

Foodservice Updates

In This Issue

- [Got pests? Get to the root of why they're there.](#)
- [Using AI to optimize your menu modeling](#)
- [Communicating to better manage cyber threats](#)

Sourcing the clean ingredients guests crave

Nearly three-quarters of the U.S. food supply is ultra-processed, according to new research published by Northeastern University's Network Science Institute, and these foods generate a higher risk of developing a variety of health problems. Consumer awareness is growing around the connection between ultra-processed foods and poor health. This could well have an impact on the dining choices of those who have grown more health-conscious in recent years, since conventional wisdom says the best way to ensure you're consuming a healthy diet is to prepare your meals yourself. But that doesn't have to be the case. More foodservice suppliers are looking to support consumer interest in healthy lifestyles while providing the taste and variety that can make nutritious eating easier to maintain – so there is significant opportunity for foodservice operators here. U.S. Foods, for one, has an “unpronounceables list” of 80 ingredients they avoid or replace in the foods they develop for select foodservice clients. The list contains items such as artificial colors or flavors, nitrites and nitrates, and high-fructose corn syrup. “This appeals to many of our customers looking for products that are produced with clean-label profiles similar to what they might make themselves back of house,” said Stacey Kinkaid, U.S. Foods vice president of product development, in an interview with Food Business News. The company uses the AI-supported e-commerce portal MOXe to suggest ingredients that suit the evolving preferences of their clients' guests, so it is likely to become easier for foodservice operators to find ingredients and substitutes that meet their need for minimally processed menus.





Tech Talk

Using AI to optimize your menu modeling

Thinking about how technology can optimize your business can be overwhelming when there are so many options and potential factors to track. But it can also be a huge opportunity – to manage costs and to understand (and serve) your guests so much better than before. Take AI and its applications with menu pricing. At a time when many reports say consumers are reaching their limit when it comes to restaurant prices, it's critical to know where the line between price and demand exists for your guests. If you have quality data about your business, AI can analyze it and come up with pricing strategies that consider your guests' preferences, as well as how your traffic shifts based on the weather or time of day. Restaurants are at a point where they can use dynamic pricing like airlines have been using it for years (when a person takes a flight, they don't assume they have paid the same price as their seatmate, right?). We're approaching this point for restaurants. You can harness AI to create personalized pricing options for guests, to make pricing adjustments in real time based on the factors that work for your restaurant, and to strike the right balance between your prices and the demand they accommodate. You can also use your pricing to make your regular guests feel special – with offers and special prices that you appear to have dreamed up with only them in mind. New doors are opening that can help you build stronger connections with your guests. Are you gathering quality data and ensuring you're making the best marketing decisions you can from it?



Got pests? Get to the root of why they're there.

Your kitchen and discarded waste can be magnets for flies and other pests in the summer. While pesticides can get rid of pests in your business, they're really just a temporary solution – particularly if you don't eliminate the reason they are attracted to your facility and their ability to enter it. Your food safety culture plays an important role here. The investments you make in this area can help you avoid having to spend continuously on a pest management program. Putting in the time and effort to protect your sanitation day to day is critical. That includes ensuring your team isn't giving pests easy points of entry into your facility and that they're cleaning surfaces and equipment deeply enough, even when it seems there isn't enough time to do it. Food Safety Magazine advises businesses to define responsibilities around integrated pest management in their facility and develop SMART goals for staff to uphold them. Discuss pest management in meetings and review and recommendations from your pest control company with them. Train them to identify ways to make ongoing improvements and empower them to respond, so a minor slip-up doesn't have a chance to balloon into an infestation.



#FoodSafety

Foodservice CEO

www.foodserviceceo.com

Communicating to better manage cyber threats

Businesses are in a challenging spot when it comes to cybersecurity. In addition to having to think about the systems that they need to protect guests' personal information and other business assets from potential theft in a digital age, employers must consider their practices for protecting and communicating with their employees about these threats. Lawsuits filed recently by at least 11 Panera workers against their employer underscore this point. The company said they detected a cyberattack in March of this year, after which they engaged a cybersecurity firm and law enforcement. The subsequent investigation found that threat actors had accessed corporate files during the attack. However, Restaurant Business reports that the workers involved in the lawsuits say they weren't officially notified about the breach until June 13 or later, when they received letters indicating they may have been impacted. Cyberattacks are becoming an unfortunate part of doing business – in the restaurant industry and beyond. While nearly half of all small- to medium-size businesses have experienced a cyberattack, 43 percent of them don't understand what security they need, according to cyber research from Sage Group. What's more, there is also a lack of understanding about the time it can take to identify and contain a data breach – an average of 277 days, according to IBM and Ponemon Institute research, though breaches involving lost or stolen credentials take even longer at 328 days. At a time when restaurants share so many digital connections with suppliers and vendors, these attacks are difficult to avoid. It's important for a restaurant's vendors and other partners to have a shared commitment to cybersecurity hygiene, for sure. But in case breaches do occur, it's just as important to have clear communication policies to help stakeholders understand the restaurant's efforts to protect them, as well as any risks they may be taking on as part of working or transacting in an increasingly digital environment.



To find out how Team Four can help your business save money contact us at:

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

©2024 Team Four Foodservice, all rights reserved