

Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 28

Appetizers

The Achilles heel of the restaurant industry



World's first "celebrity chef" reflects on his career



John Tschohl on the need for speed



Ziggi's Coffee brews up three new locations



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The importance of a transparent supply chain

By Francine L. Shaw
Co-founder, My Food Source

Restaurant operators have a responsibility to ensure that they're serving safe, high-quality foods. Consumers have become increasingly concerned with the safety and quality of the foods they eat, plus how the food is grown, sourced, and produced. Many consumers are choosing to support brands that operate sustainably, ethically, and responsibly. In fact, two-thirds of consumers (65%) said they'd switch from their usual brands to buy from companies that are more transparent about their supply chain, openly sharing information about their values (like how they treat the environment, animals, and employees).

To demonstrate a commitment to food safety and quality, sustainability, fair labor, animal welfare, and responsible business practices, restaurants should prioritize supply chain transparency. This helps restaurants identify and mitigate risks, improve communication with suppliers, boost compliance with regulations, and protect their guests, reputation, and bottom line.

The Benefits of Supply Chain Transparency

In today's globalized marketplace, transparency has become a critical factor in building consumer trust and ensuring



Francine L. Shaw

business sustainability. A transparent supply chain helps companies gain a competitive advantage and addresses key concerns, such as risk mitigation, compliance with regulations, and ethical sourcing.

One of the primary benefits of a transparent supply chain is boosting customer trust and loyalty. When consumers can see the ethical origins and safe processes involved in the production and distribution of products, they're more likely to trust and support a brand. Transparency allows consumers to make informed decisions about the brands they support, knowing these

companies' values align with their own.

Supply chain transparency also enables restaurants to improve safety and quality. Visibility throughout the supply chain allows restaurants and their suppliers to identify and mitigate potential risks, whether that's product recalls, quality control problems, or other concerns. By being aware of these risks – and taking proactive measures to mitigate them – restaurants can prevent costly disruptions and protect their guests and their reputations.

Moreover, a transparent supply chain leads to increased efficiency. Being open and transparent leads to better communication and collaboration across the supply chain. This means that operations are streamlined, delays are reduced, and processes are optimized.

Transparent supply chains especially benefit businesses operating in regulated industries, including restaurants. Compliance with regulations becomes more manageable with a safer, more transparent supply chain. By adhering to legal frameworks, companies avoid legal issues, penalties, and reputational damage.

Ethical sourcing and sustainability are increasingly important factors for consumers. Transparent supply chains support ethical sourcing practices and

See **TRANSPARENCY** page 10

Riko's pizza continues impressive growth and begins national expansion

Fast growing pizza franchise concept to have 10 locations across three states

Connecticut, Florida, and New York—by Q1 2024

Stamford, CT- Riko's Pizza - highly differentiated pizza franchise concept famous for its thin crust pies, local neighborhood atmosphere, and extensive selection of craft drinks—announced today several key growth updates as the Company begins its strategic expansion throughout the United States.

Founded by serial entrepreneur and pizza connoisseur, Rico Imbrogno, Riko's started as a single-location family business in Stamford in 2011 and opened its fourth corporate location in Darien, Connecticut in March 2023. Since then, Riko's has been selectively franchising and expanding out of state, with the Company now confirming the Q4 2023 opening of its new locations in Pompano Beach and Miami Beach. With the addition of these two franchise-owned locations, Riko's will have 10 sites across three states—Connecticut, Florida, and New



York—by the start of 2024.

These openings will also bring Riko's total number of South Florida locations to three, stretching the brand in the Sunshine State from the top of the Gold Coast to the shores of Miami—one of the fastest growing regions in the country. The Company first entered the Florida market with the opening of a franchise-owned location in Tequesta (Jupiter) last year.

"After a decade-plus of establishing our brand as a clear leader in Connecticut, the proven pizza capital of the world, we are now on a mission to save the rest of the country from the limited, lackluster pizza offerings available to them," said Rico, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Riko's. "Our super-thin crust 'bar pies' are cooked to crispy perfection using only the highest quality ingredients, proprietary chef techniques, and

See **RIKO'S** page 14

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Appell Pie Mini vacation

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

Recently Terri and I planned a mini vacation just 10 miles from our own home but closer to the ocean. We rented a cottage of 350 square feet one block from the water and within one mile of an over-flowing supply of restaurants we had never tried before. Perfect location! The little cottage was fine except for water temperature problems in the shower. I hadn't taken a cold shower since I was stationed in Ft. Polk Louisiana while in the Army.

We tried a Mexican restaurant and a NY style deli both of which I had tried before but were new to Terri, both were great. On our second day we tried to find a restaurant that came highly recommended and when we got there it looked like it was closed but it was later learned that it was open. Poor signage and street presence on a very busy street with limited parking. Next time we'll walk.

For dinner we wanted Italian food and we found a large Italian restaurant on a major road with plenty of parking that has been open for at least twenty years so we decided to try it. As we entered we were greeted by the hostess and the manager who immediately said something nice to Terri and extended a hand shake as if we were long lost friends. As he showed us to our table the conversation continued. By the time we were seated we felt as if we had been there many times before. Our waitress was attentive, friendly and knowledgeable about the menu and the history of the restaurant.

Why am I telling you this? One question we always ask each other or friends we dine with is "Would you come back?" If you read my post on Facebook, Empty Plates" you know that I judge all Italian restaurants by one dish, chicken parmigiana. Would I go back to this restaurant, yes. Not so much for the food but because we were made to feel welcome and treated well.

What do you need to do to make your

customers feel this way? Delivering exceptional customer service is crucial for the success of a restaurant. Here are some best practices to consider:

Training and Empowerment: Train your staff thoroughly on the menu, policies, and service standards. Empower them to make decisions that benefit the customer without needing constant approval.

Friendly and Attentive Staff: Hire staff with excellent communication skills and a positive attitude. Ensure they greet guests warmly, actively listen to their needs, and respond promptly.

Knowledge of Menu: Staff should be knowledgeable about the menu items, ingredients, preparation methods, and any potential allergens. This enables them to answer questions and make recommendations.

Prompt Seating: Avoid long waits by having an efficient system for seating guests. If there is a waitlist, provide accurate estimated wait times.

Cleanliness: Maintain a clean and well-organized environment. Clean tables, utensils, and restrooms regularly. A clean setting enhances the overall dining experience.

Timely Service: Strive for consistency in delivering food and beverages in a timely manner. Long delays can lead to dissatisfaction.

Customization: Accommodate special requests and dietary restrictions whenever possible. This demonstrates flexibility and a willingness to cater to individual needs.

Anticipate Needs: Train staff to anticipate customer needs. Refill drinks, offer additional napkins, and provide condiments before guests need to ask.

There is a total of 20 points to implement and too long to discuss here, so visit our Blog section of the Today's Restaurant website www.trnusa.com/blog to see all. Remember, exceptional customer service creates loyal patrons who not only return but also spread positive word-of-mouth, contributing to the restaurant's success.

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What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

16th International Natural Health & Foods Expo will be held Sept 23rd & Sept 24 in Sarasota at the Municipal Auditorium. "Support VETS Attending

Looking for Cafe's with Plant based options to exhibit, sample and sell." The Expo is produced by Healthy Referral Newspaper & Mind Your Body and Spirit Radio that was established in 1989. Brian Clement PH.D. L.N. has spearheaded the international progressive health movement for over five decades. He is the Co-Director of the globally renowned Hippocrates Wellness in West Palm Beach. For information on the event, including promote in the program guide, speaker request, sponsoring VETS or your Staff/clients contact: Cofounder, radio host Mind Your Body and Spirit www.healthyreferral.com or call Marchia Carnicelli Minor at 216.533.2273 or healthyreferral@gmail.com.



The premier event for Florida's hospitality industry has to offer - restaurants, foodservice, and lodging will be featured at the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show in November. Show officials announced their co-location with The Pizza Tomorrow Summit, owned by Grand Slam Events will be a big deal. "Join us at the Orange County Convention Center, November 8-9, alongside our co-located event, Coffee Fest Orlando that will be taking place Nov. 10-11" For registration information see their website: www.coffeefest.com. Visitors will have the chance to explore hundreds of exhibitors on both trade show floors and have access to new companies, products, and initiatives that will help propel our evolving industry into the future. The Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show experience will enhance your product sourcing options - all under one roof! (See ongoing articles in TRN for all upcoming information). Online at www.flrestaurantandlodgingshow.com.

across the Southern U.S. in a deal that will expand the fast-growing grocer's presence across the region. This includes about 400 stores in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, where most of the stores are located, including 15 Winn-Dixie stores in Southwest Florida. Aldi's CEO is Jason Hart. According to a release, some locations will be converted to Aldi stores after the acquisition, while others will



◆ Supermarket chain Aldi plans to acquire hundreds of Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket locations

continue as Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket grocery stores. Winn-Dixie and Harveys Supermarket are part of Southeastern Grocers, the chains' parent company, headquartered in Florida. Aldi's is a German-based Company.

◆ **Condado Tacos**, the award-winning taco joint, specializing in craveable tacos, fresh margaritas and tequilas with an unmatched cool vibe and atmosphere, announced 12 new restaurants will be opening in 2023, with 8 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.

◆◆◆◆
Berner International the leading manufacturer and innovator of air curtains, introduced the Architectural Icon 8 and Icon 10 to its Architectural Collection of air curtains. The two models make this collection the HVAC industry's quietest high performance air curtains for protecting open doorways in hotels, retail, restaurants, healthcare and other market applications where thermal comfort, aesthetics, and energy savings are valued. Standard cabinet is clear satin anodized aluminum that complements today's aluminum/glass commercial entrance and metal architecture trends. Stainless steel and powder coats in dozens of colors are options. As with other air

See WHAT'S GOING ON page 8

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The Achilles heel of the restaurant industry: Retention

Chris Morocco ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

With the effects of the pandemic subsiding, consumers continue to resume leisure activities, including returning to restaurants. To recover from immense job losses during the pandemic and keep up with the increased demand from consumers, the hospitality industry headlined a rejuvenated job market in 2022, outpacing every other industry to be the fastest growing in the country.

Despite this great hiring, a National

Restaurant Association survey at the end of 2022 found that restaurants were still below pre-pandemic staffing levels. More than half of operators (62%) felt they did not have enough employees, and the restaurant industry had the largest employment deficit in the country.

In 2023, the situation has grown more complicated. Hiring has slowed and owners are now facing employees leaving the industry, rising inflation and

increased food and labor costs.

How can beleaguered operators combat this threefold challenge and retain their restaurant talent? Here are three retention initiatives that restaurant operators should consider.

Professional Training and Development

Training and development are essential for restaurants looking to retrain staff.

Basic training for new employees is a common way to onboard staff. It shouldn't be where training ends. Online training is inexpensive and underutilized by restaurants, and it keeps employees engaged while enhancing their abilities. Cross-training programs are another popular training option to offer employees that don't require much added expense. These types of programs are great for helping employees diversify their skills and learn different roles. This option also presents leadership opportunities by letting employees in each department lead the training.

In addition to internal training, offering external professional development opportunities to employees is a great strategy for reducing turnover.

Restaurant owners who present development opportunities can improve morale and show that they value their teams. There are a number of external certifications restaurant employees can pursue. Certifications are mutually beneficial; employees get to hone their skills and the restaurant gets added credibility and a better dining experience for patrons. By empowering employees to pursue a professional certificate, restaurant owners show their commitment to their teams and a true interest in developing their skills.

Teams that feel valued by their management through development and training are more likely to stick around.

Compensation and Rewards

This year, many restaurant owners are required to raise staff pay, with more than half of U.S. states increasing minimum wages. This could potentially pose a challenge for increasing wages further.

One reason for this is inflation. Food

inflation has slowed as of late, but prices remain significantly higher than last year. Restaurants have countered by raising their prices. However, some customers have responded by cutting back on their restaurant visits, resulting in less revenue for restaurants. This perfect storm likely prevents many restaurants from raising their employee wages.

A fear for many owners at larger restaurants and chains is unionization. Unions have taken the labor market by storm in 2023, and the hospitality sector is at the forefront. High-profile cases, like at Starbucks, have started a movement among restaurant workers. Especially now when inflation may prevent higher compensation, restaurant owners should maintain open dialogue and communication with their employees.

Savvy restaurant owners are looking beyond wages to recognize and reward their staff. Gift cards are a great way to offer a type of monetary bonus to staff. Similarly, some owners are designating a stipend for workers. These can go towards health and fitness, streaming services, or even education purposes. Other owners are focused on scheduling. A common complaint from restaurant workers, offering flexible scheduling options could be the difference between retaining or losing an employee.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach, but owners who recognize and reward their staff are less likely to see turnover.

Benefits Beyond Compensation

Restaurant owners who can't raise wages may need to explore other benefits they may offer their employees. One option is to explore health insurance plans.

One survey found that just 31 percent of restaurants offer health insurance to their staff compared to 70% of private industry. To prevent their staff from seeking employment at other restaurants or industries, owners must enhance their benefits offering for those employees who are currently covered. Owners may have shied away from attempting to enrich their insurance plans in the past because of the high expense

See **RETENTION** page 6

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New bill provides opportunity to help address restaurant workforce challenges

Essential workers for economic advancement act would create employment pathways for difficult-to-fill positions

Washington, D.C. – From the drive-through we stop at before practice, to the sit-down restaurant where we celebrate life's successes, the restaurant industry runs on hospitality. However, 79% of restaurant operators say they currently have job openings that are tough to fill. The Essential Workers for Economic Advancement (EWEA) program would help address some of these challenges.

The program, created by the bipartisan Essential Workers for Economic Advancement Act (HR 3734) introduced by Reps. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA) and Henry Cuellar (D-TX), creates a pathway for workers to come to the U.S. on market-driven, non-immigrant, three-year visas. The program is intended for small businesses in industries with comparatively low sales per employee and would be available

for non-agricultural jobs with lower education thresholds that have been unfilled for extended periods of time.

The foodservice industry is the nation's second-largest private sector employer, with a workforce of more than 15 million people...

fighting to fill positions. This program is a win-win for employers in desperate need of employees and individuals seeking training and opportunity."

The EWEA will initially be available for up to 65,000 new workers, and after the first year, the number of additional workers could go down to 45,000 or up to 85,000, based on market need.

The foodservice industry is the nation's second-largest private sector employer, with a workforce of more than 15 million people in nearly one million eating and drinking establishments. The recruitment challenge is not new for the industry. In 2019, more than a third of operators rated recruitment and retention of employees as their top challenge. Today it's closer to 2 in 5 operators. **TR**

"There is no silver bullet to solving the industry's recruitment challenge, but this program would be a significant step forward," said Sean Kennedy, executive vice president of Public Affairs for the National Restaurant Association. "The restaurant industry is growing its workforce at a faster pace than the rest of the economy. We expect to add another 500,000 jobs by the end of the year, but with one job seeker for every two open jobs, operators are

About the National Restaurant Association: Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises nearly 1 million restaurant and foodservice outlets and a workforce of 15 million employees. Together with 52 State Associations, we are a network of professional organizations dedicated to serving every restaurant through advocacy, education, and food safety.

Retention from page 4

they would undertake. However, there are alternative health insurance options available that can generate savings for the company while also making their plans more attractive to their employees.

For example, Frisch's Restaurants, a popular Midwest franchise, re-evaluated its employee benefits after being hit hard by the pandemic. The company decided to switch its health insurance to a reference-based pricing (RBP) model. As a non-traditional model, RBP eliminates hidden fees and enables its members to pay for the true cost of healthcare. This change saved Frisch's \$1 million in year one, which meant employees paid significantly less too. Instead, employees saw no premium increases,

giving them more financial flexibility. Frisch's credits this change as a key reason for its strong retention rate.

Restaurants have been driving the labor market for more than a year. Restaurant owners who prioritize retention can ensure this isn't just a passing phase but rather can serve as the foundation for a successful future. Employees are the backbone and face of restaurants, and it's now on restaurant owners to demonstrate to them that they are valued. **TR**

About Chris Morocco: Chris leads business development efforts for Imagine360's enterprise division. He has 20+ years of experience in franchising and launching food & beverage brands as a consumer brand builder and growth-stage CEO. Imagine360 works with restaurant owners who are self-funded to offer affordable, high-quality healthcare to their employees.



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Bryan Waechter

Refrigerated Solutions Group, an industry leader in refrigerated equipment and service, recently announced a commercial leadership addition to their team. **Bryan Waechter has joined RSG as VP of Foodservice National Accounts**, effective July 24, 2023. Bryan joins RSG from Illinois Tool Works (ITW) after 19+ years in various sales and product line leadership roles. Most recently Bryan served as Director, National Accounts for all ITW Food Equipment Group brands. Bryan was instrumental in developing the team's annual and long-range plans, leading a team of National Account Managers and growing sales with the Top 100 US-based restaurant chains. Bryan states, "Norlake and

Master-Bilt have significant sustainable competitive advantages within the walk-in category. I'm honored to join the accomplished leaders at RSG, and I look forward to bolstering its position as the walk-in supplier of choice for our chain partners." Refrigerated Solutions Group is an industry leader with over 150 years of combined history between the Master-Bilt® and Norlake® brands.

Fat Brands has plans to develop 20 new Johnny Rockets restaurants in Texas over the next ten years. This is in partnership with franchisee Brame Holdings. The first of the multiple units will open sometime in 2024. Brame Holdings is headquartered in San Antonio.

A local restaurateur claimed victory over a popular Food Network personality on the same day that he opened his first brick and mortar location in Ocala. **Rashad Jones, who owns Big Lee's Barbecue, was declared the champion of Beat Bobby Flay** during an airing of the food competition show on Food Network on July 6. Big Lee's Barbecue is located at 2611 SW 19th Avenue Road. The episode, which was part of season 34 of the popular series, featured a showdown between Jones, Kent Rollins, and Bobby Flay.



Jason Everett, are deeply rooted in their community, and we can't wait to be a part of their journey as they bring Huddle House to Arkansas." "Jason and Sarah are the ideal Huddle House franchise owners, and our team is thrilled to drive growth in the Arkansas market," said Peter Ortiz, Chief Development Officer of Ascent Hospitality Management. "We're committed to fostering their success and building a strong partnership."

Erik Nommsen, Chief Executive Officer of Ali Group North America and **Kevin Clark**, Chief Executive Officer of **Welbilt, Inc.**, announced two organizational changes, effective September 1st. **Tom Van Der Bosch** has been named President of Scotsman Ice Systems. In his new role, Van Der Bosch will be responsible for all of Scotsman's operations in North



Tom Van Der Bosch

America, overseeing sales, administration, product development and production. **Al Smith** will assume the role of Vice President of Welbilt KitchenCare. After more than 10 years in the HVAC field with positions of increasing responsibility, Smith joined Delfield®, a Welbilt brand, as Service Manager in 2011. In 2015, he was promoted to

Director of Service, a role he held until this most recent promotion. The Ali Group and its 115 global brands employs approximately 14,500 people in 34 countries and, in terms of sales, is one of the world's largest groups in this industry. It has 75 manufacturing facilities in 17 countries and sales and service subsidiaries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, North America, South America, and Asia Pacific. For more information on Ali Group products and services, visit www.aligroup.com.



Ellianos Coffee, a southeast-based drive-thru specialty coffee brand, has proudly teamed up with Jacksonville Running Back Travis Etienne Jr. and Florida Running Back Trevor Etienne. This partnership is not just another business deal but a confluence of values, roots, shared aspirations, and the drive for excellence. Prior to Jacksonville, Travis Etienne Jr. played college football at Clemson, where he helped the team win four ACC Championships and a National Title. The Jaguars selected Travis in the first round of the 2021 NFL Draft. Trevor Etienne is a running back for Florida. He had a breakout year as a freshman in 2022 with 118 rushes

for 719 yards and six touchdowns and was named to the SEC All-Freshman Team. Ellianos Coffee was founded in 2002 by entrepreneurs Scott and Pam Stewart with the mission to become the premiere

double-sided drive-through coffee shop in the southeast. Ellianos currently has 39 stores open and over 110 more in development.

The Naples Hotel Group has sold the Hampton Inn located at 1220 Marsh Landing Parkway and Holiday Inn Express & Suites, situated at 4791 Windsor Commons Ct., both in Jacksonville, to Panama City Beach LLCs. This is a recent sale to AON Holiday Jax LLC.

Huddle House, the fast-growing breakfast franchise, is expanding its footprint in **Arkansas** with three new locations opening starting in 2024. Ascent Hospitality Management, parent company of Huddle House and Perkins Restaurant & Bakery, signed 70 franchise agreements in the past two years, bringing its portfolio to nearly 600 locations open or in development across the U.S. and Canada.

"We are excited to announce Huddle House's expansion in Arkansas," said Troy Tracy, Brand President and Chief Operating Officer for Huddle House. "Our new franchise owners, Sarah and

Ford's Garage, the burgers-and-beer brand fueled by America's love affair with the auto, has named restaurant industry expert David Ragosa its Vice President of Franchising and Development. Ragosa will work with the Ford's Garage team to expand the company into new markets, support existing franchisees' sales growth and serve as a thought leader on current restaurant trends. Ragosa's noteworthy career positions include Director of Franchising at Inspire Brands, a global multi-brand restaurant company, where he led franchising of the Arby's and Sonic brands. Ford's Garage is an official licensee of the Ford Motor Company. It has become a dining destination throughout the country, drawing customers with hand-crafted American fare and décor evoking a classic 1920s service station. For more information, visit www.fordsgarageusa.com.

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World's first "celebrity chef" on his lasting three decade career

Acclaimed Las Vegas Food & Wine "2022 Chef of the Year" TODD ENGLISH (@ChefToddEnglish, 480K followers) is on a roll, recently joining forces with luxury car brand Bentley to open a resident-only private restaurant in the brand new Bentley Residences in Miami, Florida and has several other new restaurants in the works and ready to open in 2024. As one of the longest working and most versatile restaurateurs in an industry that can be mostly unforgiving and short lived for most chefs, English has managed to carve a unique path that has kept his ventures fresh and trendsetting for over 30 years.

One thing the most enduring and relevant chefs have in common is that they are early risers who never shy away from staying as late as necessary to ensure their game is on point, every order is consistent, and their kitchen team puts in a cohesive effort. This is certainly true of Todd English, who entered his first professional kitchen at age 15 and became a star student at the Culinary Institute of America, graduating with honors. Armed with that experience, the young chef refined his craft at New York's La Côte Basque under the tutelage of chef Jean-Jacques Rachou. From there, English dug deeper into his ancestral roots by apprenticing at Dal Pescatore in Canneto sull'Oglio and Paracucchi in Locanda dell'Angelo, two of Italy's most esteemed restaurants.



Chef Todd English

And all before the age of 25.

Upon his return from Italy, English began a three-year run as executive chef of Michela's in Cambridge, Mass., renowned for its Northern Italian cuisine, before opening Olives in Boston's Charlestown neighborhood. His bold approach to simple, rustic cuisine did more than delight selective diners. The James Beard Foundation named

him its "National Rising Star Chef" and "Best Chef in the Northeast." Nation's Restaurant News named English one of the Top 50 Tastemakers. It can be argued that English became the prototype of the modern celebrity chef in 2001, garnering the titles of Bon Appetit's "Restaurateur of the Year" and one of People Magazine's "50 Most Beautiful People." English's lifetime membership in the league of culinary rock stars is secure, and it is underscored with his inclusion in the James Beard Foundation's "Who's Who in Food and Beverage"; restaurants along the Eastern Seaboard as well as Las Vegas, Florida, and the Philippines; a cookware collection; cookbooks; and his own PBS culinary travel show, Food Trip With Todd English.

English is also a celebrated philanthropist, often hosting and acting as Chef for high-profile entertainment

and charity events. He has been the Executive Celebrity Chef for MTV's Video Music Awards and has hosted events for The Superbowl, Sundance Film Festival, Fashion Week, The Tony Awards, NASCAR, The Masters, US Open, and Dinner in White. He is also very involved with several local and national charities, including Susan G. Komen, Big Brothers of America, the Anthony Spinazzola Foundation, Community Servings, Share Our Strength, Boys, and Girls Clubs, Volunteers of America, Food Bank of NYC, Make a Wish, Autism Speaks, City Harvest, Keep Memory Alive, Family Reach, Men with Heart, YMCA, NECAT, American Red Cross, Maureen's Haven Shelters, and Bakes for Breast Cancer where he is an honorary board member. Most recently, Todd formed The Wendy English Breast Cancer Research Foundation in honor of his sister. 

Transparency from page 1

enable businesses to demonstrate their commitment to social causes and environmental sustainability, issues that are important to their key stakeholders. Consumers are more likely to support brands that align with their values and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Here are some tips for creating a safer, more transparent supply chain:

- ◆ **Leverage Technology:** Leverage digital tools such as AI, machine learning, IoT sensors, and data analytics to enhance transparency and traceability across the supply chain. Real-time data, process automation, and product tracking capabilities enable businesses to monitor their supply chain from source to destination, ensuring transparency at every stage.

- ◆ **Embrace Collaboration:** Foster a culture of open communication and collaboration with suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, and other supply chain partners. All parties can work towards common goals and drive transparency throughout the supply chain by sharing information and addressing issues collectively. Everyone along the supply chain should be willing to share documentation and certification that verify their safe food handling practices.

- ◆ **Boost Safety and Mitigate Risks:** Food safety should be a priority for all restaurants and food businesses. Improving transparency allows brands to effectively identify and mitigate potential risks at every point along the supply chain. Better supply chain visibility means that restaurants and their suppliers can promptly address issues related to product recalls, quality control, and other concerns. This proactive approach minimizes disruptions, safeguards restaurants' reputations, and protects consumers.

- ◆ **Establish Clear Standards and Metrics:** Develop standards and metrics to measure and monitor supply chain transparency. This includes

guidelines for supplier selection, product labeling, responsible sourcing, and sustainable practices. And then proactively (and consistently) ensure that all products you purchase and serve measure up to your high safety and quality standards.

- ◆ **Empower Employees:** Ensure that all employees understand the importance of supply chain transparency and their role in upholding it. Provide training and resources to help them understand how their actions impact the overall integrity of the supply chain. Empower them to always uphold the highest safety standards.

- ◆ **Enhance Communication:** Maintain open communication with internal and external stakeholders, including customers, investors, regulatory bodies, and industry organizations. Transparently share information about supply chain practices, sustainability initiatives, and progress toward goals. Businesses can build trust and strengthen their reputation by engaging stakeholders and addressing their concerns.

A transparent supply chain is crucial for restaurants and other businesses to thrive in today's competitive landscape. It helps build consumer trust, enhances risk mitigation, increases efficiency, ensures compliance with regulations, and supports ethical sourcing and sustainability. By following these tips and embracing transparency as a core value, restaurants and food businesses can help create a safer, more sustainable future. **TR**

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

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The need for speed

John Tschohl ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

"I feel a need for speed."

Actor Tom Cruise made that line famous when he played Maverick, a fighter pilot, in the movie "Top Gun." Unfortunately, most companies and employees don't share that need. They don't recognize the value of speed when it comes to attracting and retaining customers—and simply doing a good job, no matter the situation. As technology has increased the demand for speed in everything we do, it's critical to the success of businesses and employees that they deliver it.

Most companies throughout the world have set up roadblocks to speed. They've established rules, policies, and procedures that handcuff employees in their dealings with customers. They don't trust employees to make empowered decisions in order to satisfy customers and solve their problems because they think those employees will give away the store. What they don't realize is that, when employees are empowered to solve customers' problems, those customers will not only continue to do business with you, they will reward you with word-of-mouth advertising as they tell others about their experiences with your company.

Employees are also at fault for the lack of speed in businesses today. Their

mindset is locked into "slow," which means that, if you give them four hours or four days to complete a task, that's exactly the amount of time they will take to do so. Whether they are dealing with external customers or internal customers, in the form of coworkers or management, they simply aren't driven to complete things swiftly.

Employee should take these steps to increase speed.

Organize. Assemble everything you need to tackle a project or solve a problem so that everything is at your fingertips. Then evaluate the time necessary to do what needs to be done.

Prioritize. Break the project down into a series of small steps. This will allow you to focus on the details while understanding the "big picture" goals you must work toward.

Manage your time. Identify specific timelines you need to complete each section of the project and then work to meet—or beat—the time you have established to finish the entire project.


Recognize efficiency opportunities. Look for ways to incorporate your vendors or coworkers into projects early in the process. That means considering all the tools at your disposal, from the expertise of your coworkers to your organization's technology assets.

Limit distractions. Every time you have a conversation at the water cooler or check your Facebook posts, you are getting off course, which can derail a project. That doesn't mean that breaks aren't important. Take short ones throughout the day to quickly recharge, maintain your creativity, and stay ahead of fatigue.

Communicate. Provide coworkers and managers with appropriate updates on your progress and timetable. That not only illustrates the effectiveness of your use of speed, it demonstrates how you handle and overcome barriers. Constant communication forces you to think about the responsibilities of you and your team members and about how you can each maintain speed throughout the course of the project.

Keep promises and over deliver. When you do this, it shows your customers, coworkers, and supervisors that you can be depended on to come

through in a clutch. Over delivering allows you to further beat expectations by completing projects well ahead of the original schedule without compromising quality. Quality must go hand in hand with speed.

In the face of stiff and increasing competition from throughout the world, it's critical that speed becomes a focus for everyone in your organization—from the CEO to frontline employees. If there is no commitment to making speed a priority, it will never happen. 

About John Tschohl: John is the founder and president of the 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 has written several training programs, including "Speed," which is also available in Spanish, Greek, Russian, and Chinese. His monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge at www.customer-service.com. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. For more information on John Tschohl and the Service Quality Institute, visit www.customer-service.com.

Ziggi's Coffee brews up three new locations

Ziggi's Coffee, a leading franchise coffee company announced the opening of three new locations in Colorado on August 15th. This monumental day also marked the company opening its 75th location. This significant expansion demonstrates the company's commitment to growth and its dedication to serving communities throughout the nation.

store, is an exhilarating milestone," said Brandon Knudsen, Ziggi's CEO and Co-founder. "This achievement speaks volumes about the dedication of our team and the loyalty of our customers. Our commitment to innovation, quality, and creating meaningful connections remains at the center of who we are, and we can't wait to continue growing in communities throughout the nation."

Each new Ziggi's location will offer a wide range of handcrafted beverages, including signature drinks like the Gold Rush Cold Brew and Caramel Macchiato. In addition to their extensive coffee menu, Ziggi's also provides a variety of teas, smoothies, and other refreshing options, such as their own Energy Drink lineup filled with unique Energy Infusion flavors, like Beach Bum and Just Peachy. To complement their beverages, customers can indulge in a selection of on-the-go breakfast, snack and lunch items. 



With the simultaneous opening of these three new stores, Ziggi's is making a bold statement in the competitive coffee industry. The new locations in Ault, Broomfield and Thornton will provide residents with convenient access to Ziggi's high-quality coffee and exceptional customer service.

Ziggi's positions itself to become an integral part of every community they join by focusing on drive-thru convenience, friendly service and an extensive menu lineup. They are excited to reach the members of the communities of Ault, Broomfield and Thornton and become part of the fabric of these communities.

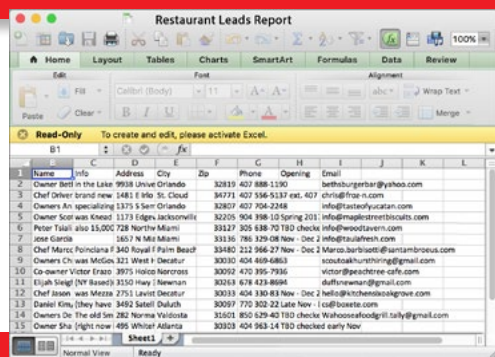
"Opening three Ziggi's locations on the same day, including our 75th

About Ziggi's Coffee: Ziggi's Coffee, recently ranked on the 2023 Entrepreneur Magazine Franchise 500®, is a leading specialty coffee shop and drive-thru franchise dedicated to serving only the finest roasted coffee, uniquely handcrafted drinks, and amazing, locally-made breakfast, lunch and snack options. Founded in 2004, the Colorado-based company is on a mission to elevate the standard of service within the coffee shop industry. From specializing in a variety of great-tasting menu items to providing fast and friendly service, the Ziggi's Coffee brand is focused on creating a positive experience that is faster, more authentic, and convenient for the demand of consumers seeking higher-quality coffee and food options on the go. In addition to its distinctive menu and superior service, Ziggi's Coffee is also committed to making a positive difference in the local communities it serves. With 75 locations nationwide and over 140 additional units in development, Ziggi's Coffee is positioned to quickly grow its presence in a variety of communities across the U.S.

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Riko's from page 1

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This combination of delicious food, amazing drinks, and good vibes is completely different from what consumers and the U.S. franchise industry are used to, and we are excited to continue introducing this amazing concept—and with it, actual great pizza—to new markets all around America."

In addition to these two planned South Florida locations, Riko's has signed numerous new franchisees over the past 18 months during its soft launch phase. Several of these new franchisees are currently in the process of identifying proper sites and will open their businesses over the next 12 months. These include operations in multiple key growth markets, such as Austin, Texas; Charleston, South Carolina; and Suffolk County, New York (Long Island). Overall, the Company has experienced a 50 percent increase year-over-year in franchise sales, with demand increasing monthly.

"At Riko's, we are absolutely committed to ensuring two things: customer satisfaction and franchisee success," said Luigi Cardillo, Partner and Chief Operating Officer of Riko's. "When we began the soft launch phase of our franchisee program in 2019, our goal was to test the waters—and given the robust franchisee demand we have witnessed, we can say with absolute confidence that Riko's Pizza offers a truly unique concept that appeals to all audiences. Further, our partnership style approach

empowers our franchisees to achieve success both early after opening and consistently over time. As we look towards the back-half of 2023, we are thrilled to officially close out the soft launch phase with so much momentum and begin our strategic expansion throughout the U.S."

To support Riko's growth and the evolution of the franchisee program, last year the Company tapped senior finance industry veteran, Robert Furnari, to serve as its Chief Financial Officer. Robert joined the Company from The Northern Trust Company, where he was a Senior Outsourced Chief Investment Officer and Global Head of Portfolio Insight in the firm's Asset Management business. He brings over 30 years of senior-level experience building and managing financial systems. 

About Riko's Pizza: Founded in 2011, Riko's Pizza is a highly differentiated pizza franchise concept famous for its thin crust pies, local neighborhood atmosphere, and an extensive selection of craft beers, wines, and specialty cocktails. The fast-growing brand currently operates four corporate-owned and four franchisee-owned locations across three states—Connecticut, Florida and New York—with two additional franchise locations opening by the end of 2023 and dozens more planned to break ground throughout the U.S. in 2024 and beyond. Riko's Pizza is known for its one-of-a-kind menu, which features signature pizza recipes—such as the iconic Hot Oil Pie—oven roasted wings, premium salads, and desserts. Riko's locations offer both eat-in and take-out, with each site leveraging a modern layout that features a large bar, open-spaced dining rooms, outdoor spaces, numerous TVs, and a rustic-urban décor that incorporates the character of the local community.

TR Today's Restaurant

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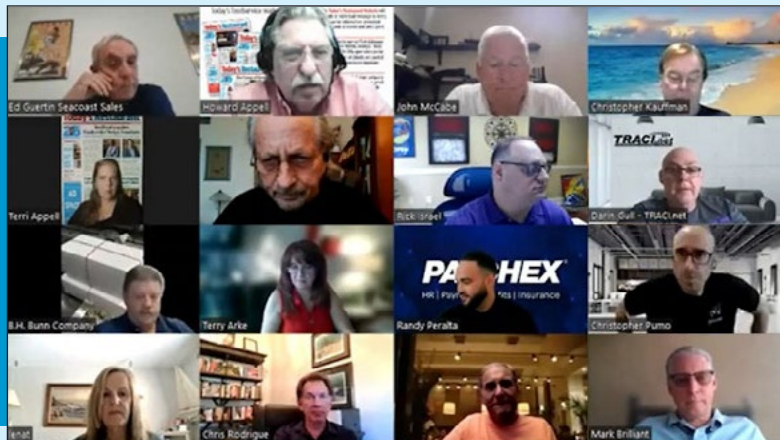
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