Foodservice Updates

Restaurant brands walk the talk on nutrition

When Mintel released its 2024 Global Food and Drink Trends report, they predicted that this year, we should "expect brands to help consumers live longer, healthier lives." To be sure, consumer consciousness about health and nutrition has been on an upward trend in recent years, with growing awareness about functional food and drink, the degree of processing involved in what we consume, and the ability of food to help extend the healthy years of a person's life. To that end, restaurant brands are responding to this environment in new ways. For one, Nation's Restaurant News reports that the quick-service salad brand Salad and Go recently named its first-ever salad nutrition officer, registered dietician Maya Feller. On the Salad and Go website, Feller is providing tips to help guests incorporate more healthy food into their diets, as well as collaborating with the restaurant's chef on a video series aimed at dispelling food myths and misconceptions, the report says. If making healthier choices is important to your guests and a key component of your restaurant's brand, there are steps you can take – both direct and subtle – to nudge people in a healthier direction when it comes to their food and drink. You can promote the pleasure of healthier items with descriptions that focus on taste as opposed to health benefits – "citrus-glazed carrots" as opposed to "fiber-rich carrots," for example. You can also place healthier options front and center when guests are reviewing the menu, flag them with special logos on your menu, or suggest them as side dish options when upselling an order.

Tech Talk

Can tech take a bigger bite out of your food waste?

Research from Recycle Track Systems found that the restaurant industry spends an estimated $162 billion every year in costs related to wasted food. That's money that can fund critical tech investment, new hires, or other areas of your business. While tech tools to help restaurant operators manage restaurant waste have been on the rise, food waste continues to be a costly challenge for many oeprators. When Nation's Restaurant News surveyed 600 operators as part of their second annual Restaurant Technology Outlook this year, they asked what features are most important when considering tech upgrades for the back of house. The top answer, for 35 percent of respondents, was reducing food waste. So what can be done? Assess how well your business understands the sources of loss. There could be many, including inventory over-ordering or other mismanagement, inconsistency in portioning, coupon abuse, or problems with food spoilage along the supply chain. A recent Forbes report advises operators to create prescriptive models to avoid over-preparing food items. For instance, could you provide your staff with workflows that incorporate waste reduction practices as part of your efforts at continuous improvement? Doing so could not only cut waste but also boost staff productivity. Improving your view of the supply chain through Internet of Things-connected sensors can help too, as well as ensuring you and your suppliers have a shared commitment to transparency.

Take the guesswork out of handwashing

We all know it's important to wash our hands – and chances are good that people on your team aren't consciously walking around with contaminated hands. Yet in a demanding, fast-paced foodservice environment, it can be easy for handwashing to happen less frequently and less thoroughly than it should. But it's so important: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one million deaths each year could be prevented if everyone routinely washed their hands – and a large percentage of foodborne disease outbreaks are spread by contaminated hands. Fortunately, technology is taking human error out of the equation for food safety tasks, to include handwashing. One case in point is the Handscanner, a device from PathSpot that is being dubbed the "handwashing lie detector." The small device can be wall-mounted next to a handwashing sink. After a worker washes their hands with soap and water, then dries them with a paper towel, they place their hands under the scanner. Within a couple of seconds, the device uses non-UV LED imaging technology to identify residual contaminants on hands and wrists. The technology, which is used in healthcare settings, is able to detect contamination in hard-to-clean areas like under fingernails and around jewelry. It is already in use in 10,000 foodservice locations worldwide, including franchised Taco Bell, Arby's and Chopt restaurants.

#FoodSafety

Foodservice **CEO**

www.foodserviceceo.com

Plug the holes in your data security

As data has become a critical asset and contributor to the success of restaurant businesses, so has its security. Unfortunately, having so many more digital assets to protect means there are exponentially more opportunities for threat actors to breach your systems and seize data. The consequences of data breaches are significant: Research from IBM found that in 2020, the estimated cost of a data breach in the global hospitality sector was $1.72 million. Just one year later, it climbed to $3.03 million. But fortunately, a growing assortment of tech tools are making it possible for restaurant operators to ramp up their security and be alerted in the moment if and when problems occur. For example, a recent report from Foodservice Consultants Society International recommends restaurant groups use integrated access control systems to restrict unauthorized access to sensitive information and areas of the operation, as well as monitor any unauthorized access attempts in real time. Further, mobile security management tools including remote monitoring can keep watch over system security around the clock, regardless of the restaurant's location, and alert designated people to potential threats so they can mitigate them when time is critical. If you're still at the stage of trying to assess your operation to determine what data you should protect and how – or even if you just want to make sure you're not overlooking vulnerabilities, the National Restaurant Association offers a digital security guide that helps operators identify risks, protect against them, detect and respond to threats, and then recover from them with minimal disruption.