

Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 28

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7 ways tech can elevate restaurant safety, quality & compliance

The restaurant industry's labor shortage is softening, and restaurants have been adding jobs for the past 24 consecutive months. In fact, the majority of new jobs (128,000) added to the U.S. economy in January 2023 were in the leisure and hospitality sector.

As restaurants actively hire new employees after years of being understaffed, it's essential to train them properly to maximize safety, quality, and compliance. And as we welcome an influx of new employees, restaurants must build (and reinforce) cultures of excellence. Tech is essential to this effort.

Here are 7 tips for restaurants:

1. Leverage technology to improve operations. Digital tools can help restaurants improve every aspect of their operations. Digital temperature probes and automated temperature monitoring can help keep foods safe. Scheduling tools and digital checklists make daily tasks easier. Automated inventory management software helps restaurants track stock, anticipate quantities, schedule reorders more efficiently, and reduce food waste. Analytics and reporting let operators make more informed



Francine Shaw

decisions to drive business success. Digital solutions make operations safer, as well as more accurate, efficient, and transparent.

2. Improve training efforts. Even as tech has become readily available – and affordable – many restaurants are still using archaic or informal training programs. Update and modernize your training to be current, relevant, and tech driven. Use microlearning



Paul Damaren

platforms, learning management systems, AI, and gamification to provide interactive, engaging training opportunities to help employees learn and retain key information. Provide ongoing training that extends beyond employees' first days. Tech tools can easily push out reminders, updates, and refreshers to keep critical information top-of-mind for all staff.

See **ELEVATE RESTAURANTS** page 12

Dacha Beer Garden targets east coast for franchise launch



Washington, DC - Dacha Beer Garden, one of DC's most popular destinations for locals and tourists alike with two iconic locations, announced it is speaking with investors and potential franchisees about territories for the brand's expansion on the East Coast. Co-owners Dmitri

Chekaldin and Ilya Alter said the timing is ideal for high-net-worth investors seeking a successful franchise model, unlimited support, and potentially high profit margins.

"Location is everything, so we will be working to help franchisees secure prime spaces in high traffic areas,"

said Alter. "We are initially targeting areas along the East Coast, including Virginia, Delaware, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. We are also interested in underserved regions in booming coastal cities such as St. Augustine, for example. In addition, although we are targeting the East Coast, we aren't ruling out other desirable locations across the country."

"We believe the Southeast, and particularly several cities in Florida, is underserved. To be clear, we do not feel Miami Beach represents Florida at large. Populations in major metropolitan areas on both Florida coasts could benefit from affordable, but curated dining and drinking services. We believe cities such as Tampa Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and St. Petersburg would be anxious for the arrival of our original Dacha Beer Garden concept - a quality beer garden for all, stated Dmitri Chekaldin."

Consistently voted as among the top 5 Best Beer Gardens in the U.S.

See **DACHA BEER** page 14

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Appell Pie

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Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

As some of you know we drive to Georgia and Tennessee quite often and we recently spent some time in the Atlanta area just before the wicked line of tornadoes that tore through Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

My appointments were all over the Atlanta area so we decided to stay at a hotel near the airport and major roads. When I approached the check in desk we were greeted by the desk attendant who asked for my name and the customary identification and credit card information. Once he had the necessary information he asked if we needed help with our luggage and came out from behind the counter to offer his assistance. We didn't have that much to bring in (LOL) so we declined his help. He insisted on helping and showed us to our room to make sure we were happy, all done in a very friendly manner.

We checked out in the morning but we were scheduled to come back after our swing through upper Georgia and Tennessee about five days later. When we returned to the hotel I was on my cell phone so Terri went to check in. The same deskman was on duty and came out from behind the desk to give my wife a hug and welcome her by first name. I was able to see all this from my vantage point in the car. He then proceeded to check us in to the same room we had on the previous visit. What a welcome! This was not a five star resort so this kind of service was not expected but it was certainly appreciated.

Having the right person doing the right job is a big part of the success of your restaurant or hotel. Imagine the impression your business is presenting if the first person that comes in contact with your potential customer has a bad attitude hates his or her job and is not helpful. A hostess or host is your front line and first step to ensuring your customer a memorable dining experience in your restaurant.

I remember several years ago going into my first Five Guys Burger & Fries store in northern Georgia and having a great customer service experience with the lady taking our order. I don't remember the exact conversation now, but I do remember how much fun it was and it planted the positive memory of the brand in my mind. I have been a happy customer ever since.

Make sure you are aware of the impression your company is transmitting from the very first second your customer arrives or calls. It could be creating repeat business even before your food is tasted. Thanks Al H. for the great service.

Having the right person doing the right job is a big part of the success of your restaurant or hotel.

After we got settled in the room we decided to go for dinner and went to the desk to ask for restaurant locations in the area. Our new friend gave us his recommendations and we got into a conversation about how long he has been in the hospitality business and how much he loved doing his job, which was quite evident. We offered to bring him back dinner but he declined.

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What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

The U.S. restaurant industry continued to recover from pandemic-related losses in February, with traffic up by 2% compared to a year ago, reports **Circana, formerly IRI and The NPD Group**. Visits to quick service restaurants, representing 82% of total restaurant industry visits, grew by 3% in the month over a year ago. Full service visit growth was held back by a 13% decline in dinner traffic, the segment's busiest meal daypart, but the segment increased visits at morning meal and lunch. Visits to full service restaurants declined by 2% in February compared to a year ago. Total restaurant traffic at the morning meal, breakfast and A.M. snack, has fully recovered from pandemic losses. Morning meal restaurant visits grew by 10% in February compared to a year ago and are up 2% from three years ago. Whereas total restaurant lunch visits were down 1% in February compared to a year ago, and dinner traffic was down 3%.

◆ **Blendid®**, a robotic food service solutions leader, announced the opening of its first location in the Midwest,



Eco-Products® is launching its newest line of sustainable products, compostable cutlery made from Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC)® certified birch wood complete with a unique, user-friendly design. The new wooden spoons, forks and knives feature a ridge in the handle for a stronger grip and extra durability. The utensils have CMA-S (Substrate Acceptance) from the Composting Manufacturing Alliance (CMA). "This new wooden cutlery is a significant addition to our GreenStripe® line," said Wendell Simonson, Director of Marketing for Eco-Products. "Fiber-only alternatives are becoming increasingly popular, and now there is an offering that doesn't require foodservice operators to sacrifice on design or performance." For more information, visit ecoproducts.com.



the freezer to thawing and re-heating, and while it's held under heat at the point of sale. This allows customers to enjoy a delicious hot sandwich that was made and wrapped off site. Power Prep wrap is ideal for convenience stores, supermarkets and other foodservice operators, catering to the growing demand for high-quality, freshly made offerings. Online at Novolex.com.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

◆ **McCormick For Chefs** has launched two new products under **Frank's RedHot for foodservice operators, Nashville Hot Seasoning and Mild Wings Sauce**. As the #1 hot sauce in the world¹ and the inventor of the Buffalo wing flavor in 1964, Frank's RedHot is the expert in heat. Over 50% of global consumers choose spicy options when dining out and 60% of consumers reported they are eating spicier foods today compared to a year ago. These new menu solutions are geared to help operators excite the growing population of patrons with

◆ **Novolex®**, a leader in packaging choice, innovation and sustainability, is introducing **Power Prep™ wrap for grab-and-go hot sandwiches** and other freshly made foods. Manufactured by Novolex brand Bagcraft®, the new wrap is laminated and insulated to keep food tasting fresh as it moves from



◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

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See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 8

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Automated craft beverage company receives expanded backing from restaurant industry leaders and investors

San Francisco, CA - Botrista Beverages announced food and beverage industry talent Mark Hatch as its newest Advisory Board member. Mr. Hatch joins Botrista's already notable advisory board following the company's oversubscribed Series B round, which brought the total funding to over \$55 million, nearly 50% oversubscribed. The automated craft beverage company has continually gained backing from investors and restaurant industry veterans.

For the past decade, Hatch has built relationships with restaurant industry leaders and facilitated idea sharing among executives in the food and beverage space. Hatch says, "Understanding that many restaurant operators are looking to identify new ways to solve labor shortage issues and mitigate rising costs, while collectively improving the customer and employee experience, Botrista's automated craft beverage solution serves to fill a significant need. The solution also offers a creative way for restaurant and convenience brands to differentiate their offering and quench the thirst of new customers."

Botrista's Chief Strategy Officer, Jason Valentine, says, "We're humbled by the opportunity to have Mark on our board. His consistent exposure among the industry's top players and innovations further legitimizes our growth, our solution's market potential and the



value we bring to current and prospective customers." Valentine, former President of Zoup! Eatery, went on to say, "We are eager and excited to receive Mark's feedback and utilize his expertise as we grow and evolve together in this partnership."

Valentine moderated the "Automation: What is it good for?" panel at the 2023 Restaurant Franchising Innovation Summit held in March in Miami. He was joined in that panel discussion by Phil Crawford, Chief Technology Officer at CKE Restaurants; Bennett Maxwell, Founder at Dirty

Dough, and Desi Saran, Founder & CEO at Sweetberry.

Hatch joins Botrista's bright-minded board members who share long-standing success in the food and beverage industry. Don Fox held positions of Director of Franchise Compliance, COO and CEO at Firehouse Subs. He also held a leadership role at Burger King Corp. Of Fox's 48 year restaurant industry career, he predominantly held leadership roles in QSR and fast casual segments.

Former Red Lobster President and CEO of 14 years, Kim Lopdrup, also

serving on Botrista's Advisory Board, has demonstrated his depth of experience in leadership, operations and strategy. Lopdrup has pointed to Botrista's ability to empower restaurant operators to create new, high-margin craft beverages without adding complexity or labor. He says, "Botrista DrinkBot is the right idea at the right time."

Botrista is elated to have the backing, support and trusted advice of these industry leaders as the company continually endeavors to serve up meaningful innovation for the food and beverage industry. The company plans to continually bring in top talent from across the food and beverage landscape. 

About Botrista Beverages: Botrista provides automated beverage solutions to foodservice operators. Operators can increase ticket size and beverage attachment by serving non-alcoholic craft beverages to younger generation consumers. The trendy innovative craft beverages include infused teas & lattes, flavored lemonades, energy drinks, iced coffees and more. Botrista enables operators to add a new beverage category to their menu without the operational complexities. <https://www.Botrista.io>.

The DrinkBot® platform allows operators to subscribe to world-class quality from the leading ingredient manufacturers that they partner with. The vision is to make any staff member a professional barista or bartender with a DrinkBot®. Botrista Beverages, HQ in San Francisco, California. The company currently has restaurant, convenience store, hospital, coffee shops, and virtual kitchen customers nationwide in the US, and has expanded to Canada, Australia, and Asia. Botrista's DrinkBot is currently operating in multiple national and international brands.

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First VIVO! Entertainment venue to open at Miami's Dolphin Mall

Nationally acclaimed concepts Sports & Social and PBR Cowboy Bar, beloved local eatery Sergio's Cuban American Kitchen, will offer a variety of premier dining and entertainment experiences

Miami, FL - Taubman Realty Group and Live! Hospitality & Entertainment, a division of The Cordish Companies, announced the summer 2023 debut of **VIVO! DOLPHIN MALL**. With a name literally meaning "lively," Vivo! will be just that with 62,000-sq. ft. of dining and entertainment space including an expansive 30,000-square-foot al fresco plaza. Vivo! will be the ultimate destination for premium entertainment, great food and drink, and first-class hospitality in Miami. Vivo! will be an all-encompassing central hub for lunch, brunch, dinner, nightlife, concerts, date night, or a hangout with friends and family.

"It's been incredible working with Taubman Realty Group to bring this world-class dining and entertainment experience to life at Dolphin Mall," stated Scott Steenrod, chief operating officer of Live! Hospitality & Entertainment. "For over two decades, our Live! brand has dramatically changed the entertainment experience all around the country. Vivo! Dolphin Mall will bring even more energy and excitement to an already bustling destination, including best-in-class food and drink, premier live music and entertainment, and first-class hospitality that our Live! brand is known for nationwide. We can't wait to debut Vivo! this summer including bringing Sports & Social and PBR Cowboy Bar to Florida for the first time, and welcoming Sergio's authentic Cuban cuisine to the District."

"Our multi-center partnership with Live! Hospitality & Entertainment comes to life for the first time with Vivo! Dolphin Mall," said William Taubman, president and chief operating officer of Taubman Realty Group. "We are dedicated to engaging our customers with the absolute best in entertainment and experiences and this project will provide unparalleled enjoyment within this competitive market."

Encompassing multiple food and beverage concepts, Vivo! Dolphin Mall features three signature areas including its energetic center, **SPORTS & SOCIAL**. Found in other markets at similar entertainment/lifestyle districts, professional



sports stadiums, and world-class casino resorts, Sports & Social is a carefully curated dining, entertainment, sports viewing, and social concept by Live! Hospitality & Entertainment. The space will feature three bars, live music and entertainment throughout the week, nostalgic arcade games, and an unrivaled sports-watch atmosphere – the next best game watching experience outside of a stadium or arena. Outfitted with state-of-the-art audio-visual technology, the sports bar will offer an impressive 50-foot LED screen that allows for simultaneous viewing of multiple games and sporting events. Game days will feature an electric environment with elements such as emcees and DJs, live fan-cams, competitions and games, and industry-leading sound and light effects.

The **17,000-sq.ft. domain** will offer an elevated menu conceived by James Beard Award Nominee, Chef John Suley, from its made-from-scratch kitchen. Guests will be able to enjoy a full menu for lunch and dinner as well as an

indulgent brunch on the weekends. Menu favorites include Crispy Kataifi Wrapped Shrimp, Cacio e Pepe Arancini, the Southwest Bowl, Truffle Mushroom Flatbread, Nashville Hot Chicken Sandwich and Beef Barbacoa Tacos. The bar's beverage program will include creative craft cocktails, specialty drinks, and an extensive line-up of local and national brews on tap.

Anchoring the Vivo! Dolphin Mall complex will be **PBR COWBOY BAR**. The result of a partnership with PBR (Professional Bull Riders), the world's leading bull riding organization, PBR Cowboy Bar will live up to its legendary name, bringing an authentic Country Western spirit married with big-time entertainment and nightlife to Vivo!. The 10,000-square-foot venue will offer high-energy music, two expansive bars, private VIP tables with bottle service, world-class sound and lighting, and a mechanical bull.

The soul of PBR Cowboy Bar comes alive through its great entertainment, the best in country music, and its rich

traditions, including **Freedom Friday**, a night of appreciation once a month for all military personnel, veterans, first responders and public service members. As the 13th PBR Cowboy Bar in the country and the first in Florida, guests can expect big-name country music entertainment as other venues have welcomed natural stars including Luke Bryan, Old Dominion, and Justin Moore. PBR will be the hottest new spot for great music, vibes, and dancing in Miami's buzzy late-night party scene.

"PBR Cowboy Bar is a thriving concept and important part of our sport's expansion off the dirt through an expanding partnership with The Cordish Companies," said Sean Gleason, Commissioner and CEO, PBR. "As Western culture and our sport surge in popularity, Vivo! Dolphin Mall is an ideal place for the 13th good-time cowboy bar. We can't wait to welcome South Floridians and visitors alike to come in and 'Be Cowboy.'"

See **VIVO!** page 14



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Michelin Star Chef Fabio Trabocchi debuts Fiolina Pasta House

Boca Raton, FL / Washington, DC - Located at the highly anticipated Restaurant Row, FTR's newest eatery was inspired by Chef Trabocchi's award-winning Sfoglina restaurant concept in Washington, D.C.

Set to redefine neighborhood Italian restaurant dining in South Florida, guests at Fiolina Pasta House Boca Raton will enjoy a hearty, diversified menu of modern Italian cuisine influenced by neighborhood locales in Bologna, Rome, Le Marche, Abruzzo, the Amalfi Coast, and a full-bar and wine service. As an authentic pasta house, the centerpiece of Fiolina will be its glass-enclosed exhibition kitchen where guests will observe artisan pastaios (pasta makers) at work, hand-rolling sheets and sculpting various shapes of pasta to be served daily.

With unwavering commitment to sourcing ingredients from the best local farms, fisheries, meat and chicken purveyors and Italian goods suppliers, the menu will feature individual and family-style offerings. In addition to pasta dishes, there will fresh baked breads, soups, salads, antipasti, charcuterie, as well as seafood, meat and chicken entrees and desserts. While classic cocktails will be served, Fiolina's bars will also feature handcrafted seasonal specialty cocktails that change throughout the year.



Created by the global hospitality design and branding studio EDG Design, the whimsical and airy design is inspired by the craft of impassioned master pasta makers of Italy — who carry on the tradition. The restaurant will feature a distinctive ambiance in each area, from cozy and warm in the dining lounge enclave to the excitement and energetic colors in the main dining room. Its captivating open exhibition-style pasta room will allow guests to savor the sights and sounds of artisan experts at work preparing fresh, handmade spaghetti, linguine, fettuccini, tortellini, ravioli and gnocchi.

Construction has begun on the 7,000-square-foot Fiolina Pasta House that will feature a main dining room;

lounge dining; a pasta room; show kitchen with counter dining; an open Mozzarella Bar Kitchen, charcuterie station and wine room; an indoor bar with counter seating and televisions, and a private dining room for 12 guests. The 1,500-square-foot outdoor terrace features its own bar with counter seating.

"While memorable food and exceptional service will be the core draw, Fiolina Pasta House will be much, much more," shared Trabocchi. "It will be the place where you will always find a sense

of community, and everyday life celebrations happen." Demonstrating his own personal commitment to South Florida, Trabocchi is looking forward to soon relocating his family to Boca Raton -- where he and his wife first met -- and becoming an active, integral part of the community.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., Trabocchi added that FTR always strives to be an "employer of choice" within the markets it serves, which includes Miami, FL; Washington, D.C.; and Arlington, VA. He anticipates Fiolina Pasta House Boca Raton will generate 80 jobs. These include management, culinary, beverage, host, and server positions. **TR**

Established in 2011, FTR has become one of the preeminent restaurant groups in the world. Its culinary collection currently includes Fiola; Fiola Miami; Fiola Mare, an Italian seafood restaurant at Washington Harbor on the Georgetown waterfront; Del Mar, a fine-dining Spanish restaurant located at The Wharf on Washington, D.C.'s southwest waterfront; and Sfoglina, a neighborhood pasta house with three restaurants located in the Washington, D.C. area.

Fiolina Pasta House Boca Raton - fabiotrabocchi.com - located at 5355 Town Center Road, Boca Raton, FL 33486 (across the street from Town Center at Boca Raton), will open in Fall 2023.

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TRN Recovery

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How SMBs can make employees feel secure

John Waldmann ◆ CEO of Homebase

When most industries were able to quickly pivot to a virtual world in the midst of COVID, the restaurant, food & beverage industry didn't have the same privilege. When cases slowed and a sense of relief was in sight, businesses like local restaurants still couldn't catch a break, struggling with inflated food prices, evolving consumer shopping habits (eating at home vs dining out) and the burden of retaining and hiring new talent.

Sixty-four percent of hourly workers think inflation is a top concern.

SMB workforce management platform Homebase has released its monthly **Employee Pulse Survey**, which gauged the sentiment of 873 hourly workers. With a recent uptick in restaurant hourly workers advocating for what they need from employers: more time off for holidays and weekends and deserved pay raises, this sentiment data will help shape SMB owner

priorities as we move forward into the year.

Here's what else it found:

- ◆ Inflation is top of mind: Of all issues that employees are facing, inflation was cited as the top concern for a majority (64%) of those surveyed

- ◆ Inflation could be raising retention: 56% of hourly workers do not plan to look for a job in the next 3-6 months

- ◆ Employment factors: 54% cited wages as a top 3 factor in their employment decisions. Benefits and employer-sponsored upskilling are close behind, indicating that employers need to be investing in their workforces in order to attract and retain talent.

In addition to the survey, Homebase also released its February Main Street Health Report (MSHR) drawing on real-time timesheet data from over 100,000 businesses and two million employees. The data provides a holistic view of the SMB landscape, showing a silver lining for the restaurant industry; it was one of the few industries that went up in employment relative to December employment. **TR**

*John Waldmann is the CEO of Homebase which is a tool that is used by more than 100,000 small businesses across the country to help manage their hourly workers. The data shared is from their recent **Employee Pulse Survey** which surveyed around 800 hourly workers from their platform.*



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Chef Luca Donofrio



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What's Going On from page 3

preferences on opposite sides of the heat-level spectrum.

◆ **Plein Air** has quietly become one of the fastest-growing marketing consultancies in the business. Now, the agency that has built a thriving business centered around solving the problems and realizing the opportunities specific to the restaurant industry is expanding once again. Growing from a foundation of creativity and focus, Plein Air unveiled its new affiliate, “**Big Colony.**” **Big Colony, a new mobile app & website platform,** will continue to build on their industry leading tech foundation

through ongoing innovation and feature development that gives clients more flexibility and scalability. The new division was a natural evolution for the organization that prizes speed, efficiency, and a connection to the business. Big Colony brings the ability to build, iterate, and scale to brands of all segments and sizes, including pizza, ice cream & snacks, QSR, fast-casual, casual, virtual, and multi-brand, while enabling a custom-like brand expression and features at investment levels in the range of existing white label offerings. “Plein Air was founded by restaurant people for restaurant people, and our passions are around finding new and better ways to



make the brands we work with stronger, smarter and more relevant every day,” said Jason Abelkop, Co-CEO of Plein Air. “Big Colony represents a way to harness the power of this big, sometimes complex, constantly growing Martech environment for the benefit of our partners.”

◆◆◆◆
Downtown Tampa’s newest cafe has opened 507 N Tampa St. Little Tina’s signature drinks include a honey lavender latte and a Cuban-style americano, with other espresso-based drinks and

teas. In addition to its caffeinated drinks, this new cafe also dishes out a small menu of breakfast items, acai bowls, and a several baked goods. Little Tina will announce the launch of its cocktail program soon. They are on Instagram.

◆ **Hobart introduced its new FreshServe™ Self-Serve Scale – the latest scale solution for retail self-serve and in-store order fulfillment.** FreshServe is a fully integrated scale, stand, and printer for use in retail grocery stores and is a unique solution to meet increasing demand for autonomous shopping in fresh and bulk-food departments. A mid-sized shorter



configuration designed to meet ADA height requirements, is customized for accessibility, and can be placed strategically in the department, ensuring unobstructed access for all shoppers. A smaller tabletop version is designed for placement on an auxiliary stand in the produce or bulk foods area, typically situated next to display tables for instinctive shopper access and use. To learn more about the new Hobart FreshScale Self-Serve Scale, visit [FreshServe SelfService Scale | Hobart \(hobartcorp.com\)](http://FreshServe SelfService Scale | Hobart (hobartcorp.com)).

◆ The foodservice industry often leads initiatives that revolutionize safety and set new standards, such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point), an internationally recognized system for reducing food safety hazards. The industry can also act as a catalyst for encouraging widespread use of disposable toilet seat covers in public restrooms. It’s not just people that sneeze – toilets do it, too. We’ll explain. When a toilet flushes, microscopic droplets of whatever was just in the bowl project out of the bowl and land all over restroom surfaces. It’s called the sneeze. The toilet seat often takes the brunt of this eruption. This is why use of disposable toilet seat covers is so important to prevent the spread of germs. **Hospesco Brands Group – hospesco-brands.com/foodservice** – an industry-leading manufacturer and supplier of personal care, cleaning, and protection products serving the entire away-from-home marketplace, manufactures a full line of disposable toilet seat covers and dispensers. Covers include half- and quarter-fold options as well as green, recycled, and standard

materials. Dispensers include manual all the way to fully automated, no-touch technology for the hands-free restroom. These Evogen® no-touch dispensers are attractive, easily cleaned, and discourage waste and over-use. They are also fully enclosed for an optimal hygienic solution, ideal for healthcare, foodservice, and similar environments.



◆◆◆◆
 The leading manufacturer of specialty printers, **Primera Technology, Inc.**, has introduced its newest accessory, the AP-CODE Lot & Date Coder. The AP-CODE Lot & Date Coder attaches in just minutes to the AP360 and AP362 Label Applicators. As labels are applied, AP-CODE simultaneously marks the bottle, can, or other types of containers with date codes, lot codes, or other alpha-numeric information. AP-CODE’s permanent, solvent black ink prints onto glass, metal, plastics, and even laminated labels.

◆◆◆◆
Gallery Carts – galleycarts.com – has been announced as the North American sales representative and distribution partner for Dometic’s revolutionary temperature-controlled delivery solution DeliBox. This strategic partnership aims to disrupt the food safety and delivery market in North

America. Now shipping, DeliBox’s innovative design and engineering offers retail, restaurant, hospitality, and other industries responsible for transporting food to guests and patrons a valuable differentiator. Gallery Carts, along with the Paradigm rep group, is actively selling the DeliBox and expects to deliver the first orders nation-wide in Q2, 2023. The group is also responsible for sales and distribution of Dometic MoBar, - dometic.com - a versatile range of mobile beverage centers suitable for hospitality, restaurant, retail and residential settings.

◆◆◆◆
Effin Egg, the Florida based fast casual & funky breakfast sandwich concept, is poised for **massive expansion in the state of New Jersey.** Rossi Capital, the three brothers who opened the Morristown, NJ, location this past month, loved the concept that they have agreed to open 8-10 more locations across the state of New Jersey. The three brothers came up with the “Dirty Jersey”, to pay homage to a Jersey favorite, using Taylor Ham...and now it’s on the Effin menu. Rossi Capital says, “This is a fun, laid-back concept that appeals

to all people, so we know we have a hit on our hands as we expand in New Jersey!”. This new partnership is so awesome and we see a very bright future in New Jersey with Jeff, Nick and Taylor Rossi. Follow their Founder @ [effinpresidente](https://www.instagram.com/effinpresidente) or visit effinegg.com.

◆◆◆◆
Riko’s Thin Crust Pizza, a beloved, New England-based restaurant renowned for its crispy, thin-crust pizza, oven-baked wings, fresh salads, and



craveable iconic Hot Oil Pizza, has announced its continued expansion across the east coast, with four locations opening soon. **(Two are coming to Florida late this year).** In Q4, Miami Beach locals and visitors can look forward to getting a taste of Riko’s when the restaurant opens at 900 Collins Ave, and those in and around Pompano Beach can look forward their Riko’s at 14 N Federal Highway. Building on the success of its just-opened Fairfield, Connecticut location, fans in and around Darien, Connecticut, along with Merrick, Long Island, Miami Beach and Pompano Beach, Florida, can soon look forward to a taste of Riko’s famous pizzas. Visit the restaurant online at rikospizza.com.

◆◆◆◆
Today’s Restaurant invites you to submit information for the What’s Going On column at any time. Please e-mail your company or product info to terri@trnusa.com and try to keep the word count between 50-75 words. You can get free publicity for your company, product, service or event! Then check the rest of our website for more information, foodservice news, back issue PDFs, classified ads & more!

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Exploring ROBS: The rollover for business startups solution for entrepreneurs

Steven Whitehill ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

ROBS (Rollover for Business Startups) is a financing method that allows individuals to use their retirement funds to purchase a business without incurring any tax penalties or early withdrawal fees. This method is becoming increasingly popular among individuals who want to start or buy a business but don't have the funds to do so. In this article, we'll take a closer look at ROBS and how it works, as well as some tips for using it to buy a business.

What is ROBS?

ROBS is a financing method that enables individuals to use their retirement funds to purchase a business. With ROBS, you can roll over your 401(k), IRA, or other qualified retirement plan into a new self-directed 401(k) plan. This new plan is then used to purchase shares of the business, which effectively acts as the business's startup capital. The new plan will be a tax-deferred plan, so you won't have to pay taxes on the funds until you withdraw them.

How does ROBS work?

To use ROBS to buy a business, you need to follow these steps:

1. Establish a new self-directed 401(k) plan.
2. Roll over your existing retirement funds into the new plan.

3. Use the funds in the new plan to purchase shares of the business.

4. Start the business and begin generating revenue.

5. Repay the funds borrowed from the 401(k) plan as the business grows.

The key to success with ROBS is finding a reputable and experienced ROBS provider to work with. The provider will guide you through the process and ensure that everything is done correctly.

Tips for using ROBS to buy a business

Do your research: Research the ROBS provider you're considering working with to ensure they have a solid reputation and are experienced in the ROBS process.

Have a solid business plan: You need to have a solid business plan in place before you use ROBS to buy a business. This plan should outline your business goals, target market, and projected revenue and expenses.

Get professional advice: Consider working with a financial advisor or accountant to ensure that you fully understand the ROBS process and the impact it will have on your retirement funds.

Be prepared to repay the funds: ROBS is not a loan, so you will need to repay the funds you borrow from your

401(k) plan as your business grows. Make sure you have a plan in place for repaying the funds and consider how this will impact your retirement savings.

Conclusion

ROBS is a powerful financing tool that can help you buy a business without incurring any tax penalties or early withdrawal fees. However, it's important to do your research and work with a reputable and experienced ROBS provider to ensure that everything is done correctly. With a solid business plan and pro-

fessional advice, you can use ROBS to buy the business of your dreams and achieve financial freedom.

About the Author: Steve Whitehill is a Mergers & Acquisition Specialist. He can help you prepare your business for sale or help you find the business for you. As a member of the Business Brokers of Florida, he can assist you with everything you need to sell or purchase a business, even facilitating procurement of US visas for prospective investors who are citizens of foreign countries. He also offers a broad range of commercial financing solutions and practical consulting. You can reach Steve at Anchor Business Advisors Inc. by phone at 561.376.7500 or online at Anchorbusinessbrokers.com

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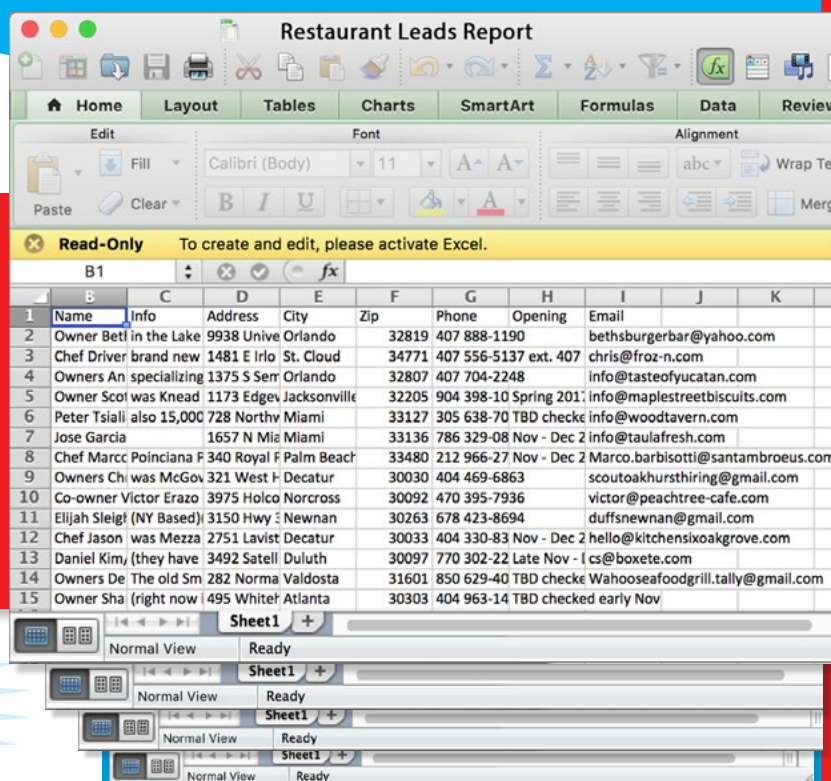
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Elevate restaurants from pg 1

3. Prioritize food safety and quality. Each year, 48 million (1 in 6) Americans get sick from contaminated food or beverages. We must do better! Prioritize a food safety culture, where all employees work collaboratively to maximize safety and minimize risks. Use tech tools to elevate food safety protocols. For instance, Bluetooth sensors can alert your team if the walk-ins or freezer temperatures rise to unsafe temperatures. Digital thermometers can provide accurate readings to ensure foods are being cooked to proper temps. Digital tools can significantly improve your audits and self-inspections, allowing you to identify (and fix!) any noncompliance issues to keep your restaurant safer.

4. Manage suppliers across the supply chain. Your restaurant may be following proper safety protocols, but – as the saying goes – you're only as strong as your weakest link. If your suppliers deliver unsafe products, your restaurant (and guests) are at risk. Restaurants should routinely conduct supplier audits to be certain that all food safety and QA practices are being followed before the food even arrives at your restaurant. Are you doing this? If so, how are you determining your suppliers' safety and quality protocols – and confirming that they have the proper safety certifications in place? Don't try to manage paper records or update Excel files to manage this effort, especially if you have multiple

suppliers, as most restaurants do. Tech tools streamline and simplify this important task, to help ensure that proper food safety and QA procedures were followed from the food products' point of origin, all along the supply chain, until the food is (safely) served to your guests. These tech solutions are widely accessible and affordable for restaurants of all sizes and budgets.

Since FDA recordkeeping requirements go into effect in 2026, the need for technology is undeniable...

5. Boost employee retention. Keep employees happy and engaged to increase retention and reduce the disruption (and cost) of staff turnover. For instance, Dutch Bros coffee chain differentiates themselves by training employees to do every job in the restaurant, and this rotation of roles helps combat employee boredom and boost engagement. Checkers & Rally's restaurant chain offers career advancement, with some high-performing hourly workers being promoted to manager and even becoming store owners.

Checkers & Rally's also offers benefits for part-time employees, free GED and college classes, and attractive rewards, like free Caribbean cruises for exceptional managers. Retain employees by creating a safe, supportive environment, as well as offering enticing perks, like health insurance, profit-sharing, skills training, financial bonuses, career advancement, and free-shift meals. And give them tech tools to make their jobs easier and more efficient, allowing them to spend less time on tedious tasks and more time doing what they love.

6. Increase transparency. Since FDA recordkeeping requirements go into effect in 2026, the need for technology is undeniable, so it's best to begin preparing now. Moving forward, many businesses will require safety documentation and certification, and tech tools make it much easier to simplify and automate this critical task. Depend on tech tools to boost transparency and related metrics, including increased accuracy, consistency, consumer trust, sales, and profits.

7. Be inspired by innovative restaurant brands. El Pollo Loco uses delivery drones. Domino's is testing self-driving cars in certain markets. White Castle has robots working its fryers. Even if the cost of robots or drones is out-of-reach for your restaurant, get excited about – and inspired by – the possibilities that tech offers. Tech solutions are a wise investment

in your restaurant's future, and brands that don't adopt technology will get left behind.

Tech solutions are no longer just "nice to have" but have become essential for restaurants of all sizes. These affordable, accessible, user-friendly tech tools help brands improve their safety, quality, accuracy, transparency, consistency, and compliance – and drive brand excellence. As the labor shortage finally softens and restaurants are staffing up, tech solutions can help ensure that all employees are properly trained, following safety and quality protocols, and committed to your culture of excellence. 

About the authors:

Paul Damaren is Executive Vice President, Business Development at RizePoint, a technology leader in the food safety, quality management, compliance, and social responsibility space. RizePoint's quality management software solutions help companies, including Starbucks, McDonald's, Marriott, and more, keep brand promises through their quality, safety, and compliance efforts. Customers gather better data, see necessary actions earlier, and act faster to correct issues before they become costly liabilities. To discuss RizePoint's solutions, please contact Paul at paul.damaren@rizepoint.com.

Francine L. Shaw, CEO of Savvy Food Safety, is a successful entrepreneur, author, and speaker who spent 20+ years working in the foodservice industry. Her career has included performing services (operating partner, corporate/private trainer, health inspector, 3rd party inspector, adjunct professor) in various sectors of the foodservice industry. She has written 200+ articles for national trade magazines and appeared on Dr. Oz, the BBC World Series Radio, and iHeart Radio as a food safety expert.

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Dacha Beer from page 1

by USA Today, Dacha is renowned for its Bavarian-style beer gardens with an extensive world-class selection of beers, ciders, wines, spirits, and traditional Bavarian-inspired food. The brand's successful locations in DC's Shaw neighborhood and Navy Yard regularly host crowds who gather for lively events, fundraisers for social causes, special occasions, and an atmosphere that keeps regulars returning for more. All year long, Dacha dials up the fun with everything from doggy birthday parties to events featuring local vendors and fundraisers for charities and causes. Alter said he and his team will be working with franchisees to help them recreate a unique Dacha experience in their own neighborhoods. He mentioned Dacha's two gigantic murals at each of its current locations as an example.

"At our Shaw location, we have an eye-catching mural of Elizabeth Taylor, while our Navy Yard Location features a mural of Jackie Onassis," Alter said. "Both gigantic murals are striking works of art outside the restaurants that have made our locations unforgettable landmarks. We will be working with new franchise owners to ensure their locations are also big, bold, and extraordinary."

Since owners Chekaldin and Alter opened their first Dacha Beer location in DC's Shaw neighborhood in 2013,

they have experienced remarkable success in just ten years. Capitalizing on year-over-year growth and profit margins, they opened a second sprawling location in 2019 at Navy Yard, directly across from Nats Park, home of the Washington Nationals major league baseball team. During the pandemic when many restaurants and bars were struggling, Dacha's unwavering sales prompted them to acknowledge franchising with their proven playbook would be the perfect way to scale the business.

"We talked about supporting franchisees and entrepreneurs who would recognize the opportunity to build a prosperous business that would be able to thrive even during unstable economic times," said Chekaldin. "By the time we opened the second location at Navy Yard, we knew we had an exceptional concept and track record, so we made the decision to franchise and offer our expertise and support to investors." **TR**

About Dacha Beer Garden: As a fixture in DC neighborhoods since 2013, Dacha - www.DachaBeerGarden.co - combines the charm of a classic German beer garden with a modern American bar. With locations in DC's Shaw neighborhood and Navy Yard, the locations feature a lively atmosphere for families, friends, and pets alike with a delicious Bavarian-inspired menu, amazing cocktails, and an unrivaled world-class beer program and Beer Club. Dacha Beer Garden is committed to giving back to the communities it serves and to social causes to make a difference.

VIVO! from page 5

Sports & Social and PBR Cowboy Bar will both open onto a sprawling Vivo! Plaza that will create a free-flowing community gathering space for live music, sports watch parties, family-friendly events, cultural celebrations, food, and beverage festivals, and more. The highlight of Vivo! Plaza will be its stage complete with a state-of-the-art 24' LED screen for sports viewing and live musical performances. With room to host up to 2,000 people for concerts, the Vivo! Plaza will showcase a wide range of live music that celebrates local, regional and national touring artists. Guests can also expect to enjoy beverages from the plaza's Blue Moon Garden Bar and a Miller Lite Bar, as well as various lawn games, covered picnic tables, and plenty of lounge seating.

The casual "backyard" space will include a container food and beverage area for guests to eat and enjoy bites from **SERGIO'S CUBAN AMERICAN KITCHEN** and refreshing drinks from **CRUSH BAR**, including Maryland's signature Orange Crush drink, which is landing in South Florida for the very first time. The iconic beverage takes fresh squeezed juice and your choice of spirit and serves it up over crushed ice.

Creating authentic dishes using family recipes to fuse Cuban and American cuisines since 1975, Sergio's Cuban American Kitchen's cooking is

based on the philosophy of simple, fresh and homemade. With 14 locations across South Florida, the beloved restaurant features items such as Pan Con Lechon made with grilled pork, onions, mojo sauce and Cuban bread; Croqueta Preparada made with ham, pork, two croquetas, Swiss cheese, pickles, mustard and Cuban bread and Frita & Fries made with a chorizo and beef burger, onions, string potatoes, ketchup, order of fries.

"Sergio's Restaurants is delighted to partner with Vivo! Dolphin Mall to showcase the Cuban and Latin cuisine we've grown famous for," shares Carlos Gazitua, CEO of Sergio's Cuban American Kitchen.

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