

Foodservice Updates

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Shield your restaurant against cyber threats

In recent months, three restaurant ordering platforms were the target of cyberattacks that led to the theft of more than 50,000 payment card records from at least 311 restaurants, according to the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future. The records, which were stolen from MenuDrive, Harbortouch and InTouchPOS, were posted for sale on the dark web. While cyberattacks have become so frequent across industries that they don't necessarily make headlines for the individual businesses affected anymore, helping your restaurant become a more difficult target can go far in helping it avoid an attack. Talk to your tech vendors about the evolving best practices for avoiding a breach or managing one if it happens. It's important to patch and update software regularly, encrypt sensitive information, upgrade devices that are no longer supported by the manufacturer, enforce strong passwords and multi-factor authentication for everyone logging on to your system, develop and enforce strong security policies for employees using their own devices at work, and train staff on an ongoing basis about the best security practices that can prevent a breach. Your insurer can also advise you on cybersecurity protections and coverages, both to help you prevent a breach and to get your business get back up and running promptly if it does experience one.



Apply manufacturing's efficiencies to your kitchen

While so much customer-facing restaurant technology has been adopted in the past few years, many restaurant kitchens are still playing catch-up. If your kitchen is a place in your business that is struggling with inefficiencies, consider adopting tech that applies manufacturing processes to it. The Spoon reports that companies including Powerhouse Dynamics, Perfect Company and Orbisk are handling such tasks as monitoring kitchens in real time to optimize labor allocation, ingredient portioning, food waste reduction and other aspects of operation



Prepare for greater personalization

While restaurants aren't yet offering guests fully personalized menus, that kind of customization is an enhancement that's likely to be a more common aspect of the restaurant experience in the coming years. Those businesses with a treasure trove of guest data at their fingertips will be in the best position to capitalize on the change. Right now, you can take steps to strengthen the historical information you have to draw from. How can you tap the technology you have to better understand who your guests are, what foods and promotions they are drawn to, and when they like to order from you?





Pita power

Mediterranean diets are among the few diets that have retained their popularity with nutritionists and consumers alike over the years. If your guests are looking for more Mediterranean-style dishes, pita bread can be a versatile carrier for healthy ingredients on your appetizer and entrée menus. Consider filling it with ingredients like chickpeas, sweet potatoes and greens for a light sandwich option, toasting pita triangles to serve as scoops for hummus or as Mediterranean-style nachos, or topping it with roasted vegetables for a health-conscious pizza.

Food Trends

Pita Bread

Ingredients:

- 1 Rich 7" Sheeted Pizza Dough
Flour, as needed



Instructions:

1. Keep rolls in freezer until ready to use.
2. Pan 2 x3 on sheet pan, lined with a vegetable sprayed pan liner.
3. Cover with plastic wrap, sprayed with a vegetable oil, or place on a roll rack with a rack cover to prevent the product from drying out. Place in a refrigerator overnight to thaw.
4. Once dough is thawed allow to reach room temperature, keeping dough covered to prevent from drying out.
5. Lightly flour the dough and roll into a 8" inch round diameter.
6. Place directly on the deck of a 475 to 500 degree preheated deck oven. If a deck oven is not available invert a sheet pan in a convection oven set at 425 to 450 degrees and place dough directly on the preheated inverted sheet pan.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Ken's

Get ready for cold and flu season

After more than two years of uneasiness over the first signs of sickness — and uncertainty over whether a mild cough was the start of the flu, Covid, a cold, or nothing at all — we're likely in for more of the same this year. Review your procedures for staff sickness, absence and substitute coverage this season so you can bring as much clarity as possible to a murky issue. If you have relaxed standards around masking and other personal protective equipment over the summer, it may be time to reinstate them in the interest of protecting staff and guests from illness.



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Make new-worker safety a priority

More than one-third of work-related injuries happen during people's first year on the job — and the most insurance claims from first-year workers (53 percent) come from the restaurant industry. That's according to the 2022 Injury Impact Report from Travelers, which examined 1.5 million workers' compensation claims over a four-year period. Keep this in mind as you onboard and train new staff, particularly as other important concerns like Covid regulations, food safety and staffing vie for attention in restaurant kitchens. At a time when so many restaurants are stretched for resources, ensure you at least take stock of what basic knowledge and support people need to prevent injury before they begin work.



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Protect your restaurant's long-term sustainability

When so many supplies are scarce and restaurant operators are facing mounting pressure to source popular menu ingredients or suitable substitutes, cutting corners on sustainability is understandable. But increasingly, consumers hinge their spending on the degree of trust they have in the ethics of a business. Further, any sustainability risks within your supply chain could

damage the value of your brand, impact your ability to adapt to change and make it difficult to remain in business. Being clear about your own mission and values can help you communicate them to suppliers, employees, investors and customers — and help you hold yourself and others accountable. In a recent report from New Food Magazine, Rick Sanderson, founder of the STAR Index ESG Platform, advises brands to focus on four P's to gauge their starting point in this effort and to actively monitor progress: people, politics, platforms and partners. Do you have people around you who can adapt to ever-changing conditions and who ideally bring some external insights to their work?

Are all departments and influencers in your business aligned in their willingness to adapt to changes, or do you have skeptics who need to be persuaded? Do you have the technology platforms needed to monitor and measure your progress, as well as to communicate with customers, suppliers and other parties? Are you aligned with partners who can help support your strategy and objectives — and who are motivated by their own mission to improve sustainability?



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