

Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 26

20TH ANNIVERSARY

Appetizers

Chef Watter's
Middle Eastern
Dish Recipe



Rogue One
subsidiary
launches new
tequila brand



Aspen Institute's
free COVID-19
safety course



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Yes, we are open to partners

2020 was a difficult year for independent restaurants and 2021 is looking just as difficult. If you have managed to keep the doors open, CONGRATULATIONS because across the country over 30% have not. But as we continue to navigate these painful times, continuing to market your restaurant is critical for survival and can even produce some significant growth.

I hope to be contributing to TRN on a regular basis, so, let's start simple. Here are three local marketing strategies you can start with immediately.

1. Partner with local businesses to local visitors, your customers

Consider making a partnership with a local business. When exploring a new partnership, BE CREATIVE, look for "non-traditional" relationships, and focus on businesses within minutes of your location. Why? The customer is already in your neighborhood. For example, if you have a cigar shop next door, offer to distribute a promo card with 10% off the next purchase; and, conversely, they offer a free lunch with the purchase of a box of cigars. This shows being creative - you don't have to "eat" the entire cost of the lunch; the cigar shop wants your leads, and they have a huge ticket price. So, for every "box" coupon claimed from a \$250+ sale at the cigar shop, they will pay you \$15 - while you might lose a couple of bucks, a) the cigar shop is obligated to tell all their patrons of the offer dramatically increasing awareness; and, b) you have the opportunity to establish a new buying habit - i.e. every time I get a box of cigars, I always stop for lunch at Fred's.

2. Leverage loyalty to fill your restaurant on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Loyal customers are perhaps the most valuable advantage independents hold over their franchise counterparts. Reselling to an existing customer is 10%



Stephen Gould, CEO and Founder

of the cost in gaining a new customer; getting a Saturday customer to come in on Tuesday is cheaper than finding a new customer to come in on Tuesday. Your loyal customers want to keep dining with you, but you are "out of sight and therefore, out of mind". You need to get a piece of their attention.

In 2021, you'll need to embrace digital loyalty. Hole-punch cards may have worked in the 80's, but they put an unnecessary burden on the customer.

See **PARTNERS** page 6



4 Rivers opening 14th smokehouse in Orlando

Winter Park—4 Rivers Smokehouse has announced the opening of its newest location in Orlando's bustling SoDo district. Slated to open early next year, the award-winning BBQ restaurant will be located at 3200 South Orange Avenue.

Recognized as the "South's Best BBQ Joint" by Southern Living, 4 Rivers Smokehouse will bring popular classics like 18-hour smoked Signature Angus Brisket, Pulled Pork and Burnt Ends to the flourishing dining district. The SoDo Smokehouse will also offer a menu that includes

selections such as BBQ Baked Beans, Smokehouse Corn and St. Louis Style Ribs. A variety of John Rivers Originals will also be available, including the Six Shooter, a longtime fan favorite that's made with baked cheese grits topped with pulled pork, coleslaw, pickles, jalapeños and 4R Signature sauce. Additionally, the location will serve Vegan Burnt Ends, a 100 percent plant-based dish that has received rave reviews from vegetarians, vegans and carnivores alike

See **4 RIVERS** page 14

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Appell Pie

Looking back

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

Sometimes I like to go back and read my columns from the early 2000's to see what has changed in the world. This column is almost comical in some spots but still relevant in others. I hope you enjoy it.

Many months ago I wrote about how the high price of gasoline would effect business. Now as we approach a National average of over \$2.00 per gallon we must prepare for a much different business environment.

As a restaurant owner or manager you realize that your core customers must come from the neighborhood in which your store is located.

The cost of gasoline is spiraling upward and the guesses are that they won't stop until they reach \$3.00 a gallon sometime during the late summer. One of my readers asked me if I was obsessed with terrorism based on some of my previous columns. The answer is no, but I am concerned. These prices represent economic terrorism, which eventually will turn our economy further downward. For an economy based on mobility via motor transport these high prices will bring us to a sudden halt.

What can we do about the high price? Probably nothing. Writing to your Senator or Congressman will do little but waste your ink. They are helpless too. Writing to the car manufactures may work if you said you would refuse to buy a new car until they raised the fuel economy to 60 miles per gallon.

Who am I kidding? You don't have to write to them. You won't be able to

afford a new car if these prices continue upward.

What can we really do about it? We MUST re-adjust our thinking and our lifestyles. As a restaurant owner or manager you realize that your core customers must come from the neighborhood in which your store is located. Much of your customer base will decide not to drive to you from across town as they used to do. You have to start to think outside the box now.

Local advertising directed to your core neighborhood is essential. Mailings and ads in local newspapers with coupons are one way to build your base now. Rewards programs for customer loyalty is a great way to keep the locals coming in. You may even consider altering your menu choices to appeal to a larger audience. Believe it or not delivery service can be done on bicycle or mopeds. In Europe and Asia motor scooters and bicycles are the main means of transportation in some cities.

If you do 200 dinners on a regular Saturday night and you have a full liquor bar, but your rush is over at nine o'clock, try booking a local jazz band or an oldies group to perform and extend your selling hours. Advertise the fact that you have the entertainment. E-mail is a great way to reach thousands of people with very little expense. Ask every customer you have now to fill out a form with their e mail address and birthday or their favorite dish on the menu. Give them a soft drink for doing so. Once you have the address you can contact them with your message. Don't over do it. Once a week or twice a month is fine. The bottom line is that if you do something now, when gas reaches \$3.00 a gallon and the economy comes to a grinding halt you at least will have a fighting chance to keep your customers and gain allot of new ones and therefore survive this challenging economic period. 

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PUBLISHER	Howard Appell
ASSOCIATE EDITOR	Wesley Paul
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR	John Tschohl
CIRCULATION MANAGER	Eric Spencer
ADVERTISING MANAGER	Howard Mckinney
ART DIRECTOR	Jim Pollard
SALES MANAGERS	Terri Mckinney
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SEPTEMBER 2021 ♦ TODAY'S RESTAURANT



What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

Florida's new Gaming Compact between Florida and the Seminole Tribe of Florida has been approved by the federal government — ushering what should become the broadest gambling expansion in Florida in decades. Notice of the approval, offered in letters from Bryan Newland, principal deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior for Indian Affairs, authorizes the massive new deal between the Seminoles and Florida, negotiated by Gov. Ron DeSantis's administration and approved in a Special Session of the Legislature in May. Sports gambling will be legalized both through casinos and online, run by the Seminole Tribe. The legal status of daily fantasy sports gaming will be confirmed. New casinos can be built and opened, both on and off tribal lands. Other casinos can be expanded or moved. Roulette and craps tables will be added.

The wine that has taken over the summer is finally expanding into new waters! Just Enough Wines is now offering their signature, premium wines to the Sunshine State. Available in four unique variations, the brand



continues to make its way across the country, and is officially available in California, Oregon and now, Florida. While the initial years of Just Enough Wines have remained relatively close to the West Coast, this East Coast expansion will only be the catalyst for their future launches in Texas, and New York. And while three of their four variations, the Chardonnay, Brut Bubbles, and Rosé, have been tried and true, 2021 meets

There's a new chef in town at Grassy Flats Resort & Beach Club, an eco-friendly boutique resort and beach club located at 58182 Overseas Hwy in Marathon in the Florida Keys. Award-winning Chef Andy Niedenthal oversees all food and beverage at the resort. Chef Niedenthal's love for food began in Baltimore, where he helped his parents prepare Maryland crab feasts. As a teenager, he busied tables at a Greek restaurant and later earned a degree from Baltimore's International Culinary Institute while working as a line cook. Since then, he's cooked in the British Virgin Islands, Deep South, and Puerto Rico. His resume includes Pierre's at Morada Bay, Cheeca Lodge and Spa, The Green Turtle Inn, and the Islander Resort in Islamorada; The Marshall House in Georgia; and Scrub Island Resort in The British Virgin Islands.



their newest Pinot Noir just in time for the Florida launch. Jess partnered up with team members Kaitlyn Lo, co-founder and COO, and Ross Bentley, Director of Winemaking. They decided to create a portable wine option that had a more practical serving size (1 can is equivalent to 1.5 glasses of wine), while keeping the brand environmentally focused.

Happy Joe's Pizza & Ice Cream is continuing to propel rapid expansion efforts by bringing its renowned pizza and party place to the southwest. Happy Joe's CEO Tom Sacco recently announced that the family-focused concept has executed an area development agreement with Franchisee Christina Tennant and family to grow the brand and open several new restaurants throughout Southwest Florida.

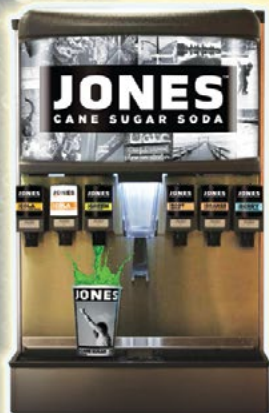
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See WHAT'S GOING ON page 8

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Magical words

John Tschohl ♦ Restaurateur and founder of BellyMelly

We are all aware of the importance of words. They can be healing or inspiring, humorous or hurtful. They can also be motivating and magical.

Two of the most powerful words in the English language are “thank you.” Most of us were taught that phrase when we were toddlers learning to verbally express our thoughts and

feelings. It was part of our parents programming us to treat people with respect. Unfortunately, for many people, the basic rules of politeness have gotten lost through the years. It’s time to bring those rules back—and to put them into play.

The pandemic seems to have brought out the worst in many people

who were—and, in many cases, still are—dealing with fear of the unknown. When people are fearful, they often become so obsessed with what they are feeling personally that they neglect to recognize the feelings and needs of others. One of those needs is feeling valued, and nothing conveys value as much as being thanked. It’s almost as inherent as our need for food and water.


There is magic in the words “thank you.” That magic isn’t automatic, however. To fully unleash the power of “thank you,” you must be specific, sincere, and speedy.

handshake, and eye contact, it loses much of its power. People can tell whether a “thank you” is sincere or not. If they think your “thank you” is phony or not heartfelt, it’s worthless.

A “thank you” shows people you value them and what they have done to help you. That might be a waitress who was attentive to your needs, a grocery store employee who helped you find the olives you wanted for a charcuterie tray, or a parking lot attendant who greeted you with a smile and wished you a good day. How often do you take for granted how others treat you and what they do for you?

It’s also important to recognize that the more power you hold, the more important it is to thank people. When a company’s CEO or executive thanks an employee for a job well done, it has a huge impact because it comes from someone in a position of power. When people know that others acknowledge and appreciate their work, it energizes them to do more, to do better.

If you’re a business owner or executive, make a resolution to thank your employees. When you do, you show them that you value them. When they feel valued, they will work harder and pass on that message of value to your customers.

Saying, “Thank you” to employees, customers, coworkers, and anyone else for doing a great job costs nothing, but the benefits of doing so—professionally and personally—are immeasurable. Make these two magical words —“thank you”— part of your everyday life. 

About the Author: John Tschohl is the president and founder of Service Quality Institute—the global leader in customer service—with operations in more than 40 countries. He is considered one of the world’s foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service and recently released his latest book, “Relentless.” John’s monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge at www.customer-service.com. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

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Owner Michele Leventhal

It's also importance to recognize that the more power you hold, the more important it is to thank people.

Let’s say you’re leading a team of coworkers on a project. Once it’s completed, you should thank those team members immediately and be specific about what you’re thanking them for. For example, “I thank each of you for your contributions to this project. We would not have been able to complete it without you and what you bring to the table.” Then acknowledge what each team member contributed and how that contribution resulted in a successful outcome.

Don’t wait weeks or months to thank someone. The longer you wait, the less power those words have. To realize the full impact of “thank you,” you must deliver it within hours—days, at the very longest.

You also must be sincere when you thank someone. If you simply throw out the phrase without a smile, a



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Recipe for a Middle Eastern dish

By Chef Paul Watters

Spiced chicken thighs with Baharat curried lentils, quinoa, arugula, red onion, baby cucumber, cherry tomatoes, picked basil and a coconut curry cream dressing. Serves 4

8 chicken thighs (on the bone)
200g argula
4 tablespoons of Baharat Seasoning
300g cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
8 baby cucumber (sliced)
16 cherry tomatoes (cut in half)
Handful of fresh basil (picked leaves)
4 tablespoons of curry powder
500g of cooked quinoa
500g of cooked lentils
8 tablespoons of creamed coconut


First preheat the oven to 180. Sprinke seasoning over chicken and rub well into the chicken. Then cook in the oven for 35 minutes. While the chicken is cooking you can prepare the rest of the ingredients. Gather a large bowl and add quinoa and lentils.

The good thing about this it can be served hot or cold depending on your preference. Add 2 tablespoons of cury powder and mix well. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well, cover with a damp kitchen paper to keep fresh.

For the cream gather a medium size bowl add the coconut cream and remaining curry powder. Add a little of the water and mix well.

For the presentation

Place the argula in the middle of the plate and spoon the remaining of the ingredients around the plate. Place the chicken on top of the argula and drizzle over the curry cream dressing and enjoy.

A nice middle eastern feast. Curried lentils, quinoa, rocket, red onion, baby cucumber, cherry tomatoes, picked basil. Along with a spiced Baharat chicken thighs and a coconut curry cream dressing. 

You can contact Chef Paul Watters by email at paulwattersu2@hotmail.com

Partners from page 1

What works? A loyalty solution that can engage customers via their mobile devices. Customers trust their phones and by engaging on the phone, you are tying into those emotions. Then, use an emotional message, not just "\$5 off wings", but a "happy birthday", "romantic dinner for two, celebrate", or "relax with us tonight". And if you want a "deal" offer, make it easy, "click here for \$5 off your entre". What's stopping you?


3. Highly targeted marketing for greater revenue

The natural thought here is Facebook advertising - and this is far from the complete answer. Social media is awesome. We will explore the HARD REQUIREMENT to have a Social program in future articles, but the default "paid advertising" just isn't enough and, standalone, doesn't generate the desired returns. Highly Targeted Marketing is pushing critical information directly to your customer, based on their behaviors in your restaurant. Quick example, at exactly 2pm on Friday send a text message to

everyone who was in your restaurant three of the last six Fridays between 5pm and 7pm, with "Your margarita is waiting!" What's stopping you?

A personal message, I am a small business owner who survives in the same boat you are in every day. I get staffing, roadblocks, and overwhelming advice from people that just don't understand.

What's Stopping You? That's easy, the same thing that stops me from opening a restaurant. I just don't have a clue. And if I did, there's no way I can take on ANOTHER JOB! But even if you thought your sister's daughter could do the job, they don't have the most important things: a) your database, segmented, validated, and engaged; b) they don't have the tools to know the behaviors, perform the communications, and time the delivery of message; and, most importantly, c) they don't know how to create campaigns that ARE GOING TO RESULT IN REVENUE.

Your partner should speak directly to increasing your revenue, and not just spending your money. 



Rogue One, Inc. subsidiary launches new tequila brand

Washington DC - Rogue One, Inc., has announced that it has re-launched its flagship Tequila brand, ARMERO® (hereinafter “Armero”) Tequila in select US markets. ARMERO®, a 100% premium “sipping” tequila which was included in the Company’s recent acquisition of Human Brands International, Inc., is exclusively imported in the United States by the Company’s import division CapCity Beverage and is now available at select on and off premise retailers in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland and Washington DC.

ARMERO, produced at the award-winning Hacienda Capellania (NOM-1545 currently ranked #14 out of the top 100+ distilleries in Mexico, according to Tequila Matchmaker), is distilled from ripe 6 and 7-year-old mature Blue Weber agave in the highlands of Jalisco, Mexico, an area well known for its rich copper clay soil and temperate climate which gives our mature agave very distinct and flavorful tasting notes.

The brand creator, Daniel Bouquet De Grau, a master distiller who is still actively involved with the brand and currently the Director of Mexico operations for Human Brands International, stated “We believe that our slow cooking and cooling process, long fermentation, mellow distillation and our proprietary formula/process makes ARMERO pound for pound on the finest sipping tequilas in the world”.

The Company selected it’s “Krystal” expression to re-introduce the brand to American tequila enthusiast. The “Krystal” is the brand introductory Blanco expression and is the perfect way to discover the fine art of sipping tequila at an affordable price point. The Company is currently in discussions with several distributors to expand the brands distribution to more markets across the United States and intends to launch additional expressions by early

Q-1 2022, which will include a Cristalino, Reposado, Anejo and Extra Anejo.

“We are very excited about the positioning of Armero in the US market. With each of our brands we try to focus on providing great quality and value for our customers, what we call “affordable luxury”. With each sip of Armero you can taste the high quality of the spirit, the care that went into the Agave and you would think you were drinking a \$300 bottle of Tequila. Armero was created to be a disruptor in a spirit category that has been dominated by a few brands that controlled the way people consumed tequila in the US for decades, which is why we are so excited about the potential of introducing the US consumer to an affordable premium sipping tequila in the fastest growing spirit category in the world”, stated Rogue One/ Human Brands COO Janon Costley.

About Rogue One, Inc.: Rogue One, Inc. is a holding company that focuses on acquisition opportunities in the multi-trillion dollar spirit/ adult beverage sector and related industries. ROAG primarily targets companies, and/or exclusive production and supply agreements in the Tequila industry. ROAG will also seek opportunities involving uniquely positioned, specialized retail/hospitality locations and brands that will be supported by our underlying business activities.

About Human Brands: Human Brands International, Inc. (www.humanbrandsinc.com) is a diversified holding company in the spirit and hospitality sectors with a primary focus on the tequila industry. The Company was established in late 2014 to capitalize on the growing alcohol beverage market and changing consumer habits in the industry. The Company currently has several wholly owned subsidiaries that focus on five key areas of business: Agave, Bulk Tequila Production, Brand Development, Import/Export and Hospitality. Human Brands diversified operating divisions currently own and manage over 250k agave plants, several premium spirit brands such as Armero Tequila, Three hospitality concepts, (Santo Coyote, Santa Cantina, Museo by Santo) and holds exclusive import/export rights for a variety of spirit brands (CapCity Beverage). The Company’s core foundation is built upon its bulk tequila production operations. The Company currently has supply contracts with well-known tequila brands, as well as celebrities and athletes.

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What's Going On

from page 3

need to be constantly supervised and as an added safety measure, the new immersion circulators include a low water switch that protects the equipment by shutting off the unit when the water level is too low. For more details, visit vollrathfoodservice.com.

◆ Miami-based seafood spot **Crabman 305** is opening an Atlanta outpost downtown, at 171 Auburn Avenue. The seafood joint specializes in seafood dishes of all kinds, particularly, crab, lobster, and conch. "We do fried conch, conch salads, conch fritters. However you want your conch, we make it," says Tony Trotter, who will manage the new Atlanta outpost.



◆ **Legacy Foodservice Alliance** announced that **Choctaw Provisions**, based in Baton Rouge, LA has become the newest Distributor Member of the Richmond-based Foodservice Supply Chain Alliance. Established in 1947, Choctaw Provisions is a family-owned wholesale foodservice distributor for meat, seafood, and dry goods, serving convenience stores, restaurants, grocery stores, schools, government agencies, and healthcare facilities throughout Southeast Louisiana. Deb Winter, Legacy's Executive Vice President shared; "We are laser-focused on providing lasting value for Legacy Members and contributing to the good health and well-being of Independent Foodservice Distributors. And are very pleased to continue to add new Legacy Members from the Southeastern US." Legacy Foodservice Alliance – legacyfoodservicealliance.com - is a national foodservice sales and marketing organization that combines the purchasing power of more than 170 Distributors and 500 Suppliers to bring the best products at the best prices to its Members.

◆ After opening its doors in Lewisville, Texas in 2005, **Twin Peaks' Lodges/Restaurants** are expanding in a big way to the Texas markets, leading to more than 25 new locations in every major city across the Lone Star State. Along with its Texas popularity, Twin Peaks has grown into a global brand with more than 80 locations. Now, the Dallas-Fort Worth-based company is well-positioned for growth and is bringing its 29-degree beer and scratch-made menu to even more of the great state with new openings planned in Burleson, Grand Prairie and Amarillo, Texas.



◆ **Main Squeeze Juice Co.**, has more than 60 franchisee - and corporate-

owned stores in various stages of development across the Southeast and other areas in the U.S.

◆◆◆◆ In collaboration with over forty experienced industry executives, **Personica™** has released a framework that restaurants can follow to create more highly personalized guest engagement. The framework was developed by a broad and diverse team of operators, strategists and experts - including executives from Netflix, Pandora and Starbucks - who participated in a series of virtual roundtables. Through these collaborative sessions,

a new model for understanding and executing on the opportunities and challenges that are emerging for restaurants was developed. To download a free copy of the Personica White Paper and the 3D Model visit www.personica.com. Personica™ is a powerful marketing and analytics platform for restaurants. Formerly Fishbowl, Personica was founded 20 years ago by a team of restaurant professionals who wanted a better way to connect with their guests.

◆◆◆◆ **Mighty Quinn's BBQ**, a fast casual concept founded in New York City, is bringing its BBQ style to the Tampa Bay area. The signed multi-unit franchise agreement in Tampa Bay with TBBQ Group LLC.

◆◆◆◆ **Technomic** recently released the **Crisis on the Front Lines Multi Client Study** uncovering drivers and deterrents to unit-level employment in the commercial restaurant industry among job seekers and current employees. The strategic study also uncovers strategies and tactics for operators as

they navigate staffing locations and positioning their brand as employers of choice. "Foodservice operators are facing new challenges in connecting with job-seekers while also keeping up with rising consumer demand," explains Melissa Wilson, advisor at Technomic.

"The employment value proposition has changed as a result of the pandemic, and operators will need to adjust hiring and retention strategies to effectively compete for workers in this environment and going forward." Learn more: <https://www.technomic.com/reports/multi-client-studies/crisis-front-lines>.

◆◆◆◆ **The Shrimp & Grits Festival on Jekyll Island, GA** will not be held this year, but next year, November 4-6, 2022 to celebrate their 15th anniversary! A

See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 14

Recruiting platform offers critical hospitality hiring assistance in time of need

Nashville, TN – Nashville-based foh&boh is bringing crucial hiring assistance to the hospitality industry with an innovative, user-friendly online platform that is successfully placing thousands of employees nationwide within restaurants currently struggling with unprecedented labor shortages.

Launched in early 2020, foh&boh has quickly accelerated to serve restaurants in over 50 markets with a sophisticated recruiting tool to assist both hiring businesses and applicants searching for employment.

Exclusive to the hospitality industry, the online platform offers a space for businesses to list job openings and be matched with potential candidates. User-friendly technology instantly posts submitted job openings to more than 60 job boards, giving users access to thousands of candidates from dozens of job sites. The software then sorts and matches candidates based on listed criteria such as experience, location, available hours and commute time. Once a match is made with a job candidate, employers are able to chat in real time through instant messaging that is sent directly to the candidate's phone.

"Foh&boh provides restaurants and applicants alike with a simple and effective way to find the right match for every position," said CEO Halle Hayes. "As restaurants have emerged from the pandemic, job shortages have hindered restaurant openings across the country. Foh&boh is a turnkey solution - making the search and application process as



Mary Pillow Thompson (left) and Halle Hayes are co-founders of foh&boh.

seamless as possible by delivering qualified job seekers while eliminating the need to post on several platforms and manually search through candidates on several different sites."

Additionally, both hiring businesses and applicants can turn profiles off and on when needed without the hindrance of a contract.

With restaurants and other hospitality businesses reopening, the need to find qualified candidates to fully staff businesses is critical, and the industry is taking notice of the new technology. The platform is serving hundreds of businesses that span from major brands like Hilton, Omni Hotels & Resorts, The Palm, KFC, Bob's Steak & Chophouse, Taco Bell, Nobu, Flying Saucer Restaurants and J. Alexanders, among others to niche chains across the country. 

Hire hospitality help at FRLA's GreatFloridaJob.com

By Carol B. Dover
President/CEO FRLA

What a wild ride the last 18 months has been for our Industry! From the Pandemic, to the labor shortage and back to the Delta variant of COVID-19, it has been a struggle to stay open and remain fully staffed. Many businesses have adjusted hours and days of service or closed temporarily and some, sadly have been shuttered forever.




The Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association (FRLA) has worked hard to provide assistance to the Industry throughout the Pandemic and now in addressing the labor shortage. We know that until we are fully staffed and at maximum capacity, the Industry is going to suffer.

The labor shortage was an issue for us prior to the Pandemic, and it is now a major challenge facing all aspects

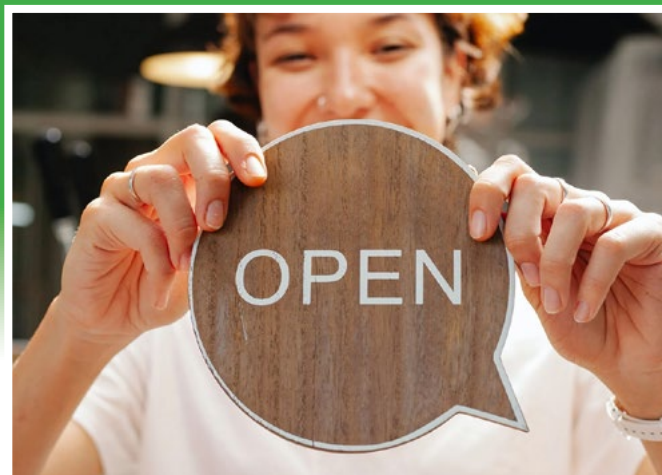
of the Industry. While we have been working on several measures to assist, many of these solutions are long-term rather than what is needed today. In an effort to provide relief for FRLA has built GreatFloridaJob.com, a job board specifically designed for Florida's hospitality industry. The website allows job seekers to register and apply for jobs, and it also registers employers and lets them post jobs in need of filling.

Posting jobs on the website is free to FRLA members. It is \$50 to post 20 jobs per location for non-members. In addition, if you want to boost a job to the top of the listings, it is \$10. Not a member? Want to join? Visit FRLA.org to join today.

We also have many other resources that we have compiled for you. Visit our Employer Resources page to explore them.

We hope this web site is useful to you and helps to alleviate some of your current labor shortage issues. If you want to know more about this and other activities FRLA is taking on to address the labor shortage, please contact Susie McKinley at smckinley@frla.org. If you want to find out what is happening in your area, contact one of our Regional Directors. 

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Aspen Institute's Food & Society program releases free COVID-19 safety course for restaurant operators

"Safety First: Protecting Workers and Diners as Restaurants Reopen" launches in partnership with Rouxbe

Washington, DC - As cities and states across the country resume indoor dining, the Delta variant picks up speed, and mask guidance remains inconsistent, the Aspen Institute's Food & Society Program is partnering with Rouxbe to release a free online training course that promotes safe restaurant dining for both customers and staff, including guidance on vaccinations. This training program, supported by the CDC Foundation, is based on the first national indoor dining safety guidelines, Safety First, released in April 2021 in partnership with prominent restaurant industry leaders and organizations. Safety First is a comprehensive guide to what managers and workers must know to keep their workers and diners protected from Covid in the face of shifting community transmission. Its two principle infographics, the Diner Code of Conduct and Our Covid Pledge, lead with the importance of helping all staff and diners get vaccinated; they are also available in Spanish and Mandarin.



Safety First

Protecting Workers and Diners as Restaurants Reopen

"Restaurants are confused. Workers are confused. Diners are confused," says Corby Kummer, Executive Director of the Aspen Institute's Food & Society Program. "Current Covid news shifts by the week—but the uptick in Covid-19 cases, including among the fully

vaccinated, puts renewed focus on the need to ensure safe working conditions and eating environments. For restaurant owners and their staff, that means understanding how best to continue to protect workers and diners while we wait for easy and reliable proof of vaccination and the frequency of testing to rise."

The new Safety First trainings offer invaluable sector-specific guidance for restaurant operators to keep their workers and guests safe in the face of varying vaccination and transmission levels around the country. "This Safety First course will offer clarity at a moment when the restaurant industry urgently needs it," says Ken Rubin, Chief Culinary Officer with Rouxbe who helps with the development of all online courses.

The training also includes insights into how to find nearby vaccination sites, guidance for all food-service workers to build their own personal-health plan, and the importance of discussing mental health and finding nearby resources as the pandemic

"Restaurants are confused. Workers are confused. Diners are confused."

continues. Those insights are part of the recently announced CDC Foundation Food Worker COVID-19 Health Safety Toolkit.

The course is organized by units, each about 15 to 20 minutes and includes short videos that showcase the voices and perspectives restaurants and foodservice workers. The course also includes learning tasks and resources including knowledge checks to review what has been learned. The entire course can be completed at once in about 90 minutes.

Food & Society's Safety First guidelines were generously supported by the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund, Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch, and Food@Google.

See **ASPEN** page 11

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Helping restaurants grow using their data, for free

Irvine, CA - DataSciencx is offering cost-free solutions to restaurant chain executives and multi-unit franchisee operators, so they can analyze their once fragmented data and make informed marketing decisions to help grow their business.

“We take a restaurant’s data and organize it into an easy to understand Dashboard that’ll increase operations and transparency,” said Robert Edwards, Director of Marketing at DataSciencx. “With a clear snapshot of the key metrics, and powered by our partner Zenreach, we use our platform to digitally advertise and market restaurants to the right customer demographic who we already know will love what the restaurant offers. The best part is we do so at a very reasonable price...it’s free!”

Restaurants are starting to bounce back from last year’s COVID setback.

According to the International Data Corporation, restaurants and franchises analyze only 10% of the data they collect. Customer data is a major key to a restaurant’s success and can help increase customer retention and acquisition.

“Businesses already have the right equipment and flow of data. It’s all been stored on the backend of their website or in their point-of-sale (POS) systems, sitting dormant,” said Edwards.

With the help of DataSciencx, restaurants can now take advantage of their valuable data and streamline day-to-day operations. And, the process is easy. DataSciencx offers clients free services like custom branded photography, videography and drone content creation, data organization and display, and POS and Zenreach services, to help them grow and reach their valuable customers.

“I always tell businesses that it’s your data. It won’t grow mold if you leave it alone, but it could turn into gold with the right tools and strategies. Making smart data-based decisions will help make your business operate a lot smoother and their customers will be a lot happier,” stated Edwards.

As restaurants navigate a post-pandemic world, data will be more important now than ever to reach and attract existing and new customers. Restaurants are starting to bounce back from last year’s COVID setback. Data-driven marketing and sales will help set restaurants using the DataSciencx platform apart from and ahead of their competition.

About DataSciencx: DataSciencx is an Information Technology Company, headquartered in Irvine, CA. We empower business owners and their marketing teams to uncover, organize and understand their overlooked, fragmented and previously untapped data sources. Our goal is to help businesses win more sales by solving the madness of misinformation with powerful data that creates a digital walkway to bring customers through their doors. DataSciencx.com.

Aspen from page 10

About Food and Society at the Aspen Institute: Food and Society at the Aspen Institute brings together leaders and decision-makers in the food and beverage industry and the public health community—scientists, nutritionists, environmentalists, entrepreneurs, chefs, restaurateurs, farmers, and food makers of all kinds—to find solutions to production, health, and communications challenges in the food system. It is currently working on a major initiative to broaden the work on the Food Is Medicine movement, creating a Research Priorities Action Plan that will be a road map for future funding that will extend current work to rural and underserved areas. The goal is for people of all income levels to eat better and more healthful diets—and to enjoy them bite by bite. Find executive director Corby Kummer on Twitter @ckummer.

About Rouxbe: Rouxbe, the world’s leading online culinary school, was founded in 2005 to train people of all abilities to become better, more confident — even healthier — cooks in kitchens around the world. With high-definition videos, world-class instructors, peer support, and interactive assignments, Rouxbe has set the bar as the new standard in culinary education, providing certificate-level instruction not only to quality restaurants and hospitality organizations but also to serious home cooks and career changers.

Rouxbe’s revolutionary online platform delivers cutting-edge e-learning solutions that drive and measure learning outcomes and engagement while providing effective, lower-cost alternatives for training professional cooks. Rouxbe programs are also recognized by both the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation and by WorldChefs as approved training programs.

About The CDC Foundation: The CDC Foundation helps the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) save and improve lives by unleashing the power of collaboration between CDC, philanthropies, corporations, organizations and individuals to protect the health, safety, and security of America and the world. The CDC Foundation is the go-to non-profit authorized by Congress to mobilize philanthropic partners and private-sector resources to support CDC’s critical health protection mission. Since 1995, the CDC Foundation has raised over \$1.2 billion and launched more than 1,200 programs impacting a variety of health threats from chronic disease conditions including cardiovascular disease and cancer, to infectious diseases like rotavirus and HIV, to emergency responses, including COVID-19 and Ebola. The CDC Foundation managed hundreds of CDC-led programs in the United States and in more than 140 countries last year.

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National Restaurant Association Show® achieves major exhibitor sales milestone ahead of 2022 event

Chicago, IL - As the foodservice industry continues its revival and advancement, the National Restaurant Association Show recently announced that it has already surpassed the 1,000 exhibiting companies milestone for the 2022 event. Known as the leading restaurant and hospitality industry's trade show, the National Restaurant Association Show brings together more buyers, suppliers, and manufacturers than any other industry event. For the first time since 2019, the 2022 Show will be held May 21-24, 2022, at McCormick Place in Chicago.

"For 2022, we are seeing a lot of momentum with both new exhibitors and returning exhibitors we are excited to welcome back," said Tom Cindric, President of Winsight Exhibitions. "We are seeing new solutions across all of our product categories and are excited to


feature new companies entering the foodservice space in our reimagined Startup Alley. We can't wait to bring our community back together in 2022 with renewed energy and three-years' worth of innovation and collaboration."

To date, 1,055 companies have renewed their commitment for the 2022 Show. This, in addition to the new exhibitors that have signed, brings the 2022 Show to 500,720 sq. ft. of exhibit space. This milestone was achieved nearly a month earlier than for the 2021 Show.

Cindric added, "While we haven't been able to do business or learn together in person, we have made it a priority through The Show To Go to continue to provide our industry with information, resources, and connections to power our industry forward until we meet again in 2022. The Show To Go will continue to be an important

digital resource for our Show community moving forward."

Following the cancellation of the 2020 event, organizers of the National Restaurant Association Show developed The Show to Go, an online resource that houses searchable products and supplier profiles, free educational sessions led by industry influencers, and more. Users can explore content within seven unique tracks—Culinary Insights, Operations Solutions, The New Consumer, Technology & Innovation, Trends in Adult Beverage, Wellness, and Workforce Development—and new assets are being made available throughout the year. In this year-round marketplace, exhibitors can also gain exposure to thousands of foodservice industry professionals eager to find new connections. Access to the platform is free for industry professionals.

Organizers are expecting a full and robust show floor as anticipation and excitement build for the 2022 Show. 

For more information, visit the National Restaurant Association Show website and The Show To Go, and connect with the Show online on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

The National Restaurant Association Show, Hotel-Motel Show is owned and operated by Winsight LLC in equity partnership with the National Restaurant Association.

About Winsight LLC: Winsight LLC is a business-to-business information, event and market intelligence company serving the restaurant and noncommercial foodservice, convenience and petroleum retailing and grocery industries. Winsight provides research and analytics, branding solutions, face-to-face opportunities, lead generation initiatives, and content marketing services through products including subscription data products, reports, research tools, research programs, fully custom studies, conferences, custom marketing services, meetings, print, digital trade media and tradeshows, including the National Restaurant Association Show.

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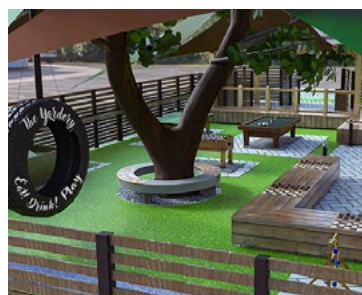
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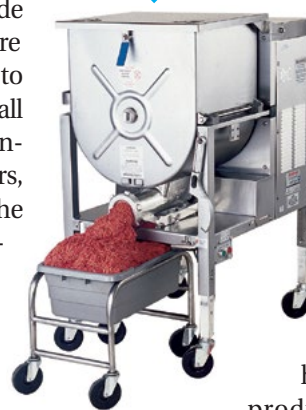
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What's Going On from page 8

coastal favorite, the Jekyll Island Shrimp and Grits Festival combines the classic southern dish with family-friendly entertainment, artists market, live music, kids' zone, food, a craft brew fest, and more. Visit jekyllisland.com/signatureevents for more information.



♦ **The Yardery (Yard + Eatery)** is a fast casual dining and safe social & entertainment experience, opening soon in Sanford at 415 East 4th St. All guest areas are outdoors and are protected from the elements by an entry gazebo, pavillion-style dining area, pergolas and sail shades. The Yardery will feature popular games like billiards, table tennis, foosball, cornhole, ladder toss, and more. The benches will have built-in game boards. The signature fixed tire swing will provide selfie moments and the fire pit lounge will be a place to safely gather. In addition to all the favorite food typically enjoyed outdoors like burgers, hot dogs, ribs, & chicken, the Yardery will also feature artisan flatbreads, creative appetizers and a tater tot dish or two. The Yardery will also feature a line of bagels and bagel sandwiches made fresh daily by their bagel master, Bernie (who happens to be a co-owner).



♦ **Eight-Story Calle Miramar Hotel Planned** A 170 guestroom eight story hotel on Calle Maramar in Siesta Key Village, has been recommended for approval by the city planning commission. The site is located at the intersection of Calle Miramar and Beach Road. Bill Merrill is the land use attorney representing the developer. RE/MAX real estate agent Robert Anderson is planning the project that is being designed by DSDG Architects.

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4 Rivers from page 1

"Given the challenges of the last year, we are incredibly grateful to be in a position to expand the footprint of the 4Rivers family of restaurants. We are particularly excited to open a new Smokehouse in our hometown of Orlando" said John Rivers, 4R Restaurant Group Founder/CEO. "The Smokehouse's proximity to Orlando Health, City Hall, and other local partners will allow us to strengthen the relationships that fuel not only our business, but more importantly our ministry and the important work we are doing at the 4Roots Farm. We look forward to serving the wonderful families and businesses in the Downtown and SoDo districts and to sharing with them a little taste of our 'Barbecue Ministry'."

The 3,636 square-foot SoDo Smokehouse will offer indoor seating for 66 guests as well as the largest outdoor capacity of any 4 Rivers location. The outdoor area will feature the first-ever 4 Rivers Pavilion, an open-air space where diners will enjoy 4 Rivers food, live music and a rotating selection of craft beer and wine. The outdoor Pavilion will also be available for private event bookings.

The SoDo Smokehouse will also feature an open-air Pavilion. Another first-of-its-kind feature at the SoDo Smokehouse will be a double drive-thru that will support the increased demand for off-premises dining. Additionally, the new Smokehouse will include the

largest 4 Rivers area dedicated for to-go pickup and third-party delivery partners such as Uber Eats and DoorDash.

The new 4 Rivers Smokehouse will employ approximately 40 people and is being launched in conjunction with locally owned Pineloch Management.

About 4R Restaurant Group: Established in Winter Park in 2009, 4 Rivers Smokehouse is a family-owned "Barbecue Ministry" specializing in 30-day aged Smoked Angus Brisket and "Homestyle Sides," as well as bold twists of flavor and ingredient combinations with "John Rivers Originals" and "Fresh Eats" offerings. Recently voted "Best BBQ in the South" by Southern Living Magazine, 4 Rivers is led by Founder/CEO John Rivers, who strives to support the local community through exceptional products, steadfast customer service and uncompromised integrity.

4R Restaurant Group has 22 locations in Florida, including thirteen current 4 Rivers Smokehouses, 4R Cantina Barbacoa at Disney Springs; four 4 Rivers walkup venues at ESPN Wide World of Sports; as well as eateries at Camping World Stadium, Spectrum Stadium and Doak Campbell Stadium. In addition to online ordering, 4 Rivers also offers a variety of catering options for larger parties and special event occasions. Also part of the 4R family is The COOP, a neighborhood restaurant in Winter Park celebrating the home-style fare of the South.

4 Rivers Smokehouse sauces and signature rubs are also available for purchase in Publix stores throughout the Southeast.

The 4R Foundation has donated funds to more than 650 local organizations, non-profits and churches. Out of this Foundation also grew 4Roots, an effort designed to build a better food future in Orlando, including the construction of an 18-acre farm in the Packing District area. 4Roots also launched "Feed The Need Florida" a movement to feed Floridians in need of food since the onset of COVID-19. Since its inception, Feed The Need Florida has served more than 1.7 million meals.

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