

Foodservice Updates

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Find the formula for recruitment and retention

The National Restaurant Association has said that employee turnover in the restaurant industry is nearly 75 percent, compared to about 49 percent for the total private sector. So as painful as the Great Resignation has been for the US economy overall, restaurant operators have felt it especially severely. Restaurant companies that are succeeding at recruitment and retention right now are taking steps to be as proactive as possible at bringing in potential staff and then giving them the career options and stability they need to stay. In a recent webinar, “The Future of Food: The Role of Technology in Restaurant Recruitment and Retention,” presented by SmartBrief, Jamie Starner of Bartaco mentioned that every one of their applicants is likely applying for seven other jobs at the same time, so it’s critical to make it easy for people to apply for open positions and then respond to their inquiry promptly. To make that happen, the company uses QR codes to connect people to their open positions, sends applicants a text in response, and uses the Calendly app to encourage applicants to schedule their interview on the spot. Keeping staff happy, according to the restaurant leaders on the webinar, has been about showing them potential career paths at the company, polling them regularly to better understand what they need, and offering the stability and flexibility that comes with offering a salary and other benefits. Instead of accepting tips, some incentivize good service through bonuses provided in exchange for high online reviews each month. For Kelly Phillips of Destination Unknown Restaurants, being able to provide a salary and a career path more akin to what someone might find in other parts of the private sector has been about operating as leanly as possible – using handheld POS devices has helped the company slim down the number of staff needed, for example, so the company has the resources to take good care of the ones on hand. As a result, she says, she doesn’t often have server openings, doesn’t have the ongoing expense of recruitment, and some former servers have stayed to become partners in the company.



Lean into tech to protect from the downturn

As we brace for a potential recession, your digital technology may be your restaurant's best protection. It can help you identify the snags that may prevent you from operating more efficiently. But in an age when there is so much potential data for a restaurant to collect and analyze, analysis paralysis is common. To make the most of the information you collect, focus on several key metrics: how you can best streamline your labor, track staff performance, identify your best-selling items and other items that aren't as profitable, and slim down your operating hours so you're open when you're most likely to profit. This will help you elevate your more profitable items and identify potential waste that is holding you back – whether that is in the form of a low-profit entrée, a low-traffic period that is difficult to staff, or a server who needs support in upselling orders.



When tech can support your employee culture

Incorporating more technology to manage back-of-house functions in your restaurant isn't simply a matter of improving efficiency; it may also help you build and sustain the kind of employee culture you want to cultivate. Management plays a role in employee happiness on the job. When they are on the floor and available, they can provide training, support and mentoring. When they are consumed with managing inventory, vendors, scheduling, payroll and other tasks that take them away from their time with the team, staff morale can take a hit. Are there pain points in your business that keep your managers away from the rest of the team and can be reduced with the help of automated tech?





Shepherd's pie w/ shredded beef

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup onion, minced
- 2 lbs Hillshire Farm® Shredded Beef sku# 04310
- 4 cups assorted cooked vegetables (peas, carrots, green beans, etc.)
- 3 cups prepared brown gravy
- 6 cups prepared mashed potatoes

Stretch your supply of fall comfort foods

After a summer of unseasonably hot temperatures, the thought of cooler weather and cozy foods may be especially appealing to your guests. Think hearty soups and stews, pasta bakes, potato dishes and creative takes on macaroni and cheese. As you plan menus for the months ahead, consider how you can stretch your ingredients on hand, whether that includes produce that can support a pasta dish as well as a sandwich, or cuts of meat that you wouldn't normally feature at the center of the plate but which can elevate a soup or savory pie.

Food Trends



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Heat oil in large sauté pan over medium heat. Add onion; cook, stirring occasionally until tender, about 3 minutes.
2. Add pot roast and cook, stirring frequently for 3 minutes. Divide meat mixture among 6 heatproof individual serving dishes.
3. Layer each dish with 1/3 cup vegetables and ¼ cup gravy. Top with ½ cup mashed potatoes, spreading to edges to seal. Repeat with remaining ingredients.
4. Spray potatoes with non-stick cooking spray. Bake for 20 minutes or until center of casseroles are 145°F.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Tyson

Everyday training bakes safety into your culture

A visit from a health and safety inspector can cause anxiety in a restaurant, but it doesn't have to. Spreading the responsibility for food safety across your team can help everyone gain the confidence they need to present your facility well. At a time when turnover remains high and resources are stretched, weaving automated learning tools into the fabric of everyday tasks can help. First identify your basic needs when it comes to training so you can gather resources that address past problems and new processes. While every employee should be given high-level training, follow-up training should be continuous and built into the flow of work, with checklists and mini lessons accessed via mobile device so they accompany the employee and be updated in real time.



#FoodSafety

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Improve your facility's flood protection

According to FEMA, a single inch of floodwater can cause \$26,807 in damages. Beyond financial harm, floods can pose risks of mold and structural damage to your facility – not to mention risk the safety of your food. Climate instability has made many cities more vulnerable to flooding through hurricanes and rising sea levels, so it makes sense to take precautions to protect your structure and limit potential damage. A Modern Restaurant Management report advises that outdoors, operators keep gutters clean and ensure that downspouts and exterior walls direct water away from the building so it doesn't pool and seep below the foundation. Inspect and maintain the roof and windows to prevent leaks. Finally, using water detection devices placed near sump pumps can alert you to moisture and the start of flooding before it becomes a disaster.



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How do your guests use your restaurant?

Pre-pandemic, it may have been a given that Friday and Saturday nights were your peak times for guests. The past few years have thrown such assumptions up in the air as consumers have shifted their working hours and workplaces. As a result, your biggest happy hour crowd may have shifted to early evenings on Wednesday and Thursday. Your business lunch crowd may instead be coming for breakfast or a late-afternoon snack. During a recent discussion with veteran restaurant operators and industry experts that was organized by Nation's Restaurant News and its CREATE educational program, participants acknowledged the shift. Victor Fernandez, vice president of insights and knowledge at Black Box, said the fastest-growing time of day is late afternoon between lunch and dinner. This blending of dayparts can be both a blessing and a curse for operators: Blurred lines between meals mean that consumers may crave a range of food and drink at all times and it's always a good time to visit a restaurant. On the other hand, the lack of definition makes it difficult for operators to know how to plan and what to offer. It's more important than ever to understand how your guests use your physical restaurant at every hour and how profitable they make your business per square foot during the times they are with you. Having this knowledge will help you know if and how to scale down your menu, staff or hours if business slows in the months ahead. At a time when consumers expect a lot from restaurants, understand where you're best able to provide it and where you need to draw the line.



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