

CONTRACT catering MAGAZINE



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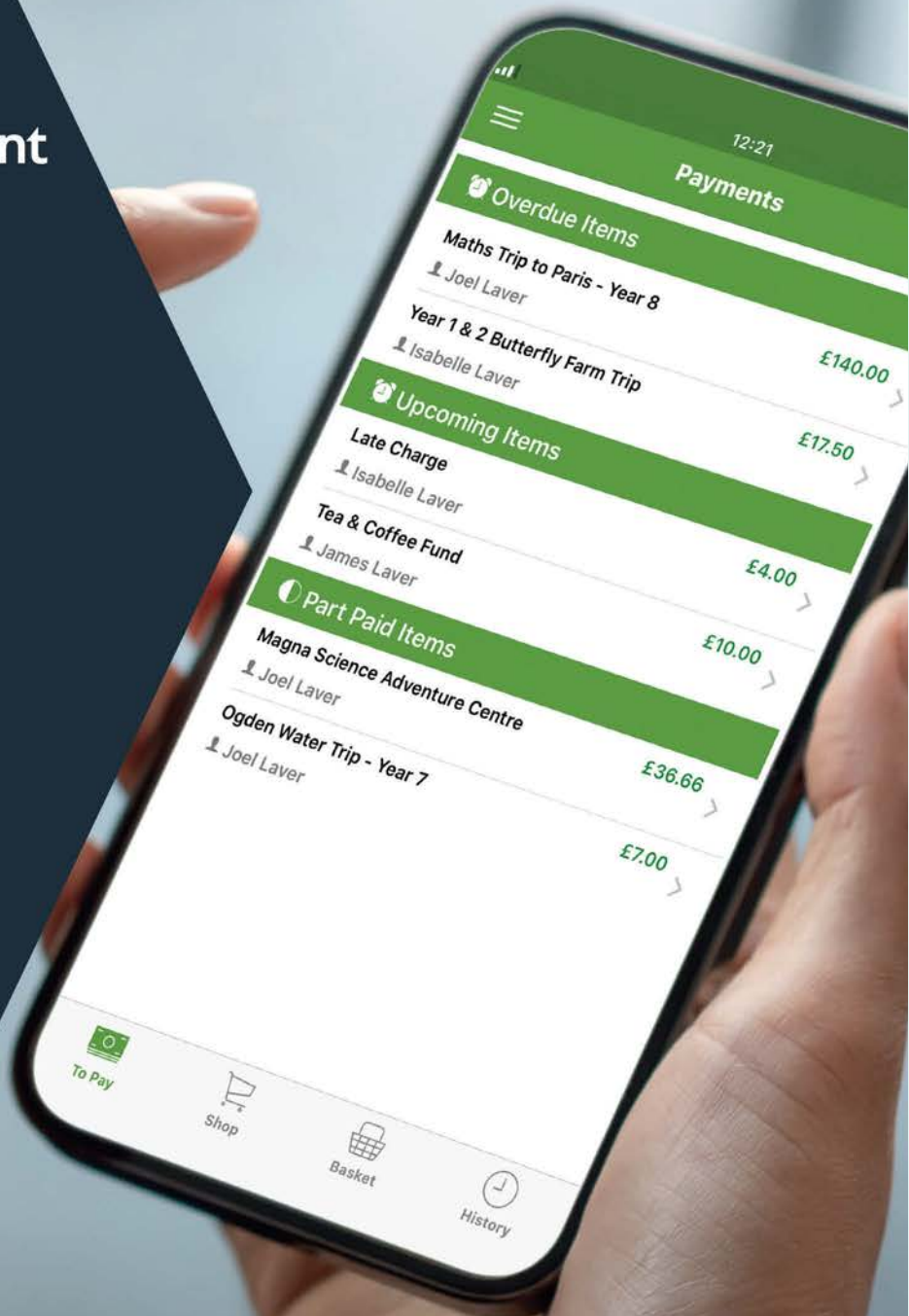
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WELCOME



I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO ATTEND THE ARENA FUTURES EVENT IN CENTRAL LONDON RECENTLY. THIS NEW INITIATIVE FROM THE POPULAR NETWORKING ORGANISATION IS A LAUDABLE MOVE TO BRING THROUGH THE NEXT GENERATION OF YOUNG INDUSTRY LEADERS.

What struck me while listening to the speakers, along with how impressive and driven they all were at such a young age, was that they all mentioned how addicted they are to a particular social networking platform. We are all aware of how important this aspect of modern-day life is (see our tech feature on page 45), but I was a tad surprised to hear that their platform of choice was, without fail, LinkedIn, with one even saying he was addicted.

We have been aware of just how popular it is in the industry for a while, and we have our own profile. However, we will be making an even bigger effort to interact online going forward, so please come and connect with us on LinkedIn at 'Contract Catering Magazine', as well as on Twitter (@CCateringMag) and Instagram (@contractcateringmag). In the meantime, I'm just off to update my MySpace page...

HENRY NORMAN

H Norman



*Please come and
connect with us online*



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VEGAN SOUTHERN
FRIED WINGS



VEGAN BUTTERMILK
BURGER



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BOWMAN WINS SODEXO CHEF OF THE YEAR

Development chef Kyle Bowman was named Sodexo Chef of the Year 2022 after a live cook-off at the recent Hotel, Restaurant and Catering (HRC) event held at ExCel London. He represented Sodexo Live!, the organisation's sports and leisure segment, making an impression on the judges with his street food menu.

Bowman's menu began with a starter of tom kha gai, a Thai coconut soup served in biodegradable bowls. For his main course, he served chorizo-battered Norwegian cod, bravas fritas, mojo verde and mashed fava beans. For dessert, Bowman created a Snickers chocolate éclair.

Kyle Bowman said: "I am delighted to have won the title of Chef of the Year 2022. I've only been with Sodexo for 10 months, so this feels like an incredible achievement!"

David Mulcahy, food innovation and sustainability director for Sodexo UK and Ireland, added: "Kyle's dedication to Sodexo's sustainable future has been demonstrated clearly through his food being delivered to such a high standard. All the chefs this year rose to the challenge of presenting a street food menu with high-quality dishes, which is a testament to their determination and training."

Eight chefs from across Sodexo UK and Ireland competed on the day. Adam Harty, representing Sodexo's corporate services, was named runner-up by the judges.

I've only been with Sodexo for 10 months!

BM LAUNCHES LOW-CARBON MENU

BM Catering recently launched a new range of low-carbon menus with the aim of improving its impact on the environment and the people it serves. Titled Eat With The Earth in Mind, the menus aim to raise awareness and understanding of the effect an activity or item has on the climate, from its creation, transportation and use through to its destruction or wastage.

The caterer launched the initiative alongside extensive chef training and roadshows to educate and inform customers about how to eat with a lower impact. It will focus heavily on reducing food miles, ethical trading and collaboration with local businesses.

Kevin Macey, the BM executive chef who is leading the project, said: "By educating our teams and customers about reducing the amount of emissions in the food we eat in a simple way, we can collectively contribute to tackling climate change."

14FORTY INTRODUCES CLEANING ROBOT

14forty has introduced a sophisticated cleaning robot into parent company Compass Group UK and Ireland's Chertsey headquarters to help reach its sustainability goals and maximise productivity. The company partnered up with cleaning innovation specialist Killis to deploy the robot, named Hanzel in honour of Compass Group's Hanzel Gardener who sadly passed away during the pandemic.

Hanzel uses a scrubber-dryer system that uses 70% less water and fewer chemicals than traditional cleaning products. Compass says that it will play a key role in helping the caterer achieve its target to reach net zero by 2030.

Mauro Ortelli, managing director of 14forty, said: "The pandemic has highlighted the importance of keeping our environment and surfaces as clean as possible if we want our people to stay safe. The introduction of robotics to 14forty's cleaning proposition will support our teams who work diligently to keep our clients' buildings clean and sterilised day and night, helping their employees to feel at ease while at work."

14forty says it expects to use more robots across client bases in the future. Compass is already using a dozen robots in its Medirest arm and has deployed another for vacuuming purposes at a 14forty client site.





BENNETT HAY NEW FOOD

BENNETT HAY WINS NATIONAL GALLERY CONTRACT

Bennett Hay has won a four-year contract with The National Gallery to provide workplace catering for its 650 employees and contractors. The win follows the recent completion of a purpose-built accommodation hub for National Gallery employees, covering six floors and encompassing recreation facilities.

The National Gallery in Trafalgar Square was founded in 1842 and houses one of the greatest collections of paintings in the world. Artists including Constable, da Vinci and Rubens are on display.

Charlotte Newton, business services manager for The National Gallery, said: "Bennett Hay grasped our values and vision and we've cemented an excellent collaboration for our workplace hospitality. They were innovative in terms of catering offering, tech-savvy and, most of all, have far-reaching sustainability goals."

Zoë Watts, business development director for Bennett Hay, added "The new employee accommodation has been beautifully designed and gives us the opportunity to bring into play our stylish and personable service levels. We are very excited to be working with one of the biggest names in the global museum and heritage sector."

Bennett Hay grasped our values and vision

SEARCYS RELEASES FIRST ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE

Searcys has released its first-ever own-label English sparkling wine to mark its 175th anniversary. The new bottle is available across its 19 venues and restaurants including Searcys at The Gherkin, St Pancras Brasserie and Champagne Bar, and The Orangery at Blenheim Palace.

In collaboration with the award-winning Greysfriars Vineyard near Guildford, Surrey, the new Searcys Classic Cuvée, Brut, English Sparkling Wine, NV is 'a vibrant and elegant wine blended from the three traditional champagne grape varieties, chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier'. Grown on the south-facing chalk slopes of the Hog's Back at Puttenham, at the 40-acre vineyard established in 1989, the grapes are handpicked and the wine is sustainably produced using the traditional method, ageing in cellars for over four years.

Bruno Pelletier, drinks ambassador for Searcys, said: "Being at the heart of events and celebrations since 1847, we are very excited to be adding our very first own-label English sparkling wine to the wine list for events across all our venues. What's more, we are continuing to raise awareness and interest in Britain's local wines and vineyards, supporting local businesses and practising being more sustainable."



SEARCYS' NEW ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE

CH&CO RETAINS FOOD MADE GOOD RATING

CH&CO has retained the maximum three-star Food Made Good rating from the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA). The top rating was secured across the diverse catering and hospitality business, with the overall score increasing by 4% to 74%.

CH&CO became the largest and most diverse contract caterer to be awarded the top rating by the SRA in 2018. The Food Made Good rating framework measures sustainability across 10 areas under three key themes of sourcing, society and environment.

Clare Clark, sustainability business partner for CH&CO, said: "The past two years have been exceptionally challenging in the hospitality industry. The fact that we have been able to continue to improve our sustainability practices and gain significant advances in our scores is testament to the dedication of our teams and the culture of sustainability that we are cultivating."



BBQ BATTLE SET FOR SUMMER

The Master Chefs of Great Britain has launched a search for Britain's best al-fresco chefs in reaction to the increased popularity of outdoor eating. The British BBQ Championships 2022 is expected to attract some of the most talented chefs in the UK. Its aim is to encourage more chefs to cook outdoors and use the wonderful possibilities of diverse and delicious British ingredients.

There are two heats – one for young chefs up to 23 years old and one for senior chefs in the industry. Prizes worth over £2,000 are up for grabs, including the possibility of joining a UK BBQ team in an international contest.

The judges include George McIvor, chairman of The Master Chefs of Great Britain, who said: "In the last few years, chefs in the UK have really got to grips with smoking and grilling food. They know what they are doing and know how to really impress the judges."

"BBQ food is extremely popular in the UK and it will be interesting to see just how creative the chefs can be in this competition. We are delighted that this year's final will be held with chefs cooking live at the glorious private estate of Catton Hall in Derbyshire."

Entries are open from 16th May to 12th June 2022. Shortlisted finalists will be announced on Friday 17th June and the finals will be held on 12th July. Visit www.masterchefsgb.co.uk for full details.

BBQ food is extremely popular in the UK

OVER £100K RAISED AT 2022 SPRINGBOARD AWARDS

More than £100,000 was raised at the Springboard Awards for Excellence 2022, as the charity crowned its hospitality heroes of the past 12 months. The evening highlighted the great lengths that hospitality businesses have been to in order to attract talent and look after, develop and retain their workforces, through being innovative, inclusive and collaborative.

BM Catering picked up two awards, for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, and Employee Health and Wellbeing. Sodexo, meanwhile, was named Best Kickstart Employer.

Springboard CEO Chris Gamm commended those who were nominated for doing an outstanding job, championing the industry and aligning with the charity's mission to futureproof the talent pipeline for hospitality. The awards fell on the same week that it hit the milestone of supporting 5,000 young, unemployed people into work as part of its Springboard to 2022 initiative.



TWEET ALL ABOUT IT

DAN KIRKPATRICK

@Dankirkpatrick4

Congratulations to all of the winners and nominees at last night's @CCateringMag awards – A great night celebrating success in such turbulent times – Thank you also to the superb H2O team – Good luck with the rebuild everyone #ContractCateringAwards

DARREN PASSMORE

@Darrenpassmore

Truly shocked to win at Contract Catering Awards. I have such a great team within Medirest Signature that allowed me to win this award. Food is an intrinsic part of a patient's not only physical but mental health #eatgoodfeelgood #teamcompass #ContractCateringAwards

ADIL RAY OBE

@adilray

Many asking for an alternative solution to the migrant crisis. Here's one. How about inviting some Syrians & Afghans to work here and fill job vacancies.

Starting with hospitality and the 500,000 vacancies in farming post Brexit. But that would mean admitting we depend on them.

UKHOSPITALITY

@UKHofficial

Hospitality is well placed in supporting prison leavers and it can not only give businesses the chance to benefit from a new, highly-skilled and motivated workforce but it also helps reduce reoffending.

HOSPITALITY ACTION

@HospAction

Touching words from just 1 person we've been able to help thanks to you:

"I was suffering financially & mentally. Your grant has taken a lot of stress away. I can now focus on my studies, look at ways to get back into work and not have to worry about bills as much."

#wevegottyou

SLC

CONTRACT CATERING AWARDS UPDATE

Levy UK+I on winning the Contract Caterer of the Year award for 2022



THE LEVY TEAM COLLECTS THE AWARD

We recently became the prestigious Contract Caterer of the Year, which recognised our partnership approach and dedicated teams. The organisation has made the transition out of lockdown to deliver exceptional services with a focus on sustainability, and this was especially brought to life as we successfully delivered food at COP26 in 2021.

It is fair to say that the last two years were some of our most challenging and most successful. A brand renowned for its legendary events and experiences, we were forced into silence throughout 2020 and the early parts of 2021.

We were one of the only major events caterers to be selected to deliver pilot events, working with The Kia Oval in June 2020 to run the first, and implementing new health and safety measures to keep our customers, team and clients safe. Cashless was nothing new to us, but we continued to innovate in the pandemic and introduced more frictionless and contactless measures to protect our customers and teams. Pre-ordering apps, self-ordering kiosks and the continued use of self-ordering tablets at hospitality and box level ensured that everyone was kept safe when ordering and delivering food and beverage on a matchday.

We were delighted to be named Contract Caterer of the Year. This achievement is testament to the hard work of the entire Levy UK+I, client and partnership teams.

We were delighted to be named Contract Caterer of the Year

deliver pilot events, working with The Kia Oval in June 2020 to run the first, and implementing new health and safety measures to keep our customers, team and

clients safe. Cashless was nothing new to us, but we continued to innovate in the pandemic and introduced more frictionless and contactless measures to protect our customers and teams. Pre-ordering apps, self-ordering kiosks and the continued use of self-ordering tablets at hospitality and box level ensured that everyone was kept safe when ordering and delivering food and beverage on a matchday.

THE COMPETITION THAT SEARCHES FOR THE **UK'S MOST CREATIVE STREET FOOD CHEF** FROM ALL CONTRACT CATERING SECTORS

**THURSDAY 22ND
SEPTEMBER 2022**
ISLINGTON
METAL WORKS

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awards ²²/₂₀

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STREETFOOD awards

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STREET FOOD CHEF FROM ALL
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QUORN PARTNERS WITH CHEFS FOR FOODIES

Quorn has launched four new recipe boxes after signing up to a new partnership with Chefs for Foodies. The company was created during the pandemic to connect chefs who are unable to work with consumers looking for restaurant-quality food at home.

The four boxes, which were launched at the beginning of April, were developed by three professional chefs. The range consists of an Indian-inspired street food dish by award-winning chef Dipna Anand; a nacho buttermilk-style burger from cordon bleu trained chef Ella Cockman; and two pizza dishes from Ricardo Arias Regalado, chef at renowned pizza restaurant Yard Sale Pizza.

"We're always looking for new ways to get consumers eating Quorn, to help us with our mission to tackle climate change by making great-tasting food," said Quorn marketing director Gill Riley. "We're really excited about this partnership with Chefs for Foodies, not only as a way to support the hospitality industry, but also to highlight just how versatile and delicious creating with Quorn can be."

www.chefsforfoodies.com/pages/quorn-recipe-kits



THE TWO LAUDED ELECTROLUX PRODUCTS

DOUBLE DELIGHT FOR ELECTROLUX

Electrolux Professional is celebrating following a double win at the Red Dot Design Awards, where two products from its commercial foodservice portfolio were awarded the prestigious accolade for 2022. The distinctive Red Dot is internationally renowned as one of the most sought-after seals of approval for quality product design, and has been recognising innovation and excellence for over 60 years.

The latest products from the manufacturer that can now bear the design award label are its TrinityPro series of table-top food preparation appliances and LiberoPro hyper-versatile mobile cooking solution. It is the first time the company has had two products recognised with the accolade in the same year.

Darren Lockley, head of region for Electrolux Professional UK and Ireland, said: "The Red Dot Awards are known the world over as a mark of groundbreaking design and innovation. Electrolux Professional has an impressive track record in the awards, but to see two products recognised in the same year is a landmark achievement."

www.electroluxprofessional.com/gb

QUORN BUTTERMILK BURGER



BOOKER WHOLESALE

makro

BOOKER'S NEW GUIDE

CATERING GUIDE

Spring 2022

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Guaranteed

NEW

BLACK GATE Signature PORK

CHOICE

PRICE

SERVICE

www.booker.co.uk

OVER 250 PRICES LOCKED DOWN

BOOKER LOCKS DOWN PRICES

Booker recently launched the latest edition of its Catering Guide, featuring its largest -ever price lockdown. It includes more than 250 essential and popular lines that are fixed through to 31st May.

Showcasing the latest in products and pricing for caterers of all sizes, the guide features, among others, the recently launched Blackgate pork, Dead Man's Fingers tequila and a number of new desserts. It also confirms that, in response to customer demand, the market-leading price of Chef's Larder Premium chips at £9.99 for four 2.5kg bags is extended again through to 31st May.

Stuart Hyslop, managing director – catering and small business for Booker, said: "With food prices continuing to rise and uncertainty in the market, Booker is delighted to reassure our catering customers that over 250 lines will be fixed until the end of May. We are committed to being here when you need us, delivering the best in choice, price and service."

www.booker.co.uk

APPOINTMENTS

COMPASS APPOINTS NEW HEALTHCARE MD

Russell Blake has been appointed as managing director of healthcare for Compass Group UK and Ireland. He has spent the last two years leading the caterer's hospitals and senior living team, which has been at the forefront of the Covid response.

Blake, who has been in the Compass business for over 22 years in total, moves into the position following Steve Cenci's 20-year tenure. Cenci has moved to a new role within Compass Group PLC, where he will be working with the group commercial team to support the expansion of international markets by sharing healthcare best practice and innovation.

Cenci said: "I am delighted that Russell will be heading up our healthcare business moving forward. He has been an integral part of our healthcare family for many years."

Blake added: "I am really looking forward to leading the Compass healthcare business. The pandemic shone a spotlight on the integral role so many of our frontline colleagues play in supporting the NHS, private healthcare and senior living."



BENNETT HAY RECRUITS DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Leo Coates has joined Bennett Hay as director of operations to oversee the caterer's 35 contracts. He will oversee its hospitality experiences across a portfolio of clients comprising notable corporate workspaces, estates and landmark destinations.

Coates has significant experience in the workplace sector having previously worked for Restaurant Associates, Vacherin and CH&CO. He joins Bennett Hay at a time when the company is promoting and recruiting new team members to support a return in confidence and maturation of hybrid working.

"I'm delighted to be on board with Bennett Hay who I've watched grow into one of the key players in hospitality over the last decade," said Coates. "The workplace is back, it's different and it's time to address an exciting new era."

Anthony Bennett, one of Bennett Hay's founders, added: "Leo is a huge asset who brings significant experience, a mindset for innovation and genuine care for his team. He is the perfect fit to lead our operations division."



BARROW IN AT EVOCA UK

Evoca has announced the appointment of Andrew Barrow to the role of HoReCa sales manager. He will replace industry veteran Stephen Parsons.

Barrow brings with him 20 years of experience and he has a long-standing connection with the company. "It goes way back to my time at my café bar when Evoca was still N&W Global Vending," he said. "I know some of the people from back then and I was au-fait with the equipment, so my introduction to the business is not so much a learning curve scenario as one of hitting the ground running."

A spokesperson for Evoca said that, while the company is delighted to welcome Barrow to the team, it is "hugely sorry" to see Parsons depart. In his three-and-a-half-year spell at Evoca, he played "an enormous part in re-establishing the Gaggia brand name in the UK".



NEW FINNISH MD FOR SSP

SSP has announced the appointment of Elena Heiska as managing director of SSP Finland. She has 20 years of professional experience in the hospitality industry, most recently as commercial director for Nordic Hotels and Resorts.

Heiska will join the business in early May, reporting to Jeremy Fennell, CEO of Nordics and Continental Europe.

Fennell said: "Elena's industry experience will be a great asset. I'm confident that her passion for people and customers will deliver great value, support and innovation to our colleagues, customers and partners as we head into the future."

Heiska added: "It is part of human nature to explore and seek out new experiences, and that is why I believe that travel and hospitality has a bright future ahead of it. We will be an integral part of that future".



29th & 30th June
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Skills for Chefs

Conference

2022



29 June

A Special Opening Event at 6.30pm
An Audience with **Paul Ainsworth**.
Our Conference Host is **Joe Hurd**.

30 June

Business Programme featuring:

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Hrishikesh Desai

Ross Sneddon

Jason Howard

Chris Wheeler

Martin Eccles

Plus "An Audience with **Pierre Koffmann**"

30 June

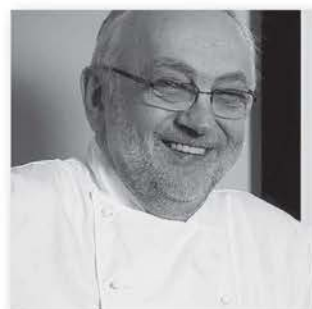
Skills for Chefs Gala Dinner

For all the information visit:

www.skillsforchefs.org.uk

E: information@universityhospitality.co.uk

T: 0114 222 8983



EVENTS

STrEATFOOD 20 awards 22

StrEATfood Awards

WE SPEAK TO ARON ELLIOTT, A HEAD CHEF FOR BAXTERSTOREY, ABOUT MAKING OUR 2021 FINALS



What's your everyday role?

I joined BaxterStorey 12 years ago as a commis chef and am now head chef at one of our WeWork locations in London, which opened in 2019. I currently oversee a team of six but am hoping to expand this as business levels return.

We cater for 2,000 people, but given the nature of hybrid working, this fluctuates with Tuesday to Thursday being our biggest days. We regularly run events for companies in-house and have an events space with a balcony area on the 16th floor.

A big part of my role is menu development and I'm particularly focused on street food initiatives and pop-ups. We introduce a new theme, such as a Mac Man macaroni cheese pop-up or an I'm a Fun Guy pizza one, in our restaurant every week. I like to

have fun with food, and I believe contract catering needs to be as good as street food in order to compete with the high street and deliver a memorable experience for customers.

How did you come to enter?

It was through word of mouth – a colleague suggested I enter the day before the competition deadline! I literally came up with the idea of Get Punkd on the spot, drawing inspiration from the '80s music scene.

What was your signature dish?

I wanted my dish to be visual with bold colours, to reflect the big bold flavours. It consisted of a Get Punkd salmon burger; a black charcoaled beer-battered salmon and black burger bun; Pink as Floyd fries; Black Sabbath mayo; and Purple tartare sauce.

I found inspiration through street food vendors. I wanted to create a similar experience, which is all about getting your food and eating it in the moment; it's not about the all-encompassing hospitality you have in a restaurant.

How do you stay calm when competing?

I didn't practice as much as I would have normally due to lockdown, but having never competed before I had no idea what to expect. On the day I just kept focused on the food and the execution.

Did you enjoy the event?

I did, once I was over my nerves. I would do the competition again, there was a great atmosphere and once you've done your round you can enjoy watching others and seeing their creations. I chatted to quite a few people, so there are lots of networking opportunities and you're guaranteed to bump into people you know. 🍷



*I like to have fun
with food*



ELLIOT'S TECHNICAL DISH

THE 2022 STREATFOOD AWARDS

The fifth StrEATFood Awards will be held in London on 22nd September. The 16 talented finalists will be tasked with recreating their signature dishes for our panel of expert judges. They will also compete in other challenges on the day.

The finalists will be selected after submitting their signature street food dishes for our exclusive judging panel. If you work in business and industry or event catering and would like to enter, or require more information, go to

www.streatfoodawards.co.uk.



ELLIOT'S SIGNATURE DISH

I found inspiration through street food vendors



ELLIOT IN ACTION

INDUSTRY EXPERT: B&I



Industry update

IAN THOMAS, CEO OF BARTLETT MITCHELL, TELLS US HOW B&I IS BOUNCING BACK

It is really encouraging that we have seen up to 75% of volume return to pre-Covid levels, and this is improving gradually. However, it is important to note that both the model and working week in which the sector operates are now quite different.

As has been widely recognised, the Tuesday to Thursday working pattern is common across most offices. That said, there are no guaranteed volumes on these days, so planning, ordering and prep can often be a challenge. Catering and facilities team relationships have proven to be vital in helping to understand true footfall patterns in our buildings.

It is interesting to note that we are seeing an increasing proportion of free issue activity, and those adopting this approach are definitely seeing a higher volume of their workforce present in their offices.

Hospitality has also increased, with clients seeing real value in holding team events and celebrations within their own buildings. Many have truly bought into the idea that teams need to get together outside of 'work' time to enable them to succeed. This, if there is one to be found,

*Client retention
has been
incredible*

could be a silver lining from the pandemic.

However, this positive demand from clients and customers has to be considered in the context of some wider significant challenges the sector is facing. Volatility in the supply


chain, and unknown levels of future food inflation, are expected to be ongoing challenges for the foodservice and wider hospitality sectors. We initially thought we'd be looking at 12 months, but it's likely to be longer and could begin to ease in 18 months' time.

It remains difficult to recruit staff. However, we are finding that we are attracting a good calibre of people either joining us for the first time or coming back to the sector, which is fantastic.

There are, of course, still challenges around Covid-enforced absences, as team members tackle the latest waves to hit our cities. While availability of product hasn't quite hit us yet (although we nearly ran out of salad in the UK this month), we do expect this to become a challenge as the year continues.

Weather, UK port issues and industrial action in some countries are causing a backlog that is likely to take some time to pass. Sales are buoyant, though, and the market is definitely moving, which is really positive.

Businesses are getting on with it and making the decision to work as usual. Client retention has been incredible, for which we are grateful to our wonderful clients, and we are fortunate to see a lot more new opportunities also becoming available.

Environmental, social and governance is climbing higher on the agenda and, as we have seen from the response to initiatives such as our low-carbon menus, there is a real drive to push this conversation further. People want to know more now than they ever have about the impact our food is having on the climate, and what we can do together to achieve net zero targets. 



WORKERS ARE RETURNING TO B&I LOCATIONS



Right to work

NICOLA SMYRL, PARTNER AT THE LUTON OFFICE OF TAYLOR WALTON, EXPLAINS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW SYSTEM THAT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR RIGHT TO WORK CHECKS

How employers perform right to work checks is set to change once again following a recent government announcement. However, there is some concern as press reports have appeared to suggest that these new changes will have serious cost implications for employers.

As it stands, it is illegal to employ a person who does not have the right to work in the UK, so checks are not negotiable. Opting to employ a worker illegally will have major consequences for any business owner, and can result in a criminal conviction plus a penalty fine of up to £20,000 per employee.

On 30th March 2020, the government introduced temporary adjustments to the process to take into account coronavirus restrictions. These adjustments made it possible for checks to be carried out remotely over video calls, with applicants then providing the employer a photo of their documents digitally.

These widespread adjustments to the process will cease to be the norm from 30th September 2022. The general consensus is that going back to the former protocol could be extremely challenging for many employers due to the increase in flexible and home working. As a consequence, the government has now issued guidance on its intentions to introduce an option for carrying out digital or online checks wherever possible.


THE NEW RULES

1. From 6th April 2022, those foreign nationals who have either a biometric residence card, biometric residence permit or a frontier worker permit can be checked via an online system. They will simply need to provide their date of birth and share code to enable an employer to validate their status via the government's online checking service. This is to be a free service, with manual checks no longer permitted. It will not be necessary to carry out retrospective checks on employees if a manual check was already conducted on or before 5th April 2022.

2. From 1st October 2022, as an alternative to manual checks, employers can utilise certified identity service providers to complete digital right-to-work checks for all British and Irish citizens with valid passports. These digital checks will be carried out for a fee. The process will see digital images of personal documents submitted electronically and verified using identity document validation technology.

3. Manual checks can continue for any employee not covered by point one above. This will cover British and Irish nationals who don't need permission to work in the UK.

Opting to employ a worker illegally will have major consequences

Full details of the amended regulations concerning right to work checks are available on the Gov.uk website. Employers who have been conducting right to work checks under the current temporary adjusted measures will need to consider their approach to these checks in the future. If employers do not wish to return to manual checks, they will also need to factor in the costs of performing these checks in their future budgets. 

The experienced employment law team at Taylor Walton can assist employers with any queries relating to the new right to work check requirements or any other employment or business immigration matters. For more information, call 01582 731 161 or e-mail nicola.smyrl@taylorwalton.co.uk.

A COMPASS THAT GUIDES US

WE ARE NAVIGATING A NEW WORLD WHERE CATERERS MAY EMPLOY AS MANY FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS AND NUTRITIONISTS AS CHEFS, AND WHERE CUSTOMERS PAY WITH MICROCHIPS EMBEDDED IN THEIR HANDS, ROBIN MILLS, THE HEAD OF COMPASS UK, TOLD THE RECENT ARENA SAVOY LECTURE

WORDS: JANE RENTON

Robin Mills who became managing director of Compass UK and Ireland in late 2019 – just in time for mayhem to break out with the arrival of Covid just over one month later – recently moved home. He talked of the stresses and strains of that process, which some liken to divorce or even death. But instead, he chose to use it as a metaphor for the current situation that the contract catering sector finds itself in.

"We've survived, we've unpacked many boxes... but the thing is, we're not decorating [the new home] in the same way. We're not putting the wonky handles back on or coping with temperamental hot water taps. We're trying to do something new and better," he told a gathering of industry consultants, procurement specialists, suppliers and HR executives at Arena's recent Savoy Lecture.

The same instinct needs to be deployed in the current environment by a sector that is still contending with the fallout of Brexit, Covid, war in Europe, and acute labour and supply shortages, as well as the return of "ferocious inflation". This desire to make things better will also have to contend with a changing world order, renewed emphasis on nuclear deterrents, a return to high levels of defence spending and the hunt for better energy security.

"We're in the middle of massive change, and the journey from one place

Be prepared to invest in roles you've never heard of

of consistency to another one can be long, unnerving and uncomfortable," he said. "We're in transition as an industry and we will be for a while yet. We have to have faith that we will get to a better place."

Building that better future will depend on how well the industry gets to grips with digital technology. This is something that needs to be deployed not just modestly but to create the fundamental building blocks of better client and supplier relationships, and above all good employment practice. "I think we can build an industry that tops the rankings of industries that 12- and 14-year-olds want to work in – not gaming, tech or sports, but catering and hospitality," Mills told his audience.

But that collective vision would only become a reality if the catering and hospitality industry acted more like a creative industry. "Why are we not a fully contracted out industry?" he asked, as he identified four key elements to make that collective ambition a reality: the ability to employ as many food technologists and nutritionists as chefs; to spend as much time with suppliers and farmers as with clients; investment in cutting-edge technology; and brilliant food that drives people back to offices and boosts national productivity.

But with 164,000 job vacancies in British hospitality – the highest recorded in any UK sector – it is also paramount that the industry gets to grips with its employment practices and what he called "its minimum wage mentality". "We know that the majority of students who work while

We need the very best graduates to join this industry



ROBIN MILLS AT THE SAVOY



at university work in hospitality, I think it's something like 90%," said Mills. "However, only a small percentage of those graduates go on to join our industry. I believe it's a single-digit percentage.

"As an industry, we have to find a route beyond the minimum wage. It's the floor and it's not the place where we should be."

Mills explained how his company's existing temporary labour pool paid the London Living Wage and how its partnership relationships with clients enabled this to happen. During Covid, Compass's two internal agencies merged into one, allowing for an unprecedented degree of flexibility. "We began to send people who would have been working at Aintree or Twickenham, which were obviously closed, to King's College Hospital," he explained. We found that those employees were better trained and better suited to working for short purposes in high-pressure environments, regardless of setting."

The reason this pool of talent could continue to be paid what Mills

described as "a proper wage" was because of Compass's partnership arrangements with clients. These were embedded into contracts and included profit sharing and longer-term goals around its people's experience, as opposed to minimum guaranteed returns.

Since Compass became accredited by the Living Wage Foundation, Mills, who was formerly head of HR for Compass UK and Ireland, said his company had been able to persuade some 6,000 client businesses to sign up to the Living Wage. "That's more than 35,000 people receiving an additional £1,600 or £1,900 each year," he said.

Better pay and conditions will become increasingly important, not just in a labour-constricted market, but also one in which contract caterers will increasingly have to recruit high-level graduates with skills in technology, science and environmental sustainability – skills that traditionally laid well outside the remit of the industry, but no longer do. "We need the very best graduates to join this industry," said Mills. "Not just vocational foodies, the people who might join Amazon or Google and start-ups that you have not yet heard of. They're the people who will take this to another level."

Mills clearly does not believe that current geopolitical tensions are likely to result in any weakening of regulatory pressures on businesses, especially in relation to climate change measures. If anything, he foresees a time when a company's profits will be directly linked to what it contributes. "Our business will be measured on what we give back as much as what we make," he said.

We'll see robots and drones doing the last mile of food delivery



THE ARENA AUDIENCE ASSEMBLED



BM CATERING'S WENDY BARTLETT ASKS A QUESTION

Just-walk-out stores will become the norm

Protestors will increasingly converge on the food industry to take "a closer look at what we do, bringing in their wake a whole new raft of environmental legislation". "There'll be a revolution in company law," he asserted. "It's currently receiving some pushback, but it will come."

These, he suggested, will come in the form of a carbon tax and further taxes on energy. Companies will also be measured via their impact on natural resources and legislation is likely to follow in all of these areas, Mills said, as he urged industry colleagues to plan ahead for the next phases of these environmental laws for which the industry is poorly prepared. "We don't currently have the green skills and the green jobs to guide us through this," he said. "There's a new wave of employment coming in this sector. Be prepared to invest in roles you've never heard of or haven't imagined yet."


Technology is already making inroads into the industry and will accelerate in the rapidly changing environment. "We'll see robots and drones doing the last mile of food delivery – it's already happening," Mills said.

Food prep robots have already happened, along with smart vending using facial recognition to serve, pizza, noodles and salad. "Just-walk-

out stores will become the norm, as they are already in many parts of the world," he said, as he asked the audience to imagine thousands of fans at football stadia being able to walk up and collect their pre-ordered pies and pints from backfill chefs without any interaction at all from staff. Facial recognition and autopay will combine to make this a reality. Computer recognition of what is on a staff canteen tray is already being rolled out by Compass in Amazon warehouses, and Mills said that its employees are enjoying the freeing up of lunch-break time that this has created.

Looking further ahead, Mills talked about the likelihood of people being microchipped, not just to gain entry to employer buildings but also to pay for food. Such developments, which some might find dystopian, or straight from the Chinese Communist Party's playbook, are not so far from reality. Mills referred to research suggesting that 51% of millennials would consider such a measure if it improved customer service.

Mills himself conceded that comfort could be drawn from the fact that, even with a virtual Metaverse, there will still be a need for real food and nutrition. "We'll always have a role," he reasoned. "We would say that you can't replace the human interaction – and that's what makes our industry so magical."

The industry will have to embrace new technologies to prosper and satisfy demand in the future. However, it will always have to maintain great food as its foundation. The correct approach, like creating the perfect home, is to combine the best of all worlds. 



HOT ON THE HIGH STREET



SOCIAL BITE LONDON

BITING BACK

THE ANTI-HOMELESSNESS ENTERPRISE SOCIAL BITE RECENTLY OPENED ITS FIRST ENGLISH OUTLET WITH THE HELP OF BAXTERSTOREY. HENRY NORMAN ATTENDED THE LAUNCH

“It happened almost by accident really about 10 years ago.” It’s early March and I’m at the launch of Social Bite on the Strand, chatting to Josh Littlejohn MBE about how his simple café concept somehow evolved into an anti-homeless initiative – all with the help of Coutts, a contract caterer and a certain George Clooney.

Social Bite was originally founded as an everyday outlet in Edinburgh by Josh and Alice Thompson back in 2012. However, this all changed after an encounter with a young homeless man.

Ever since, it has been committed to tackling the problem via a range of innovative programmes including training, employment and housing. A decade on and it now has five fully functional coffee shops in three cities in Scotland, plus its first English outpost.

The Strand site really couldn’t be better positioned, sitting as it does right opposite Charing Cross station. Anyone who knows the area even only fairly well will be aware of the juxtaposition that it offers, between the fantastical world of the West End and the reality of what Peter Flavel, CEO of Coutts Bank, speaking at the launch, describes as being “known to be the epicentre of homelessness”.

He is referring specifically to the Strand, though sadly Westminster in general has the highest rate of rough sleepers in the whole of England. The problem is so acute here that it is almost six times higher than in any other London borough.

“We had a little café in the centre of Edinburgh and originally it didn’t have anything to do with homelessness at all,” continues Josh. “There was a young guy – he was 19, he was homeless, he was selling the Big Issue – outside the front of the café.

He came in one day after we’d been open for about two weeks. He was hanging around the counter and we wondered what he was up to.”

It turned out he was plucking up the courage to ask for a job and he was quickly employed in the kitchen. “He was working hard and we saw

It happened almost by accident really

what a difference it made to him,” remembers Josh. “We thought we’d try it again, so we asked him if he knew anyone else and he recommended his brother, Joe. So that’s kind of how it all got started. Then we introduced the pay-it-forward system and that became the whole ethos.”

This idea originated in a similarly minded café in Naples. Basically, customers who come in to buy a coffee or a sandwich can also purchase an additional meal or hot drink in advance for someone who is homeless to redeem later.

Of course, Social Bite continues to employ people from the homeless





[L-R] PETER FLAVEL, ALASTAIR STOREY, JOSH LITTLEJOHN AND RONAN HARTE (CHIEF EXEC OF BAXTERSTOREY)

community full-time. Indeed, the charity specifically aims for one in four of its staff to come from this background.

Sadly, times are tougher than would be ideal for businesses and individuals alike, so does Josh still detect a desire to help from both sides? "There is clearly an appetite from loads of companies. This is being supported by Coutts Bank, which owns the unit, as well as [the caterer] BaxterStorey, which is providing operational support and staff. Without them we wouldn't be able to do it. There's such an overwhelming sense of passion to be involved.

"In terms of the man on the street, I guess time will tell. But it's promising that even before we even opened, someone knocked on the door and made a pay-it-forward donation, so that's a good sign."

Other visitors, to its Edinburgh outlet, have included the Duchess of Cambridge, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai – though the real shot in the arm was provided by the appearance of a certain ex-TV doctor. "George Clooney came in and paid us a visit in 2015, so that really increased our profile," says Josh. "I wrote to him and managed to persuade him, basically, to come to Edinburgh and come to our café, which was amazing.

"It sounds like I'm making it up, but 12 months later Leonardo Di Caprio came in. The charity has grown arms and legs since then and we have launched lots of projects."

They've clearly set themselves something of a high standard there, so what big names are Social Bite going to acquire for the new London

George Clooney came in and paid us a visit

store? "Well, we've already got Alastair Storey here, so we're very happy," Josh laughs, referring to the chairman of Westbury Street Holdings, which owns BaxterStorey, who has impressively shown his commitment to the cause by also attending the event.

"I met Josh many years ago and he had this vision to help people who are in a bad situation," Alastair tells me. "This all really came out of thinking, 'How could you build an environment where you create jobs for people in a coffee shop environment?'. What we are trying to do is steadily get a few people each year off the street and into jobs, so that they've got a sense of self-esteem and pride."

I continue by asking Alastair if initiatives like this could be one solution to alleviating hospitality's much-publicised, and ongoing, issue with employment. "It's up to individuals to decide what works for them," he replies. "It's definitely the case that the industry has got vacancies and we need to try and attract people from all walks of life, so this is part of a holistic approach.

"This is massive," he continues, as I ask him for his take on just what level of altruism is anticipated. "Even if you take the horrible situation in Ukraine, that just illustrates why it's so important to take care of all people in society. It's part of what we want to be as an organisation; it's important to us, both individually and as a company."

Similarly, Social Bite aims to give out an average of 180,000 items of free food and hot drinks per year across its network of coffee shops and charity partners. Indeed, it has provided more than 800,000 food packs during the pandemic alone. "As well as the cafés, we've also built a little village to house people in Edinburgh," elaborates Josh. "It's grown into a reasonably large charity now."

It certainly has and it's incredible just how far Josh and his team have progressed, all thanks to the brave actions of one man who summoned the courage to approach him and ask for a job. So, 10 years on from that pivotal moment, where does Josh see Social Bite going next?

"This is a really exciting moment, because it's our first project outside of Scotland," he reflects. "It's a big milestone for the charity. It's also a great opportunity to work with BaxterStorey to open more of these.

"We'd love to go to other big cities like Manchester. I think this is a great test case; if it works well, it will give us a bit of a blueprint to open. Really, the sky's the limit." ☺



How important is training to your business?



CLAIRE HUISH

HR AND WELLBEING DIRECTOR,
BENNETT HAY

The role of training has never been more crucial as the hospitality sector faces one of its toughest periods in the recruitment and retention of staff. For Bennett Hay, instilling soft skills and a sense of belonging throughout our colleague community has long been a company differentiator and has led us to being a regular employer of choice through our Best Places to Work in Hospitality award. The current competitive climate for attracting and maintaining people means that we've further refined our focus on training, learning and development to ensure that we have a business that retains, rewards and recognises talent.

Our employee retention is high with 20% of the team having been with the company for more than 10 years. However, we cannot rest on our laurels as we are very aware of the migration of the hospitality workforce to new sectors. As such, we've bolstered our human resources team with the view of having structured people practices in place to enable everyone in

the team to progress within the organisation, as well as develop their own interpersonal skills. We see better training and development playing out through improved productivity, efficiencies and accountability – as the saying goes: "Take care of your people and they will take care of your business."

Our training plays a significant part in building a sense of community among our people through shared lived experiences, developing connections with each other and encouraging creativity and entrepreneurialism. Training is a constant in our business and applies to all, no matter where they are in their career journey, from the new recruit who learns our service delivery promises and company values to our fast-track candidates who are part of our 12-month leadership academy. Not only do we look at instilling our business values among our people, but we also focus on developing their individual soft skills while also having a watchful eye on the following.

The evolution of the office means that there is a greater reliance on technology, which again calls on training to ensure our people are fully up to speed with new tech products and fresh ways of managing hospitality. In some cases, tech has lightened personal interactivity and we are training employees on the importance of personal impacts and behaviours.

We also place a substantial training focus on evolving our guest experiences and partner with a specialist who helps us to develop upscale hotel service levels within our clients' workplaces.

Ultimately, training is a fundamental pillar for hospitality businesses, and it's not just important, it is imperative. After all, the outcomes of training are demonstrably underlined by performance, colleague and client retention, and commercial success.

*Training is a fundamental pillar
for hospitality businesses*



AMANDA SCOTT

DIRECTOR OF TALENT, LEARNING
AND D&I, COMPASS GROUP UK
AND IRELAND

I believe training is critical to any business. If our industry wants to attract the best individuals with great potential, we must invest in our people and focus on every job being a good job with great career prospects.

Last year, we ensured that clear career pathways were created to offer genuine opportunities for all roles and ages across all business sectors at Compass. It's never been easier for our people to see how they can develop and progress through the company – regardless of background or education.

During the pandemic, we signed up to the government's Kickstart scheme and put nearly 300 candidates through our pre-employment programme, in collaboration with long-standing partners and industry charity Springboard UK. This saw an almost 100% completion rate with Kickstart learners gaining a level-one award in Skills For Employment. This first step in training is vital groundwork and has led to some fantastic Kickstart successes.

With the announcement of a Compass Academy, a multi-million-pound investment to help address the skills crisis the hospitality industry faces, it is an exciting time for us. Our aim is to train over 12,000 people a year, focusing on supporting young people in the most disadvantaged areas to get on that crucial first rung of the ladder.

Our apprentices are a credit and an inspiration throughout Compass. We recently took time to speak to our partners, training providers and colleges to upgrade and develop our food and support services apprenticeship programmes. For example, we wanted our entry-level culinary apprentices to get a taste of supporting at prestigious events and working at famed locations – this has really helped with their skills development and career progression.

Training doesn't have to stop when you're in a senior position either. Fifteen of our senior chefs, from across the business, embarked on the ultimate culinary apprenticeship Forward led by Marcus Wareing last August. This landmark training programme was shaped by Marcus himself, to challenge candidates with real-life experiences and one-to-one mentoring from one of the UK's most respected chefs.

We're also looking at how new training and apprenticeships can enrich our people and business. Business and industry senior nutritionist Rees Bramwell was recently enrolled onto an MSC level-seven sustainability business specialists apprenticeship, in partnership with Cranfield University. This is the first course of its kind and is in line with Compass Group UK and Ireland's continued commitment to reach climate net zero by 2030.

Our aim is to train over 12,000 people a year



ALEX BAILEY

COMPANY EXECUTIVE CHEF,
FOODITUDE

In an ideal world, that's a question that should only have one answer: very! A well-thought-out training program develops a talent pipeline like nothing else can. It motivates staff, creates a consistent product, can be used as a reward and helps with retention.

But we're working in B&I catering in an interesting time. Facing the perfect storm of staff shortages, rising costs and the fact that business is picking up after two years of lockdown – it can be very easy for training to slip down the list of priorities for any kitchen leader.

As a food business, we offer all the compliance training on food safety, health and safety, allergen management, and key people management skills. But we go beyond that and foster a culture of curiosity and continuous improvement. While it may be hard to set time aside for formal training at the moment, there's still plenty that we are able to offer our chefs in terms of inspirational training, mentoring, shadowing and demonstrations.

At Fooditude, we cook all our meals from scratch in a central production kitchen, from a daily changing menu that is inspired by cuisines all over the world. Our menus don't repeat for at least four weeks, so our chefs get to cook different dishes for a whole month before they make the same dish again, vastly expanding their cooking repertoire.

We don't expect them to be experts in all cuisines; instead, we rely on detailed dish specifications that the senior chefs then take the time to demonstrate to all members of staff, so that every single dish that leaves our kitchen is just as tasty and consistent as it should be. They also mentor chefs on their areas of expertise, whether it is sharing their passion for foraging, sourdough bread making, pickling or fermentation.

Training, in a different form, can play a crucial role in attracting the next generation into our industry. Offering work experience opportunities to young students and providing an atmosphere rich with learning will go a long way towards helping address the acute chef shortage we are currently seeing.

We have a close relationship with Highshore School, a special education needs school in Southwark. We have worked with them for nearly seven years, taking on 19 students for work experience, two of whom have progressed into paid employment with us.

We're also involved in programs such as Adopt a School at Ilderton Primary, London, and World of Work at Trinity Comprehensive, Dublin, where our teams teach school students about nutrition, healthy cooking and what it is like to work in hospitality. These initiatives provide a great introduction to food and work for the students, and are something that our chefs find immensely fulfilling and rewarding. For time-poor chefs, looking at training from a new perspective is the only way forward!

Training can play a crucial role in attracting the next generation

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BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH



CENTRAL FOODS KATERBAKE

BRINGING HOME THE BACON

FROM BREAKFAST BURRITOS TO AN EGGS BENEDICT BRUNCH, LAUREN FITCHETT DISCOVERS HOW THE EARLY BIRD CAN CATCH THE WORM WHEN IT COMES TO MORNING TRADE

Breakfast has long been the most important meal of the day, and it's also now the most varied. Where a bacon sarnie or bowl of porridge may have once sufficed, today it's a vast sector packed with choice – and opportunity. Pre-pandemic figures show that breakfast was the fastest-growing mealtime in 2019, while as many as 35m UK adults enjoy it out every year.

"The market is still there for a good breakfast, that's for sure, and in particular for brunch," says Pete Redman, chef director for BM Catering. "With customers' working hours shifting to avoid commuter rushes, the desire to arrive at work at 10am and still get something delicious to eat that isn't a pastry is definitely there. Where some of our clients have taken up the all-day grazing style of menus, the brunch-style dish really does fit into this well."

Breakfast is already a significant driver of trade for contract caterers, agrees David Bell,

A delicious breakfast offering is a great way to become a destination dining venue

executive chef and culinary lead Scotland for BaxterStorey. He echoes that workers' later starts are boosting the brunch market. "Breakfast does make up a large proportion of what

we do – it's probably a good 30% of our offer," he says.

"That said, I always feel like there is more we can do as it's a rapidly increasing market. It's one part of the overall offer that is always guaranteed to sell. Whether it's porridge pots, baps or rolls, breakfast offers a lot of opportunity for caterers, and this has grown significantly since the Covid restrictions have been lifted."

This makes it the perfect time to refresh breakfast menus, according to Gordon Lauder, managing director of Central Foods. "The popularity of out of home breakfasts was growing pre-pandemic and is likely to increase now things are starting to get back to normal and pent-up demand can flourish," he comments. "Having a delicious – and different – breakfast offering is a great way to become a destination dining venue and pull people into your venue earlier in the day. Therefore, now is a great time to review your breakfast menus to ensure you offer tempting options to suit all tastes."

WHAT TAKES THE BACON?

Today's consumers expect more from morning menus, including healthy choices and flavours from abroad, from Mexican-inspired breakfast burritos to American pancakes. With so much choice, whittling down menus can be tricky. Redman says caterers should consider their environment – an iced mango smoothie may not be a hit on a cold, dark morning, for example. Variety, though, is key. "The bacon and sausage crowd is still very much there, but we have seen the uptake of lighter, fresher and healthier food-based choices as well," he says. "For example, a berry-loaded bircher muesli or protein pancakes or a spicy shakshuka."

At BaxterStorey, Bell says hot on-the-go options reign supreme. "People don't tend to want to sit down for breakfast at work, so it's always a grab-and-go option at this time of day," he says. "People tend to go for warm options, so it's important that we are able to offer something quick, simple and high quality, as well as hot, for them to start the day. As people are in the office less, they are willing to treat themselves and spend per head is up, especially at breakfast."

Understanding what customers are looking for from their breakfast may help – are they after a healthy start? Or a morning pick-me-up? "Simple flavours such as egg and cheese muffins and bacon and sausage baps will always have a place on a breakfast menu," says Jason Coyle, food creator and owner of Invisible Chef. "We do, however, increasingly see people stepping out of their comfort zones and trying more adventurous and bigger-fill products, such as

American-inspired breakfast burritos with egg, potatoes, beans and bacon. These tend to be more popular with those who have hit the gym before work."

Lara Bicknell, head of sales for Creed Foodservice, says its teams look at the week in three parts: the first, where consumers' health intentions are strongest; the latter, where more are looking to treat themselves; and the weekend, where indulgence often triumphs.

When it comes to bridging the gap, a pastry or slice of traybake can provide a treat without the calories. "The trend for healthy and nutritious food is strong in the breakfast and brunch market," she says. "We're seeing real popularity for porridge, granola and bircher pots, each topped with different yoghurts, nuts, seeds and nut butters. The smoothie is also growing in popularity, with many choosing to fortify their smoothies with added nutritious products such as spirulina, hemp and CBD."

Customisable options are an efficient way of providing variety. Lauder suggests crumpets – caterers can add modern twists through

*Simple flavours
will always have
a place on a
breakfast menu*

MEAT-FREE MORNINGS

The move towards veganism has been well documented and, from meat-free sausages to plant-based milks, breakfast is no exception. Phil Thornborrow, head of foodservice for Quorn, says: "As we see more people realising the impact their diet can have on the planet, interest in meat-free dishes on menus shows no sign of slowing, with health and sustainability playing a key role in consumers' decision making when dining out."

He says Quorn's products can be used in dishes ranging from breakfast muffins to Mexican-inspired quesadillas. They can also, he adds, help develop on-trend options and meet compliance criteria in order to make menu planning simpler.

toppings including banana, blueberries and syrup, smashed avocado and chilli flakes, or cream cheese and harissa. "Crumpets make a great alternative to bread muffins and are sure to go down well with all customers," he says. "They're peculiarly British and appeal to a sense of nostalgia, reminding customers of favourite childhood snacks. Pop crumpets onto lunch and snack menus too and they'll more than earn their keep in your kitchen."

Sharing the potential for childhood nostalgia, cereal is another option that is easy to personalise with toppings. David Bone, foodservice channel manager for Weetabix, says: "Catering for people in the morning can be a tricky business, but there is a massive opportunity if you get it right. We've seen a significant increase in demand for portion packs in the post-Covid market, and Weetabix's new portion pack additions have been created to offer foodservice operators a tasty and nutritious cereal option for their customers."

Toby Baker, regional marketing director UKA for Nestlé Cereals, agrees, saying. "For consumers looking for a convenient option, cereal has always been a popular choice, as not only is it quick to prepare and consume, but it is affordable and filling too. This has become even more important for those people returning to the office looking for a convenient breakfast option in the morning, as well as those prioritising choices that offer good value for money."

Of course, we are a nation of bread lovers – sliced bread remains the most popular bakery product in the UK, making toast a staple on most menus. But many consumers are looking for lighter swaps, says Scott Oakes, commercial manager for St Pierre Groupe. "One of the biggest challenges in meeting this trend has al-





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*Nielsen 52 w/e 29.01.22 – Total Coverage. **Combined wholesaler data w/e 14.01.22



ways been variety, particularly when it comes to bread," he says. "However, the category now offers a range of healthier options, including free-from, wholegrain and also rye bread, which can unlock opportunities.

"Rye bread is a viable alternative to white bread on the breakfast menu and the perfect solution to a healthier variety. It is fibre-rich, full of goodness and contains less gluten than wheat and other grains."

Joel Carr, development chef for Young's Foodservice, says there are plenty of options that bridge the gap between healthy and indulgent. "A smoked salmon and cream cheese bagel to go hits the spot for those who need to eat on the run, as does a warming smoked salmon and egg wrap with chopped chives and baby spinach," he says. "A more leisurely breakfast of scrambled eggs with smoked salmon, topped off with avocado and a round of toasted sourdough, makes a substantial meal that will keep anyone going until lunchtime."

SPREADING THE WORD

In a crowded market, one challenge will be catching consumers' attention. Focus on what makes life easier for your customers, Redman advises. "We are seeing the use of tech as a good way to promote breakfast products," he says. "Through our pear pay app, customers can see the dish, the ingredients, the allergen and the nutritional information of the dishes on the menu before they even arrive at work. They can order what they fancy on the train and collect it when they arrive."

We eat with our eyes, and inviting displays could nudge undecided customers towards a sale, with seasonal promotions that tie into key calendar events likely to encourage higher spend. "Don't just think of traditional croissants and pain au chocolats," Bicknell says. "Line your

shelves with eye-catching and mouth-watering filled savoury croissants, such as spinach and ricotta or smoked ham and gruyere cheese, flavoured torsades and optional fruits and jams, to create a personalised experience."

Oakes suggests caterers consider breakfast bundles. "Most meal deals work on a mix-and-match basis, and breakfast presents a fantastic opportunity to combine a hot drink with a breakfast sandwich, baguette, wrap or roll," he says. "The whole idea of a meal deal is to get people to trade up and, if done correctly, offering them can be a win-win situation for both the caterer – higher revenue – and the consumer – perceived value."


With a growing focus on provenance, David Colcombe, chef ambassador for Maple from Canada UK, says promoting a product's sustainable background can become a selling point. "Adding a touch of maple syrup to dishes is an easy way for contract caterers to add a new twist to all kinds of breakfast dishes, and the fact that pure Canadian maple syrup is a natural, sustainably sourced ingredient is a selling point," he says.

"Stating that your dishes are made with pure Canadian maple syrup, for example, can be a positive selling message, especially for business and industry caterers."

Similarly, many consumers can be swayed by the familiarity of familiar names – but this must be balanced with the demand for local, independent products. "Big brands are definitely attractive for quality assurance such as Heinz Beans," Coyle says. "However, we have found that many people prefer products that they perceive to be either small or made in-house, as it makes them feel like they are eating high-quality, home-cooked products that support local workers."

ON THE GO

There are few times when grab-and-go options are so crucial, and caterers should consider speed, whether through processes, equipment or products. "With the focus on takeaways, operators need a solution that can deliver breakfast products with speed, efficiency and consistency every time," says Scott Duncan, managing director of Unox. "Consumers don't want to be left waiting for their breakfast, but at the same time operators don't want to be compromising on quality to meet the speed requirements of their customers."

Coyle says Invisible Chef's products, including muffins and paninis, can be cooked in less than two minutes, with options that can be hot-held for 90 to 120 minutes. And at Kepak, the home of Rustlers, senior account manager Carl Hunter says its all-day breakfast sausage muffin is provided in a cook-in-box format, so customers can heat it without opening the pack, making it well suited for sites with smaller dining facilities. "In such locations, people often don't want the hassle of having to go off-site to get a meal," he says. "Similarly, people who are on a short break haven't got the time or inclination to prepare meals themselves, but often want hot food that they can enjoy with the minimum amount of fuss." 





LYONS

CAFFEINE FIX

We couldn't talk about breakfast without mentioning coffee. In the UK, we drink around 98m cups per day and demand for a morning caffeine fix is high. While many caterers use instant varieties or machines, Lyons Coffee has launched new coffee bags. It says that while 60% of consumers are not aware of coffee bags, those who are are loyal to the format – over one-third buy them at least once a month. It adds that the bags simplify back-of-house operations, save time and are easy to store.

"In busy contract caterer kitchens, often the default solution is instant coffee or machines – automatic or otherwise – which are not supported by the necessary training or processes that enable the quality customers demand," a spokesperson says. "Coffee bags give a much higher quality beverage than instant and do so without the effort or expense of machines."

[CONTACTS]

Central Foods

www.centralfoods.co.uk

Creed

www.creedfoodservice.co.uk

Invisible Chef

www.invisiblechefsnacks.com

Kepak

www.kepak.com

Maple from Canada

www.maplefromcanada.co.uk

Nestlé Cereals

www.nestle-cereals.com

Quorn

www.quorn.co.uk

UCC

www.ucc-coffee-direct.co.uk

Unox

www.unox.com

Weetabix

www.weetabix.co.uk

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BIG BUSINESS

LARGE EVENTS CAN PROVE EXTREMELY LUCRATIVE FOR CATERERS THAT COVER ALL THE BASES

Historically, large-scale conferences and banquets have been a huge source of revenue for businesses, but with many of these kinds of events having been cancelled or postponed recently due to the Covid-19 outbreak there has been a big dent in profits. However, with restrictions on public gatherings now lifted, businesses can look forward to packed schedules.

"Forward-planning can now be undertaken with confidence that the booking will go ahead," says Reggie Randhawa, business development executive for Brita Vivreau. "Therefore, there's never been a more important time for caterers to consider the effectiveness and efficiency of their products, equipment, and facilities to ensure people attending events have a smooth and enjoyable experience."

THAW AND SERVE

Catering for people on a mass scale, and ensuring quality and consistency, is no mean feat. Producing every item on the menu from scratch will put immense pressure on a kitchen, which is why many businesses rely on pre-made frozen products to supplement their menus.

"Using high-quality, frozen, pre-prepared products makes things so much easier when catering for large numbers at conferences and banquets," says Marie-Emmanuelle Chessé, international development project manager for Tipiak. "Now that events are back on the calendar, contract caterers will be keen to lay on a super spread, making up for all the events that have been postponed or cancelled."

With staffing levels continuing to fluctuate

Forward-planning can now be undertaken with confidence

due to absences caused by sickness, opting for pre-made canapés and sweet treats will not only help service run smoothly, but take the pressure off staff too. Using frozen pre-prepared products is also a simple way for caterers to follow the latest food trends. With vegan and vegetarian choices in high demand,

it's expected that menus will include free-from products too.

"The plant-based trend is very much here to stay and there's an expectation that menus will now include tasty vegan and vegetarian dishes," says Chessé. "Delegates and guests will expect there to be meat-free and dairy-free options, and serving great-tasting vegan items to all your guests will help to avoid menu proliferation and make it easier for both kitchen staff and serving staff."

LIQUID ASSETS

Ensuring every guest is hydrated at conferences and events can prove a challenge for caterers who are trying their hardest to ensure that the food is up to scratch. However, keeping water cool and ensuring a plentiful





MKN

supply throughout an event is easy to do with water dispensers.

"Hydration plays a vital role in both physical and mental wellbeing, and that's why it's important to regularly serve staff members and people attending events," says Randhawa. "Studies show that even mild dehydration can alter a person's mood, energy level and ability to think clearly, elements that are particularly important to people attending conferences who need to absorb lots of information and remain engaged throughout the day."

Events and banquets will require bottled water on tables for guests to serve themselves. However, this presents the perfect opportunity for businesses to reinforce their commitment to sustainability and their brand with personalised water bottles. Branding can even be used to include sponsor logos.

Additionally, placing professional water dispensers around a venue is a great way for both staff and guests to access fresh water throughout proceedings, without impacting on waiters who are then free to carry out other tasks.

PERFECT SERVE

When it comes to serving hot food on a large scale, timing is key. Ensuring food is kept at the right temperature and in optimal condition is vital. Therefore, investing in innovative technology, such as hot fridges, could prove invaluable for caterers.

Capable of preserving cooked food for days at a time, products like the Evereo from Unox use the latest technology to maintain precision temperature and humidity control. "When used to its full potential, Evereo is capable of saving energy and labour, speeds up service times and can virtually eliminate food waste," explains

The plant-based trend is very much here to stay

Scott Duncan, managing director of Unox UK.

"Allowing a kitchen brigade to prepare entire dishes in advance, even delicate foods can be preserved for up to 72 hours using precise temperature, humidity and oxygen controls. In turn, this means that an operator needs only to serve the exact quantity of food being consumed, helping to reduce food waste, and simultaneously maintaining the quality and consistency of the food served to guests."

SWEET SIDES

Everyone loves a biscuit, particularly when accompanied by a hot drink to provide a welcome sugar boost during a long meeting or event. As more face-to-face meetings and events are taking place, it's essential not to disappoint

on the biscuit front.

"The ideal accompaniment to a hot drink, individually wrapped sweet and savoury options are perfect for meeting rooms and conference events, allowing you to provide a wide selection of complimentary snacks alongside tea and coffee facilities," says Nykki Bezer, director of foodservice product and marketing for Burton's Biscuit Company.

At a time when consumer concerns over health are at an all-time high, individually portioned and wrapped products will provide reassurance and a little indulgent snack.

"In a world of healthy-eating messages and campaigns, consumers are still not willing to sacrifice all of life's simple pleasures, with many seeking a more balanced approach when it comes to food and drink," says Bezer. "Our research shows that even the most avid healthy eater still wants to indulge themselves with a sweet beverage accompaniment."

With the conferencing and events world now fully open, contract caterers need to ensure they provide premium options and smooth service in order to keep clients coming back year after year. ☕



TOP TIPS

Slick servicer – “When it comes to serving drinks at conferences and banquets, speed and efficiency are key,” says Randhawa. “Avoid bottlenecks and queues at water and hot drinks stations by having professional water dispensers placed strategically both front- and back-of-house in venues.”

Optimise efficiency – “Ask your equipment partner how to drive efficiency in the kitchen with technologies such as demand-controlled ventilation and heat recovery with air source heat pumps on dishwashers,” suggests Chris Hinton, sales director for Shine Catering Systems.

High-tech options – “Consider the use of the latest technology to help your kitchen deliver standout dishes, in the most time-, energy- and labour-efficient way,” says Duncan. “From state-of-the-art, space-saving combi ovens through to the latest hot food preservation technology, which can make conference and banqueting service more efficient in a busy commercial kitchen, technology can really aid consistency and quality.”

Multifunctional – One of the most important aspects in any banqueting kitchen is flexibility; the flexibility to deliver large quantities of food, on time, without impacting quality,” says Wayne Bennett, VP sales and marketing UK and Ireland for MKN. “That’s one of the reasons equipment choice is so important. Look for appliances that can offer multiple cooking processes.”



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CONTACTS

Brita

www.brita.co.uk

Burton's

www.burtonsfoodservice.co.uk

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STOCKS AND SAUCES

Top of the stocks

PROVIDING AWESOME FLAVOUR AND A TASTE OF ADVENTURE, WHAT STOCKS, SAUCES AND CONDIMENTS ARE MUST-STOCK ITEMS?

With palates evolving and customers becoming more discerning (or should that be picky?), the market for stocks and sauces is soaring. More flavour, more spice is the general message, and condiments can also help in this battle by providing an enticing bit on the side.

"A report by Mintel titled World Cuisines UK from March 2020 found that 81% of consumers were looking for a 'flavour adventure' when dining out," says Fergus Martin, development chef for Major International. "This focus on flavour is likely to have remained consistent throughout the pandemic, as consumers have concentrated more on quality and provenance than speed and ease of purchase."

THE PANDEMIC EFFECT

Martin is right to invoke the impact of the pandemic, as hot weather and restrictions on indoor gatherings fuelled a surge in BBQing, which represents a key opportunity for sauce suppliers. The fact is that there were a record 189.9m BBQ meals eaten in the UK in the year ending 27th December 2020, a rise of 40%. This helped to drive sales of sauces, in particular mayonnaise and ketchup.

"With many consumers having been prevented from taking a holiday abroad, or choosing not to, they have been travelling globally through condiments, and they like it hot!" says Rachel

Shoosmith, marketing manager for Creative Foods. "Hot and spicy sauces, such as sriracha and chimichurri, are now store-cupboard staples. They are also looking further afield to products such as American regional sauces, especially less common vinegary BBQ options from North Carolina, as well as African cuisines.

"Creative Foods has a delicious range of Atlantic's House of Lords Premium BBQ Sauces, made to authentic American recipes using the highest quality ingredients. This trend-aligned range blends the best of Americana with hot and spicy or sweet and sticky BBQ flavours, and is suitable for dips, glazes, marinades, coatings and toppings, offering hundreds of quick and easy ways to transform dishes."

Sauces and condiments are a key ingredient in lifting a meal from the everyday to the sublime, but they're also an effective way of delivering more 'adventure' in food flavours and so increasing your margins. The legacy of a renewed interest in scratch cooking during lockdown is that people's expectations of out of home dining are greater than ever before, with many now seeking to replicate the flavour trends and global influences they tried and enjoyed at home.

This is the view of James Lewin, marketing manager for Tiger Foodservice, who says caterers can easily meet this demand by ensuring they stock a comprehensive range of store-cupboard condiments. "Condiments play a key role in el-

evating flavour and whether you offer a spicy mayonnaise to pep up a burger or use a tangy chilli sauce as a marinade, they will give your menus a shot of extra flavour and keep your customers coming back for more.

"Sauces and condiments have always been the gateway to new cuisines and flavours, and are a very effective way to give dishes a contemporary twist. However, caterers should also be aware that traditional flavours – and the comfort factor they deliver – are still very much in demand."

Lewin advises stocking up with a range of globally inspired sauces and condiments that can be used at the prep stage to enhance existing dishes. In addition, they should also offer a selection of popular table sauces – such as ketchups,

Some 81% of consumers are looking for a 'flavour adventure' when dining out

FORECASTING FLAVOURS

What are the findings from McCormick's latest Flavour Forecast?

You can look to the leading flavour expert McCormick for the latest flavour trends, which are published annually in its Flavour Forecast. The team from the five regions of North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Australia worked with food and drink experts and influencers to hear their take on what's coming in food and drink flavours. No trend is off the table, no idea too wild.

Flavourful vegetables, fruit and botanicals can be pushed beyond their healthy halo and used to create an amazing array of sauces and condiments. Veggies have moved from side of plate to the main event and into sauces and condiments. Caterers should be embracing all of the brilliant colours, vibrant ingredients and playful plant flavours that heighten the eating experience.

Whatever your reason for exploring plant-based – dietary, environmental or just for fun – dig below the surface to discover a new way of eating flora-focused foods. For instance, you can explore how the simple effect of charring elevates produce to a whole new sensory level with charred tomato ketchup.



mustards and chutneys – that customers can add themselves.

STOCK ANSWERS

Similarly, when it comes to stocks, Tom Styman-Heighton, development chef for Funnybones Foodservice, believes these should also be bought pre-made. “A freshly made stock or sauce can be a wonderful thing but can also be time-consuming and demanding to make,” he says. “With customers wanting to enjoy dishes from all around the world, chefs cannot hope to be experts on all the different cuisines, and it is not practical to store ingredients from all the different regions. The answer is often to buy in quality sauces and to pick your supplier carefully.

“Specialist wholesalers like Funnybones Foodservice are the experts when it comes to sourcing the authentic ingredients of their area of expertise. For example, we don’t just choose a chilli to add heat to a sauce, we will choose the right chilli for the dish. Some examples are Scotch bonnet for our Jamaican Cooking Sauce and Jerk Paste, and chipotle for our Mexican-inspired sauces.”

With regard to what the essential stocks and sauces to, er, stock are, Martin advises that for a chef in a professional kitchen, it comes down to three key elements: authenticity, to as near as scratch as possible, time-saving and consistency.

“At Major International, we go beyond great taste to create food experiences that do good and feel good, for body, mind and planet. Using extensive knowledge built up over more than three decades in stocks and sauces for the foodservice sector, our focus is on making a real difference to your menu by delivering products that are truly versatile. Our authentic stocks, mari bases, seasonings and gravies deliver without compromising on quality.”

Today’s contract caterers are, of course, looking to deliver standout dishes that not only satisfy the customer’s needs, but also generate repeat business in the future. And Major’s products can help achieve this.

“Take our range of stock powders,” continues Martin. “Created by chefs, they deliver consistency every time. Gluten-free and truly flexible in use, our stock powders are a cost-effective and

convenient solution for contract caterers who simply don’t have the time to make their own stocks from scratch.”

They are available in seven flavours, Beef, Chicken, Lamb and Fish, as well as three vegetarian-certified, Cheese, Mushroom and Vegetable. The latter two are also vegan-certified with flavours to enhance almost any dish.

“For chefs looking to replicate the scratch-made taste and texture, Major Gluten Free Stock Paste is a no-compromise range that achieves an exceptional flavour and consistency,” explains Martin. “Each tub is packed full of quality ingredients that make this perfect for sauces, soups

Consumers have been travelling globally through condiments

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CREATIVE FOODS (WITH TABASCO)

and gravies, as well as dishes including risottos, pies and stews. Major Stock Paste is available in a choice of 13 varieties, including one vegetarian-certified and five vegan-certified products.

"For the ultimate in sauces, the Major Mari Base range is the go-to base for all your authentic global dishes. This unique product range is gluten-free and uses a water-based recipe, meaning the products are versatile and have multi-use application. With just one pot you can create so much, from adding directly onto protein as a marinade, or used to create wonderfully rich sauces, dips and soups."

Available in a choice of 11 inspiring world cuisine flavours, the range is completely vegetarian-certified. Nine of the products are also suitable for vegans and many of them are allergen-free."

BEN-EFITS

The benefits of using Ben's Original Professional's and Dolmio Professional's ranges of ready-to-use sauces are similarly wide reaching. "As well as having instant access to a whole host of flavours from around the world, all of the sauces within the ranges can be poured straight from the jar without the need for additional cooking," says Alison Smith, global product developer for Mars Foodservice.

"Once opened, the sauces can then be stored in the fridge for up to 30 days, thus allowing caterers to conveniently make a variety of dishes from one sauce. For example, caterers can use Dolmio Professional Tomato and Basil to make a one-pot pasta dish and any remaining sauce can then be used to create a classic pizza base or a tomato-based stew at a later date.


"What's more, caterers can also easily cater to customers with varying dietary requirements, as the entire Ben's Original Professional's and Dolmio Professional ready-to-use sauce ranges are suitable for a gluten-free diet and vegetarian diet. All this and 14 out of the 17 sauces are suitable for vegans, meaning caterers can make a menu of vegan options too."

The market has clearly developed immeasurably in recent years, but what stocks, sauces and condiments do our experts think will be along next? "In addition to classic tomato-based sauces, such as those within the Dolmio Professional range that always remain popular, we predict that demand for pan-Asian dishes will soar with a cuisine that is all about bringing together a wide variety of Asian flavours onto one menu," says Smith of Mars. "However, if a contract caterer truly wants to impress with a pan-Asian offering, then they shouldn't stop there.

"Instead, they should look to create dishes

that infuse the traditions of flavours of multiple Asian cuisines, from katsu curry pad Thai dishes that combine the traditions of Japan and Thailand, through to sweet and sour pho soups that unify China and Vietnam. With fusion foods, caterers can create an on-trend point of difference with pan-Asian themed options."

"One of the biggest trends in stocks and sauces currently is the focus on global cuisine," echoes Martin of Major. "An ever-increasing consumer choice of foods from around the world has led to a demand for associated products, particularly with Asian flavour profiles.

"Being such a crucial component to any dish, it's vital to choose a stock or sauce that achieves quality, consistency and convenience in your kitchen. We would say that the most important thing is to get to know your key suppliers. We have a lot to offer and a wealth of experience." 

Demand for pan-Asian dishes will soar

DIGGING DEEPER

Shoosmith of Creative Foods asks, beyond ketchup, what are the top sauces?

According to a recent report on the quick-service restaurant and fast-casual market by The Food People (2021), the top sauces are:

1. **Guacamole** – Added to sandwiches and burgers or used as a dip.
2. **Mayonnaise**, aioli, caesar and tartare – Flavoured with garlic, chilli, honey and mustard, or herbs, these can be plant-based and used as a base for secret sauces.
3. **Barbecue** – Called out as Korean, bulgogi, Texan, Hawaiian and honey.
4. **Chilli** – Popular types include sriracha, Thai, sweet chilli, peri-peri, cajun, jerk, creole or with pineapple and mango from the southern US or the Caribbean.
5. **Teriyaki** – This Japanese sauce continues to grow in popularity as a dip and marinade in all types of fast foods, including burgers, sandwiches and bowl food.



CONTACTS

Aimia/Mars

www.aimiafoods.com

Creative Foods

www.creativefoods.co.uk

Funnybones

www.funnybones.co.uk

Major

www.majorint.com

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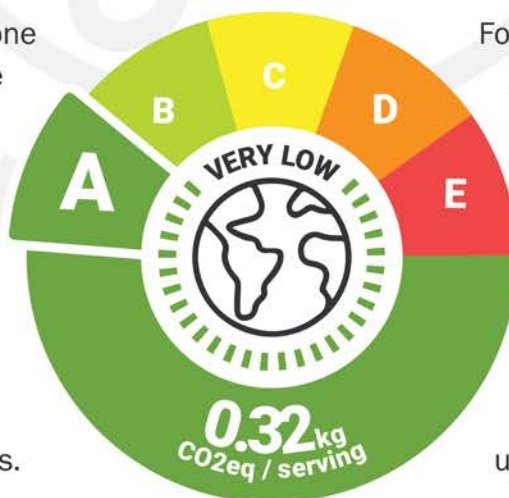
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PLANET OF THE APPS

TECHNOLOGY HAS AN EVEN MORE PROMINENT ROLE TO PLAY IN OUR POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Cash may once have been king – but it has been going out of currency in recent years. In particular, the rise of touch-and-go tech has led to an almost previously unimaginable situation whereby people can often go weeks – or longer – without having to have money on their person.

Appropriately enough, one of Civica's solution goes by the name of Cashless and, for contract caterers running operations in schools and for NHS staff, it streamlines mealtimes, improves take-up of free school meals and helps manage individual dietary requirements, with secure ID management built-in. "With features like pre-ordering, menu scheduling and meal deals, Cashless gives students and parents – education – and NHS staff – healthcare – the ability to make safe meal choices earlier," says Andrew Pond, business development director for Civica's Saffron catering management software. "It's all about improving the

*Pre-ordering
has been
shown to
increase uptake
by 50%*

'customer' experience with a solution that gets them enjoying your meals faster."

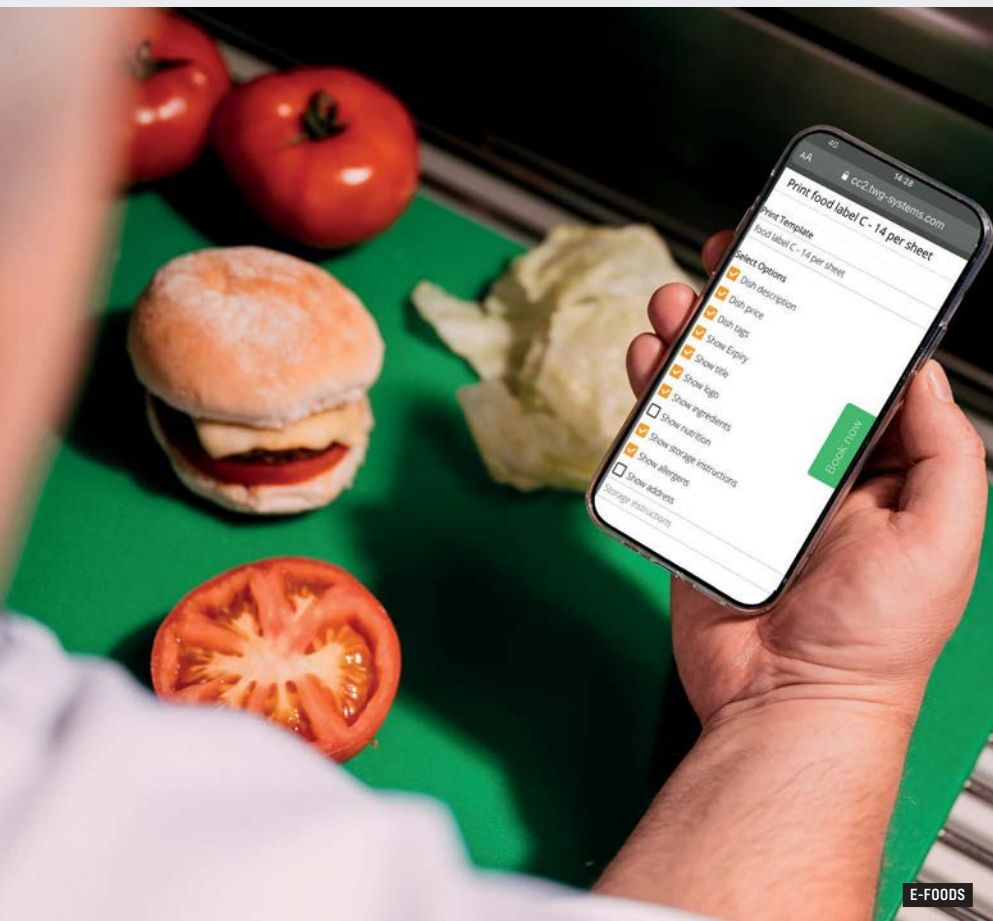
Cashless also includes the CivicaEats mobile pre-order app, which is available in education and healthcare too. "The app supports food waste reduction and helps manage mealtimes more efficiently and safely," continues Pond. "Customers can order meals in advance, which

means the kitchen only needs to prepare the meals required – minimising waste and driving sustainability, while supporting accurate management and ordering of stock too. Pre-ordering has also been shown to increase uptake of school meals by 50%."

INTOLERANCES ON THE INCREASE

And there is also the incredibly important issue of safety. With intolerances on the increase – and tragedies such as the one that led to Natasha's Law to be avoided at all costs – technology can also help out when it comes to the latest labelling legislation.

"Operators need to ensure that they follow guidance regarding allergen laws in order to protect their business and customers," says Rob Henry, head of food safety and compliance for CaterCloud, which is offered by E-foods. "Communication is key and offering transparency with regards to allergens, both on their



E-FOODS

menus and verbally, can prove they are a trusted provider.”

Sticking with the altruistic angle, Hungrr allows businesses to support their staff and keep their customers safe at the same time – while also driving those all-important sales. “Ever since the outbreak of Covid-19, hospitality businesses have been under real pressure to reduce physical touchpoints and enable contactless ways for customers to order and pay,” a spokesperson says. “Our technology allows them to offer that exactly at a low cost. We also integrate with EPoS, ResDiary, TipJar, Deliverect, ICT Touch and more, so we can sync with hospitality venues’ current technology with ease.”

What with the ongoing challenges regarding staff levels and increased operating costs, the app also takes some of the pressure off teams that are already extremely stretched. “Businesses can process all orders through the app, sending them directly to their kitchen,” the spokesperson explains. “This means that the front-of-house team can concentrate on serving food and drinks to tables, while giving the best levels of customer service.”

SYSTEMS AND SOLUTIONS

So, from the huge – and sometimes bewildering – array of systems and solutions on offer, which should you go for? “Our powerful menu management system, CaterCloud, was built to

Operators need to ensure they follow guidance regarding allergen laws

make life easier for the catering industry,” advises Henry. “With customisable dashboards, ingredient and recipe libraries, allergen information, fine-detailed costings, and weekly and recurring menu planning, it is revolutionising menu management.”

Catering management software like Civica Saffron, meanwhile, is the glue that holds all the individual elements of an efficient, cost-effective and safe public sector catering operation together. “Saffron is an end-to-end cloud solution that manages purchasing, stock control, menu engineering, supplier management, recipes and kitchen compliance, including food safety, allergen management and cleaning schedules, in one system,” explains Pond. “Removing paper processes from the kitchen can cut costs by 70%.

LABELLING LEGISLATION

E-foods advises on the latest requirements

The Calorie Labelling (Out of Home) Regulations 2021 came into effect across England on 6th April 2022. This legislation is not currently in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, but consultations are ongoing and equivalent legislation is likely.

The businesses currently in scope for the legislation include:

Cafés, fast food outlets, restaurants, pubs and supermarkets

Home-delivery services and third-party apps selling food that is in scope

Cafés and takeaways within larger shops and venues, such as delicatessens, bakeries, supermarkets, department stores and sweet shops

Contract catering

Domestic transport companies such as trains, planes and coaches

As part of the implementation businesses must:

Display energy content of food per portion in kilocalories (kcal)

Define portion size unless clearly a single portion

Display the statement ‘Adults need around 2,000 kcal per day’

“Crucially, it enhances efficiency, control and visibility of complex catering operations, with added functionality. It includes online meal ordering in hospitals using a tablet for enhanced hygiene and accuracy, a portal for displaying menu information in schools and hospitals, and a mobile pre-order app for ordering meals in advance.”

Hungrr offers feature-rich ordering solutions, especially for the hospitality industry. “We work with bars, pubs, restaurants, takeaways, hotels and events spaces to enable them to offer delivery, collection, table ordering and more via their own website and mobile app, which we create with their own unique branding,” explains the spokesperson.

“Customers can simply download the branded app, or scan a QR code positioned on a table, to access food and drinks menus for placing orders. In this day and age, customers expect this sort of touchless service, so it’s important that hospitality businesses are meeting this demand.”

For E-foods, the benefit comes from knowing that you are doing as much as possible to

keep your customers safe. "We ensure that the system and its features remain compliant with new legislation, including Natasha's Law which came into effect last year, by offering compliant labelling solutions," says Henry. "CaterCloud is also up to date with the more recent calorie labelling legislation for the out of home sector [see box]."


"Not only does CaterCloud help you remain compliant, but the busy caterer needs a simple-to-use system to create and house recipes that can be shared across multiple sites. They can also then be used on any device."

GET TECH SMART

When it comes to getting the most from this technology, Civica's top tip is to ensure that you are, well, getting the most from this technology! "The important thing when investing in software is to explore what else it can offer," advises Pond. "Additional functionality like the Saffron Wellbeing Portal or CivicaEats pre-ordering app can unlock significant benefits above and beyond those offered by the main Saffron platform. Speak to your provider and see what options are best for your individual needs."

For Henry, however, it all comes down to safety and staying on top of those all-impor-

Hospitality businesses have been under real pressure to reduce physical touchpoints

tant allergy laws, as he concludes: "If you work in catering or hospitality, ensuring you have the systems in place for your business to remain compliant is essential." 

CONTACTS

Civica

www.civica.co.uk/saffron

E-foods

www.e-foods.co.uk

Hungrrr

www.hungrrr.co.uk

CHANGING PRIORITIES

Hungrrr on how tech can help businesses adapt to the new normal

Hearing how our technology is enabling our clients to grow their businesses and thrive in an increasingly challenging industry is incredibly rewarding. For example, our top-performing pub has generated almost £400k of revenue through our platform.

During the pandemic, we had great feedback on how our technology helped bars to survive and enabled them to continue operating by introducing click-and-collect options and home delivery. Equally, it's allowed some of our clients to expand their offerings, or launch new menus without the hassle of reprinting physical menus, and so on.

We've also been blown away by the positive response we've had since introducing our last-mile delivery solutions. In the past, our partners fed back that they really struggled to source their own delivery drivers, whereas now we integrate with Uber Eats, Stuart and Gophr, so everything is taken care of.

Your perfect software solution partner



e-f group offer intelligent software solutions, helping you to deliver better results for your clients. From procurement of food and hygiene to tools, cement and building materials, our leading procurement solution can simplify and streamline your purchasing.

We work closely with our partners to deliver outstanding solutions, services and partnerships that will digitally transform the way you do business, saving you time and money.

To find out how our next-generation purchasing solution can help your organisation thrive, please contact:

Steve Walker, Group Sales Director
stevewalker@e-foods.co.uk
e-foods.co.uk
07837 212719



NEW PRODUCTS



5 FROM ONE

Following the recent re-brand of Ben's Original Professional, Mars Foodservice has unveiled 5 Ways With – a series of short recipe videos that demonstrate how caterers can create five dishes from a single jar of its foodservice sauces.

For example, in one of the three-part video series, esteemed chef Paul Dickson demonstrates how to create on-trend sweet potato tikka and lamb tikka kebabs with Ben's Original Professional Tikka Masala Sauce. He then provides three further recipes: chicken masala salad, a tikka turkey burger and a traditional Indian mulligatawny soup.

"Collaborating with Mars Foodservice to create these recipes has been an absolute pleasure, not just because the sauces are so versatile, but because they are such excellent quality, meaning the end results tasted as good as they looked," said Dickson. "These products are perfect for caterers who want to expand their menus with ease."

www.mars-foodservice.co.uk



JUBILEE SCONES

As the nation gears up to celebrate the Queen's platinum jubilee, CSM Ingredients has launched a new Victoria scone recipe especially for the occasion. The number of parties and celebrations is set to gather pace as we head towards the celebratory bank holiday weekend (2nd to 5th June) and, as such, product ranges should cater for this very special occasion.

This recipe combines two of the most popular and quintessential afternoon tea products to produce a delicious scone with a twist. It's easy to make with Craigmillar Buttery Scone Mix, Marvello Cake Margarine, buttercream, jam and icing sugar. Designed to appeal to all ages, it is perfect for indoor and outdoor celebrations and taps into the 2022 trend of returning to the traditional and comforting. To obtain a recipe booklet, contact:

helloUK@csmingredients.com

HEALTHY 'PIGS

teapigs has finally unveiled its first-ever decaf tea. Using the CO² method to gently decaffeinate the tea leaves, this creates a cuppa with all the award-winning full flavour of teapigs' everyday tea, but with none of the caffeine.

The premium decaf black tea market is currently pretty limited, so this new launch is an exciting trade-up for stockists and customers from a trusted brand. This is particularly true of the pre- and young family consumer groups who are willing to spend that little bit more on better caffeine-free teas to enjoy throughout the day.

www.teapigs.co.uk





PANASONIC PARTNERSHIP

Global brand Panasonic and Regale Microwaves of Gosport have announced a new distribution agreement. The arrangement formalises the latter as the former's sole supply partner for its range of commercial microwaves and speed ovens.

Jared Greenhalgh, European sales manager for Panasonic, said: "This means that now, any operator will be able to purchase a Panasonic oven from their preferred supplier, either via our direct distribution network or through a distributor supplied by Regale. It will be offering an unrivalled service to any distributor who doesn't have an account with us directly, making it easier to procure Panasonic microwaves."

www.panasonic.co.uk/pro-cooking

LOW-CARB(ON) CUISINE

Quorn has joined forces with Sodexo to begin the global rollout of Carbone Cero, the world's first carbon-neutral solution for foodservice. The pair estimate that it could save at least 7,296 tonnes of carbon each year.

Carbone Cero was recently rolled out at a number of Sodexo's corporate client sites in the UK, with a plan to expand this globally to 1,500 locations by April 2023. It consists of 10 carbon-neutral recipes including Asian-Inspired Potato Chaat and Saag Dahl, Dirty Wing Burrito Bowl, Japanese Crispy Katsu, Louisiana-Style Buttermilk Burger, Napoli-Style Lasagne and Double Dip Korean Wings.

www.quornfoodservice.co.uk



INNOVATIVE EXTRACTION

Filta Group's FV2000 automated extraction cleaning system uses innovative technology to provide caterers with complete peace of mind in meeting fire risk management standards for commercial kitchens. The system has been accepted by the Building Engineering Services Competent Assessment Vent Hygiene Elite Scheme, which means Filta can carry out vent hygiene works in accordance with the TR19 grease specification.

This is a document that is specifically focused on fire risk management of grease accumulation within kitchen extraction systems. Through a simple and effective technology, it prevents the accumulation of fats, oils and grease on the vent surface and associated ductwork.

www.filta.co.uk

WAYNE MARTIN

EXECUTIVE CHEF,
CHARTWELLS

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ROLE AND WHAT DOES IT ENTAIL?

I'm executive chef at Chartwells, working alongside an excellent team to deliver consistently high standards of nutritious and delicious school food that fuels learning. We oversee the creation of exciting new menus that incorporate plant-forward initiatives and a health-by-stealth agenda, as well as driving engagement and education with children about the food system through programmes such as our Young Chefs Academy.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO WORK IN FOODSERVICE?

I wasn't overly academic in school but loved food technology. I would try cooking at home – not very well at first – but I just loved playing around with ingredients. I started as a kitchen porter at a local country club then moved into preparing vegetables. Within months, I'd enrolled onto an NVQ course and was on my way to a successful career as a chef.

WHAT EDUCATION, TRAINING AND COMPETITIONS HAVE YOU UNDERTAKEN TO GET THIS FAR?

I've achieved NVQ levels two and three in professional cookery. My main experience comes from working across great businesses, ranging from large-scale wedding caterers to small producers in Newquay, as well as with Angela Hartnett at the York and Albany. Different elements of these jobs help every day in my current role.

HOW COULD CONTRACT CATERING ATTRACT MORE RISING STARS INTO THE SECTOR?

Our industry has a problem attracting and retaining talent. It's a very competitive job market and we all need to do more to promote the sector to younger generations. This is why we launched the Young Chef Academy, to give up-and-coming talent a real taste of what it's like to be a chef and give them the knowledge to make an informed decision about a career in contract catering.

Growing and developing your own talent internally is the best way to create rising stars in the sector. We're lucky enough to have lots across our business who put smiles on children's faces every day.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT THE INDUSTRY?

A very good chef once said to me, 'If you enjoy your job, you will never do a day's work' – and how true that was. Our role is to fuel the learning and understanding of the next generation. Not only that, devastatingly, some of the meals we serve may be the only hot meal a child eats in a day, and the education we provide around healthy eating may be the only place they hear it. The importance of this cannot be understated and is something I'm immensely proud to be part of.

HOW DO YOU THINK THE INDUSTRY COULD IMPROVE?

We need to do more to shout about the amazing work school caterers are doing.



WAYNE MARTIN

We've even had a letter from a year five class asking about our palm oil policy!

There's an ongoing negative media narrative around school food, which we need to tackle head on.

Chartwells serves 1.6m meals a week, in keeping with strict school food standards, and operating within the sector's tight budgets. The quality of food delivered within these parameters, and the passion and energy of the teams who deliver it, always with a smile, need to be shouted about more.

WHAT TRENDS DO YOU PREDICT FOR THE FUTURE?

Sustainability is a current key trend. Compass UK and Ireland has committed to net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, something that we're fully supporting from Chartwells through menu engineering and waste reduction programmes.

There's much cause for optimism, as the children we serve are so engaged on the subject – we've even had a letter from a year five class asking about our palm oil policy! With engaged children, and a creative approach to menu innovation, you can expect to see sustainability driving innovation across the sector.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST AMBITION?

Feeding children nutritious and delicious food is what gets me out of bed in the morning. If I can continue doing that, as well as sharing my expertise and insight with younger generations, then I will remain a very happy man.



Opening up the industry

KATE NICHOLLS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF UKHOSPITALITY, ON HOW ITS NEW DISABILITY ACTION PLAN AIMS TO PROMOTE GREATER INCLUSIVITY

Because the hospitality industry is so vitally important to communities across the UK, we take our obligation, as an employer and service provider, to make it a sector that's more accessible for disabled people very seriously. It's why UKHospitality has drawn up a Disability Action Plan, comprising a series of initiatives that we hope will ultimately see all parts of our industry, including contract catering, open to everyone, and for hospitality to be a lucrative and fulfilling career option for all.

One of the ways to achieve this aim is to educate and inform businesses on how they can accommodate all mental, cognitive and physical abilities. (So that we're a credible advocate for improving accessibility in the sector, we'll also be working to become a DWP level-three Disability Confident organisation.)

When those with mental, cognitive and physical impairments look at working in the hospitality sector, they must see an industry that can be a good fit for them. We've identified several ways to make that a reality, including making the route to hospitality easier to access.

Hospitality should be, can be and will be open to everyone

We'll work to make vocational college courses more accessible for disabled people; connect contract catering businesses to the sort of training providers and resources that will provide existing staff in the sector with the confidence necessary to support disabled colleagues; identify ways to make applying for roles more straightforward; and enable disabled people to demonstrate their important personal qualities and skills during the application process.


Channels through which we can encourage disabled people to consider hospitality include job

centres – using their websites to promote contract catering as a career option for disabled people; local authorities – encouraging them to consider a hospitality career as an aspiration when creating education, health and care plans; and teachers – demonstrating that this is a potential career option for disabled students.

UKHospitality will endeavour to ensure that, once in their new roles, disabled employees have the necessary tools and information to make doing their jobs easier. We'll also educate businesses about how they should talk about disability and how communications should be tailored for disabled audiences.

Ours is necessarily a long-term plan, but we've identified these short- and mid-term objectives: inspire greater take-up of level-two Disability Confident status throughout our sector; raise the profile of disability awards; make measurement of disability ratios within member companies more commonplace, and make tools and resources for supporting disabled people readily available.

In the same way that the hospitality industry is the one that can lead the UK's post-Covid economic recovery, it's the one to show the way when it comes to helping disabled people flourish. As well as our own Disability Action Plan, UKHospitality is also closely involved with shaping the national disability strategy, which is looking at how government and employers can make workplaces more inclusive for disabled people.

Progressive, innovative, entrepreneurial and one of – if not the most – inclusive sectors out there, hospitality should be, can be and will be open to everyone. This will include those people with mental, cognitive and physical impairments. 



UKHOSPITALITY HAS DRAWN UP A DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

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