

# Foodservice Updates

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## Where can you afford to cut corners?

Restaurant operators are feeling the pinch from all directions right now – double the unemployment of the general economy, widespread supply shortages and inflationary woes. One recent study found that 64 percent of consumers plan to cut back on their restaurant spending. Amid these challenges, many restaurant brands are trying to reconfigure their physical operations to accommodate the new ways in which consumers are demanding restaurant food. Some formerly full-service restaurants are converting to fast-casual or quick-service models. Others are expanding drive-through lanes, adding windows dedicated to third-party delivery pickup or otherwise making off-premise orders a bigger priority. But all of this costs money – and something has to give. In your operation, what might that be? Amid the strains of the times, there are also opportunities, as well as more companies looking to offer them. In a recent webinar, Morgan Petty of the Interactive Customer Experience Association moderated a discussion with representatives from Steritech and Zaxby's about how restaurant operators might leverage current market disruptions to improve the brand experience they offer guests. Steritech, for one, is now supporting clients in the midst of remodeling by offering up its specialists to visit client restaurant sites around the country, take photos of every item that an onsite real estate team from the restaurant would normally want to inspect, then upload those photos to an online portal for review by the restaurant. The company says across 500 site visits, it has given restaurant clients back more than 500 hours and reduced their labor cost by 70 percent. Everyone is having to find creative ways to reduce spending, do more with less labor, or otherwise be more efficient with resources right now. What priorities are you managing that can be addressed in modified ways?



# Get your head in the cloud

As the past couple of years have taught us, life can have some strange surprises in store. For restaurants, it has magnified the need to be able to pivot to a range of challenges. Technology is enabling that adaptation – to new streams of income, as well as new methods of managing service, labor, inventory and safety. Having a cloud-based system does well in adapting to and integrating with new tools, setting you up to manage what the future has in store. As you assess new systems and other tech tools that promise to enhance your operation, scrutinize them with an eye toward how readily they will be able to flex with your needs down the line.



## Modernize back-of-house payment capabilities

Could you benefit from online payment – not the customer-facing kind, but the kind used at the back of the house to pay the wide range of suppliers keeping your business stocked? As much as technology has introduced speed and efficiency at the front of the house, for many restaurants, back-of-house operations continue to be stuck in the past, relying on paper processes and manual management. By introducing digital invoicing and payment, you can bring greater precision to your inventory management and use scarce labor more efficiently. Talk to Team Four/Value Four if you need guidance to either start or refine your back-of-house financial management processes.



## Seasonal surprises

Supply chain challenges have made it all the more important for restaurants to support regional suppliers and source what is plentiful, local and easily transported. As you source more seasonal items, look for ways they can help you refresh a menu item that may be popular but could benefit from a new twist. Weaving seasonal additions into everything from salads to desserts can help you add creativity and color to your menu, as well as give a long-standing menu item a welcome update.

# Food Trends

## Strawberry and Almond Tiramisu

### *Ingredients:*

- 1 1/4 pounds PHILADELPHIA CREAM CHEESE
- 2 cups Heavy Cream
- 1 cup Sugar
- 2 teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1/2 cup Toasted Almonds, chopped
- 48 each Lady Finger Biscuits
- 1 1/4 cup Black Coffee, cooled
- 20 ounces Fresh Strawberries, sliced
- 1 1/4 cups Whipped Cream



### *Instructions:*

1. Beat together the cream cheese, heavy cream, sugar and vanilla until smooth.
2. Fold in the chopped almonds and set aside.
3. Line 2, 5" X 8" loaf pans with parchment paper.
4. To assemble each pan quickly dip 8 of the lady fingers on each side in the coffee and layer them in the bottom of the pans.
5. Layer each pan with a quarter of the sliced strawberries and then 1 1/2 cups of the cream cheese mixture.
6. Repeat the layers one more time and then end with a layer with 8 of the soaked lady fingers.
7. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
8. To serve: turn out onto a plate and slice. Garnish with whipped cream and whole strawberry.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Kraft Heinz



## What does your restroom say about you?

In times when labor is in short supply, restaurants often have to revisit what tasks are essential. Unfortunately, that often means focusing on food preparation and food-related customer service at the expense of other important tasks happening behind the scenes. Cleaning practices may suffer as a result. Your restroom maintenance is one area that might easily slip off of your list of priorities, but do your best to keep it on the list. A survey from Harris Interactive found that 50 percent of restaurant guests who had a negative experience with a restaurant bathroom will mention it to friends and family. Based on that bad experience, whether it relates to dirty toilets, bad odors or something else, your guests are apt to make assumptions about the level of care you put into your food and food safety (and opt for a different restaurant next time). Make sure you don't leave guests with a bad impression before they even have a chance to taste your food.



**#FoodSafety**

## Beware of food-safety pitfalls when using substitute ingredients

Food substitutions are a way of life for operators right now as supply chain challenges continue. As you swap in new produce, different cuts of meat, or otherwise alter a dish in some way, your food preparation processes need to be adjusted too. Say you're working with a new supplier of a key ingredient and the portion size you receive is different from what you're accustomed to using. How are you compensating for this to ensure the overall experience of eating the dish remains high? You may need to adjust cooking times to avoid over- or under-cooking, or simply tweak accompanying sauces and other ingredients to uphold the quality of the dish.



# Foodservice Updates

## Unify your brand across channels

While the early months of the pandemic saw a sharp rise in restaurants' off-premise sales, many operators with dining rooms are now seeing their in-store business climb back up. But that hasn't chipped away at the momentum of off-premise sales. In fact, according to a recent consumer survey, 53 percent of respondents now believe food delivery is essential to their life. As long as in-person and off-premise dining options are both available, operators can expect to see demand for them – though the degree of demand in each area may be more difficult to predict. For this reason, it's become even more important for restaurants to be able to unify their physical and online customer service experiences, providing a seamless transition between them. According to data from PYMNTS' 2022 Restaurant Friction Index, which considers input provided in September by more than 500 restaurant managers across the country, unifying channels is a top priority for operators, ranking above such factors as payment options, ordering options and loyalty offerings as central to restaurants' technology plans going forward. Achieving unity starts with understanding your brand and values. What are the key sentiments you want guests of your restaurant to walk away with after they visit your restaurant? Friendliness? Fresh ingredients? Sustainability? How can you weave those messages into your digital channels to ensure your brand identity comes through clearly regardless of where your customers consume their meals from you?



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:

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