

Foodservice Updates

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Protect against payment fraud

So many of our payments have become contactless in the past year – and businesses have felt the need to offer card-not-present payment options in an effort to maintain safety, enable off-premise food purchases and promote customer convenience. But as card-not-present transactions have climbed alongside food delivery orders in the past year, so have the opportunities for fraud. Research from Aite Group forecasts a 16.4 percent increase in card-not-present fraud this year. This fraud can hit restaurants with chargebacks that are difficult to dispute, but fortunately there are steps restaurants can take to help detect and prevent fraud. Overall, it's about identifying patterns about your customers – who they are, how they are ordering, are and how they are finding you. Machine learning tools can help you identify what good customers look like – then flag those that look risky. For example, an order placed from a city other than the one listed as the delivery destination might raise a red flag for a restaurant business. ATM Marketplace advises having a fraud-protection provider that helps screen every transaction – and it's important for the restaurant to partner with them to ensure the system is adaptable to the business. In a recent webinar entitled “How to Protect your Restaurant from Online Scammers,” Brittany Allen, Trust & Safety Architect at Sift, advised restaurants to use fraud detection systems that provide an activity log that lets them view a customer's session history, and which use a single dashboard that eliminates the need to jump from tool to tool. Beyond that, Allen said a restaurant operator should know how different fraud alerts rank for their business – and what kinds of fraud similar businesses are facing. Finally, a system should allow you to take action somehow, whether to flag a suspicious transaction for further review or to stop a transaction from occurring.



Step up your social media presence

As people return to restaurants in greater numbers, we'll continue to need the digital tools we have been using to maintain safety and distance. Since it may take some time to rebuild the sense of hospitality and community restaurants had before the pandemic, it's more important than ever for operators to use their social media channels to keep communication flowing to and from guests – and to use that to generate more traffic. Create a content calendar that allows you to plan social media posts in advance and on a regular (if not daily) basis. Think about sharing behind-the-scenes videos and blog posts, asking open-ended questions to start online conversations, hosting virtual trivia contests and scheduling a lineup of other promotions that encourage guests to share photos of their food online and talk up their experience with you.



Let labor technology do the job

As restaurant business rebounds and operators look to stabilize costs, adopting tech to help with labor management and fluctuations can help contain unexpected expenses – and reduce the staff frustrations that can lead to turnover. Make sure your labor management software is up to the task: It should help you forecast your sales and develop accurate staffing schedules based on those forecasts. Beyond that, it should allow employees some freedom and flexibility to swap shifts or request time off – all while requiring minimal involvement from management.





Loaded tots and rings

Ingredients:

- 2 fl oz Boom Boom Sauce
- 8 oz tater tots
- 3 oz homemade fried onion petals, can substitute onion rings
- 2 fl oz white queso
- 3 fl oz cheddar jack cheese, Shredded
- 3 strips crispy bacon, Chopped
- 1 tsp chopped chives

Safe sharing

It seems like a long time ago that restaurant guests would gather around big tables at restaurants and share overflowing platters of food, family-style. But doesn't that sound great after months of eating at home and away from groups? As we ease back into gatherings, your menu can safely promote the sense of community that people have been missing. Consider offering some comforting appetizers and entrées that can be shared. You might provide individual serving spoons to promote safety or serve up individual portions tableside.

Food Trends



Instructions:

1. Fry tots & onion petals until crispy, drain and plate.
2. Top with queso, shredded cheese, bacon, and Boom Boom Sauce.
3. Garnish with chopped chives and serve.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Kens



Protect the safety of plant-based proteins

As plant-based proteins flood restaurant menus of all types, food safety practices around these foods may be lagging – all at a time when consumers have greater expectations for food safety overall. The nutrition company Kerry said because of the wide range of materials used in plant-based meat and dairy alternatives, plant-based proteins may be susceptible to microbial spoilage: “Like their meat-based counterparts, they are near neutral in pH, high in protein and moisture content so it is imperative that appropriate microbiological control mechanisms are put in place,” the company said. Does your operation have new procedures and training in place for protecting the safety of the new plant-based proteins you are bringing into your business?



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Solar as an extreme-weather safeguard

If you're in a hurricane zone or have been experiencing an increase in extreme weather conditions in recent years, you've likely been making changes to your food safety and business continuity plans. Installing rooftop solar panels may help – in a number of ways. While the panels are more often associated with homes, they can provide businesses with extra risk protection and cost savings in case of power outages. And at a time when people are more concerned with their environmental impact, the use of renewable energy is a powerful way to share those values with guests.



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A new wrinkle for food delivery

On-demand food delivery is just getting started – and restaurants may be just one part of it. Uber announced recently that it had partnered with the on-demand delivery startup GoPuff to offer items from grocery and convenience stores in 95 cities within the next couple of months. (This is on top of its recent acquisition of Drizly, enabling the delivery of alcohol.) As grocery stores offer more ready-to-eat foods and companies like Uber appear to be making it easier for consumers to have food and drink delivered when they want it from businesses beyond just restaurants, where does this leave restaurants? To be sure, developments like this hint at how third-party delivery companies could be shifting gears to promote greater profitability after the pandemic – and potentially become less reliant on business from restaurants. In any case, as life begins to return to normal, restaurant operators need to continue to think about how they can innovate. That means studying developments in delivery and identifying new ways to make it work financially, whether through in-house options, partnerships with other restaurants or other avenues. It's also about looking for new opportunities to get a restaurant's brand in front of consumers – via such routes as ghost kitchens and partnerships with grocery stores that can offer hot or prepackaged restaurant food to go – or elevating and differentiating the in-restaurant dining experience so consumers feel the need to make it a bigger part of their lives again. A recent report from Restaurant Hospitality shared some things operators are doing to innovate, ranging from delivering food to lockers in apartment buildings to finding creative ways to minimize food waste.



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