

Foodservice Updates

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Harness video to market your restaurant

You've likely heard some Cinderella stories when it comes to restaurants and TikTok. A happy guest posts a creative video and the next day, the surprised restaurant operator opens to a line of 100 people waiting to eat. (That's roughly what happened last December for Skirt Steak, the New York restaurant serving steak and unlimited fries.) To be sure, TikTok packs some power when it comes to restaurant marketing. But hitting on that lightning-in-a-bottle moment where you send a post viral can be pretty elusive. On top of that, tastes for different platforms shift so quickly that if you're not among the early adopters of a platform that then becomes popular, you may not get much traction. While there is no formula for capturing a moment that ends up going viral, it's important to focus on the constant: video remains an important tool to be used for restaurant marketing. The restaurant industry is ready-made for video promotion – there is a steady supply of behind-the-scenes action to feature, an ever-changing range of challenges and surprises, and sights and sounds that appeal to people's senses. Make it a habit to capture this content – or give the task to a staff member to manage. Share a recipe or promote a new special via video. Launch a contest or spread the word about an event. Across social media platforms, from Facebook to Instagram to TikTok, video content is getting the most attention from users (and therefore the most focus from the people running those platforms). But focus less on the platform and more on finding creative ways to use video to get your restaurant's name out there so you're ready to share it in a range of ways. It may even be more about inspiring your guests to do it for you. Encourage guests who have positive experiences to share them as video posts on their favorite platform in exchange for a free drink or appetizer during their next visit. Who knows? One video post may end up sending hundreds of guests to your door.



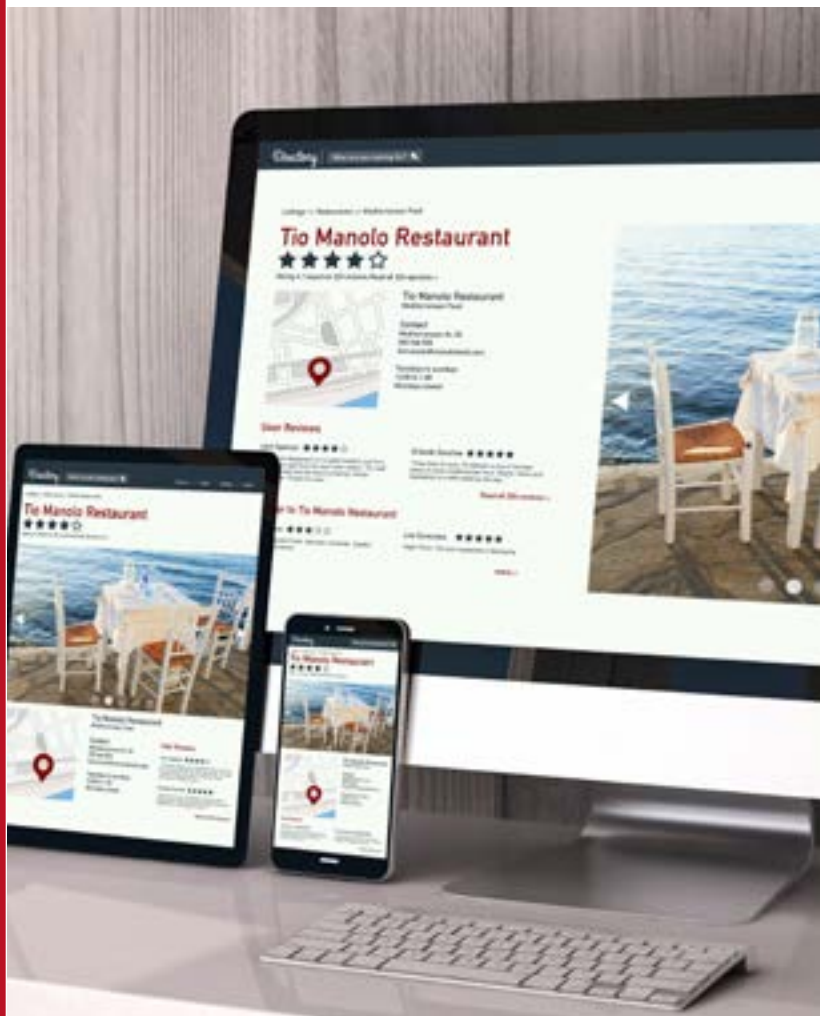
Separating hope from reality with virtual brands

The past few years have been a time of reinvention for restaurants and now, amidst inflation and with a likely recession ahead, restaurant brands need to be creative and resourceful to remain in business. Virtual brands, once touted as a helpful means of diversifying business when dining rooms had to close, have now been around long enough for more nuanced assessments to emerge. Michael Jacobs, co-founder and the original CEO of Ordermark and someone who helped conceive of Nextbite, recently told The Spoon that virtual brands are hardly a lifeboat for a restaurant that is floundering. Really, their value lies in expense savings – benefiting from joint purchasing power and shared business resources. They may well make good business sense, though mostly for restaurants that can identify several complementary brands that have similar needs. Call Team Four Foodservice to find out how they can help you leverage your buying power.



Automate responses to common questions

If you have a business profile on Google and your staff regularly spends time responding to guest questions submitted via the search engine, a new automated tool may help save you some time. Search Engine Journal reports that business profiles on Google can now set automated responses to specific questions – kind of like a customer service chatbot on a website. Further, you can add links to these responses to provide online visitors with the information they need. Just go to “my business” in your Google browser, then click customers, messages, menu, message settings and finally manage frequently asked questions to add questions and responses to your profile.





Chickpea casarecce with lentils, mushrooms, red pepper, parsley, and mint

Ingredients:

- 20 Oz. Barilla® chickpea casarecce
- 15 Oz. Can Brown lentils
- 6 Tbsp. Extra virgin olive oil
- 3 Garlic cloves, crushed
- ½ Tbsp. Crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 Lb. Assorted mushrooms (cremini, portabella, white), diced small
- 1 Red pepper, diced small
- 2 ½ Cup vegetable broth
- ¾ Cup Romano cheese, grated
- ¼ Cup Parsley, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. Mint, chopped
- Salt & black pepper to taste

Beyond hummus

Chickpeas are proving their worth in dishes well beyond hummus right now (though even within the hummus category, chickpeas are testing boundaries on the dessert menu, of all places). They pack elevated nutrition into everything from pasta to fries to even mayonnaise. At a time when pantry staples need to serve many purposes on the menu, chickpeas are naturally gluten-free, high in fiber and low on the glycemic index, making them suit a variety of dietary needs and preferences. Offer chickpea pasta with a hearty vegetable sauce and guests aren't likely to miss the conventional variety.

Food Trends



Instructions:

1. In a skillet over med/high heat add olive oil, red pepper flakes and garlic.
2. Cook for 30 seconds then add red pepper and mushrooms. Cook for 5-7 min.
3. Add lentils, vegetable broth and bring to a simmer.
4. Meanwhile, bring a pot of water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions.
5. Drain pasta and mix with the sauce and add ½ of the cheese, ½ of the mint
6. And ½ of the parsley.
7. Garnish with remaining cheese, mint and parsley.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Barilla

When workers can't stand the heat

Extreme heat has become a way of life in recent summers. The past seven years have been the seven hottest years on record. Further, the number of heat waves each year have tripled since the 1960s, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Those already-high temperatures skyrocket in a busy restaurant kitchen. Hot temperatures are not only dangerous for older workers but a drain on productivity. In a recent article in The Washington Post, Chad Asplund, a sports medicine physician and the executive director for the U.S. Council for Athletes' Health, said there are similarities between athletes and minimum-wage workers when it comes to pushing physical boundaries in the heat. "I have seen studies that demonstrate that errors for indoor workers start going up 1 percent at every degree above 77 degrees, and that once you get higher than 92 degrees, you start losing your productivity," he said. While the restaurant industry lacks regulations when it comes to managing heat in foodservice kitchens, expect that to change as more parts of the U.S. experience unseasonably high temperatures – and think now about how you may need to adapt your business to provide relief, in the form of breaks and substitute staff.



#FoodSafety

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Could a recall be on the horizon?

There are almost always warning signs when a product recall is in your future, according to food safety expert Rob Kooijmans. In a recent interview with New Food, he said it's a common mistake for people in the industry to overlook the signs – but being more vigilant could mean avoiding a food safety incident that harms someone and damages your reputation. Kooijmans said early warning signs include food safety-related complaints and repeated negative feedback from customers about a particular product or batch. When this happens, checking internal food safety protocols is important, as well as monitoring supplier food safety issues, since he said half of all recalls are the result of problems related to the supplier.



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Assess your ESG practices

Environmental, social and governance standards (ESG) are fast becoming must-have pillars of responsibility for organisations across industry sectors. These standards generally tie a company's corporate compensation to performance metrics in areas including environmental impacts and workforce diversity. A number of brands in the restaurant industry have publicly shared their ESG standards. Most recently Papa John's, but also Starbucks, Wendy's, Chipotle and McDonald's have made announcements tying their corporate compensation to ESG goals. Across sectors, ESG standards tend to give brands some environmentally friendly luster with investors and consumers, even though they aren't perfect indicators of how environmentally friendly a company may be. (As a recent report from the Harvard Business Review stated, "ESG ratings are based on...the impact of the changing world on the company's profits, not the reverse.") Regardless, ESG standards are increasingly shining a spotlight on what brands are – and aren't – doing with regard to the environment and social responsibility. Even if you don't have formal ESG standards, it's prudent to look at what other brands are saying about their practices and consider what commitments you can make to reduce waste, offer sustainably sourced items on your menu, adopt environmentally friendly products and practices, and improve efforts at diversity and inclusion. Your guests and potential staff are watching – and you have an opportunity to attract them through your actions.



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:

1-888-891-3103 or visit our web site at www.teamfourfoods.com and www.valuefour.com