

Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 28

Appetizers

2023 New Year resolutions for restaurant operators



Eggs Up Grill builds on its best year



GDK launches North American expansion



PreciTaste launches line of plug-and-play products



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2023 predictions from Novolyze on the food safety industry

By Karim-Franck Khinouche

Founder and CEO of Novolyze

◆ **Consumers will crave more traceability.** Food traceability has been at the forefront for some time now, but we've seen it take off even more since the beginning of COVID-19, and in particular over the past year. Today, people care about their food perhaps more than ever before and want to know where it's coming from – something the industry took for granted in the past. In the coming year, the industry can expect to see even more interest and emphasis on traceability.

◆ **Make sustainability a priority.** Sustainability is embedded within the food industry and has been for quite some time – even if it's hardly mentioned. But in the coming year, I believe that sustainability's real business value will come to light. Not only is it a good look in general, but it also has real value for shareholders. We'll see a shift where the industry realizes the value in working more towards sustainable production. As the industry continues to accept sustainability targets, data will be used to measure how brands are doing when it comes to sustainability. Those who don't put sustainability front-and-center in 2023 will be left behind.



Karim-Franck Khinouche

We'll see a shift where the industry realizes the value in working more towards sustainable production.

◆ **Be better prepared for audits.** Now that there is a sense of normalcy in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, food plant audits are increasingly taking place in-person and will continue to even more in the coming year. As a result, we can expect to see a higher number of recalls as auditors catch things that might have slipped by over the past several years of conducting audits virtually. With plants now fully functional, it's critical to make sure everything is in order to ensure more seamless audits.

◆ **Technology will continue to bridge the labor shortage gap.** Over the past year, the labor shortage was a major story in a wide range of sectors, including food safety. The average age of today's Quality Assurance manager is higher than ever. It has become difficult to find qualified people who want to work in this industry. Next year, I expect technology such as AI and machine learning to be a key factor in helping the industry make up for the labor shortage that's currently taking place.

◆ **Keep your crisis manager near.** Social media will continue to play a big role in food-related crises. Today, the life of a food-related crisis is a roller coaster, thanks to the fast-paced and

See **PREDICTIONS** page 11

Benihana accelerates growth



Aventura, FL - Benihana Inc., the nation's leading owner and operator of Japanese teppanyaki and sushi restaurants announced the opening of Benihana Saginaw, Michigan on January 11. Located at 3870 Bay Road with over 9,100 square feet and 16 teppanyaki tables offering lunch, dinner, happy hour, take-out and delivery.

"It's an honor for us to be a part of one of the most well-respected brands in the United States," said Henry Pi, newest Benihana franchisee and President of Company Pi. "We invite our neighbors and guests to come experience high-quality Japanese cuisine served in a fun-filled, engaging teppanyaki experience and we look forward to serving you soon!"

"We at Benihana strive to create great guest memories and are proud to partner with Henry Pi and his talented team to expand our Michigan restaurants beyond our current Farmington Hills, Dearborn and Troy locations," said Tom Baldwin, Chief Executive Officer and President of Benihana. "Guests in Saginaw will enjoy the same time-honored traditions and experiential dining that Benihana guests have come to love

See **BENIHANA** page 14

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Appell Pie

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As the pandemic neared the end of the cycle people began to return to their jobs in offices, construction and restaurants to name a few. The Federal government had doled out so much money via grants and loans that some workers in the restaurant industries had decided to remain home or change industries. The Gig economy had started.

Owners need to find the right button to push to keep their staff and reward their super stars.

Restaurant owners were left looking for new workers to replace those who they had lost and that meant re-training the new people and trying to keep them long term. So many jobs remained unfilled that robotics companies began feverishly promoting their labor-saving robots to “not replace humans, but to help humans” The replacement has not hit yet. Still jobs went unfilled and those who were working were jumping from restaurant to restaurant at will based on salary and working conditions. How to you keep them long term? became the cry of owners who had to deal with rising food costs and shortages from all suppliers from all over the world.

Restaurant consultants are devising ways to cut costs and reduce labor but the jobs remain open. Owners need to find the right button to push to keep their staff and reward their super stars.

I remember reading a study several years before the pandemic that stated people were motivated by things other than money. Sure, money is the number one motivator for a young worker

starting their life out but how does an owner turn them into long term professional waiters or waitresses like in the restaurants one operating in New York and Los Angeles. Customers had their favorite servers and would return to the same table to dine once or twice a week and the servers earned a good living, but that doesn't exist anymore.

According to David Scott Peters a well-known restaurant operations speaker and John Tschohl, a Customer Service Specialist, whose columns appear in Today's Restaurant News, employees need recognition and appreciation. (Dec 2022 Jan 2023) Tschohl stated, “That fact is that money will get employees through the doors of your business, but it won't keep them there. What will? Recognition. Praise. Feeling valued. Let's face it, most managers and supervisors have had no training in how to effectively recognize employees. Many were simply promoted to their positions without being provided the training necessary to interact with—and motivate—employees.”

Peters suggested, “Find someone doing something right and call them out for it. It's so easy to find someone doing something wrong. Like wrong, wrong, change, change. But when you go out of your way to search for people doing something right, and then in front of customers or other employees, call them out for it, and tell them what a great job they did and why this customer has one of the best servers you have, or why everybody on the team should emulate this person, you're showing them how much you appreciate them”

Both experts are stressing the point that employees should want to come to work for your restaurant because they will be appreciated, trained properly and recognized when they do the right job. It's supply and demand and the jobs are in supply but the demand is no longer in the hands of employers.

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What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

The Point on Plant Street is a 30,600-square-foot mixed-use project proposed to rise at 996 E. Plant Street in Winter Garden, FL.

There is a Courtyard planned, retail and offices in this new development. The Point on Plant is working with Amy Calendrino and team from Beyond Commercial. For more detailed information please call 407.641.2221 or email Amy@beyondcommercial.com, or visit the website at thepointonplantst.com.



Lyons Magnus, a global foodservice and ingredient source, has released

their predictions for five emerging trends that will influence food and beverage menus in 2023 and beyond. "We use our proprietary research and analysis to support our partners with targeted trend insights to help them identify opportunities that will resonate with their customer base," says John Koch, Vice President National Accounts. "These trends are the cornerstone for



ITW Food Equipment Group LLC, a subsidiary of Illinois Tool Works, is the brand behind the brands found in commercial kitchens, bakeries, delis and groceries around the world. This year at the NAFEM Show will be the first time the group, consisting of Hobart, Baxter, Traulsen and Vulcan, will share one booth (2812) to showcase essential equipment at the core of every kitchen. "We're excited to showcase a live kitchen where we'll be holding demonstrations and cooking delicious entrees throughout the show," said Todd Blair, director of marketing for ITW Food Equipment Group. An ENERGY STAR® Partner of the Year since 2008, ITW Food Equipment Group embodies a family of premium brands including Hobart, Traulsen, Baxter, Vulcan, Wolf, Berkel, Stero, Somat, Gaylord, Kairak and Peerless—covering all your core food equipment needs, from food preparation and refrigeration to cooking and baking to dishwashing and waste disposal to weighing and wrapping. Explore ITW Food Equipment Group by visiting www.itwfoodequipment.com.

innovative products and recipe creation." The five trends include: **Slushies 2.0; Strange Brews; All Things Pistacios; Everybody Wants A Date and The Power Of Nostalgia.** For detailed information contact: John.Koch@LyonsMagnus.com.



◆◆◆◆◆
◆ **Condado Tacos**, the award-winning taco joint, specializing in tacos, fresh margaritas and tequilas with a cool vibe and atmosphere, announced **12 new**

restaurants will be opening in 2023, with eight of these located in new markets. This fast-growing taco restaurant company will open new restaurants in Ballpark Village in St. Louis, MO, in Buffalo, NY, Charleston and Greenville, SC, Birmingham and Huntsville, AL, Knoxville, TN and Louisville, KY, as well as at least 4 new locations in existing markets. Condado Tacos opened in 2014 with its first location in Columbus, Ohio. Since its founding, the brand has grown to 39

locations in 15 markets, with many new markets planned. For more information, contact Roger Drake, roger.drake@condadotacos.com or 631.495.2676.



◆ Tired of losing, running out of, and having to frequently re-order flatware and ramekins? Fed up with other solutions that simply don't work? Stop throwing money in the trash. With the new **SilverSaver® Smart Flatware Detector**, your flatware and ramekin losses will be a thing of the past. Your profits will increase. Powered by innovative MINELAB® technology — global leaders in metal detection — SilverSaver® identifies flatware and ramekins of any material before they're lost in the trash.

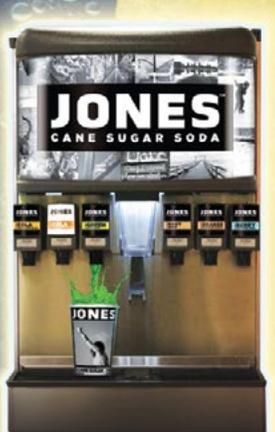


◆◆◆◆◆
◆ For detailed information call 877.366.4655 or visit GetSilverSaver.com.

◆◆◆◆◆
◆ "According to the research report published by Polaris Market Research, the **Global Food Service Equipment Market Is Anticipated To Reach USD 62 Billion By 2026, at a CAGR of 5.3% during the forecast period.**"

◆◆◆◆◆
◆ See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 10

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2023 New Year resolutions for restaurant operators

By MeazureUp

Globally, nearly 60% of adults make resolutions for the new year. Do you have big plans for your restaurant in the coming year? Traditionally a slower month in the restaurant business, January offers owners and operators time to evaluate processes to determine what's working and what needs to be done differently to grow revenue and maximize success. Typically, only 8% of resolutions actually create lasting change. Consider not only what you want to accomplish, but also how you'll get it done to increase your odds of success. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind as you identify and strategize around your business's 2023 resolutions.

Evaluate Your Menu

January's "New Year, New Me" diners aren't the only ones who will be making careful food choices in 2023. More restaurant patrons are demanding healthful options than ever before and this "feel good" trend shows no signs of slowing down. Meeting these new expectations can boost profits. Many multi-location operations already post calorie counts on menu boards. One survey concluded that transparency around nutritional content is preferred by more than half of

diners. More than 100 million Americans follow special diets. Menus that include vegan, gluten-free, and dairy-free choices are popping up with great success everywhere from quick service to fine dining establishments. Local and seasonal ingredients are not only a priority for diners; periodically updating your menu of offering specials to incorporate these items can reduce your food costs.



Prioritize Carry-Out

As the world stayed at home, curbside pickup and delivery helped many restaurants survive the pandemic. While in-restaurant dining figures have rebounded, one fact remains: takeout isn't going anywhere. Many patrons prefer to enjoy restaurant food from the comfort of home, as evidenced by a tripling of the delivery market since 2017 to a current value of over \$150B. Experts predict that industry growth in the

coming year will continue to be fueled entirely by off-site consumption. You can use this trend to your advantage. Instead of treating your to-go services as an afterthought, make them a priority. Help customers with cutting-edge online technology including exciting mobile ordering, and ways for them to let you know they've arrived for pickup or track their delivery.



Cut Down on Food Waste

Kitchen food waste generated by overordering, overcooking, or poor preparation techniques costs your restaurant money. Improper storage is not only similarly wasteful, but also puts diners' health – and your restaurant's reputation! – at risk. Commit to saving money and protecting patrons in 2023. Carefully examine your kitchen's food handling and safety processes as well as the ways in which you

provide oversight, then make revisions as appropriate.

Attract & Retain a Great Staff

Few sectors have been as hard hit by the labor shortage as restaurants have. Three in four restaurants were experiencing staffing challenges before the pandemic. Now, restaurant workers are changing jobs an average of every 56 days. Compared to the U.S. average job stay of 4.2 years, this figure is shocking and is causing ripples across the food service industry. Restaurant managers cite a lack of recognition as a major factor driving turnover, yet fewer than 40% of businesses invest in professional development for their employees. There are plenty of potential employees out there, but you'll have to entice them with tangible appreciation, reasonable hours, fair pay, and great benefits.

Improve Operations with Technology

The restaurants that thrive in 2023 will be those most willing to invest in the technology that patrons crave. While third-party delivery apps like Uber Eats and DoorDash will continue to be important, restaurants will need their own integrated apps and online platforms. You can implement an online system to ensure a smooth reservation and

See **RESOLUTIONS** page 14

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Eggs Up Grill builds on its best year — massive growth planned

Breakfast, brunch and lunch brand to open 20+ restaurants in 2023; exceed 200 restaurants by 2026

Spartanburg, SC - Eggs Up Grill, one of the fastest-growing and most successful breakfast, brunch and lunch concepts, is ringing in 2023 on the heels of a record-breaking year in new franchise partner signings and restaurant sales levels. The Brand signed development commitments for more than 60 new locations, including its largest ever development agreement for 30 restaurants in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas and its second largest agreement for 10 restaurants in Nashville, Tenn. Eggs Up Grill also signed its first franchise partner in Mississippi, bringing a region-wide presence of 150 Eggs Up Grills open, under development or committed to open by local franchise partners.

2022 was also a record year for sales growth for Eggs Up Grill. At its recent Franchise Owners' Conference, CEO Ricky Richardson recognized more

Up Grill's virtual brand - Biscuits, Bowls & Burgers.

In 2023, Eggs Up Grill has more than 20 new restaurants in development and projects to end the year with more than 80 locations in operation, while continuing to add record levels of new franchise signings. A recent addition to the leadership team is helping guide the Brand's franchise development success. Ken Phipps was named vice president of franchise growth earlier this year, having worked for 20-plus years with brands like Gold's Gym, Boston's Pizza, and 7-Eleven.

"It is an exciting time to be a part of this Brand," said Phipps. "Eggs Up Grill not only appeals to franchise partners who may want to open one restaurant, but also multi-unit investors who want to scale the business across a territory. The support system we have in place allows that franchise partner to grow."

About Eggs Up Grill Eggs Up Grill is home to the whole neighborhood and has been serving smiles for more than 25 years. In 1997, Founder Chris Skodras opened the original Eggs Up Grill in the coastal community of Pawleys Island, South Carolina. The restaurant quickly became known as the home of great tasting food, casual conversations and

long-lasting memories. It was the start of Eggs Up Grill being the gathering place for family and friends in each community we call home. Eggs Up Grill now has 59 locations open, with a region-wide presence of 150 Eggs Up Grills open, under development or committed to open by local franchise partners. Online at eggsupgrill.com. 



than 40 percent of its restaurant locations for exceeding the system average sales volume of \$1.2 million in 2022, including three franchise groups with sales exceeding \$1.7 million.

Contributing factors to Eggs Up Grill's increasing AUV are surges in dine-in guest counts, robust take-out sales, a refreshed catering offer, the growing popularity of its adult beverage platform and the roll out of Eggs

"Eggs Up Grill clearly has a differentiated offer, to both guests and franchise partners. Our Brand DNA creates a uniquely friendly experience for our guests and team members, while the business and operational models are highly attractive to franchisees. We're proud of what our franchise partners accomplish every day, and we are energized about our future!" Richardson said.

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GDK launches North American expansion opening a dozen restaurants in 2023

German Doner Kebab (GDK) has announced that it will open 12 new restaurants in North America in 2023, as it builds the fast-casual brand of the future. The brand opened its first US site at American Dream Mall in New Jersey in 2021 and will continue to expand in strategic locations including Astoria in Queens New York, then Midtown Manhattan Brooklyn, and Sugar Land in Houston in the first quarter of 2023.

Nigel Belton, MD for North America, said: "The North American market is a significant opportunity for GDK. In just a few short years we have opened more than 120 locations in the UK, and we are excited to replicate that growth here in the US and Canada, opening 500 locations throughout the next decade."

Following in the next months will be GDK outlets in Westfield New Jersey, Frisco Texas, Brighton Beach Brooklyn, Houston Heights Houston, Boston Massachusetts, Surrey Vancouver BC and Mississauga ON. In addition, two more sites are expected to open doors this year, as more details on their location will be disclosed soon. This expansion move will also grow GDK's footprint in Canada, where it has restaurants in Toronto, Ottawa and Surrey.

Now GDK has a development pipeline of 65 units throughout North America, with plans to have over 500 sites in the next ten years. They are plan-



Mark Treptow

ning to open one location each month.

Mark Treptow, GDK Franchise Director for North America, is supporting this growth, bringing valuable experience working with high profile brands like Five Guys Burgers, The Halal Guys, Freshii, and Rise Biscuits & Chicken.

GDK is revolutionising the kebab across the globe, bringing a fresh, high-quality taste sensation that has made it the go-to place to enjoy a kebab. Being freshly prepared in front of customers in an open kitchen, the game-changing kebabs combine premium, lean meats and fresh local



vegetables, served in handmade toasted bread with unique signature sauces.

Based in Glasgow, Scotland, the brand has grown fast in the UK, Sweden and the Middle East and is now rapidly expanding in the USA and Canada and across other key locations in Europe, with over 140 restaurants worldwide.

The brand has also recently signed up some major franchise partners to support its global expansion plans. Atul Pathak, formerly McDonald's biggest UK franchise partner, sold his portfolio and joined up with GDK in 2022. Maristo Hospitality, one of the fastest-growing

hospitality groups in the Middle East region has also acquired the GDK master franchise for the UAE.

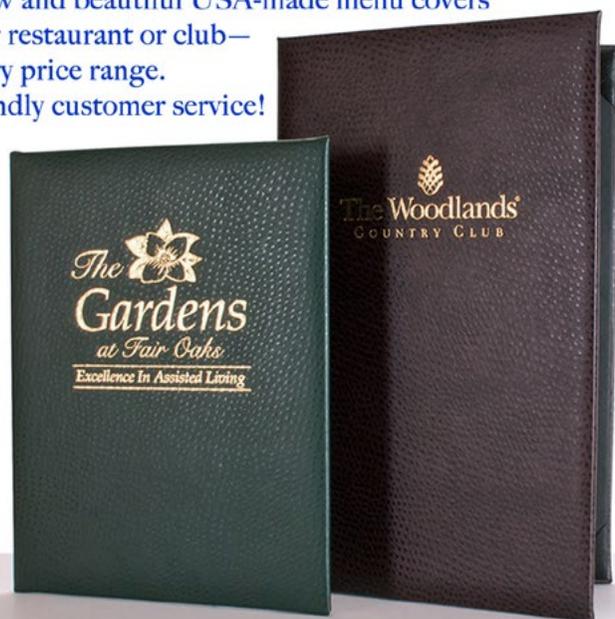
Nigel Belton, MD for North America, said: "We have big plans for the USA and Canada. We are extremely happy to announce our growth plans to open 12 new restaurants in 2023, with a greater GDK vision of over 500 sites in the next 10 years. American Dream Mall in New Jersey has been an anchor location for us in the USA. It has provided us with a launchpad to develop new exciting locations like Astoria in Queens, Midtown

See **KEBAB** page 8



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"The Pizza Tomorrow Summit was a blast. It was a perfect show to learn from, grow at and develop ideas and friendships through...[It was] an enlightening experience all around.

I can't wait for next year."

Alex Koons, owner of Hot Tongue Pizza

"This was the most direct conversational show with vendors that I have seen in a long time."

Billy Manzo, owner of Federal Hill Pizza



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IFMA releases foodservice industry forecast

The International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA) released its 2023 Foodservice Industry and Segment Projections at its annual Marketing & Sales Conference. The forecast, which is hosted on the IFMA Scope® platform, projects that operator spend in the foodservice industry will decline by 0.1 percent, considered flat on a real basis in 2023, compared to 2022. The forecast models were created in conjunction with Datassential, a leading foodservice research firm, and validated by operators from the Foodservice Leadership Councils, who act as advisors to IFMA and its Board of Directors.

While the projection is for flat growth in 2023 in real terms, IFMA projects that the industry will see inflation of 7.7 percent. This means most foodservice segments will spend more in 2023 than they did in 2022 as a result of higher cost of goods rather than increased consumer demand. These projections are based upon several key assumptions, including an economic recession in 2022, supply chain constraints, labor shortages, and many white-collar employees continuing to work remotely rather than in the office.

"The foodservice industry has shown remarkable resilience throughout the pandemic and concurrent global economic challenges, and it isn't over," said Phil Kafarakis, IFMA President & CEO. "The need for a deeper understanding of our unsettled

environment is greater than ever. IFMA offers our members proprietary data through IFMA Scope® and we work with them to interpret that data's impact on their businesses. Our research helps members and our industry prepare for what's ahead."

◆ Collectively, On-Site segments in 2023 are projected to grow 2.4 percent, largely because their recovery from 2020 was slower than that of restaurants. Additionally, many On-Site segment locations are "recession-proof."

IFMA members can access all

projections, including an early look at 2024, through the IFMA Scope® portal, which provides an interactive and immersive view of real-time segment and market demographic information to aid in business planning. **TR**

About the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA): IFMA is a trade association that has served its industry for 70 years. IFMA's mission is to equip foodservice manufacturers with the tools needed to navigate the future with confidence. By providing insights, fostering best practices, and developing networking and educational opportunities through events, IFMA enlightens its members and motivates change that improves both individual member organizations and the foodservice industry at large. For more information, visit IFMAworld.com. Follow IFMA on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.



LEADING FOODSERVICE TOGETHER

Some of the key highlights from the 2023 segment real growth comparisons to 2022 include:

◆ The total restaurant category – including full-service and limited-service restaurants – is projected to decline one percent. This expected decline is due to diminishing consumer demand due to a projected economic recession.

◆ Quick service restaurants (QSR), which have performed significantly better in recent years than other segments overall, are projected to decline 0.8 percent, while the Fast Casual segment declines 1.3 percent.

◆ Full-service restaurant segments, including Midscale and Casual Dining, are also both projected to decline in 2023, down 2.2 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively.

Kebab from page 8

Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Sugarland Houston, as we continue to expand in key states across North America." He added: "The next 12 months will prove to be a landmark in our story. We aim to expand our footprint and bring the unique GDK experience to more consumers in the USA and Canada, as we build the fast-casual brand of the future."

About German Doner Kebab: German Doner Kebab (GDK) is the global #1 in doner kebabs and one of the fastest-growing fast-casual brands. More than that, GDK has become a true lifestyle brand that is deeply entrenched in local music, fashion, and sports, forging partnerships with top talent in these areas.

"From its inception in Berlin in 1989, the brand has spent decades perfecting its products and recipes, creating its own unique blend of spices, innovative signature sauces, and distinctive 'Doner Kebab' waffle bread. Our gourmet kebabs are made using only the best, premium quality ingredients, sourced from the best suppliers around the world – from our lean, succulent meats and our handmade bread to the freshest locally produced vegetables that are delivered and prepared daily."

German Doner Kebab – germandonerkebab.com - is owned by Hero Brands. The group also includes Island Poké, the UK's leading Poké operator; Choppaluna, the fast, fresh, food-to-go salad brand; partnered with the Sidemen – Global YouTube collective - to launch mega food brand SIDES and XIX Vodka, a premium drink which went viral; Dirty Bones, the NYC-inspired food and cocktail. **TR**

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5	Peter Tsialli	also	15,000 728	Northv Miami	33127	305 638-70 TBD	checke	info@woodtavern.com
6	Jose Garcia		1657 N Mia	Miami	33136	786 329-08 Nov - Dec 2		info@taulafresh.com
7	Chef Marcc	Poinciana F	340 Royal F	Palm Beach	33480	212 966-27 Nov - Dec 2		Marco.barbisotti@santambroeus.com
8	Owners Chi	was McGov	321 West F	Decatur	30030	404 469-6863		scoutoakhursthiring@gmail.com
9	Co-owner Victor	Erazo	3975 Holco	Norcross	30092	470 395-7936		victor@peachtree-cafe.com
10	Elijah Sleigt	(NY Based)	3150 Hwy E	Newnan	30263	678 423-8694		duffsnewnan@gmail.com
11	Chef Jason	was Mezza	2751 Lavist	Decatur	30033	404 330-83 Nov - Dec 2		hello@kitchensixoakgrove.com
12	Daniel Kim,	(they have	3492 Satel	Duluth	30097	770 302-22 Late Nov -		lcs@boxete.com
13	Owners De	The old Sm	282 Norma	Valdosta	31601	850 629-40 TBD	checke	Wahoosseafoodgrill.tally@gmail.com
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What's Going On from page 3

What is New Additions in 2023?

- ◆ Detailed industry outlook
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- ◆ Customized regional / country reports as per request



Steve Gardner

to a century-old clam bar. In his new role with Woody's Bar-B-Q, Gardner is planning steady, strategic growth of the brand to ensure a win-win for the franchise and its incoming franchisees. States included in the initial push are Florida, Georgia, Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Polaris Market Research has come up with a new extensive report titled Food Service Equipment Market: By Size, Trends, Share, Growth, Segments, Industry Analysis and Forecast, 2032 that offers detailed information that enhances this report's knowledge, scope, and utilization. For a Report visit their website.

With an impressive 43-year history of success in Florida, classic Southern BBQ chain – **Woody's Bar-B-Q** – is making moves to expand its footprint within and beyond the Sunshine State's borders. To lead that charge, Woody's has hired seasoned franchise developer and founder of QSR Franchise Development Group, **Steve Gardner, as its Director of Franchise Development.** The recipient of a 2022 Franchise Broker Award from 1851 Franchise, Gardner has represented everything from an up-and-coming nutritional supplement brand

Tampa Taco Fest is returning to Al Lopez Park this year on Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023 at 4810 North Himes Ave. The event is pet-friendly and kid-friendly. Some of the participating restaurants include: Los Chapos, Tacos, Jimmy's Tacos, Loli's Mexican Cravings, and Los Tacos Mariachis. There will be 30+ local food vendors, margaritas and live entertainment. tampatacofestival@gmail.com.



The Five-O Donut Company is expanding throughout Tampa Bay into Bradenton and St. Petersburg. The concept is run by chef Christine Nordstrom and as of now has over six locations. The doughnut shop also has a variety of vegan and gluten-free doughnuts that change flavors often. In addition to its wide spread of sweet treats, Five-O also

sells juices, milks and sodas. The first Five-O opened in downtown Sarasota in 2017, and other locations in Sarasota, Bradenton and Siesta Key followed shortly after.

Hotel Happenings:

The Seminole Tribe of Florida and Seminole Gaming has recently broken ground at the site of the **future Seminole Casino Hotel Brighton**, located at 17735 Reservation Rd NE, in Okeechobee. This will be a new hotel and entertainment complex to be built on the current Brighton Seminole Reservation. Included in the Hotel will be a

Restaurant with over 100 seats, that will be open all the time, a Steakhouse and a fast-service and carry-out café, coffee bar and pizza kitchen. The Chairman of the Seminole Tribe is Marcellus Osceola Jr.

It is slated to open in late 2024.

The Vinoy St. Petersburg Resort & Golf Club has just unveiled its completely redesigned Palm Court Ballroom and Vinoy Grand Ballroom. The upgrades are part of a renovation plan that coincide with the property's upcoming rebranding early this year as a Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel. The Hotel located at 450 7th Ave NE in St Pete offers several bars and restaurants on the property. Vanessa Williams is the GM.

Alfalfa®, the fast-casual balanced food joint known for its unique pairing of locally-sourced salads and gluten-free doughnuts, announced the closing of a \$2 million seed funding round. This financing will support Alfalfa's mission to expand its brick-mortar footprint across both the Southern California and the NY Tri-State area, with new locations set to break ground in Jersey City and Los Angeles' iconic Larchmont area come 2023. It will also aid in enhancing **Alfalfa's in-house, AI-enabled food preparation tools to improve kitchen efficiency**, allowing team members to prioritize delighting customers at scale.

Nashville hot chicken fans in Texas can now dine at the Los Angeles-based restaurant franchise **Crimson Coward Chicken**, which recently opened its newest restaurant in Frisco, TX. This is their 1st location in the state. The restaurant is located at 3246 Preston Rd #510 in Frisco. They are continuing their national expansion in 2023. The proprietary Nashville hot chicken spice recipe is under lock and key. The Restaurant owner is Ali Hijazi. The flagship Crimson Coward is in Downey, CA. Visit them online at crimsoncoward.com.



TravelCenters of America®

The National Restaurant Association Show will be held this year at McCormick Place in Chicago from May 20-23, 2023. New Foodservice tastes for a restaurant menu to actionable solutions for streamlining service, payments and more, will be displayed. From testing innovative new equipment designed to power automation and profits, attendees can engage with expert-led education on today's hottest topics and build connections with key suppliers and foodservice professionals from around the world. The latest FABI and KI awards recipients—industry-altering food, beverage and equipment products that are shaping the future of foodservice, will be on display. Visit www.nationalrestaurantshow.com for all the details.

Owner and Executive Chef Kahn Vongdara, who opened **Crabcake Factory Seafood Grille & Bar in 2007 and led its kitchen until the restaurant closed in 2012, has reopened the Jacksonville Beach in January.** It is at the very same location it was in 2012 at 1396 Beach Blvd. The restaurant can be reached at 904.372.0366.

TravelCenters of America Inc. signed 30 new franchise agreements in 2022. In 2022, TA opened three new franchised sites and plans to open about 20 franchised locations this year. Jon Pertchik is the CEO of the company, based



in Westlake Ohio. The company operates more than 600 full-service + quick-service restaurants and nine proprietary brands, including Iron Skillet and Country Pride.

Pescanova, a leading seafood supplier based in Spain, is bringing its premium seafood products to the U.S. foodservice industry. MSC-certified Cape Hake and Protein Pasta made from responsibly sourced wild Alaska pollock are now available to satisfy consumers seeking delicious, high-quality seafood options on menu. "We're excited to bring our more than 60 years of seafood expertise to the foodservice industry," said Chris Maze, president and CEO of Pescanova USA. "With the booming demand for premium seafood and a growing category of pasta alternatives, we feel it's the perfect time to launch Pescanova Cape Hake and Protein Pasta made from seafood. Our pre-portioned Cape Hake products and fully cooked Protein Pasta are great options for operators looking to increase their better-for-you menu items without needing extra labor or equipment."

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Top 5 ways to show restaurant employees appreciation

David Scott Peters ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor



It's getting harder and harder to find and keep good restaurant team members. Showing your employees that they are appreciated has become the number one priority for restaurant owners who want to have a full staff. To help you stop the revolving door of employees, I'm going to share with you my top five ways to show restaurant employees appreciation.

On a weekly basis in my group coaching calls, I hear how hard it is to find anyone to work. People are leaving the restaurant and hospitality industry because they are tired of the BS from working in the weeds, shift after shift, to rude customers. So, what is a restaurant owner to do? The short answer is what you're doing right now: learning ways to attract, hire and keep the right people.

For fun, let's go backwards.

No. 5: When your team members come in each day for every shift, go out of your way to say hello and call them by their first name. All too often, employees walk in, and managers have horse blinders on, focused on something other than employees. They don't even look up; they just keep doing what they do. This makes employees feel unappreciated, like they're just a number. I'm also going to tell you that studies show there's one word that light people up. What they

want to hear the most is their name. When you got out of your way to say, "Good morning, how are you, David, I'm really glad to have you here today," you are truly starting the day off right.



No. 4: Find someone doing something right and call them out for it. It's so easy to find someone doing something wrong. Like wrong, wrong, change, change. But when you go out of your way to search for people doing something right, and then in front of customers or other employees, call them out for it, and tell them what a great job they did and why this customer has one of the best servers you have, or why everybody on the team should emulate this person, you're showing them how much you appreciate them.

No. 3: Invest in your employee's development. This is important. Spend time to make sure they learn to do a better job. Training is key to good employees. Training is key to people knowing what their job is, how to do it, how well it should be done, and more importantly, by when. Training is the key to consistent management and supervision. By investing in development of your employees, you're going to ensure they want to stay with you.

No. 2: Have lunch or dinner with a team member to get to know them. This is something I employed in my past company and it helped me connect with my employees and understand their needs. I've got many members doing this now where you eat every day. So, any day that you're in the restaurant, and this goes for your managers, pull one of your people once a week to have lunch with you. Don't talk necessarily about the business unless they want to bring it up. The goal is to get to know them so they feel you care about them, that you're going to learn their kids' names or their dog, that their parent is ill, there is something going on in their lives, learn about their goals – even if it's that they want to become a real estate agent. This tears down walls of you being the big bad owner, the big bad manager,

and you're going to see they'll start to want to align with you because you took the time to learn something about them.

No. 1: This is my favorite. At the end of each shift, if that employee did a good job, go out of your way to shake their hand, and say, thank you. One of the greatest restaurant owners I ever worked for would do this, and I cannot tell you how thrilled I was. Did I get a handshake every day? And a good job? No. I got a thank you, maybe, but a great job and a thank you every single day? Only on the days I did that. They meant something to me. I wanted to make him happy. I wanted to please him because he took an interest in me and noticed what I was doing.

Implementing these five ways to show your employees that you appreciate them will have a dramatic effect on your ability to find, hire and keep good team members. 

David Scott Peters is an author, restaurant coach and speaker who coaches restaurant operators how to stop being prisoners of their businesses and to finally financial freedom. His first book, Restaurant Prosperity Formula: What Successful Restaurateurs Do, teaches the systems and traits restaurant owners must develop to run a profitable restaurant. Thousands of restaurants have worked with Peters to transform their businesses. Get his three principles to restaurant success at www.davidscottpeters.com.

Predictions from page 1

never-ending news cycle. Since there's always another story around the corner, people often tend to move on quickly to the next story. While this is ultimately a good thing for food safety-related crises, it will be critical to have a crisis manager who knows how to handle the ins and outs of social media in the coming year.

♦ **More digitization.** As a whole, the food safety industry is taking its time to adopt AI and digitize as many different areas as possible. Today, roughly half of the food safety industry utilizes AI in some way. Many industry folks fantasize about a massive digitization product that results in a full overhaul of the industry, when in fact it's better practice to use AI and

machine learning to solve specific problems bit by bit. Food plants are becoming more and more digitally focused. And next year, I expect an even bigger digitization push in the food industry. 

***About the Author:** Karim-FranckKhinouche is founder and CEO of Novolyze, who enables the world's largest food production companies to increase efficiencies by digitizing food safety and quality processes. Engineer in Food Science and Engineering (Agrosup Dijon) and holder of a Master's degree in Business Development from EM Lyon, Karim-Franck joined ETIA as International Volunteer in Business to start a subsidiary in China. He quickly took charge of the operational development of the food division which he made the world leader of pasteurization systems in dry food ingredients in less than 4 years. Karim-Franck speaks French and English.*

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PreciTaste® launches line of plug-and-play products as they expand their market-proven solutions

Company introduces new restaurant solutions to growing number of foodservice sectors

New York, NY – PreciTaste®, an industry leader in smart software automation for restaurant operations management, is launching a line of off-the-shelf products that support the crew the moment they are plugged in: Prep Assistant, Planner Assistant, and Station Assistant. Previously focused on large-scale food chains, PreciTaste will now provide scalable foodservice solutions to mid-size QSRs and fast casuals, convenience stores and groceries with fresh food offerings, full-service restaurants, venues, and hospitality services.

“Today’s labor shortages and rising food prices are a constant uphill battle for operators - often a crew of five needs to do the job of seven,” says PreciTaste Co-Founder and CEO, Dr. Ingo Stork. “Immediate support is needed, and that is exactly what our latest software automation solutions were created to do - Come in fast, ensure instant labor efficiency, and expedite profitability.”

PreciHub is the central platform that houses and delivers PreciTaste’s restaurant solutions, providing clear visibility for managers to better direct individual crew members and precise guidance for crews to streamline their daily tasks. The Prep Assistant uses information from each operation to

predict demand and then accurately guides crews on how much to prep per day. The Planner Assistant uses quantity forecasts to produce an automated production schedule to guide crews to make the right

James Floyd, Operating Partner of Cleveland Avenue, an established investor in food, beverage, and technology, says, “To be successful in today’s labor force conditions, managers need assistance with optimizing a

chains over the past two years, PreciTaste is a proven platform that now expands its restaurant operations management solutions to a breadth of food services, ranging in different sizes, offerings, and operational needs.

Bethany Theriault, VP of National Accounts at Franke Foodservice Systems, Inc., a leader in kitchen and equipment improvement campaigns, says, “With the drastic shifts in the foodservice industry, PreciTaste has transformed the way even the largest food chains operate. Now any operator

looking to make a significant efficiency impact can do the same.”

About PreciTaste®: Developed by engineers trained at TUM, MIT, IIT, NASA, and other leading institutions, PreciTaste® is an offline-first, in-store food software platform. PreciTaste is fast-tracking deployments of its proprietary smart software automation technology protected by 40+ patents, which optimizes operations, rapidly driving productivity and profit. It works on Edge Devices, is Cloud and Internet-independent, and is data privacy compliant. PreciTaste’s recent growth funding is led by Melitas Ventures and Cleveland Avenue and includes Enlightened Hospitality Investments (EHI), and Monogram Capital Partners. PreciTaste is powered by Intel Solutions leveraging OpenVINO and is a partner of Franke Foodservice Systems, Inc., a leader in kitchen and equipment improvement campaigns. Follow PreciTaste on LinkedIn.

Prep Assistant



PreciHub



Planner Assistant



Station Assistant



quantity at the right time. With these assistants, people management and workflows reach a new level of seamlessness.

As more data is collected, PreciHub can evolve into a complete Vision AI cooking system, the Station Assistant, which uses demand prediction, inventory sensing, and deep learning recommendations to provide constant guidance to crews at each food station.

very dynamic and inconsistent environment to one that provides consistency and simplicity. PreciTaste’s new offerings provide operators with a foundation for achieving the full potential for operational excellence, which results in greater customer experience and ultimately better numbers.”

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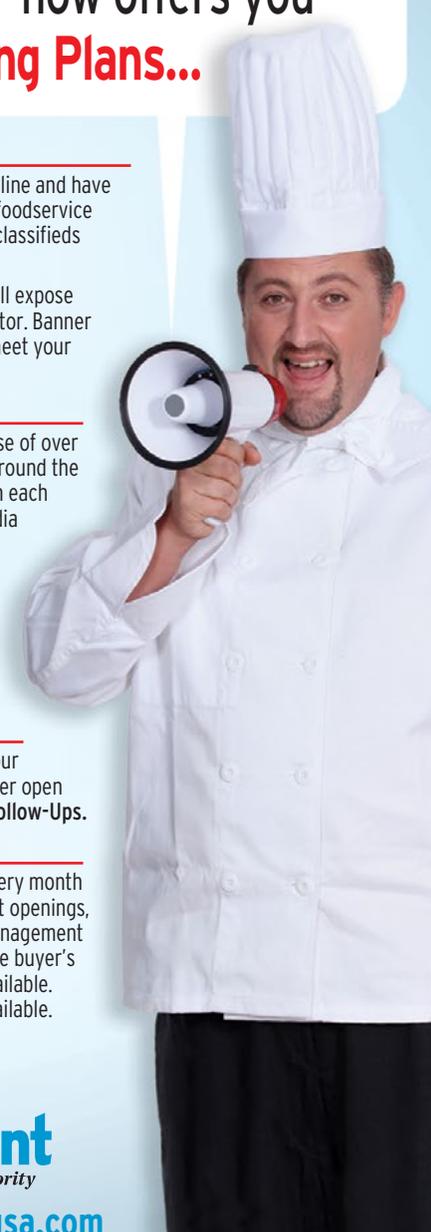
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Benihana from page 1

for almost 60 years. This new partnership aligns with our continued focus on a robust development pipeline."

Benihana builds on its growth strategy with additional restaurant openings in the next year including:

- ◆ Benihana Midland, MI is planned to open in March at 2929 S. Saginaw Road with over 6,800 square feet and 12 teppanyaki tables.

Benihana Temecula will be over 8,000 square feet with 18 tables, a full-service sushi bar and a dedicated area for take-out...

- ◆ Benihana Conroe, TX is scheduled to open in spring 2023 just north of Houston in Teas Crossing Shopping Center at 3061 Interstate 45 North. The restaurant will span 7,000 square feet with 17 teppanyaki tables, a full-service sushi bar and a dedicated area for take-out and delivery business.

- ◆ Benihana Bayside Marketplace in Miami, FL is planned to open in spring 2023 in Bayside Marketplace at 401 Biscayne Boulevard.

- ◆ Benihana Temecula, CA in Riverside County is scheduled to

open in the fall just south of the 15 and 215 freeways at the intersection of Winchester Road and Ynez Road near the Promenade Temecula Mall. Benihana Temecula will be over 8,000 square feet with 18 tables, a full-service sushi bar and a dedicated area for take-out and delivery business.

- ◆ RA Sushi Plantation, FL in Plantation Walk is planned to open in the fall at 333 North University Drive. The RA Sushi restaurant will be over 3,800 square feet with 34 tables, a full-service sushi bar and dedicated area for take-out and delivery.

- ◆ Benihana San Mateo, CA is scheduled to open in early 2024 at 2204 Bridgepointe Parkway with 18 teppanyaki tables and a full-service sushi bar.

This expansion supports the previously-announced strategic plan centered on four key growth initiatives:

- ◆ New Benihana and RA Sushi restaurant development in the U.S.

- ◆ Select U.S. acquisitions

- ◆ Select U.S. franchise development

- ◆ International franchise development in the Caribbean, Central America and South America. 

About Benihana Inc. Benihana, through its subsidiaries, is the nation's leading operator of Japanese teppanyaki and sushi restaurants with more than 100 restaurants operating under the brands BENIHANA®, RA SUSHI®, and SAMURAI®, including franchised BENIHANA restaurants in the United States, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

Resolution from page 4

confirmation process, use QR codes to replace paper menus, add a digital kitchen board that links directly to your POS system, and opt for contactless ordering and payment systems. All of these improvements will help diners feel safer in your restaurant and will alleviate the burdens created by staffing issues.

Cultivate Repeat Business

Studies demonstrate that attracting a new customer costs between 5X and 10X more than retaining one who already frequents your business. Not only do those returning customers cost you less, they spend 33% more per visit and they build your business by bringing friends and family in the door. You can generate return business by rewarding your most loyal diners and by implementing a brand standard management system that ensures a consistently high-quality experience at every visit.

Manage Inventory Efficiently

The Small Business Administration reports that a poorly managed inventory system is one of the major reasons small businesses fail. Despite this potential pitfall, 46 percent of small businesses with 11 to 499 employees don't have any kind of system to track the goods they have in stock. This is even more dangerous for restaurants, where the majority of stock is made up of potentially-perishable food item.

Poorly managed inventory eats into profits and puts your business at risk. Money is wasted replacing food that spoiled because you ordered too much or had to buy more at higher cost to compensate for under-ordering. Staff time is squandered as they look for items that should have been easily accessible. Worst of all, inefficiently addressing inventory needs leads to spoilage, jeopardizing diners' health and safety.

Up Your Social Media Game

Word of mouth is the oldest form of marketing in the world, and it's still critical for restaurants. These days, most word of mouth is happening online. Positive online reviews will drive people to your restaurant and negative ones may hurt the bottom line, but there's something you can do to mitigate the damage: respond. A whopping 94% of diners consider online reviews when choosing a restaurant. ReviewTrackers discovered that nearly half of consumers searching online are more likely to visit a business if the owner or manager responds to negative reviews. Check your online reviews regularly. Thank patrons for positive reviews. If you spot a negative review, don't take it personally. Instead, respond rather than react. Apologize publicly, invite the patron to return, and move the conversation to a private forum. 

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