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Editor's letter /



While we often read that customers are all foodie-focused and health-obsessed these days, a work culture that is increasingly encouraging grabbing and going over genuine gastronomy doesn't always tend to agree. And this has been backed up by a recent survey by Ubamarket, which uncovered some somewhat worrying results.



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The big interview

After speaking to 2,000 UK adults, the company found that the convenience-led habits of a significant proportion of respondents could be the perfect breeding ground for health problems such as type 2 diabetes and, as ever, obesity. The most worrying findings were that some 59% of Brits – that's 24,954,000 people – are not 100% confident that they know all of the ingredients that are in the food that they order online; 10% consider home delivery services to be an integral way to eat a full meal in the week; and a further 10% don't know how to cook a good/healthy meal from scratch.

Some of these statistics are as worrying as they are baffling, and one solution might be for caterers to not only consider their customers' nutritional needs while they are actually physically in the workplace. Investing in subsidised schemes that offer decent meals to take away at the end of the day would undoubtedly benefit many staff from an educational perspective, as well as from a health one. And, while they're at it, it might just benefit the caterer from a profit and a CSR standpoint too...

H Norman

Henry Norman
Editor



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British food

Offering decent meals to take away at the end of the day would undoubtedly benefit many staff



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PUBLISHED BY:
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PRINTED BY: Buxton Press

The paper used within this publication has been sourced from Chain-of-Custody certified manufacturers, operating within international environmental standards, to ensure sustainable sourcing of the raw materials, sustainable production and to minimise our carbon footprint.





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AREA MANAGER OF THE YEAR

This award is for groups, operations and district managers within a contract catering company, who provide a key link between the contractor and the client. The judges are particularly keen to hear how the nominee has secured contract extensions, developed their team, ensured stakeholder satisfaction, affected change, delivered financial results and any other aspect that they feel demonstrated their ability.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY AWARD

Nominations are invited for an individual unit manager who operates in the B&I sector of the contract catering industry. Judges will be looking for evidence of financial acumen, innovation, retention and/or sales success, internal and external recognition, social responsibility, leadership and delivering change.

CONTRACT CATERER AWARD

Competition is tough in the contract catering world and it is the same for this award. The entrant's achievements could include impressive sales growth and retention, people development, strategic development or CSR initiatives, accreditations that have been awarded, service innovations, or any other area that has had a big impact on the company and its people.

CSR AWARD

CSR is about how a business is run in its entirety, encompassing social, economic, environmental and sustainability factors. The judges are particularly keen that details of initiatives introduced are backed up by measurable data. They should be able to show measurable results for all stakeholders and accreditations that have been achieved. Short case studies can also be included.

EDUCATION AWARD

Nominations are invited for an individual unit manager who operates in the education sector of the contract catering industry. Judges will be looking for evidence of financial acumen, innovation, retention and/or sales success, internal and external recognition, social responsibility, leadership and delivering change.

EXECUTIVE CHEF OF THE YEAR

The winning chef will be able to consistently demonstrate excellent food development skills, be creative and lead from the front. The judges will also be keen to see how the chef has developed his/her own career and their team, as well as their menus, and played a part in the wider chef community (through supporting charities and/or industry associations). Nominations should also demonstrate the chef's financial acumen and any proactive steps they have taken towards providing a more sustainable food offer.

RISING STAR AWARD

This award is open to employees under the age of 30 who work in any aspect of the contract catering sector. Judges will be looking for candidates who have shown initiative, passed qualifications, received recognition internally and/or externally and demonstrated leadership skills, despite being near the beginning of their contract catering career. Most of all, they will have shown signs that they will evolve into one of the sector's leaders of the future.

INNOVATION AWARD

Nominations for this award are open to individuals who work across the sector. Entrants could show how they have introduced a new concept, product, service or process that has contributed to the highest standard of catering. Success could be quantified by improvements in meal uptake, finance or partnership with clients.

MARKETING AWARD

Entries are requested for an initiative, brand or campaign that has proven successful with determinable results that justify the execution of the promotion. This can be in the form of a sustained campaign or for a one-off event. Nominations must cover initiatives that have been no more than 24 months in development and 12 months in action.

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT AWARD

A company is only as strong as its team and this award will recognise an individual who has made excellent progress in developing the perfect team. The judges are keen to hear about new team initiatives, training programmes, employee engagement, recruitment initiatives, and any other activities that demonstrate achievement in this field.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

A company is only as good as its leader. Have you got a remarkable CEO or MD who has made your company stand out? If so, show us. This should be supported by information on the company's development through growth people retention, financial achievement, quality standards, CSR and customer satisfaction.

SPORTS, LEISURE & EVENT CATERING AWARD

Nominations are invited for an individual unit manager who operates in the sports and leisure, and/or events, sector of the contract catering industry. Judges will be looking for evidence of financial acumen, innovation, retention and/or sales success, internal and external recognition, social responsibility, leadership and delivering change.

UNIT CHEF OF THE YEAR

This award recognises truly exceptional chefs who are at the sharp end of the contract catering industry - in the kitchen - on a daily basis. They must be able to demonstrate that they have flair, creativity and menu planning skills, and that they use them on a regular basis. The judges would like to hear about impressive projects they have been involved with, results they have attained and feedback they have received. The nominee can be employed in any part of the foodservice sector.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Nominations are requested for the one person you believe stands above all others in their lifetime dedication to the United Kingdom's contract catering sector.

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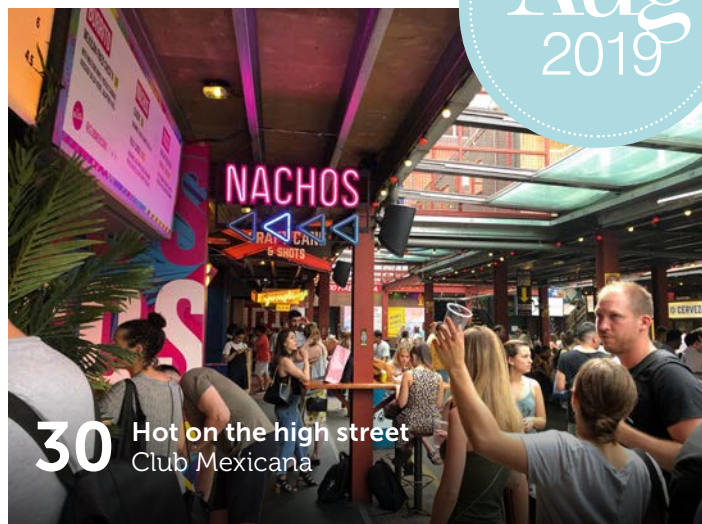


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News /

Compass acquires Dine

Compass Group UK & Ireland has acquired Dine Contract Catering. Dine will continue to operate as a distinct brand within the Compass portfolio, sharing best practice and innovation to enhance the range of food and service on offer.

Chris Garside, managing director of Compass Group UK & Ireland, said: "We're delighted to welcome the Dine Contract Catering team to the Compass family. We share a common ethos and values, and at the heart of both companies is a love of great food, a total commitment to our people and a continuous drive for exceptional, consistent service standards."

Ian Cartwright, managing director of Dine Contract Catering, added: "To be working within a company of Compass's size, prestige and standing within our industry is an honour. This is both an exciting opportunity for me personally but also a fantastic one for our people to help further their own careers by growing within the Dine Contract Catering brand but also in the wider Compass business. Our clients remain our priority and I can assure all of them that this will never change."

“

We share a common ethos and values

”

BaxterStorey celebrates chef graduates' success

⬇ BaxterStorey recently celebrated the success and achievements of its 2019 Chef Academy graduates. Thirty-four talented chefs from BaxterStorey, Searcys and Holroyd Howe completed the award-winning Chef Academy.

The Academy represents one of many programmes run by BaxterStorey that demonstrates its commitment and innovative approach to training and development. Since its launch in 2003 with the aim of enabling chefs to progress to more senior positions within BaxterStorey, the Academy has seen more than 450 students graduate.

BaxterStorey chairman Alastair Storey said: "We are lucky to be part of a thriving hospitality industry – one which the UK economy relies on. Nurturing talent and celebrating successes, is how we will continue to grow both the business and the industry. Our graduate chefs are ambassadors to our business, and I am proud to celebrate such a motivated and talented group of people."





“

We're delighted with our recent
contract wins with these exciting clients

”

Grazing growth continues

⬆ Grazing has won a raft of new contracts worth more than £1.5m over the last six months. In this period, the caterer was relisted as an approved supplier at The View from the Shard on levels 68 to 72 at The Shard following a competitive tender process.

It has also won a three-year deal with an international law firm among a number of new B&I wins, along with contracts at a fintech firm in East London, and an insurance business within the Scalpel building (20 Lime Street). The new contracts highlight growing demand for Grazing's innovative off-site production, on-site service model, which ensures employers are able to offer quality staff dining without the significant investment required to install kitchen facilities.

Sam Hurst, founder and chief executive of Grazing, said: "We're delighted with our recent contract wins with these exciting clients. Having invested heavily in our central London product kitchens and R&D in recent years to develop and roll out our hybrid catering service, it's great to see all of this hard work and investment starting to bear fruit."

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Armstrong wins ACE Robyns Award

➔ The Association of Catering Excellence (ACE) announced the winner of the 2019 ACE Robyns Award at its annual summer party, which was held at Kings Place in London recently. Rebecca Armstrong, operations manager for The Genuine Dining Company, was declared the overall winner in front of over 200 hospitality guests. She has responsibility for eight sites around London, training and developing 40 members of staff.

In second place was Liam Hatcher from CH&Co; while, because there was such a high standard of entries this year, Emma Abruzzese from Vacherin and Charlotte Rouse from BaxterStorey were both highly commended.

Tim Jones, who founded CH&Co with his late wife

Robyn, was also one of the judges. He said: "I would like to congratulate all of the entrants. I know that Robyn would have been very pleased with the winner and with the success of the awards. She would be very humbled that these awards continue in her name."

Armstrong won an overnight stay, including dinner and breakfast in bed, at the brand new Standard London. She will also receive the Robyns Trophy and lifetime membership of ACE.

The next ACE event will be Ready Steady Cook on 26th September. Go to www.acegb.org for details.



COLLEAGUE CHRIS MITCHELL ACCEPTING THE AWARD FOR REBECCA ARMSTRONG

“
I know that Robyn would have
been very pleased with the winner
”

Sodexo Energy and Resources secures new contracts worth £6.5m per year

➔ Sodexo Energy and Resources has been awarded three new facilities management (FM) contracts worth a combined £6.5m a year. The three contracts are with Total E&P UK, Doosan Babcock and a major player in the energy market.

Total E&P UK has appointed Sodexo to provide a range of FM services to over 1,200 employees at three sites in Aberdeen and the Shetland Islands as part of a new five-year contract. Doosan Babcock has also awarded a new three-year contract to Sodexo to provide multiple FM services to over 1,200 employees at six locations in the UK. This latter will see Sodexo's brand-new Let's Eat food offer introduced.

Susan Elston, senior vice president for Sodexo's Offshore and Marine business in the UK and Ireland, said: "We are delighted to have been awarded these contracts. We are looking forward to partnering with all three clients to ensure their employees are given the best quality of life based on three core factors: safety, comfort and social engagement."



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Mary's Meals @MarysMeals

This #CharityTuesday you can transform a hungry child's life with the gift of nutritious school meals: bit.ly/2hKfask

B&I Catering @BandICatering

Impressive work from @BidfoodUK at #Lords yesterday, teaching local children how to eat and cook healthily. Mike Gating was a total gent and was leading from the front #Cricket #Middxmoves



Mylegoman @mylegoman

My favourite people from #Skills-ForChefs! Two good friends, rock stars, kitchen goddesses with a couple of bits of plastic! The very fabulous legends Lisa Allen and Chantelle Nicholson

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Levy UK launches its new vision

Levy UK has unveiled its new brand vision, which says gives food its rightful place on the agenda. A fresh new perspective has been outlined by the business based on four values: fantastic food and drink, nice people, powerful partnerships, and cutting Edge.

Jonathan Davies, managing director of Levy UK, said: "To deliver truly legendary experiences, we need to empower our talented team members, foster relationships with like-minded ethical companies and continually improve the guest experience by embedding groundbreaking technology. By breaking traditional formats, we will give food its rightful place in a new world."

"The conversation has changed and so have our responsibilities; tackling the long-term issues that the hospitality industry has been facing for a long time is our commitment to the next generation. Our new purposeful intent will allow us to provide healthier, great tasting food, as well as combating food waste and reducing our impact on the environment."

"We will give food its rightful place in a new world"



Caffè Nero CEO heads up lunch! keynotes

Will Stratton-Morris is the latest big industry name to join lunch!'s new Coffee Shop Keynote Theatre line-up. The UK CEO of Caffè Nero will take part in an exclusive interview at the UK's biggest annual trade show for the café, coffee shop and food-to-go sector, which will take place on 19th and 20th September at ExCeL London.

Josh Brown, head of coffee and commercial development for Harris + Hoole, will be making a welcome return to the show. Having previously spoken at lunch! 2017, he'll be outlining what's new from the 40-strong speciality coffee shop chain.

"lunch! is an unmissable event for all coffee shop and café operators," said Edward Parkes and Henry Ayers, founders of The Gentlemen Baristas, who will also be interviewed at the show. "We look forward to seeing our industry there."



25

Meiko UK recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

B&I switches plastic for... potato starch!

H2O Publishing, which produces B&I magazine, no longer delivers any of its titles in plastic wrapping. The publishing house, which sends out magazines to 16 key sectors across foodservice, hospitality and healthcare, has made the industry-leading switch from plastic to a fully-compostable wrapping made from potato starch.

The switch means that the thousands of modern operators who receive B&I can now use every issue's packaging to line their food waste bins. This not only saves plastic, but also encourages sustainable composting at home.

Readers have been reacting to this positive news by sharing their own deliveries from H2O on Instagram, encouraging other publishers to take note and take action!





SUNIL VARMA

☝ Sunil Varma of bartlett mitchell reflects on winning Unit Chef of the Year in 2018...

I believe that the reason I was nominated for this award is because we've had a brilliant year at the contract I'm based at. We've not only grown as a unit, but also as a team. This meant we were able to retain our contract and extend it for a number of years.

We have a very cohesive team and they work as hard as I do at making the customer experience better than expected. This is at the heart of every decision we make.

The awards evening itself was awesome; it was a very special night for me and my colleagues and we all had an amazing time. It was a great to celebrate with people who mean a lot to me and our success.

I was very shocked and very nervous when my name was read out – but it was a great feeling. The effect since, as is always the case with any recognition, is that I have kept working and kept creating. It really motivates you to push on. I work for a company that gives you a lot of creative freedom within a friendly and family-like structure, so, as a result, I'm now working with other chefs in the company to create new concepts and ideas.

I'd definitely recommend that others enter the FSM Awards. I didn't even expect to be nominated, but it's always great to be recognised for our efforts!

lunch!

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SUE THOMPSON, GAYE
BULLARD AND SARAH PRENTICE

Movers & shakers

ACE appoints Thompson

Sue Thompson has officially taken over from Gaye Bullard as chair of the Association of Catering Excellence (ACE). She has been vice chair for two years and a member of the council for seven. Her new role as client services director for BaxterStorey was also announced in the same week.

"Starting a new job as well as becoming chair of ACE could have been an interesting challenge, but BaxterStorey is supportive of my involvement, and I believe the two roles complement each other very well," she said.

"I'm excited to be taking the reins from Gaye, as she has set the scene for the next generation to join in with the future of ACE. One of our biggest challenges is raising awareness among this group of the events that we run, and the benefits of networking face to face. Having younger members on the board will really help us to engage with their peers."

Bullard added: "I'm delighted to be handing stewardship of ACE over to Sue, who is highly regarded in the industry. She is a true foodie at heart and has a wide network of connections built up over the years that will be a huge benefit to ACE."

Thompson will be supported by a newly appointed vice chair, Sarah Prentice of Blue Apple. She has been an active council member for three years, acting on several sub-committees that organise events such as the ACE Quiz.

Tobun appointed to Arena committee

Tevin Tobun, chief executive of Gate Ventures (GV) Group, has been appointed to the committee of Arena. An active member of the networking organisation for more than 10 years, he has a long history of developing and supporting businesses that give back to both the sector and the communities they serve.

Tobun has been at the helm of GV Group since he founded the business in 2001. The business is the holding company behind a number of brands offering logistics services to the foodservice sector. He will help support the strategic direction of the organisation in his new role as an Arena committee member.

His appointment further underpins Arena's continual effort to remain as the sector's leading networking group. Since its launch more than 35 years ago, the organisation has brought together more than 100,000 industry professionals.

Tobun said: "It is an honour to play a more active role within Arena. Over the last 10 years as a member, I've benefited from the opportunities to meet and network with my peers.

"So too has the sector, which has reaped the rewards of the idea sharing and contact building that the countless Arena events undoubtedly generate. I look forward to working with my fellow committee members as we take Arena to the next stage in its rich history."

Steve Norris, Arena chairman, added: "I'm delighted Tevin has joined the committee. He not only brings a wealth of experience to the team, but he is also passionate about the industry and how we ensure Arena is for the future."

Other recent appointments to the Arena committee include Paul Whiteley, buying director for pubco Greene King, and Tim Adams, director of marketing and corporate sales for Bidfood.



RICHARD LEWIS

New CEO for SSP

SSP Group plc has announced the appointment of Richard Lewis as CEO of SSP UK and Ireland, effective on the 1st September. He joins from Greene King plc where, for the past two years, he has held the role of chief operating officer. He will sit on the company's group executive team and report into Simon Smith, group CEO.

Smith said: "I'm absolutely delighted to be welcoming Richard to the SSP team. With experience in operations, commercial, property and general management, and a track record of delivering strong financial performance, he's the perfect fit for the role."

Lewis added: "I'm hugely excited to be joining SSP UK and Ireland and moving into the travel F&B arena. SSP is a fantastic businesses with a great team and many opportunities for future growth. I look forward to continuing the success that Simon achieved in the role these past five years."



TEVIN TOBUN

In this series, we ask the great and the good of the B&I world: if you were to be cast away alone on a desert island, which favourite eight dishes would you choose to have with you – assuming of course that you had a kitchen and an inexhaustible supply of ingredients?



DESERT ISLAND DISHES

SAMANTHA KENNETT

Finance and HR director, Fooditude



FISH AND CHIPS

Growing up by the coast in Devon and now living by the coast in Sussex, fish and chips is a staple food. I always opt for home-cooked chips and crispy battered fish with a side portion of garden peas. Takeaway or restaurant, you always know the good places to go to by the length of the queue.

ROAST LAMB

A roast dinner was a traditional Saturday night meal in my family growing up. Infused with rosemary from the garden and served with all the trimmings, always to include cauliflower cheese and Yorkshire pudding. It usually left you needing a long walk after! Traditionally now a Sunday favourite in our house.

BEEF RAGU

This is my husband's speciality – slow-braised beef and belly pork, cooked for four to five hours with lots of garlic, red wine, smoked paprika, oregano and thyme. It is usually eaten around a table of friends with a few bottles of red.

STEAK

Whether eating at home or out, this is a classic favourite. Probably the best steak I've eaten was at a traditional steakhouse in New York, served with beef crisps and mac and cheese. Steak cooked on the barbeque at home served with griddled mushrooms is also delicious.

CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Any flavour variation of this desert classic is a delight to me. Light, creamy and indulgent, I've always got room after a meal if this is on the menu.

“

Light, creamy and indulgent, I've always got room after a meal for a crème brûlée

”

BBQ RED SNAPPER AND FRIED POTATOES

I have fond memories of staying in the Gili Islands in Indonesia and having this for dinner on a number of nights. There was a very limited menu at the time, but that didn't matter as this was perfect. The fish was wrapped with spices in a banana leaf and thrown on a makeshift barbecue, served with just fried potatoes. It was consumed while sat at a table on the beach watching the sun go down.

CHILLI CON CARNE

Spicy homemade chilli and rice just can't be beaten. It can be a regular mid-week dinner or pimped up at the weekend with extra jalapeños, nachos, dips, cheese and a dollop of soured cream on top.

PIZZA

It has to be thin crust and preferably topped with charred veg and some form of either feta or goats' cheese. I've been to some fantastic pizzerias in Paris and Rome, but we also have a great local traditional Italian that is nearly as good.



What luxury item would you take with you?

It would have to be mosquito repellent – they just love me!

What one book would you take with you?

Stephen Hawkins' Brief Answers to the Big Questions, because I bought it about a year ago and haven't had enough quiet, undisturbed time to read it yet!

Finally, if you were allowed one dish which would it be?

I think it would have to be roast lamb shoulder with crispy skin, roast potatoes, roast parsnips, cauliflower cheese, cabbage and a giant Yorkshire pudding, all served up with thick gravy and mint jelly.



ELEANOR MORRIS

FEED PEOPLE, NOT BINS

A national campaign aimed at encouraging more caterers to start measuring and assessing the impact of food waste on their businesses kicks off this September. Eleanor Morris, special hospitality and foodservice adviser for WRAP, explains all to Jane Renton

The barometer is dropping as temperatures hit unprecedentedly highs for the second time in two successive years in certain parts of Britain. This is something that has not only caused violent storms, but also escalated concerns that the recent weather patterns are not quite 'normal'.

Yet much of the debate surrounding climate change has focused on industrial activity and intensive food production; on whether climate change is man-made or something more complicated to the detriment of what may be staring us in the face: food waste. A third of the food that we produce globally is wasted. How on earth did that happen? If only we could reduce that shocking level, it would surely have a major positive impact on the climate, as well as animal and plant biodiversity. So why aren't we doing it?

There seems to be an element of learned helplessness surrounding waste management on part of some businesses and consumers, according to Eleanor Morris, special hospitality and foodservice adviser for Waste Resources Action Plan (WRAP), the UK charity working with industry to help implement the UK's wider international Courtauld Commitment to reduce food waste by 20% by 2025. "People are increasingly unhappy about food waste – we know that from our research – but feel powerless to do anything about it," she says.

But pressure is clearly mounting. More than four years into the commitment, which was signed in 2015, it seems fair to say that Britain still has some way to go, to put it mildly, if it has any hope of hitting its food waste reduction target. The hospitality industry has to date saved some £67m and cut 11% from food packaging and waste through the Hospitality and Food Service Agreement, but clearly more needs to be done. After all, the food and drink sector accounts for 20% of the UK's CO₂ emissions. When food waste ends up in landfill, it releases methane, a powerful greenhouse gas into the atmosphere.

The road to hell, however, is paved with good intentions. While there are many great initiatives out there, they tend to be done in isolation in a highly fragmented industry. The sad fact is that Britain continues to waste a million tonnes of food a year – 75% of which could have been eaten – and that this industry collectively bears a considerable degree of responsibility for a goodly chunk of that.

There are also signs that the time for talking may be over. If food businesses cannot be trusted to do the right thing voluntarily, then coercion in the form of tough legislation is necessary. Companies that continue to fail to address food waste will be "named and shamed", warned government-appointed food waste champion Ben Elliot earlier this summer.

“

A third of the food that we produce globally is wasted

”



Companies that continue to fail to address food waste will be named and shamed

Elliot, who runs a luxury concierge service, Quintessentially, and is the nephew of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, made his warning at a panel debate at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Food Waste at Westminster. He said there were some 51 organisations "in its crosshairs", which had still to sign the pledge to cut food waste or who have not taken adequate steps to address the issue. Part of his job, he added, was to become "a real irritant" to retailers, manufacturers and hospitality sector businesses, as well as to hold them accountable.

Elliot, who was appointed to his role in January by the former environment secretary Michael Gove, said a "grown-up conversation" was clearly needed with the industry. He and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs plan to launch an official Food Waste Conversation in tandem with WRAP in November.

WRAP is also planning to stage its own preliminary conversation with the industry in September, through its Guardians of Grub campaign. Its aim is to encourage all of the 300,000 foodservice companies in the UK to start measuring their food waste, if they are not doing so already, as a matter of priority. "It is crucial that we do this to assess just how much food waste is really out there," asserts Morris.

It is now possible to download a toolkit from the Guardians of Grub website that helps businesses to get a handle on not only the various volumes of waste on their sites, but also the cost financially. "It is a very complex thing to determine in this sector because so there are so many roles involved,"

says Morris. "Different procurement specifications can also make this quite a hard thing to do."

It inevitably involves talking to staff, looking at data and communicating and engaging appropriately with your customers and clients. The rewards, however, for such an endeavour can be very substantial given that what gets measured ends up being addressed. Not only do you get to reduce your waste and save money, but it also tends to lead to better staff engagement as they experience first-hand the relevance of what they are being involved in. "If you get the right level of buy-in from every member of the back-of-house team, they no longer regard waste management as being just another extra job they're being asked to do," explains Morris.

Crieff Hydro in Perthshire, Scotland, took part in a WRAP monitoring trail to actively measure and reduce food waste in its main hotel restaurant. By using a smart meter to measure food waste, the hotel was able to quickly identify the problem areas it needed to address. It did this through a series of fairly prosaic but highly effective measures, such as reducing bowl and plate sizes and limiting the amount of food it provided at its lunch and breakfast buffets. It was careful to make sure that guests who wanted to return for more food were able to do so, with additional portions being supplied if required.

By cutting the amount of food on display at any one time, it naturally limited the amount that guests piled on to their plates, much of which ended up invariably being left uneaten anyway. The setting of weekly waste targets, along with the



direct involvement of staff over the eight-week experiment, reduced food costs in just one of the hotel's restaurants by about 43%, equating to annual savings of about 11.5m tonnes of food and approximately £51,750 of savings.

Elior worked with WRAP to reduce waste on one of its sites, TDK Lambda in Ilfracombe, Devon, where it provided breakfast and lunch for several hundred workers and all-day vending. Its review resulted in potential savings of more than £2,000 on that one site as a result of monitoring food waste.

While Elior had previously sought to measure its food waste, it had done so purely in terms of cost. By also measuring it by weight, the company was able to get a better handle on how to reduce it more effectively. "One of the largest waste streams in the modern world is food waste, and we need to act on that," says Mark Hall, regional director for the south for Elior. Food costs are increasing, along with transport costs, which are a key factor on food price increases, so any way that we can reduce wastage and consequently reduce food costs represents an achievement.

WRAP is now actively urging other companies in the sector to follow its five key actions:

1. Measure waste: Companies often fail to realise how much waste they produce.
2. Cost it properly: WRAP recommends a true cost of waste calculation formula and has tools to help.
3. Set a target for waste reduction and key performance indicators to encourage the right behaviours on this front.
4. Target your highest waste areas.
5. Embed a culture of waste prevention, with senior management taking the lead to engage employees at all levels.

With hospitality and foodservice being responsible for a million tonnes of food wasted in the UK every year, with an avoidable waste cost of anything between 38p to a pound for every meal served, this is a campaign that every company needs to get behind. Tackling waste is good business as well as the right thing to do.



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Every month we catch up with the finalists from our third event, which was held in March.

.....
This time we speak to
Andrew McCreanor,
head chef for CH&CO



ANDREW MCCREANOR

WHY DID YOU ENTER THE AWARDS?

I entered because street food is my favourite style of food. I love the authenticity of it, both eating it and cooking it. I also enjoy testing myself against other chefs, so it was a great challenge for me.

STREET FOOD HAS BECOME SO BROAD, HOW DID YOU DECIDE WHAT TO COOK?

I found it quite easy to decide what to cook, but first I gave myself three rules to stick to: keep the dish authentic and true to its origins; each dish should have three main components or be served in three steps – for example, salad, broth then chicken; the dish should always have a story behind it or a history to it, so I can bring more to the customer experience than just serving them a plate of tasty food.

I cooked a fusion of Japanese and Brazilian flavours, which is known as 'nikkei'. I originally developed the dish in 2016 to celebrate Brazil handing over the Olympic Flame to Japan for the 2020 Summer Olympic Games. My San Paulo nanban consisted of crispy fried karaage chicken, nanban broth of bonito and kombu, served with chayote salad from Brazil.

HOW DO YOU STAY CALM UNDER PRESSURE WHEN COMPETING?

“
In the summer our street food really comes alive when we take it outside
”

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STREETFOOD

b&i awards 2019



You have to have confidence in your ability. The trick is to stay focused and relaxed, and I believe the only way to do this is to enjoy yourself and really be involved in what you are doing. I have competed before at ScotHot and Hotelympia, and I learned a lot about keeping a cool head under pressure in a competition environment from both experiences.

WHY HAS STREET FOOD BECOME SO POPULAR?

Because it's real food! And it's cooked with passion with simple ingredients.

HOW DO YOU GET STREET FOOD ONTO YOUR MENUS AT WORK?

We have the luxury of a dedicated theatre area in our restaurant. However, in the summer our street food really comes alive when we take it outside. One week we will have a Spanish street food fiesta and the next week, who knows? It all depends on what our customers want.

WHAT EFFECT HAS IT HAD ON THE WORLD OF CONTRACT CATERING?

Street food gives an incredible amount of flexibility to our

menus. Twenty years ago, when I entered the contract catering sector, menus were not as exciting, but now we as chefs have access to colour palettes of foods, incredible flavours and aromas. There really seems to be no limits or rules to this style of food. It's like guerrilla cooking.

DID YOU ENJOY THE COMPETITION?

I absolutely loved it! I stayed true to my self-imposed rules and produced three dishes that I was really proud of and that I felt represented authentic street food. I look forward to the opportunity to compete again next year.

WHAT'S NEXT IN THE WORLD OF STREET FOOD?

Nordic street food is definitely the next big thing – the vikings are coming! There is brunost, a beautiful caramel-coloured cheese. There are potato rostis, smoked sausage and fermented cloudbberries, and so much more.

And also keep an eye out for people possibly revisiting nikkei cuisine, or trying it for the first time, with the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan being not far away now.

THE STREET FOOD AWARDS

This year's event was the third annual search for the UK's most innovative street food chef from the workplace and event catering sectors. Following the initial judging process, 16 chefs went through to the live cook-off final, which was held in London in March.

The winners were then revealed during a presentation and drinks reception that evening, with over 200 exclusively invited trade guests from the contract catering industry. The awards were presented with the overall winner, Andrew Taylor from Restaurant Associates, taking home the £1,000 prize. For more info, go to www.bandistreatfoodawards.co.uk.

“
There really seems to be no limits or rules to this style of food. It's like guerrilla cooking
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A MOVABLE FEAST



POLARBROD

With customers being busier than ever, grabbing and going has never been more popular!

In our time-truncated world, customers have few spare minutes to consume their food. This is why munching on the move has risen in popularity, giving rise to the, now frankly huge, grab-and-go market. "The food-to-go [FTG] market, as defined by the MCA, encompasses all foodservice channels and is set to grow by 3% to a value of £21.2bn in 2019," says Lee Personius, managing director of Tugo Food Systems. "And, while speed of service is cited as the top need for FTG customers, good value and food quality are becoming increasingly important to them. This is backed up by the IGD, which is forecasting that FTG will be worth £23.5bn by 2022."

BLURRED LINES

So why exactly is grab and go becoming so popular? "The lines between traditional mealtimes have been blurring, so consumers are eating baked goods at all points of the day," says Gordon Lauder, MD of Central Foods. "Out of home demand for breakfast and brunch

“
The food-to-go market is set to grow by 3% to a value of £21.2bn in 2019
”

has been increasing too, and both are opportunities when grab-and-go bakery items are likely to be eaten."

It's also a matter of time, as Nic Townsend, trade marketer for Farm Frites UK and Ireland, says: "We all live fast-paced lives where settling down to a good meal is challenging. Indicative of the global instant gratification trend for 'I want it now', grab and go is enjoying a boom because it is reflective of the lifestyles we lead – everything is done on the move."

"Eating is a casual and social affair, but this doesn't mean that we are sitting down for conventional meals. Good food that can be eaten

anywhere and with anyone offers the ultimate flexibility."

"Consumers' busy lifestyles have very much been the driving force behind more accessible products to takeaway, hence the rise in popularity for grab-and-go options," agrees Karen Green, marketing manager for Aimia Foods. "As such, B&I caterers must ensure that their grab-and-go offering is of as high a quality as the high street's, in order to remain competitive and generate additional revenue."

John Whitehouse, chair of the Catering Equipment Suppliers Association, expands on this, saying: "On the one hand, time-poor consumers want good



THEO'S

“We use around 36,000 ingredients which encompasses 26 allergen attributes as well as reference intakes. Inputting that manually and matching the correct data to the right labelling field takes a tremendous amount of time but with LabelLogic Live this happens automatically. What’s more, we can refresh that data daily and accurately in a matter of minutes”.

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Good food that can be eaten anywhere
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flexibility
”

food and they want it fast. On the other, foodservice operators have expanded the high street menu so that there's now a huge range of grab-and-go menu items available – from conventional handheld products such as sandwiches, paninis and wraps, to 'proper' meals like curry or sushi. So pretty much whatever you want, you can get.”

Lee Sharpe, head of sales and marketing for Theo's, goes further, saying: “The obvious reason why grab and go is becoming more popular – particularly in B&I – is because people are busier than ever before. The average lunch break now lasts just 22 minutes, down one-third compared to six years ago, as work pressures continue to squeeze. One in five don't even leave their desk.

“It's also fascinating how grab and go has re-modelled the perception of convenience food, in line with continued trends for health and fitness. In a world of instant gratification where we are used to having things on demand at

our fingertips, people want quick, easy food on the move – particularly during increasingly squeezed lunch breaks. However, they also don't want to compromise on health.

“Grab and go isn't about greasy or processed meat products in a boring sandwich filler, it's about fresh ingredients, inspired by global flavours, which appeal to health-conscious and time-poor customers. It's important to get out of this 'quick and easy fix' mindset.”

This point is echoed by Sarah Moor, brand manager for Lion sauces for AAK Foodservice, who continues: “There will always be an appetite for a bacon roll or sausage bap at breakfast time, but today's take-out tastes are rapidly evolving. Customers are exploring healthier grab-and-go options. According to MCA's Healthier Eating Report 2019, 47% of consumers are trying to reduce their fat intake, while 30% are looking to cut down on sugar. At the same time, Mintel's Pub Catering Report from May



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Arctic Soft Thinbread, 60g, 8 x 10cm. Image shows serving suggestion.



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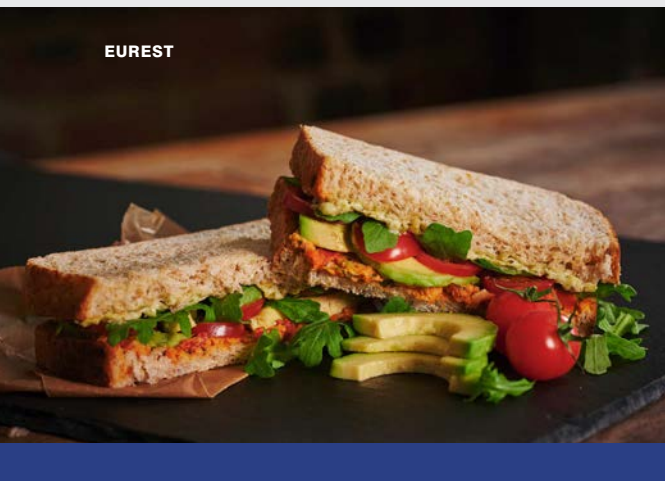


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“

From a health perspective, flatbreads and thinbreads are perfect

”



EUREST



PIPERS CRISPS

2019 tells us that breakfast is on the rise, with a 6% increase year-on-year.”

PERFECT PRODUCTS

From a health perspective, flatbreads and thinbreads are perfect, as they can be turned into tasty, healthy grab-and-go items to serve at breakfast, brunch, lunch or, indeed, any other dining occasion – you just need to tweak the fillings depending on the time of day. “One of the great things about wraps is that they can be packed with various fillings, hot or cold, and can be sliced into small portions or served whole,” says Jenny Jeppsson, concept manager for Polarbröd. “They’re quick and easy to make too, so they can be prepared in advance or to demand. Try serving wraps in a paper cup or cone, or simply use a serviette or paper. This dispenses with the need for any cutlery.”

Polarbröd’s five-strong range of flatbreads have a unique soft character, no hard crust and no messy crumbs. Their soft, moist texture provides a lighter eating quality and provides maximum pliability and flexibility, which means they don’t crack or split on handling or when being filled, and this really helps caterers with speed of service and improved final presentation. What’s more, the breads are vegan friendly, so they will appeal to those customers looking for plant-based options. “Swedish breads are becoming more popular and well known in the UK now,” adds Jeppsson. “Wraps, sandwiches and rolls using Scandi thinbreads and flatbreads are a great way to introduce something new and different to a grab-and-go menu.”

Bread would certainly appear to be best, as sandwiches are the most popular breakfast item in the food to go market (accounting for 8% of FTG breakfast incidences). Not only that but they also account for nearly a third of all FTG lunch items when you add both sandwiches (19.8%) and baguettes (7.4%) together. Sandwiches are also the second most popular FTG at 8.7%, just behind crisps (9.2%).

“We have done a lot of work to ensure our sandwich offer is on point and actually surveyed over 2,000 consumers to ask what they wanted to see more of as part of their workplace food offer,” says Liz Forte, marketing director for Eurst. “Alongside healthier choices, such

as salads and soups, cheese-topped toasties were one of the most requested options. This led to us launching a Classic Toastie Range across the business, which is proving hugely popular, selling over 100,000 toasties since the beginning of the year, in line with the continued demand for food to go.”

As with pretty much anything these days, you can never discount street food, as John Young, sales and marketing director for KeCo Foodservice Packaging, says: “It is perfect for grab and go and is still a hugely popular culinary trend. The street food offerings and styles that we’ve come to know and love can easily be replicated within workplace catering to offer authentic-tasting, flavoursome meals that are vibrant in colour and aromatic in smell. These will have mass appeal and will be particularly popular among foodies and by those who love to travel. Offering street food can be reminiscent of a favourite holiday.”

An equally important consideration in the modern market, and one we have already touched on, is the increased demand for healthy options. The free-from sector in particular continues to grow strongly in the UK and suitable products should definitely be part of the choice that is offered. “According to Coeliac UK, research shows that coeliac disease affects one in 100 people in the UK, however only 30% of people with the condition are clinically diagnosed,” says Katy Hamblin, marketing manager for Pipers Crisps. “Under-diagnosis of coeliac disease is a significant problem and it’s estimated that around half a million people in the UK are currently undiagnosed, making it much more common than previously thought. A gluten-free diet is the only treatment for coeliac disease, and is recommended for those suffering from gluten intolerance or allergy, so it’s important to carry more than just a token range of gluten-free options.”

PACKAGING AND PRESENTATION

Of course, how a product tastes isn’t the only important consideration; how it looks is also critical. “The best way of executing your grab-and-go product strategy is to produce an item that is visually stimulating,” says Mike Hardman, marketing manager for Alliance Online.

Quality Control



IAN SMITH
Elior

How Elior delivers accurate, legislatively compliant allergen labelling across 200+ sites

This February, leading contract caterer Elior began the roll out of ground breaking new labelling software to more than 200 of its UK sites. The software, LabelLogic Live, was created by labelling and compostable packaging experts Planglow. Planglow also developed an additional bespoke programme especially for Elior that enables LabelLogic Live to pull data directly from Elior's menu management software - Recipe and Menu Engineering (RME - StarChef) to deliver an instant, accurate, compliant solution for data end to end. Elior's RME product manager Ian Smith talks us through the roll out and the impact it's had on the business.

I oversee all of the menu data across the wider business - the systems that ensure everything is standardised, modular and ticking over just as they should. Allergens form a big part of this: ensuring that our allergen data (along with all of our other menu data) is present, correct and always up to date across our entire supply chain.

To make LabelLogic Live compatible with our other software, Planglow developed an API (Application Programming Interface - a standardised language that enables programs to communicate with one another) to take our recipe and ingredients data and turn this into product labelling. This minimises human interaction with the data taking any human margin for error out of the equation so from source to customer our data flows are sleek, automated and void of human interference.

LabelLogic Live saves us an unbelievable amount of time. We use around 36,000 ingredients which encompasses 26 allergen attributes as well as reference intakes which, in turn, pull in around another ten pieces of data. Inputting that manually and matching the correct data to the right labelling field takes a tremendous amount of time - not to mention a meticulous attention to detail - but with LabelLogic Live this happens automatically. What's more, we can refresh that data daily and accurately in a matter of minutes.

While we manage and control all our menu data centrally, LabelLogic Live allows us to set permissions that accommodate regional or even site-specific differences so our chefs can, for example, create a bespoke product or a regional price difference. The software is always in line with legislation too so, let's say the list of allergens expanded, we'd be able to update all of our labelling, shelf edge cards and menus immediately. The real beauty of it is, it doesn't matter which label is selected either (we use dozens across the wider business depending on the division or brand), LabelLogic Live has streamlined the entire process delivering accurate, consistent labelling across the board, the end user simply selects the label or labels for them.

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EXAMPLE OF A FULLY COMPLIANT LABEL



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FARM FRITES

"Ensuring the food and packaging are both eye-catching and appealing is key to selling your grab-and-go grub. If meals are bland in appearance, complemented only by a kraft-coloured container, potential customers are not going to engage."

And these aesthetic considerations then have to be combined with a number of other more practical ones – representing something of a tricky balancing act. "When deciding how to present grab-and-go concepts, caterers should ensure packaging is practical – easy to eat from, keeps products fresh, suitable price point and so on – as well as making the food itself look good," says Rachael Sawtell, marketing director for Planglow.

"The environment is another key consideration and, with single-use plastics never being far from the headlines, food and drink providers are looking to reduce their usage like never before. Packaging is often one of the worst culprits – if not public enemy number one – which is precisely where we can help. Our compostable ranges are made from sustainable, plant-based materials; even the parts that look like oil-based plastics all come from plants."

"Grab-and-go food packaged in containers that let the contents speak for themselves invariably score a direct hit with consumers," continues Tri-Star Packaging founder Kevin Curran. "So clear, curvaceous deli pots such as Tri-Star's Oval Eco Street Bowl, Tri-Pot and the KC Range are excellent, being see-through, strong, rigid and recyclable."

"The best food-to-go packaging – like its contents – has a good story to tell in terms of its honesty and ethics, functionality and sustainability. And today's environmentally aware consumers are increasingly as interested in the provenance of the packaging as they are in

the ingredients inside."

Looking at the bigger picture, you also need to consider the slightly more heavy-duty choices that will be housing your offer. "Food displays need to not only show food off to its best advantage but also hold it at the correct temperature," advises Donald Reid, sales manager for Moffat Catering Equipment. "The design needs to promote hygiene and maintain food safety and quality through, for example, consistent temperature, in both heated and chilled food units."

"When food is held in heated displays, customers may worry that the items will be soggy or will have dried out. Moffat has developed a special circulating air system for its heated grab-and-go displays that gently warms the product – so pastries, such as sausage rolls and pasties, stay hot and fresh for longer."

"Look for grab-and-go merchandisers that have features like panoramic glass sides, to make it as easy as possible for customers to see food and drink, even from the side, and ultra-bright LED lighting, to give maximum visibility to the display," adds Malcolm Harling, sales and marketing director for Williams Refrigeration. "Adjustable shelving allows staff to change the look of the merchandiser to suit different products. Electronic point-of-sale ticket strips make it easy for customers to find what they are looking for and can be used to promote special

offers such as meal deals. Impulse snack baskets will also encourage sales of accompaniments such as crisps."

The great news with grab and go is that not only are the number of products expanding, but the times of day that they can be sold at are too. "For many years, the late-morning to early-afternoon trade has been the most popular time of day for food-to-go operators, as consumers look to treat themselves to more than a pre-packed lunch," says Chris Beckley, managing director of kff. "However, as the trend for on the go continues to grow, operators should also be considering their breakfast and dinner options, with pastries and granola pots working particularly well for the morning rush. By offering grab-and-go options for all times of the day, operators can help drive additional footfall and boost sales."

Talking of timings, and looking to the future, Paul Curran, estimating manager for Proline Corp, adds: "I would recommend stocking the right products at the right time and always look for the next best seller. There is a lot of competition within this market nowadays, so being ahead of the game is vital to being successful."

The grab-and-go market may appear to be reaching saturation, but there is still plenty of growth to be enjoyed. Avoid complacency and always look to improve your offer and you just can't go wrong.

CENTRAL FOODS



TRI-STAR



THEO'S



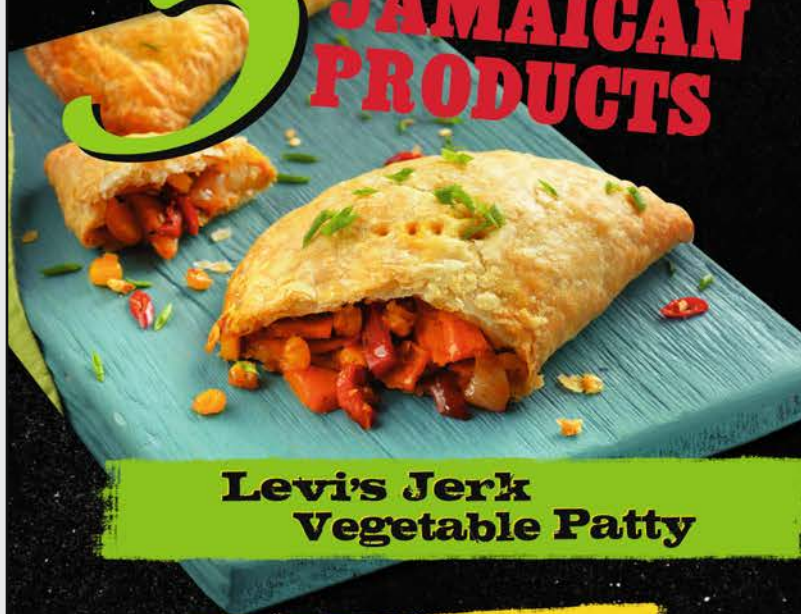
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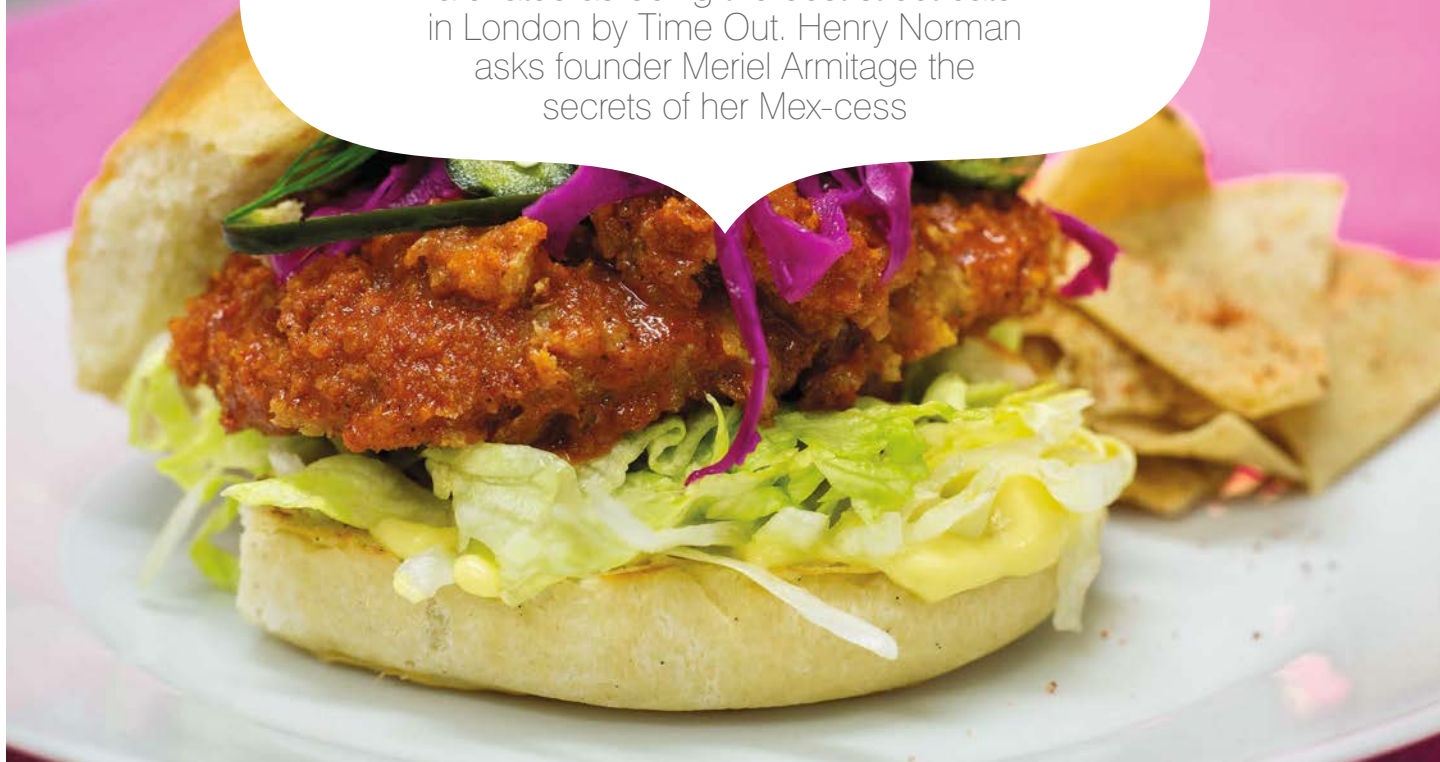
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Club Mexicana drinks aren't free

... in fact it has no beverage offer to speak of, though its Mexican/vegan creations are rated as being the best street eats in London by Time Out. Henry Norman asks founder Meriel Armitage the secrets of her Mex-cess



MERIEL ARMITAGE



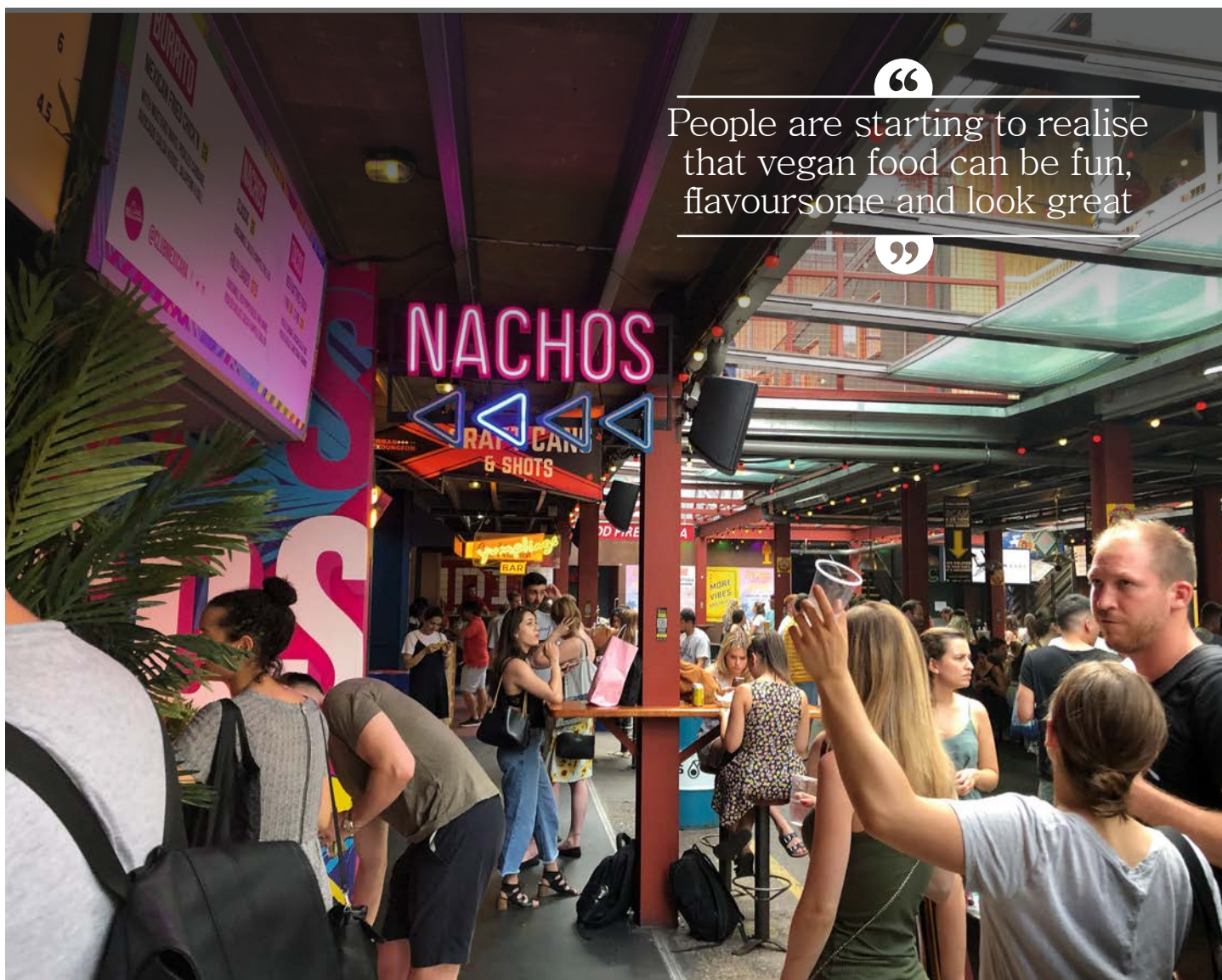
“
The key with street food is
to keep it really simple
”

While it probably won't come as a massive surprise to hear that a Mexican outlet is regarded as being the best street food trader in London by Time Out magazine, the fact that it is also vegan may well do. This fare has, quite clearly, come a long way since the days when a veggie burger or sausage seemed to think that merely being vaguely the same shape as the meat it was mimicking was enough to earn its moniker; but there are still plenty of customers who would apparently see hell freezer over before they even sampled seitan.

Club Mexicana, which trades out of Street Feast's Dinerama and Netil Market, as well as from a residency in the Spread Eagle pub in Camden, can claim this proud distinction, though – and what makes it all the more impressive is that founder Meriel Armitage only discovered that her cooking had the Mex factor almost by accident. Previously employed in advertising, she quit impulsively in 2013 when a presentation she was asked to give on the 'personality of the Jammy Dodger' left a sour taste in the mouth. It was the fact that she tried to make it tongue in cheek, but the audience took it so seriously that really took the biscuit, Meriel recalls. She resigned the very next day.

After doing some gastronomic globetrotting, she returned to London in 2014 and found herself in the middle of a thriving foodie scene that was streets ahead in most senses, but seriously lacking in one key area. “When I returned from living in Melbourne, via LA and New York, I found that London was years behind in terms of vegan food offerings,” she recalls. “So I set out to change that, which has been a really exciting challenge. We've seen London come from being that place to being named the world's leading vegan city.”

She then turned this gap in the market into a foot in the door almost by accident. Having just started her own supper club in Hackney, in 2014 she was invited along to a Street Feast traders catch-up meeting purely as the plus one of a chef friend and



“
People are starting to realise
that vegan food can be fun,
flavoursome and look great
”

took the opportunity to point out to as many people as possible the lack of vegan options; and they duly got in touch and offered her a pitch that summer. “It all happened very quickly!” says Meriel.

Despite the demands of setting up her own street business, Meriel quickly fell in love with the scene, with the positives far outweighing the negatives. “Putting up a gazebo every day in all kinds of weather can be challenging and exhausting,” she says, “but the immediacy of placing your food in a customer’s hands and seeing their reaction just can’t be replicated anywhere else.”

Like many before and since, she found it to be the perfect place to mould her business in a relatively cheap setting, while also gaining immediate feedback. “Food is a constant evolution and you’re allowed to make some mistakes, learn and improve. The best thing about street food is that everyone – your customers, your fellow traders – wants you to succeed. Everyone’s on your side and will help you every step of the way.”

When it comes to undoubtedly the most fun part of the job – the NPĐ – and how she settled on the very definite Mexican/vegan ‘angle’, she says that she simply relied on her gut, both literally and figuratively. “I just make what I want to eat!” she says. “My inspiration usually comes from things me and my wife eat out and about. We do a lot of travelling and a lot of menu shopping – i.e., standing outside restaurants playing ‘what would you have?’ – and we talk about food all the time, so it usually stems from a meal and a conversation and I take it from there.”

“I work with some brilliant chefs in my team now who can help me turn my ideas into reality. The key with street food is to keep it really simple, because you’re going to need to feed lots of people in a very short span of time. We aim for 20 seconds per portion. However, you also need to make it bursting with flavour; it has to be good enough to eat on a cold, rainy London

street and get people coming back for more.”

She has certainly achieved this aim, with Club Mexicana boasting an impressive 5/5 rating on TripAdvisor, as well as the aforementioned award from a certain London listings magazine. So how important are these online accolades to her business? “Being named the number one street food trader by Time Out has been amazing and the impact on our business has been invaluable. Getting that sort of recognition by such a huge force in London is something I never envisaged when I set this up five years ago!

“On top of online reviews, I find face-to-face customer interaction incredibly valuable. All reviews are helpful, but I always try and talk to our regular customers about our food and our menus. We’ve got some amazing loyal customers who have been coming to us since we started out. It’s great to hear their thoughts on the evolution of our food and favourite dishes they’ve had over the years.

“Social media is, of course, super important too. It’s helped us show the world how beautiful vegan food can be and not the slop it was perceived to be several years ago in the UK.”

Meriel has been one of the pioneers in this improvement, so I finish our illuminating chat by asking her what she thinks the future holds for two of the biggest foodie phenomena of recent times: street food and vegan dining. “It’s an extremely exciting time at present in London,” she says. “It feels like we are finally catching up with other vegan hotspots around the world and are overtaking them in some respects – and I believe it will only get better and better.

“The demand for vegan food is now in the mainstream, right where it should be, and people are starting to realise that it can be fun, flavoursome and look great too. And at Club Mexicana, we will continue to play a big part in changing these perceptions.”



FESTIVE FEASTS

The festive season provides plenty of profit opportunities for businesses that plan ahead

Despite still being in the throes of summer it's time to take stock and start thinking about Christmas offerings. Each year consumers spend billions of pounds during this period and the trend to spend shows no sign of abating. In fact, according to Nielsen, in 2017 UK Christmas shoppers spent a record-breaking £4.2bn on food and drink alone.

The preceding months that led up to the big day are packed with profit opportunities, including Hanukkah and Diwali, so it's important that B&I operators cover all bases to maximise customers' spend.

STARTER'S ORDERS

The more preparation that goes into festive menus, the more successful they are likely to be, so most operators will begin planning as soon as the temperature starts to drop. Businesses and consumers will also be thinking about their celebrations and are aware that venues get booked up way in advance, so they will already be on the lookout for party promotions. "As you want to get people's attention as soon as they start thinking about the festive period, your deadline to start promoting for optimal success should be the start of September," says Mike Hardman, marketing manager for Alliance Online.

“
In 2017, UK Christmas shoppers spent a record-breaking £4.2bn on food and drink alone
”



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“

Decorating till points and tables in the run-up to Christmas is key

”



THOMAS RIDLEY

Once the plans are in place, festive dishes can be introduced to customers as early as October. This will not only increase profit potential, but act as a tease for customers too, building interest before some items appear on the menu. “Decorating till points and tables in the run up to Christmas is key, as well as ensuring table-top point-of-sale materials are relevant and timely,” says Joe Angliss, customer marketing executive for Bidfood. “When the time comes to roll out your festive offering, consider themed promotions that encourage the consumer to spend that little bit extra on a treat for themselves – after all it is Christmas!”

It's no secret that veganism has exploded in the UK with increasing numbers of consumers looking for plant-based options, whether they adopt a solely meat-free diet or are simply looking for a healthier option. “One in eight in the UK is now either vegetarian or vegan, with between one in five and one in three identifying as a meat reducer or flexitarian, so ensure you have mouth-watering Christmas menu options for those who have dietary requirements,” says Gordon Lauder, MD of Central Foods. “Increasingly, free-from menu items are appealing more generally too, as growing numbers of people opt for a flexitarian or meat-reducing approach to their diets.”

According to Foodable Labs, 51% of chefs added vegan options to their menus last year, up from 31% in 2017. Kantar reported that 92% of plant-based meals consumed in the UK in 2018 were eaten by non-vegans and Ubamarket noted that 36% of meat-eaters buy vegan or vegetarian products. This means that plant-based options have wider scope beyond vegan and vegetarian customers. “The significant

number of vegan consumers, currently estimated to be around 600,000 by The Vegan Society, will continue to shift the trend of popular products in the Christmas market over the next several years,” says Hardman. “Vegan alternatives to the standard roast will include improved sales for cauliflower or nut roasts, mushroom loafs and meat-like imitations such as the tofu turkey.”

Caterers can create plant-based alternatives to festive dishes with meat-free pieces. From curry and stews to casseroles and pies, caterers can create a whole host of meat-free dishes to meet consumer demand. “The latest statistics show that there are now 3.5m vegans in the UK alone,” says Angliss. “With no sign of this market growth slowing, it's incredibly important for contract caterers to offer an inclusive menu that features more than one or two token dishes.”

OLD SCHOOL

There will always be a place for a traditional Christmas dinner which includes turkey, roast potatoes, pigs in blankets and all the trimmings, as it is always a lucrative menu item. However, consumers expect twists on classics, which means chefs need to get creative. “We'll be seeing brands utilising their product recipes with infusions and marinades to set their Christmas ranges apart from the rest,” predicts Hardman. “Garlic, pancetta, lemon, thyme, bacon coatings and even saffron are just a few examples of flavourings that operators will be infusing Christmas meats with, in order to serve up innovative tasting experiences for their consumers.”

Christmas dinner would not be the same without crisp roast potatoes, with YouGov



WARNINKS

FESTIVE FLAVOURS

This is a time of indulgence, when consumers are more likely to have an alcoholic tipple with their lunch or dinner, so offering an array of exciting options is a must to get the festive season off to a flying start. Nostalgia plays a key role at Christmas time, so a range of drinks that triggers memories and sentimentality is sure to be a hit.

Retro cocktails such as the snowball are making a comeback, with the likes of Nigella Lawson hailing them as a must-have Christmas drink and bringing a level of sophistication to the decades-old recipe. “Christmas is a time of family, tradition and reminiscing and the senses play a huge part in sparking that magical festive feeling,” says Warninks Advocaat's brand ambassador. “A classic snowball cocktail is just as an integral part of the festive season as Christmas jumpers and mince pies.”

There has been a significant shift in the UK recently, with consumers increasingly moving away from alcohol and reducing consumption. This means there has been a huge surge in demand for adult non-alcoholic drinks. “Sales of low- or no-alcohol products have increased, especially in those drinks that offer a more sophisticated adult beverage,” says Steve Lyons, sales director for Thomas Ridley Foodservice. “This represents a huge trend and caterers should ensure that they can offer guests who want alcohol-free drinks something a little special.”

Hot drinks are a key seller during the colder months, providing B&I operators with a great opportunity to introduce a range of festive-themed and flavoured products to appeal to customers' festive spirit. “Ensure you have a strong range of syrups and drinks toppers and don't forget to make sure mini marshmallows are at eye level on drink stations,” says Angliss. “When creating new coffee combinations, ensure they are styled to look decadent and unusual to catch attention and encourage social sharing.”

research finding that 85% of people cited them as being a must-have component. Therefore, it's vital that operators offer the perfect roastie – crisp on the outside and fluffy in the centre. "Frozen, ready-made roast potatoes take away a large proportion of the preparation time for a busy kitchen at Christmas – not to mention reducing waste," points out Marie Medhurst, sales director for Bannisters Yorkshire Family Farm. "Cooked to perfection, they can be heated straight from the freezer for classic roast potatoes."

When it comes to dessert, UK Christmas consumers are looking for indulgent sweets with a sense of extravagance and that include chocolate, liqueurs, cream and custard as the main components. "The best-selling desserts are those that embody a true sense of decadence: profiterole towers, melting chocolate domes, meringue wreaths, boozy trifles and matured Christmas puddings," says Hardman. "All are rich and grandiose in flavour, representing the fantastic dining experiences that we all seek in the festive period." Bidfood's work with food futurologist Dr Morgaine Gaye predicts that, while alcohol consumption will decline, it will play more of a role in Christmas desserts.

"As well as the traditional chocolate, caramel and sparkle, also think prosecco and earl grey flavours, alongside smashable, melting and surprise cakes, designed to create theatre at the Christmas table, as well as gluten-free options," says Jacqui Passmore, marketing manager UK and Ireland for Dawn Foods.

For consumers who don't have such a

sweet tooth and are looking for a savoury treat to end their festive feast, there's nothing better than a cheeseboard offering a variety of flavours. "Customers are increasingly looking for traditional favourites when dining out over the festive period, and a quality British cheeseboard is the popular choice for many, alongside a quality bottle of wine or a glass of port, at the end of the meal," says Svitlana Binns, head of CRM for DFI UK. "DFI's cheeseboard recommendation includes five exceptional British cheeses that deliver on flavour, quality, variety and value."

The run-up to December provides B&I operators with countless opportunities to boost profits, celebrate with existing customers and welcome new ones. Putting in the hard graft now will really help to give your business something to celebrate come new year!



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FR-135-006

EVERY MONTH, OUR PANEL
OF EXPERTS DISCUSS THE
BIGGEST ISSUES IN B&I.
THIS ISSUE WE ASK THEM...

HOW DO YOU COMPETE WITH THE HIGH STREET?



JASON TROTMAN,
Executive chef,
Eurest

“It is essential to look to the high street
for inspiration and trends”

Pop-up street food, independent fast food outlets and high street chains are increasingly enticing consumers out of the building during lunchtime and throughout the day. This presents us with the challenge of delivering a variety of options on-site to suit all consumer wants and needs. It is essential to look to the high street for inspiration and trends, in order to meet consumer demand and keep footfall in the workplace.

The key to this is knowing your audience. We have carried out extensive research, including surveying over 2,000 consumers asking what they want to see more of as part of their workplace food offer. Analysing huge

amounts of data has enabled us to develop an insight-led menu solution, comprised of flexible, relevant grab-and-go offers across our portfolio. These include options such as our under 600 calorie range, which is available every day, and flexitarian options for people wanting to reduce their meat intake.

Our new Indian Summer concept takes the traditional curry and turns it into a lighter grab-and-go offer, replicating the street food feel with dishes such as tikka paneer and butternut squash, and passanda chicken accompanied with Indian rice salad, mango and lemon dressing and coronation cauliflower, pineapple and chilli salad.

One area where we have been able to

take advantage of a current trend from the high street is the changing dynamic of consumers now eating breakfast out of home. We also always aim to offer prices below that of the high street to give our consumers added value. Therefore, we have designed a breakfast offer that appeals to everyone, from value to premium, healthy to indulgent, eat-in to grab and go, including hot breakfast pots, avocado on toast with chilli and a soft poached egg, and breakfast toasties, which we have seen flying off the shelves. Creating a food offer that is both exciting and current, using consumer insight, keeps customers coming back for more – there's no reason for them to go anywhere else!



DEAN KENNETT,
Managing director,
Fooditude

Up until a few years ago, this was all I thought about. Today, the high street has changed beyond recognition, but it's the independents that I look to for inspiration. We don't need to compete with the high street, we need to stay one step ahead of it.

Former pubs are now supermarkets, churches act as gyms, laundrettes have been refitted as microbreweries. One such microbrewery near my home offers Wednesday night specials and has takeovers by really good local food outlets. One week it's Indian, next it's charcoal steak sandwiches and the week after it's vegan dogs and halloumi chips. At the micropub, it's important they give variety, change it up and, ultimately, make it fun. They get to sell their beer and match it to what food is on offer that night. It's a great excuse for me to get out mid-week.



TREVOR ANNON,
Founder and chairman,
Mount Charles

The high street's impact on contract catering continues to be a challenge, but it is one that we at Mount Charles relish. Traditionally competition came from other contract catering companies, but today it comes from any opportunity employees have to eat outside of the workplace.

In the last five years, Mount Charles has completely revolutionised the way it approaches catering contracts. Instead of viewing traditional workplace contract catering and retail catering as being two separate things, we apply retail principles to our contracts, with food, drinks and promotions driven by consumer trends and demand. Our catering in the workplace is unrecognisable from the typical 'canteen-style', transforming into a very modern, consumer-focused retail offering that caters to a seriously diverse set of taste buds.

Customers' expectations are increasing and they expect the high street experience within their

Thinking about it, contract caterers can sometimes be set in their ways. There is almost a formula – till here, snacks next to till, cold counter there, juice machine here and this is where you get your plates. At Fooditude, we don't pretend we can do it all, neither do I believe we have Giorgio Locatelli on the pasta in our kitchens. We aim above middle and for things we cannot do right, we pull in help, promote local specialists and manage the offer.

Having the rights to cater for everything within a catering environment for a five-year tenure contract is challenging. How do you keep it fresh, exciting and stop your customer hitting the food truck around the corner? Well, you can't. There's no point in half-baked themed menus and inauthentic recipes conjured up with no real depth or understanding. Instead, Fooditude invites that food truck in, giving the client exactly what they want.

We don't need to compete with the high street – we need to stay one step ahead of it

In the last five years, Mount Charles has completely revolutionised the way it approaches catering contracts

workplace. In fact, the word 'canteen' no longer exists in our business, as we define our catering services now as 'workplace or in-house restaurants'. Places that inspire and engage employees offer them an experience, a community, that will drive productivity and enhance business performance.

Our focus is now on what our clients' customers want to eat and experience, understanding the emerging food trends and delivering options that reflect and surpass the wider high street offering. We work in partnership with our clients to ensure their customers are satisfied with the service offering and create a genuine hook for them to revisit.

Workplace and in-house restaurants are central to the daily working lives of employees, as hubs where they can socialise with their team and take a break from the stresses of their workload. There is a rising demand for balance and wellbeing, as people become more aware of the link between good food

From my perspective, we're not competing with the high street at all. We are coping with global food influence at unprecedented levels. Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and YouTube give us access to the finest smoking BBQ barrel pork loin from Kansas or the best fried chicken burger in Korea. Independents like my local microbrewery have figured out how to tap into this culture in an authentic way. To keep up, we need to constantly innovate.

What if you could personalise your diet, your meal, your drink, to what your gut craves – all while having a laugh with your colleagues, posting your meal on social – oh and having it delivered in an instant, of course? Whether the customer is happy, engaged and coming back will depend on how well you can deliver this experience from start to finish. The high street has to catch up on this front – and so does contract catering.

and good health. We use local, fresh ingredients where possible and work hard to let our customers know that their priorities – such as freshness, health, the environment, convenience and provenance – are our priorities too. We regularly collaborate with our clients to develop new, entirely bespoke retail catering brands and concepts that reflect health and wellbeing, value for money and offers that reflect consumer trends and tastes.

While we must continue to innovate and keep up with the ever-changing lifestyle trends of the high street, we believe that Mount Charles' most important commodity and the secret to our success is our staff. Not just our talented and award-winning chefs, but also our dedicated operations team, our marketers and sales and finance teams. Our people are passionate about creating fabulous food, they genuinely care for our clients and their customers, and have created a strong company culture where talent, creativity and innovation thrives.

HOME COMFORTS



LION FOODS

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*With the annual celebration of our superb
produce almost here, and our exit from the
EU apparently imminent, there has never
been a better time to buy British*
.....

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Provenance, sustainability,
environmental impact – the
list of selling points for
British food could go on!

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British Food Fortnight, which is now in its 18th year and is organised by Love British Food, is the national promotion that invites communities and organisations across the country to celebrate the diverse and delicious, high-quality food produced in this country. The foodservice sector has been at the heart of the promotion since its early years with many leading organisations taking part, resulting in hundreds of restaurants in the private and public sectors running special Love British Food menus every year. It is now a proven commercial promotion delivering affordable-quality menus that are a hit with customers – and this year it's being held from 21st September to 6th October.

The good news is that there has never been a better time to push our produce, as Ben Bartlett, brand ambassador for Lion sauces from AAK Foodservice, explains: “The globalisation of our diets has given new meaning to the term ‘British food’. It no longer means just roast beef, shepherd's pie or bangers and mash, but instead signals provenance.

“Whether that's down to increased concern over food miles and carbon emissions, or the fear of post-Brexit supplies, buying British is very much on-trend. We're talking British produce, locally sourced ingredients, fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables – but when it comes to cooking them, the world is our oyster!”

Will Bennett, director of Dairy Partners Ltd, concurs: “Provenance, sustainability, environmental impact – the list of selling points for British food could go on! We are living in a time when not just economic factors are driving a major shift in how we purchase and consume products, but when environmental awareness grows apace.

“The benefits of home-grown produce mean that the UK is able to support a strong manufacturing economy. The UK is the third largest milk producer in the EU, and not only does this boost an important economy but it supports the farmers who keep the industry moving too.

“As well as supplying our product to catering and foodservice outlets across the UK, we also export to 27 countries. The perception of British food is positive and our customers in the middle east and China are proud to sell British produce because

it means quality.

“As we head towards more uncertainty with Brexit, British food and drink can support the catering industry with high quality, fair prices and low food miles. When it comes to export, British manufacturers can be proud to fly the flag for our produce.”

The ‘B’ word

This has been the case for some time, as during the 18 years that the event has been running, caterers have continually been able to prove that buying British is affordable, adds value and ensures they have a unique selling point by being able to list exactly what region or even farm the meat has come from. Andy Jones, from the Hospital Caterers Association, says: “We enjoy getting involved with British Food Fortnight as it is a key time to showcase seasonal, local ingredients. We know already that many hospitals try to buy and serve British food. Of the £205m spent by the NHS on food for patients approximately, 75% is spent on British. We want to ensure these hospitals continue this and not switch to cheaper imports, plus we want to see more organisations making the commitment to buy British.”

Love British Food partner David Mulcahy of Sodexo continues: “We have worked with Love British Food for a number of years and each year the foodservice activity gets bigger and better. As a company we reach a number of public sectors, so the focus for us is ideal. Being able to run British promotions, and showcase key British ingredients and dishes, gives us a unique selling point. Our customers are keen to buy British but at the right price.”

From the world of foodservice, alongside Sodexo, Harrison Catering and Brakes are also taking part this year. All will be aiming to build on their successful involvement in previous years. The Lead Association for Catering in Education, the National Association of Care Caterers and The University Caterers Organisation are also confirmed. Elsewhere, Love British Food has long been a winner on menus in the private sector with some pubs and restaurants



TOP TIPS

GETTING THE BEST FROM BRITISH FOOD FORTNIGHT

Send your suppliers a copy of the menu and ask them if they can supply British ingredients

Don't be put off by prices that initially may seem higher. Buying large volumes can make the whole process affordable

Promote your involvement in the fortnight by displaying point-of-sale materials showcasing the British Food Fortnight logo on menus and around the restaurant

Make sure you share the menus with customers well in advance. As well as British dishes, you could also include dishes from your region

Run a competition to showcase the new menu. Some promotions that work include giving all diners entry to a prize draw to win a foodie treat

Offer tastings of specific British dishes

Use British Food Fortnight to see how popular dishes are or produce a special dish going forward that uses locally sourced ingredients

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Being able to run British promotions gives us a unique selling point

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reporting sales increases of 300%. Restaurants, pubs, cafés, hotels, bed and breakfasts, sporting venues and tourism attractions are all also invited to take part.

The campaign is led by some of the most renowned and passionate chefs and leaders in the food world, among them Michelin-starred chefs Raymond Blanc, OBE, and Phil Howard, and Bake Off 2016 winner Candice Brown. New ambassadors for 2019, meanwhile, include home cook and family food writer Alex Hollywood, founder of The Clink Alberto Crisci, and TV presenter and chef Cyrus Todiwala, MBE.

Love British Food founder Alexia Robinson says: “We are facing uncertain times with Brexit and there is a real need for a robust supply of quality food at stable, affordable prices. We want to encourage the foodservice sector to make British food the first supplier of choice throughout the year. British Food Fortnight is a proven promotion in foodservice and we are encouraging caterers across the private and public sectors to take part.”

Impressively, Robinson was named in the 2018 listing of the Top 20 most influential people in public sector catering. With this in mind, Love British Food is focusing its 2019 campaign on catering in the public sector with the aim of encouraging more schools, hospitals, care homes and universities to make British businesses their suppliers of choice.

The Brit crowd

When it comes to the suppliers, Aviko Foodservice is encouraging operators to get creative with their toppings during the event with the launch of new British Grown Potato Skins. “As 22.3m consumers in the UK make a conscious effort to cut down on their meat consumption by following a flexitarian, vegetarian or vegan diet, the arrival of Aviko’s handmade 1/4 and 1/2 potato skins provide a golden opportunity for operators to tap into this trend,” says Mohammed Essa, commercial director of Aviko UK and Ireland.

Marie Medhurst, sales director for Bannisters Yorkshire Family Farm, meanwhile, believes that

British food as a concept has shifted away from the dishes themselves to become more about the provenance of ingredients. “Consumers increasingly want to know where their food has come from and what it contains,” she says, “and if it’s grown or produced in the UK, then so much the better.”

“The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs estimates that the UK grows about 50% of the food eaten here, a figure that is continuing to decrease as consumers enjoy food from around the world. However, there is also consumer demand for home-grown produce: research shows that diners will happily pay more for food with British provenance.”

“Seasonality is often cited as a reason for food imports. However, frozen produce makes it easy to serve British all year round. All our potatoes are British-grown, harvested at their peak before being expertly baked and frozen, so every potato is the best of the crop, whatever the season.”

As great as our produce is, as with most things in life, it is even better when it is exposed to foreign influences. Medhurst explains: “One of the most exciting aspects of international cuisines is the fusion of ingredients and flavours. We’re seeing traditionally British favourites like bangers and mash spiced up with Iberian chorizo or Thai lemongrass and galangal; Yorkshire puddings filled with Mexican fajita-spiced meats; or Indian curries topping that British staple, the baked potato.”

Get this balance right and you’re in for a fantastic Fortnight, as Robinson concludes: “Whether a contract caterer or meal provider to schools, everyone can get involved in British Food Fortnight. New customers can be attracted and existing customers can spend more, with promotions during British Food Fortnight having had a serious impact on sales. It is simply the biggest national promotion of British food.”

What? British Food Fortnight

Where? Nationwide

When? 21st September to 6th October

More info: www.lovebritishfood.co.uk



Hospitality Action Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Hospitality Action's EAP has been developed by hospitality people for hospitality people with a helpline open 24/7 365 providing friendly and confidential advice, help and support for those facing problems, difficulties or challenges relating to home or working life. The EAP's online wellbeing portal, Well Online, also offers over 200 factsheets, self-help guides and signposting all designed to help when the unexpected happens.

With over 180 years of experience, Hospitality Action truly understands the issues that affect people working in the hospitality industry.

The EAP is a proactive, fully supported, totally confidential scheme that provides the following services for a very cost effective fee:



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The EAP offers telephone, online and face-to-face counselling via a network of counsellors across the UK and Ireland.



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Topics covered include: pregnancy and birth; childcare options; single parenting and shared parenting; sleep challenges; teenage challenges; keeping children safe and monitoring use of technologies.



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Information and advice for those with caregiving responsibilities for elderly relatives.



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To help individuals take control of money problems and improve financial wellbeing, the EAP provides immediate access to a full range of free debt advice and financial assistance solutions.



Hardship Grants

In 2017 we will award over £750,000 in grants and services to people who are working or have worked in the industry. We offer a range of financial grants to past and present employees within the industry who are facing difficulties.



Legal Information

This service gives clear simple information about legal matters, both personal and employment related, suggest what steps to take and whom to approach to gain further advice.

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For further information about how to sign up to the Employee Assistance Programme email eap@hospitalityaction.org.uk or call 020 3004 5500.



Helping our people





Going green: efficiency is key

Lucy Turgoose, green apple ambassador for Blue Apple Catering, looks at how catering operations can reduce their carbon footprints by targeting energy efficiency in their day-to-day processes

Taking care of our environment is a serious business, and where contract catering is concerned there are many elements of focus that can help operators, and therefore the customers they serve, to make a positive impact. The reduction of energy consumption is a key factor, and by focusing on driving efficiencies in this area it is possible to both improve carbon footprints and reduce energy costs without compromising on the quality of the offering.

Catering kitchens are busy places that inherently require a great deal of energy to operate effectively. The preparation, cooking, serving and storing of food alone draws on a near constant supply of gas, electricity and sometimes oil, and that is before we look at elements such as cleaning, lighting, ventilation and waste.

Of course, nobody is expecting a return to the dark ages – where rudimentary tools were used before the daily catch was thrown directly into the coals of the fire – but a tightening up of processes and a tweak here and there could have a significant impact on energy use in areas that may have slipped from the forefront of caterers' minds. The total energy consump-

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The total energy consumption in the UK's catering industry is estimated to be around 20.6bn kWh per year
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tion in the UK's catering industry is estimated to be around 20.6bn kWh per year – that's enough to power 4.5m UK homes every day – therefore an improvement on this number should be well within grasp. There are many areas where efficiencies can be achieved, and taking the time to go back to basics and

to adopt a common sense approach can often pay dividends.

FOOD PREPARATION

For convenience in the kitchen a large number of appliances are available to make food prep just that little bit easier. From blenders and dehydrators to electric whisks, all are useful it's true, but as chefs it can be a lot more rewarding to reconnect with the basics and to save a little energy in the process. Those knife skills honed over the years can be put to good use in chopping and slicing wherever possible, for example.

Of course, there will be many occasions where appliances will be necessary in busy kitchen environments, this is unavoidable, so where making capital purchases for a catering operation it is advisable to look into the energy efficiency ratings of the equipment you intend to buy. Bear in mind that many options that carry a higher initial purchase price can deliver a far faster return on investment over the lifespan of the appliance through energy savings, so it is worthwhile looking at the bigger picture and undertaking some research.

Storage refrigerators, although they have massively improved in terms of efficiency in

recent years, are still one of the major contributors to energy consumption in professional kitchens. This is largely because they are always switched on to maintain the correct temperatures for food storage. However, there are steps you can take to reduce energy usage.

One simple solution is called EndoCube, a simple device that sits over the thermostat sensor of commercial refrigeration units. The EndoCube reduces the number of instances where the refrigeration cycle is activated. In most fridges and freezers, the thermostat uses a sensor to measure the temperature of the air, rather than the contents. However, air can change its temperature far more quickly than food or liquid, meaning the refrigeration unit triggers its cooling cycle, expending more energy, even when it may be that the contents of the fridge are still cold, or frozen in the case of a freezer. This is more common in refrigerated display cabinets, where there is a constant flow of air as they are either open to the surroundings or have repeatedly opened doors.

The EndoCube fits over the thermostat sensor and mimics the temperature of the food. This means that the refrigeration unit only activates the cooling cycle when it is actually necessary, resulting in a reduction in cycles of as much as 85%. Finally, ensure your fridge is maintained according to its instructions. Only

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Crops from outside the UK or Europe will already be well in to their shelf life before they arrive on site

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by operating at optimal efficiency will it contribute to energy savings.

CLEANING

Cleaning is, of course, an essential element of everyday life in the kitchen, but little things such as filling the dishwasher to capacity before turning it on can help a lot. Half loads still use the same amount of energy and water, and the chances are you'll have to do another half load later! Set it to economy mode and at the same time keep an eye on how you use the taps in your kitchen too. Do you leave them running when you could turn them off? It is literally water and money down the drain.



LUCY TURGOOSE

Purchasing cleaning goods from sustainable and eco-friendly suppliers will also help as the usage is lower and it is much better for the environment. Products from companies such as Delphis Eco are leading the way in this instance. The products are all plant-based, ecological and readily biodegradable, and using such products has the added advantage of feeding directly into your own sustainability and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

WASTE

Reducing food waste and making the best use of ingredients can help to increase efficiency and help the environment. Adopt a weigh your waste policy in order to keep a record and consider the following:

a) What is in season? Crops from outside the UK or Europe will already be well into their shelf life before they arrive on site, limiting the time chefs will have to use them.

b) Use ingredients effectively. Think about how items such as vegetable peelings can be used to make a stock, for example.

c) Monitor what items are selling best. Are there too many of a particular grab-and-go sandwich? Too few of another? Are there any particular dishes that always sell well? Keep a log of the most popular meals so ingredients can be stocked accordingly.

d) Quality not quantity. Perhaps a grab and go counter has too large a range of items for a site and becomes overwhelming for the customer? Concentrate on a smaller but popular range of items. Benefits include being able to buy larger amounts of fewer ingredients, increasing efficiency and reducing the amount of food sent to landfill.

NEXT STEPS

Environmental issues will only increase in importance as time goes on, therefore it is paramount that contract caterers take steps to reduce their carbon footprints as soon as possible. It may not be front of mind at all times, but by changing mindsets, tweaking the way we operate and encouraging teams to embrace the benefits associated with reducing energy consumption, the impact could be significant.

So, take a long, hard look at what can be achieved through the areas we have outlined. The difference this will make and the savings that can be achieved will ultimately bring nothing but benefit.



BITES

AUG/19

BRANDS, INSIGHTS, TRENDS AND EXPERIENCES

BAKERIES MEAN BUSINESS

Bakery outlets have seen the strongest growth in on-premise business among quick-service restaurants, with sales up by more than 19% and visits up by nearly 18% in the year to April 2019, according to the NPD Group's Bakery Trends Tracker. While eight out of 10 bakery purchases are consumed on the move, bakeries account for just £1.2bn (5%) of the UK's £22.5bn food-to-go business annually. This is up from £1bn five years ago.

CANCELLATION FRUSTRATION

More than half of restaurant guests believe that the booking cancellation process needs to be made easier, according to a new survey by HGEM, with 56% expecting an option to cancel in any correspondence. More than a quarter (27%) would like the option to cancel over text message and 17% through a restaurant app.

HOSPITALITY DODGERS

New research by Hit Training and Get My First Job has found that more than half (53%) of 16- to 20-year-olds wouldn't consider a career in hospitality. The top reasons for this are it's seen as a stepping stone to another career, it has limited career prospects and it's a part-time job while studying.

IT'S NO ALCHE-MYSTERY

The Alchemist is on track to reach £50m in revenue by the end of the financial year. After opening in Manchester, Leeds and London, the bar was backed by Palatine Private Equity in May 2015, which led to openings in Liverpool, Oxford, Newcastle, Nottingham, Cardiff and London. This has resulted in turnover increasing from £11.3m to the £50m that is forecast for the year to March 2020.

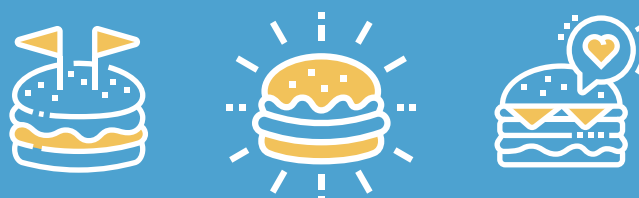
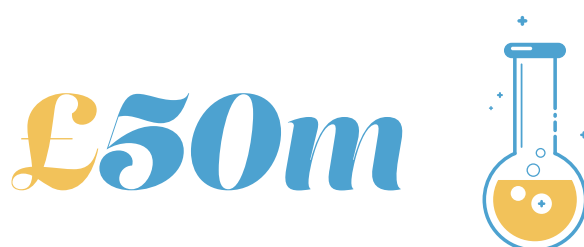
MORE VEGAN AT BYRON

Byron has added two vegan burgers to its new summer menu. The Truffler combines a Beyond Meat patty with truffle vegan cheese sauce, portobello mushroom, vegan truffle mayonnaise, crispy onions and lettuce, while Cali Cheese features the same patty but with vegan cheddar, vegan roasted garlic aioli, smoked tomato ketchup, red onion, pickle and lettuce.

LOOKING A MACMILLAN DOLLARS

Greene King has now raised more than £6m for Macmillan following a fundraising push that saw team members and customers generate £680,000 in just one month. Macmillan May featured hundreds of events taking place throughout Greene King pubs, including physical challenges and family events.

H2O Publishing is generating BITES, a digital product that keeps foodservice and hospitality operators up to speed with high street activity. Arriving by e-mail, it summarises key high street findings every two weeks, allowing operators to shape their business according to the lessons learned that fortnight...



BITES is a free service from H2O Publishing. If you're interested in subscribing, you can do so at www.bitesonline.info

★ RISING STARS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

In this regular interview, we speak to the under-30s who represent the future of foodservice

JAMIE ROWLANDS

.....
Winner of Young Chef of the Year: Thai Cuisine 2019



Tell us about your knowledge of Thai cuisine, ingredients and culture prior to entering the competition...

I encountered Thai culture and its vast cuisine from living in Chiang Mai for a year, which led me to working with Thai food in professional kitchens. I feel I have a strong understanding of Thai ingredients, having worked closely with them for the past four years. When working at Som Saa in London, I was lucky to have access to more unusual and fresh ingredients.

How has your understanding of Thai cuisine developed through your experience in the competition and your trip to Thailand?

My experience from the trip really gave me an opportunity to reconnect with the Thai culture and see it from new perspectives. The benefit of having some very good activities planned for me, and a helpful team and translators, meant I was able to gain in-

depth knowledge about how Thais engage with the cuisine and food culture. It gave me a great opportunity to reconnect with details that get lost sometimes in the west.

Are there any new techniques, ingredients or recipes that you've incorporated into your work as a chef in the UK?

The majority of what I learnt during the trip was at the farms outside Bangkok, in the Nakhon Pathom and Kanchanaburi provinces. I realised that understanding a food's heritage and how it's produced can really improve the way in which we eat it. Chefs have a responsibility to educate their public and collaborate with hard-working farmers to encourage positive, sustainable growing techniques.

Tell us about the new London restaurant you've helped to launch...

Tayer + Elementary is a collaboration between Alex Kratena and Monica Berg, who do the bar side, and Tata Eatery, which takes care



of the food. It's a great project to be involved with. They have established the bar as somewhere providing exciting cocktails, combined with a chef's counter dining experience. The food is truly unique – there isn't really anything like it in London at the moment.

How did it feel to be awarded the winner's trophy at the Young Chef of the Year: Thai Cuisine?

It was a great feeling. The other competitors and I were focused on the day and the quality of the other menus was very high. I felt extremely proud to have just edged past second and third place. Alexander Lloyd from Som Saa and Llion McGrath from The Begging Bowl were both very supportive – recognition and comradery among peers is so important.

How would you describe the overall experience of competing?

I think it's healthy for young chefs to be involved in competitions. They present positive, competitive environments for chefs to push themselves, develop and

learn about their own abilities. I found the overall experience very positive. The work put in by the organisers and the college was substantial and that really benefited the competitors.

Did you find the activities at Westminster Kingsway College, including the Thai Week lunch, beneficial?

I found them very beneficial. It was good to be involved in activities that brought people working in the Thai cuisine industry together.

Where do you hope your career as a chef takes you?

I hope to carry on learning and evolving as a chef specialising in Thai ingredients. Thai food is my passion and I'd like to continue my journey, being surrounded by other chefs who share this vision.



“ Understanding a food's heritage and how it's produced can really improve the way in which we eat it ”



WHY EVERY BUSINESS OWNER SHOULD HAVE A BUSINESS POWER OF ATTORNEY

Business owners in the field of catering will be busy navigating a host of industry challenges, from competitor pressure to regulatory compliance to increasing customer demands. Hannah Glover, associate with Cripps Pemberton Greenish, has five reasons why you should still take the time to make a business power of attorney



HANNAH GLOVER

You can make a lasting power of attorney (LPA) for your personal affairs (personal finance and/or healthcare), but you can also make a separate 'financial decisions' LPA, geared specifically to your business interests. Such business LPAs can (and often do) prove key to the continuing success of a business when faced with the incapacity of an owner/manager.

RETAINING CONTROL

Making a business LPA lets you retain control over who takes your place if you lose capacity. It is your choice as to whom you appoint as an attorney, and being able to nominate someone with experience, whom you trust, is as important for the

business as it is for your peace of mind. It can also reduce the scope for disputes between family members and others in management roles, in what may already be a very stressful situation. Consider advising stakeholders in advance of what you've decided to do, so that everyone is aware of your wishes, particularly if you run the business with a partner but are not going to make him or her your attorney. It is advisable to appoint more than one attorney so there is not an issue if one is unable to act.

CONTINUITY

Without a registered LPA, an application must be made to the court of protection for a deputyship order to be granted before anyone can make decisions on your behalf. This process takes many months and can be very costly. Business can quite quickly start to falter if there is no one available to make day-to-day decisions, sign cheques or enter into contracts.

THIRD PARTIES

A business LPA is a formal arrangement. All LPAs must be registered with the office of the public guardian before they can be used.

“
Making a business LPA lets you retain control over who takes your place if you lose capacity
”

It is likely that banks, professional advisers and other third parties will want evidence that someone has been formally appointed before taking instructions from them.

FAMILY FINANCES

You may rely on income from the business to support your family and lifestyle. Less disruption to the business should help reduce the impact on your and your family's finances.

WE ALL DESERVE A BREAK...

Perhaps you travel for business or want to enjoy a long summer holiday? Business LPAs can be used, with your consent, while you have capacity too. This can be particularly useful if you are unavailable or abroad on holiday.

When making a business LPA it is important to consider the structure and needs of your particular business. For example, if you are a company director, the company's articles of association will need to be looked at. If you are party to a shareholders' agreement, this may also contain relevant provisions. Taking specialist legal advice will help you get the protection you need in place.

For more information about business powers of attorney or wills, contact Hannah Glover on 01892 506 057 or hannah.glover@crippspg.co.uk, or visit www.crippspg.co.uk

Reader offers /



(SWEET) POTATO SUCCESS TO KEEP CUSTOMERS SATISFIED!

If there's one thing caterers can depend on in the fast-changing world of food trends, it's potatoes. Few products are as versatile, especially in the innovative hands of global category leader Lamb Weston, which turns them into versatile and hard-working products – from fries to flakes, shreds to dices and slices, CrissCuts, crispy fries and so much more! With new trends towards healthy eating and exciting flavours, the ever-adaptable potatoes are the answer for hungry customers – and that includes the on-trend sweet potato. A little different, a little tastier, seen as a superfood, so a little better for you, Lamb Weston has a sweet potato product for your every need.

To celebrate the humble potato, Lamb Weston is offering a recipe book of exciting ideas and a case of Sweet Potato CrissCuts or Potato Puffs to each of six lucky readers*. These über-cool products are great for customers and can be oven cooked to make them an even healthier alternative!

All you have to do is e-mail offers@talkingfood.co.uk with your name, business name and address and daytime phone number – quoting 'Sweet Potato Success' in the subject line – before August 31st 2019. Six readers will be drawn at random after the closing date. For innovative ideas, recipes and potato inspiration, head over to www.lambweston.eu/uk, call 0800 963 962 or e-mail salesuk@lambweston.eu.

**Open to bona fide caterers only*

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The BM60 is an easy and affordable way for any establishment to take its menu outside this summer and increase its profits. Hurry, this limited price of £569+ VAT is only available while stocks last! Order yours now from readeroffer@h2opublishing.co.uk.

CROWN VERITY



New products /

JUST DESSERTS

Country Range is making it easier for operators to serve up a stunning dessert selection with the addition of four new launches: Triple Chocolate Cheesecake, White Chocolate and Raspberry Cheesecake, Salted Caramel Cheesecake, and a Chocolate and Cherry Mousse Cake.

The new eye-catching launches come frozen and pre-sliced, meaning there's little fuss and preparation for caterers who just have to defrost and serve. The latest desserts from the innovative foodservice brand are available exclusively through the Country Range Group's network of 12 independent wholesalers.

Vasita Jantabutara, brand manager for the Country Range Group, said: "We're thrilled to launch our new desserts and believe they can definitely help operators add some excitement to their menus."



PAIRING PORTFOLIO

Monin continues to add to its extensive portfolio, giving drink development teams access to an ever-growing range of products. The newest addition – Green Tea Concentrate – pairs perfectly with passion fruit, pomegranate, mango, lemon and honey, as well as on-trend botanical flavours jasmine and hibiscus, helping to create an array of exciting green tea drinks.

The product was recently awarded Best New Product in the Speciality Beverage Flavour Additive category at World of Coffee.



PLANT PERFECTION

Theo's is making it easier for its customers to tap into the vegan plant-based trend with its new frozen Quinoa Falafel and Spinach and Kale Burger. The falafels are full of flavour and are really easy to prepare. They make a delicious, healthy, protein-rich Mediterranean favourite.

The burgers offer a delicious blend of spices, chickpeas, spinach and kale. They have a crispy coating and are soft in the middle and full of taste.



LIKE BUTTER

Whirl, the liquid butter substitute from AAK Foodservice, has ventured into the vegan market with the introduction of a new dairy-free version. Convenient, versatile and with the same buttery flavour as original Whirl, it provides a quick and easy way for caterers to meet global demand and deliver vegan dishes, without compromising on taste.

The product is registered with The Vegan Society and is also suitable for vegetarians and those following a gluten-free diet.



TOP THAT!

The new Love Fresh Cheeseburger Melt from Calder Foods is available to order now. It's a quick and easy way to dress up many menu favourites.

Prime minced beef, mozzarella and cheddar cheese are blended together in a tangy sauce that can be poured onto a burger for a fast and tasty topping. Not confined to burgers, though, you can pour it over tortilla chips or fries to make a simple snack, starter or side.



SAY CHEESE(CAKE)

Central Foods has launched a new vegetarian and gluten-free Ruby Chocolate and Raspberry Cheesecake for the foodservice sector. The Menuserve cheesecake has a gluten-free dark cocoa biscuit base, topped with a light and creamy, fruity ruby chocolate and raspberry cheesecake, finished with a layer of dark chocolate ganache swirled with ruby chocolate.

Part of the growing free-from range offered by Central Foods, the mouth-watering dessert will appeal to all diners – not just those looking for a gluten-free or vegetarian option.

"The fruity flavours from the raspberry and the ruby chocolate combine with the dark cocoa biscuit base to create a match made in heaven," said Gordon Lauder, MD of Central Foods. "The Menuserve Ruby Chocolate and Raspberry Cheesecake is very creamy but not too sweet, and showcases one of the most stylish ingredients for 2019 – ruby chocolate. It's a lovely treat to serve in any foodservice outlet."



THE BADGER

Catering consolidation

This month, The Badger ponders how smaller caterers can retain their identity after they've 'joined' a larger one



As we know, there have been very few start-ups in the contract catering world of late until the recent launch of Houston & Hawkes. It's become unusual to see entrepreneurs start up new contract catering businesses because the barriers to entry have become so high. In days of old, people would start up with some spreadsheets for accounts, a few manuals 'adapted' from their previous employer, a host of new ideas and initiatives up their sleeves, mostly cost-plus contracts, and an unshakeable belief that they could make a difference.

Fast forward to today and there is way more legislation and regulation to consider like allergen rules, health and safety, dietary analysis and employment checks. Add to that the complex contractual finances, expected investment by the caterer and the increasing involvement of client procurement departments, which are unwilling to allow their business to become a big percentage of the caterer's overall turnover, and it's not surprising that so many tender opportunities are either out of reach or too risky for a start-up to go after.

I was thinking about this situation the other day and wondering what the solution could be to give clients more options. We're seeing more small caterers being absorbed into larger operations as those big businesses seek to increase turnover or quickly enter new markets. Meanwhile,

the owners of the small businesses look for a satisfactory exit and financial reward for their years of hard work in building their companies. If there is more consolidation and fewer start-ups, might we soon be left with just a handful of larger caterers to choose from and how then do they stand out from each other? They all do good food, look after their people and have innovative ideas, so how will they differentiate?

It's got me wondering if we could learn anything from the hotel world. There are many hotel brands out there but when you start to analyse it, so many of them are owned and operated by a small number of giant hotel companies – IHG, Hilton, Hyatt and Marriott, for example. But all of these super brands have a big variety of sub-brands that appeal to all sectors of the market – from budget to luxury, urban-chic to holiday destination. The parent companies provide the head office support services, finance and group-level marketing initiatives, for example, and the sub-brands focus on what they need to do in order to find and keep their particular customers – and they have more localised decision making on the aspects of the brand which make it unique.

It strikes me that in contract catering, small companies are acquired and 'integrated' in one of three ways:

1. The small caterer is absorbed into the parent company and the small brand disappears.

2. The small caterer keeps its name but is essentially just the same as the parent company.
3. The acquired caterer is allowed to keep its brand and individuality but with the back-up resources of its larger parent.

There are pros and cons to all of the above, but I wonder if the third option is most like the hotel world and whether this route would continue to give clients and consultants the choice and variety they seek if it applied to foodservice. Is it also the most palatable for those entrepreneurs selling their business, enabling the owners to get a return on their investment and watch their legacies continue? Option three gives the acquiring companies the ability to grow turnover and enter new markets with more confidence too.

So, what can we learn from how hotel companies manage their sub-brands? Do the work and invest appropriately to ensure that there is differentiation I'd say. They make sure that there is substance to their offer and it's not just a smokescreen. Caterers with sub-brands need to invest in their constant development and innovation and let their teams, clients and consultants know what the brand stands for and what makes it different. In our sector, that's no easy task when many caterers already operate to high standards, but it is possible. Time will tell how the current period of industry consolidation works out in the long run – but for the companies that get it right, the benefits will come through.

“
Might we soon be left with just a handful of larger caterers to choose from?
”

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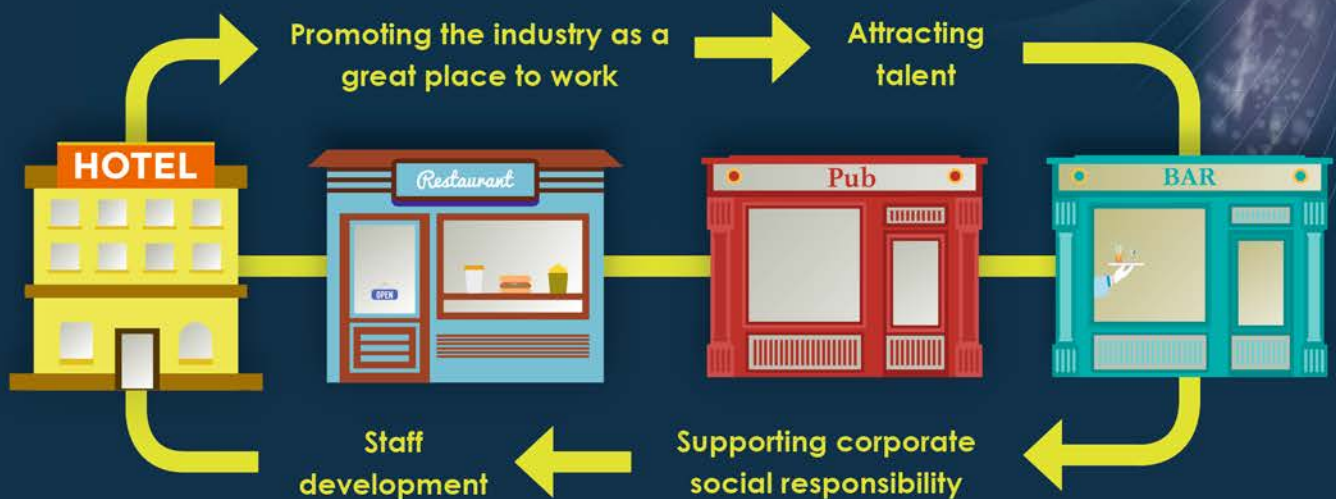


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