Ill. by Nala Robotics. The company says its restaurant can make “dishes from any cuisine around the world, using authentic recipes from celebrated chefs,” and easily change menus and adapt dishes to any number of customer modifications. Whether restaurants choose to adopt AI in their kitchens or not, these robotic assistants are likely to change what restaurant competition looks like – and what consumers expect from restaurants.



A changing landscape for delivery

What's the best way for you to get take-away food to your customers? As operators adjust to new, late-pandemic conditions – including a lack of available labor and an increase in potential vendors and tech-driven solutions to provide support – they are making changes to how they handle delivery. Panera, long held up as an example of how a non-pizza restaurant can accommodate in-house delivery, recently announced it would be switching to third-party delivery – at least for now. In the meantime, the food delivery robot is becoming a far less futuristic concept than it ever was, with companies including Nuro, Kiwibot, Tortoise and Starship Technologies rolling out options for last-mile delivery. Those robots also happen to relieve some of restaurants' labor, food safety, marketing and profitability pressures, so they could make the delivery landscape look a whole lot different in the coming months and years.





Greek Salad & Yogurt Crema

Ingredients:

- 4 1/2 C Cucumbers, Fresh diced
- 1 1/2 C Cherry tomatoes, Fresh halved
- 6 Tbsp Red Onions, thinly sliced
- 3/4 C Red Wine Vinegar
- 6 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 1 Tbsp Oregano, Fresh chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp Parsley, Fresh minced
- 1 tsp Kosher Salt
- 3/4 tsp Black Pepper, Ground
- 1/2 C Plain Lowfat Greek Yogurt
- 3 Tbsp Lemon Juice
- 1/4 tsp Kosher Salt
- 1/8 tsp Black Pepper, Ground
- 3/4 C Feta Cheese, Reduced Fat
- 3/4 tsp black pepper

Dress it up

It's salad season. As the weather warms and your choice of fresh produce expands, your salad menu is likely to become all the more craveable as people seek out healthy eating options. Your dressings have the power to elevate those dishes with smooth, creamy textures and savory, sweet or spicy flavors. They can also make your salad more special than something a guest would prepare at home. It's a bonus if your dressings can contribute to the health of the overall dish – raising protein content, boosting immunity or promoting heart health, for example, without overloading it with empty calories.

Food Trends



Instructions:

1. Combine first 9 ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix until ingredients are well incorporated.
2. Transfer in to a storage container, cover, and reserve under refrigeration for 1 hour before serving.
3. Combine next 5 ingredients in a large mixing bowl and whisk until smooth and ingredients are thoroughly mixed.
4. Transfer the mixture in a storage container, cover, and refrigerate until needed.
5. For each portion, top 1 Cup(s) of cucumber salad with 2 Tbsp(s) of feta cheese, and drizzle with 2 Tbsp(s) of greek yogurt lemon crema; Finish with 1/8 tsp(s) of fresh cracked black pepper.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Danone



Play it safe with ice

There's nothing like a cool drink on a warm day. Just make sure your team is handling ice as safely as possible day to day, as your ice machine can be a haven for bacteria and viruses. Have employees wash hands before scooping ice from the bin. Store the scoop outside of the machine and consider it the only tool used to scoop ice – don't use glassware, which could chip and cause a safety hazard or contaminate ice in the machine. Sanitize your scoop in your dishwasher. Finally, keep your ice machine door closed securely when not in use.



#FoodSafety

Let's clear the air

Throughout the pandemic, a major barrier to the reopening of restaurants has been the air quality of indoor spaces – and how operators can ensure their dining rooms are safe. As restaurant operators reopen their indoor dining rooms, many are investing in systems and products that promote air filtration and ventilation as the pandemic winds down – and for protection down the line. The investment can be substantial but also a major selling point for guests concerned about safety. If you're considering anything ranging from small tabletop air purifiers to HVAC system updates, consult with someone who can assess how air moves around your facility – including the locations and spacing of vents and air filters, as some purifiers inadvertently increase the spread of aerosols if spaced incorrectly. Also consider the noise of any new units you install – they shouldn't require guests to speak more loudly to be heard, and again, spread more aerosols. Finally, have a means of measuring air quality in your restaurant and understand how the number and locations of guests, and your efforts to change ventilation and filtration, can impact your air



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How loyal are your guests?

Chances are you have some kind of loyalty program at your restaurant – and if you have graduated past the little plastic loyalty cards carried on keychains, you might think your program is doing okay. But have you studied exactly how well it's helping you turn a new customer into a loyal one? Are you able to assess large amounts of data and translate that into targeted promotions that reach customers at just the times when they're most likely to respond? According to a recent podcast on Pizza Marketplace with Tom Byrnes, vice president of marketing at LedgerPay, most loyalty programs aren't succeeding. Research from Deloitte found that the average loyalty app loses 95 percent of its active user base within 90 days of it being downloaded, so most restaurant loyalty programs are engaging only a small portion of their customer base. Still, loyalty programs, when done right, are worthwhile: It's nine to 11 times more expensive to recruit a new customer than to retain an existing one, so having a loyalty program that attracts and continuously engages new members is paramount. Your program should allow you to not only collect consumer data but to easily slice and dice it in a meaningful way. When you create a promotion for a subset of your loyalty program members, you should be able to readily find out how many people took you up on it, for instance – and how that offers response rate and profits compared to the promotion you sent them last month. How well does your program deliver for you?



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