

# Foodservice Updates

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## The evolution of restaurant reservations

As restaurants continue to look for ways to offer prime experiences to diners while catering to their most frequent visitors, the process of booking a restaurant reservation is beginning to resemble the process of booking a flight – with perks for those willing to pay for a first-class experience. As a recent CNBC report says, the guest management platform SevenRooms is offering restaurants tools such as online ordering, waitlists and reservations, in addition to customer data that restaurants can use to promote enhanced experiences or sell upgrades to certain clientele. That could mean getting first dibs on patio seating at sunset – or simply better access to prime tables at peak dining hours. Participating restaurants are finding that this capability to make reservations more exclusive is giving them some extra ability to accommodate walk-ins and lingering diners, as well as greater assurance that the people who have booked a reservation will honor it. The evolution of restaurant reservations is coinciding with renewed investment in the fine dining space, which is having a post-COVID moment right now. The category is ideally matched for the current need for restaurants to build higher-end experiences into their service – and consumers’ willingness to spend at restaurants if what they are receiving feels special.



# Tech Talk

## One tech tweak for a major efficiency boost

At a time when high inflation continues to make restaurant food a harder sell, operators need any tools they can find to help them ensure the experience they deliver is one that people find worthwhile. Speedy, accurate food service is a key part of that experience. A kitchen display system is a modern-day reinvention of the manual ticketing process in a restaurant, and it's a workhorse when it comes to helping operators precisely prioritize preparation tasks being assigned from multiple areas of the business. It can help you make the most of a smaller-than-ideal team and also deliver faster, more accurate, more consistent service across all of your ordering channels.



## Get smart about smart tools



It seems every part of a restaurant kitchen has a “smart” solution these days, whether it's smart sensors to monitor the temperature of a pot of water, the volume of ingredients needed for a dish, or any number of other tasks. But these new tools are only as good as the knowledge employees possess in using them. Make sure your staff first understands the problem you're looking to solve with smart tools and appliances. Then provide hands-on introductory training, follow-up training and ongoing monitoring to ensure you're getting the most you can from these new additions to your kitchen. If you have a tech skeptic on your staff, it may improve your eventual buy-in by working with this person on the new tool, then having them teach others on the team.

# Trends

## Creatively climate-aware

Environmental friendliness means a lot more to today's consumers than it did just a few years ago – and to accommodate that change, restaurants are making changes well beyond the food they serve. For example, Taco Bell's planned installation of electric vehicle charging stations in more than 100 of its California restaurants this year is not only a nod to its environmentally aware guests in the state. It also has the potential to help the brand pull business from convenience stores, which, as Modern Restaurant Management put it recently, have been taking a "larger piece of the quick-service restaurant pie" with their ability to combine multiple service offerings in one stop. Considering the habits and values of your guests, how might you demonstrate your environmental awareness in creative, convenient ways – whether large or small, and both on your menu and beyond it?



*Made from 100% Recycled fibers.  
No bleach was used to make this napkins.*  
**SAVE THE WORLD**

## Serve a safe barbecue

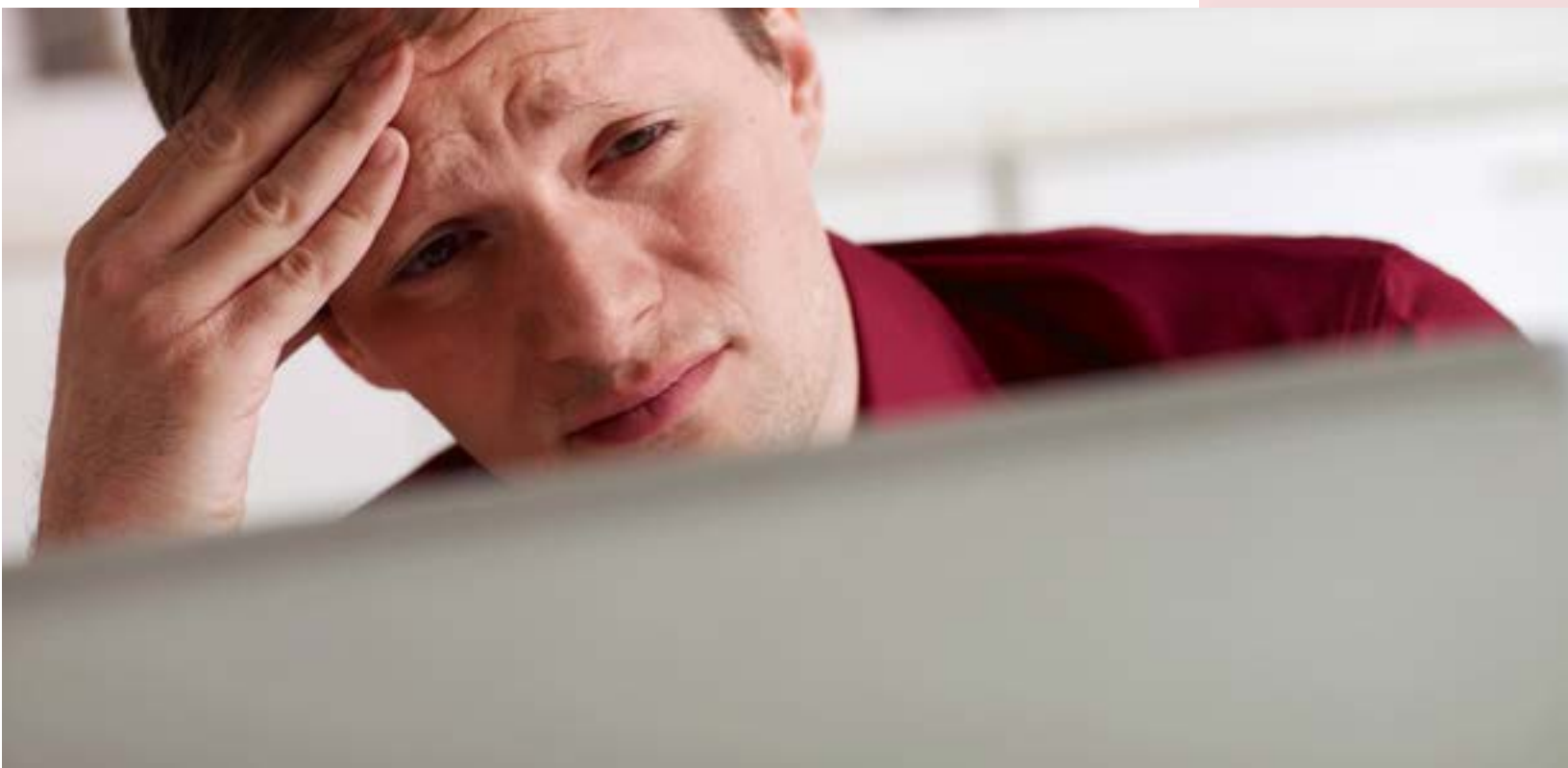
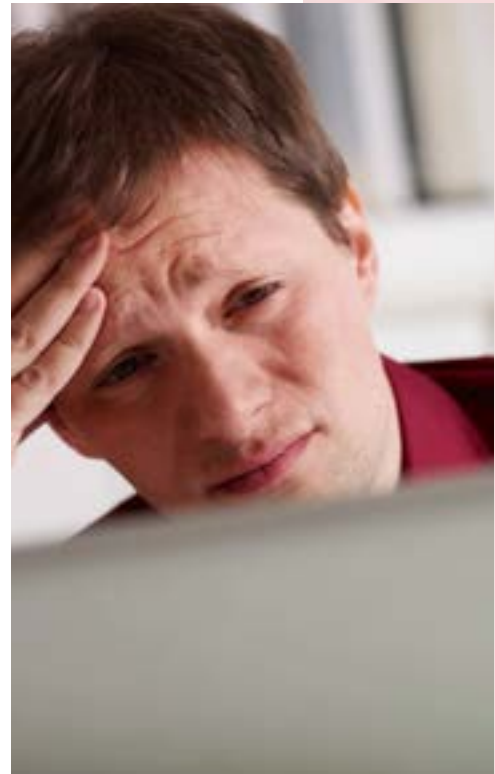
It's barbecue season. Is your staff ready to protect the raw meat and poultry they handle? Bacteria like Salmonella and E. coli occur naturally in animals' digestive systems, so the safety precautions you take in handling animal proteins play a meaningful role in ensuring these pathogens aren't passed on to guests. Make sure any frozen meat and poultry you receive arrives frozen and that refrigerated meat is no warmer than 41°F. Keep raw meat separate from other foods in your cooler and store it in accordance with how long it must be cooked – proteins requiring the most cooking, such as poultry, should be stored at the bottom. After handling raw meat, wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water, put on new gloves, and clean and sanitize your preparation area and tools. Cook proteins to the FDA's recommended temperatures – and use calibrated thermometers to make sure your readings are accurate.



**#FoodSafety**

## Are you protecting food safety or putting out fires?

Much as we may intend for the systems and training we have in place to keep business running smoothly, there are days when operating a restaurant can feel like playing a game of whack-a-mole. If you find yourself and your staff reacting to problems more often than proactively managing and mitigating them, take it as an alert that it's time for a reset. Is there a pattern to the problems that continue to crop up? Do the seeming emergencies all require an urgent response from you? Can you scale back on meetings or automate back-office tasks that would allow you to spend more time supporting staff or guests? Instead of continuing to react to crises, step back and dig deeper into the root cause of the problems you're experiencing.



# Foodservice Updates

## Lure those loyal guests

Consumers like a good value – and increasingly, they are looking to loyalty programs to provide it. A recent consumer survey by PYMNTS found that 51 percent of respondents said they used a restaurant loyalty program. This was true across restaurant categories, with 49 percent participating at quick-service restaurants and 34 percent participating at full-service restaurants. This is spurring restaurants to reinvent their programs with new tiers, increased personalization and new payment capabilities, among other enhancements. There are more businesses vying for more signups to their loyalty program, so it will take a well-coordinated effort to get guests to join. Consider offering a tempting incentive to get people to sign up – a discount on their purchase that day, a free drink or snack, or another popular item you offer. Then get your staff on board, since they are likely the ones who will be prompting guests to join. Make sure they understand it, can explain it, and have some opening language on hand to promote it – have them share suggestions with each other or even engage in some competition for guest signups. Then make sure you promote the program on your website, store signage and social media – with clear language, simple prompts and an easy means of joining (like a QR code that will take guests right where they need to go). Your social media is another avenue to create contests and potentially viral content around your program.



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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