

# Foodservice Updates

Week of:  
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## In some cities, lunch is looking different lately

Perhaps it has to do with the flexibility of post-pandemic schedules, the rise in hard-to-acquire dinner reservations in various places around the country, the need for restaurants to maximize sales opportunities, or all of the above, but the demand for quality lunch options appears to be on the rise. According to one restaurateur in a recent report from Eater New York, lunch has become the “new post-pandemic 5 p.m. reservation,” with multi-course, prix-fixe lunch menus popping up around the city. Offering enhanced lunch options could work well beyond major metropolitan areas like New York: Dinner reservations are becoming more difficult to secure at restaurants in many cities and towns around the country, and recent reports have indicated that restaurants are seeing more opportunity in catering (which has a lot of sales potential at lunchtime). Lunch could be an opportunity to give guests access to an elevated experience for what feels like a better value, provide your staff greater flexibility with scheduling, and make more efficient use of your space and inventory. Could innovating at lunchtime work for your business?





# Management Minute

## The layered benefits of dynamic pricing

Earlier this year, when Wendy's CEO Kirk Tanner announced a \$20 million investment in digital menu boards to test strategies like dynamic pricing, the backlash was immediate and fierce. The public's assumption was that restaurants were going the way of Uber by implementing surge pricing during peak periods. But the controversy overshadowed how restaurants can use pricing flexibility to their benefit – not merely to make money, but also as a means of providing value to guests, making delivery more financially sustainable, and reducing waste. As Food on Demand reports, Shawn Walchef, founder and CEO of San Diego-based Cali BBQ, uses technology from Juicer to adjust delivery pricing on his restaurant's \$15 pulled pork sandwich. He spent more than a year testing how delivery customers responded to paying between \$12 and \$18 for the sandwich at different times of day. He hasn't gotten pushback, so now he uses dynamic pricing to help use up excess product in the afternoon (and reward customers who order at that time of day). He plans to test the model with other menu items and locations. In the meantime, he has been able to boost his delivery revenue by \$1,300 a month on average. If you're looking for ways to boost traffic during slow periods in a way that feels like a good value to customers, improve delivery revenue, and use your inventory more efficiently, tech that gives you flexible pricing capabilities could be a useful tool in your toolbox.



## Do we put too much trust in gloves?

In the U.S., there are hundreds of millions of gloves used every day in medical and food settings. When people wear them, they are taking an action intended to protect the safety of their task. But what if this assumption of safety is misplaced? In a recent podcast promoted by Food Safety Magazine, food safety experts Francine Shaw and Matt Regusci interviewed Steve Ardagh, the CEO and Founder of Eagle Protect, about how regulations governing glove safety haven't caught up with reality. Ardagh said FDA food compliance as it relates to gloves only focuses on chemical migration – not whether the gloves are actually clean or intact out of the box. Five years ago, Ardagh began working with the microbiologist Barry Michaels, who has researched glove and hand cleanliness extensively, to test the safety of gloves coming into the U.S. market. He said tests of 2800 gloves from 26 brands of medical and food-compliant gloves found that more than 50 percent of test samples had indicators of fecal matter, as well as 260 additional pathogens including E. coli, salmonella and listeria. Subsequently, they developed a test process to make sure the gloves reaching the U.S. have a good standard of cleanliness. It's troubling news and underlines the importance of personal hygiene – and not relying on other products as a first line of defense when it comes to protecting food safety.



**#FoodSafety**

# Foodservice CEO

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## Keep an eye on digital marketing opportunities

When Nation's Restaurant News surveyed 600 restaurant operators for its second annual Restaurant Technology Outlook, they found that digital marketing is an area of tension for many businesses right now: Operators understand that digital marketing efforts are critical to driving traffic and sales, yet across segments, the vast majority of survey respondents reported being only "somewhat satisfied" with their existing digital marketing tools – or worse. (The same was true for related tools for loyalty programs, integrations and APIs, customer data platforms and CRM systems.) Tellingly, the survey found that digital marketing topped the list of investment priorities for restaurants, with 46 percent of respondents saying they would support this area of their business with investment. In the quick-service segment, an even larger percentage of respondents (54 percent) were in favor of digital marketing as a top priority for investment. In a recent webinar, "Emerging Tech Strategies for Restaurants," Christi Ravneberg of Nation's Restaurant News said operators' dissatisfaction with their digital marketing tools, growing knowledge and confidence about guest data, and willingness to invest, combined with the expanding applications of artificial intelligence, could deliver a "perfect storm for a lot of exciting investment and innovation on the marketing front in the next year." If your restaurant is looking to enhance its current capabilities in this area, you will likely find opportunities to innovate (and perhaps negotiate) as providers bring new services to market and vie for business in a market eager for better options.



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