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Takeout is a strong potential source of revenue for Operators as 57% of consumers state they purchase takeout once a week or more, according to Technomic. This is an increase of 8% over consumers polled just three years ago.

Even with these strong takeout numbers, Operators can rest assured that the takeout occasions are not cannibalizing dining room traffic. Sixty-percent of consumers who recently purchased takeout said that if they had not done so on that occasion, they would most likely have made food at home and not purchased from a foodservice Operator.¹

"In many cases consumers do not view takeout orders as a part of the same consideration set as food purchased to be eaten in the dining room or on-site," states Technomic Vice President Joe Pawlak. "Operators have a real opportunity to gain an advantage if they can respond to consumers' needs for convenience, accuracy and food quality."²

Beyond quick service and the limited service arena, full-service Operators have the opportunity to be a part of the consumer takeout consideration set as 57% of consumers reported they would likely use delivery service from full-service restaurants and 54% cited an interest in using a curbside pickup service. A key opportunity for full-service Operators is in offering "bundled" meal packages. These bundled packages appeal to busy families by providing multi-serving options and a strong value proposition while delivering a quality food experience with eat-at-home convenience.

Technology

Restaurants that are using the Internet, mobile sites or apps for takeout orders are meeting and exceeding consumer expectations.³ Although online ordering

does not prove to increase the per-order check average, the availability of online ordering does increase order frequency. The key drivers for consumers taking advantage of electronic ordering are convenience and control. Consumers expect to be able to more accurately customize their orders through online ordering systems than when placing orders via phone or in person.

Although not all consumers have embraced online ordering, the numbers are increasing steadily, especially among Gen Y consumers (18-34) who are more tech savvy. The bonus for Operators among this group is they tend to be more frequent consumers of food away from home, both on-premise and as takeout occasions.

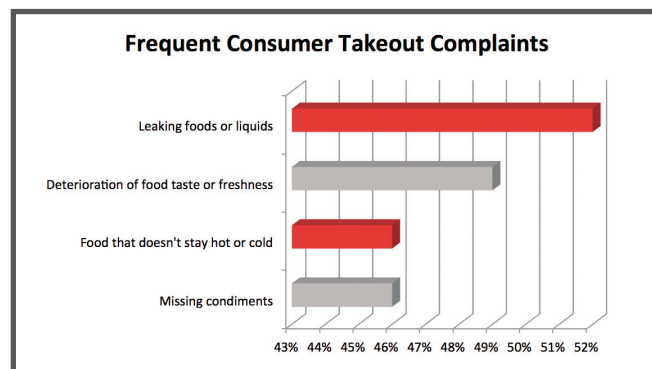
However, a majority of consumers place their takeout orders via traditional means such as call in or walk in. Although these consumers are more traditional, they are avid takeout users who desire convenience, speed and order accuracy.

Catering to both groups will prove beneficial as order frequency increases with the effective implementation of both electronic ordering systems and traditional on-site and phone ordering programs.

Consumer Demands

Consumers are very critical of food quality and temperature when ordering takeout. However, faulty food containers rise to the top of the list of complaints. Secure packaging to stop leaking containers will pay off in assuring positive customer experiences once they leave your restaurant. There are a other situations that can ruin a consumer's takeout experience as indicated on Figure 1.

Figure 1



Source: Technomic 2011 Takeout and Off-Premise Dining Consumer Trend Report

Key P.A.T.R.O.N.® Segments

Time-Crunched Socials

- Ages 21-34
- Young singles
- Seek convenience but also have aspirational tendencies
- They go to restaurants with extended hours and convenient menu options (all-day breakfast, snacks and late meals)
- They want restaurants to feel like their third place (beyond home and work)

Traditionals

- Ages 45+
- Mixed family status with lower incomes and more often live in rural areas
- Follow routine and like things that are familiar to them
- They frequent QSRs and casual dining establishments that serve basic, comfort food
- They appreciate speed, convenience and low prices

SIDE DISH

Patron Key Issues

Restaurant takeout provides a key opportunity for Operators as consumers are suffering from pent-up demand for restaurant meals but have chosen to eat at home more often due to economic pressures and concerns. However, although more meals are being eaten at home, fewer meals are being prepared from scratch according to NPD Group.⁴

This opens an opportunity for restaurant Operators to focus on providing a quality takeout experience and raising consumer awareness of your takeout program. These off-premise occasions also provide a strong value proposition to consumers as they are able to enjoy a restaurant-prepared meal without the expense of drinks or tips.

Unlocking the potential of your takeout program can be accomplished through sourcing the right packaging, controlling ordering errors through a double-check system, offering both electronic and traditional ordering systems and letting your customers know your menu is available on the go!

Source: ConAgra Foodservice
Proprietary Food Away
From Home Study, 2009

For more targeted recommendations to grow your business ask your ConAgra Foodservice representative for a customized P.A.T.R.O.N. profile report.



Enhancing Takeout Ordering – Top Actions

1. Implement a system of double-checks for outbound orders. Use a “takeout checklist” that assures the order was checked for accuracy. The checklist could contain items such as napkins, silverware, dressings, condiments and customer requests. This type of customer assurance can go far to create a positive impression and experience for your diners.
2. Offer a family bundle meal that includes a shareable appetizer or salad, multi-serving main entrée and shareable dessert such as a brownie tray.
3. Activate ordering from your website or other electronic ordering method. Be certain that whatever method you choose, the incoming orders are attended to in a timely manner to accommodate the convenience that customers are seeking through online or mobile ordering technologies.
4. Market your takeout program with current on-premise customers through server mentions, business cards or magnets with your takeout phone number and Web address where they can find your menu. Perhaps offer an incentive for either their first order or for repeat takeout orders. Remember that takeout orders do not replace on-premise occasions so this could be an opportunity to increase your business.
5. Provide quality takeout packaging to minimize spills, leaks and breakage while maintaining temperature and food integrity. The additional cost of a quality packaging system will pay off in the long run through satisfied customers.
6. Create your takeout menu based on which items will travel well since some of your menu items may be better experienced on premise. Think about how best to package your dishes for ultimate customer satisfaction. For instance the sauce for a pasta dish might be better served on the side so it is mixed in by the consumer or perhaps side dishes or accompaniments would travel better if they were packed separately from the main entrée. Do all that you can to ensure a quality off-premise meal experience similar to what your customers would experience in your restaurant.



to go...

Sources:

- (1) Technomic 2011 Takeout and Off-Premise Dining Consumer Trend Report
- (2) QSR Magazine, 12/7/11 qsr.com/news/takeout-remains-strong-source-revenue
- (3) Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, Cornell Center for Hospitality Research, September 2011
- (4) monkeydish.com/raising-bar-takeout

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