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# A LETTER FROM RESTAURANTS CANADA'S INCOMING CHAIR OF THE BOARD, MIKE YASINSKI

BY MIKE YASINSKI
CHAIR OF THE BOARD
RESTAURANTS CANADA





The greatest growth and advancements are always birthed from great challenges; and as we look beyond the last two years of the pandemic, this has never rung truer. Our industry is on a journey of REVIVAL, and I'm honoured to be serving as the new Chair of the Board to support Canadian foodservice and hospitality in building back stronger than ever.

My term as your new Chair of the Board of Directors began at Restaurants Canada's Annual General Meeting on March 30, 2022, where Cindy Simpson, Executive Vice-President, Imago Restaurants Inc. passed along the torch. I'm privileged to succeed Cindy in the role as I was able to watch her lead our Board during some of the hardest years our industry has ever seen. During Cindy's time as Chair, we watched as the nation took notice of the role foodservice plays in supporting our economy. We also made great strides to ensure that our industry remains a top priority for federal and provincial governments. On behalf of Restaurants Canada and its members, I want to thank Cindy for her commitment to our organization and the industry as a whole.

It is a true privilege to have been given the opportunity to serve Restaurants Canada members as the Chair of the Board. I look forward to pairing my industry insight and expertise with the brilliant minds on the Board, the executive team, and those among the members of Restaurants Canada to keep our industry moving forward, and towards a prosperous future. I'll continue to support our 30,000+ members, and the industry at large by overseeing our Board and working closely with Restaurants Canada's leadership team to not only focus on helping foodservice operators bounce back from the COVID-19 crisis, but also ensure those within our industry have the tools needed to continue navigating new challenges and opportunities from labour shortages to single-use plastics, and highlighting the integral role our sector plays in the revival of local communities.

Our industry is on the dawn of a new era - we've fought a long pandemic, but opportunity is in abundance. I look forward to seeing where we go from here, supporting each of you on your journey to REVIVAL.

Summer 2022
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The voice of foodservice | La voix des services alimentaires

*Do you have comments or a story for us? If so, please email menueditor@restaurantscanada.org.*

# 7.2

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*Photography by Rick O'Brien, Stills & Motion @rickettes*

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# *Meet me at the Corner of Hospitality and Technology*

BY CHEF & RESTAURATEUR, DONNA DOOHER

If there was one lament I heard over and over through pandemic lockdowns, it was, "*I really miss going to restaurants!*" yet technology's quick pandemic response opened up more access to food and drink for the customer than any other time in the history of the industry. Restaurant-quality home meal replacement, beverage kits, bottle shops, party boxes and the explosion of third-party delivery—beyond burgers and fries—landed the best of offerings right on front doorsteps.

Four months after the first lockdown, with trepidation, we re-opened the doors to MILDRED'S. Surprisingly, our guests were bursting to get back into the dining room, ready to embrace the ritual of breaking bread with families and friends, as well as with the strangers sitting at the tables opposite them. It was evident what everyone really missed was the real driver behind our success, that infinite number of small gestures that adds up to one thing: hospitality. From the heart-felt welcome customers receive when they enter our establishments to the discovery of special moments that require recognition and celebration, we were reminded of who we are and what we do: happy people making people happy, that's what we do.

As the pandemic unfolded, our story at MILDRED'S was not unlike many others; we explored everything in order to survive. It was like throwing spaghetti at the wall, if it

> "IT WAS EVIDENT WHAT EVERYONE REALLY MISSED WAS THE REAL DRIVER BEHIND OUR SUCCESS, THAT INFINITE NUMBER OF SMALL GESTURES THAT ADDS UP TO ONE THING: HOSPITALITY."



> “...WE WERE REMINDED OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO: HAPPY PEOPLE MAKING PEOPLE HAPPY, THAT’S WHAT WE DO.”

stuck, we grabbed on and that included new technology. Pre-pandemic many technologies and automations in foodservice seemed more novel than mainstream to me. The notion of customers perusing and ordering food and drink offerings off a QR code then paying through their smart phones without having to catch the eye of a busy server seemed like something out of Star Trek. Mini robots scooting down busy sidewalks delivering hot food, robotic arms shaking cocktails and ghost kitchens didn’t feel like a fit for the way we did business. But as the earth shook under our feet, emerging technology and automation continued to advance at rapid speed, bringing innovation and new products and services to markets in all sectors. Our team embraced it all. They signed up for third-party delivery, converted the service line where cooks once called “hands” to docking stations for iPads, they built an e-commerce platform in under 48 hours, uploaded photos taken with new-generation phones and hired drivers with tracking technologies to ensure frozen products and meal kits promptly reached our customers’ doorsteps. Social media platforms were used to expand our brand and engage our customers in new ways, such as live-stream cooking demos and competitions, welcoming followers from around the world into our kitchen. Sous vide circulators, vac pak machines, labeling machines and dry ice took centre stage in the kitchen and our dining room was cleared of tables and chairs, converted into a makeshift processing and production operation. New skills kept emerging as our team continued to adapt.

We have developed a new revenue stream that’s outpacing our conventional sales that we never dreamed possible in March of 2020. I’ve witnessed more change and adaptation in our business than any other time in our 35 years of operation.

As the industry emerges from the aftermath of this unprecedented pandemic, we’re left with many challenges—health and safety concerns, financial recovery, inflation and supply chain disruption—afflicting an industry that operates on low margin. From experience, I feel confident saying we will survive and no doubt technology and automation will play significant roles in taking us through to better times. But we must not overlook the greatest challenge that the pandemic has exposed, the workforce that drives our success, our happy people who make people happy. The pandemic was the tipping point for what was already looming on our horizon: a shift in the mindset of our workforce, the exploration of relationships with work and how invested people were prepared to be, be it picking up a knife in the kitchen or tray in the dining room. This leaves us in an industry where customers’ pent-up demand often can’t be met due to labour shortages, and where margin never lets us take out eye off the ball as we constantly look for ways to improve productivity, efficiencies and bottom lines.

Technology and automation will provide those opportunities with enhancements like improved sales forecasting, controlled purchasing, minimal waste and dynamic prep schedules. So, here’s where technology intersects with hospitality: we may be able to serve you faster and more efficiently, but can we use technology to deliver hospitality? Service is a skill, hospitality is a spirit.

At this year’s RC Show, the industry will come together in person to seek new innovations and ideas. Like so many operators, suppliers, distributors and manufacturers, I’ll be looking forward to meeting at the corner of hospitality and technology.

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Don’t miss Chef Donna Dooher on the **Leadership Panel** at **Breakfast with Champions**.

Check out MILDRED’s fabulous Pancake Kits at the **RC Show Pop-Up Restaurant**.


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# Resto Retail is the Child *of* Invention

In addition to stretching the resources, endurance and energy of the foodservice sector to the limits, the pandemic also gave a stage to the incredible resilience, persistence, and sheer originality of restaurateurs across the country. Canadian foodservice operators tried new models, new menus and new modes of service, developing pandemic-fuelled innovations and collaborations in order to grow their reach and revenue opportunities well beyond the confines of their dining rooms. Some of these changes have spurred a renaissance that will outlast the pandemic.

From coast-to-coast, restaurants searched for ways to add portability to their bill of fare, moving beyond takeout and opening up new, sector-expanding frontiers. Meal and cocktail kits were created for all price points. Some operators even added direct retail elements to their offerings. For many, those retail elements are here to stay. Donna Dooher, Chief Cook and Bottle Washer of Mildred's Temple Kitchen in Toronto, looked to retail as a way to expand her reach and discovered a grand adventure she wasn't expecting.

Like many in the industry, Dooher was constantly originating and inventing, even before COVID-19. "The truth is, even pre-pandemic the margins were incredibly slim, and will continue that way until we find a new business model for hospitality." The closures of and restrictions on restaurants made it even more important for Dooher to step up her search for new avenues. "We realized we had to extend our brand beyond four walls, beyond brick and mortar. Our first test was to try to sell our dry pancake mix. We always made it in huge lots for the restaurant, so we put it into smaller portions for people to take home."

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Customers couldn't get enough. And the pancakes spurred other complimentary creations. Regulars who missed Mildred's famous blueberry compote asked if she might provide it. "I said I'd give them the recipe, but they said 'No, please make it for us'. So we made it, and sold it in deli containers. We couldn't keep up."

Invention spurred invention. After seeing how successful the pancake mix had been,



Dooher searched for another menu item with transferable potential. She found it in Mildred's renowned biscuits and scones. "Normally we'd make them in big batches to freeze, then bake them from frozen at the restaurant." Instead, Dooher began to package frozen biscuits and scones by the half-dozen to sell directly to customers. "Then people wanted apple butter to go with them. And then hot sauce. These were hero products."

The ever-increasing demand led to the creation of an online pantry. "We've rebuilt our website twice during the pandemic. We went from using photos taken with our cell phones to professional photography. Then we discovered that people wanted gifts, so we came up with curated boxes." Today Mildred's Pancake Essentials kit contains Dooher's famous pancake dry mix, along with attractive bottles of their own blueberry compote and maple syrup. And the demand keeps climbing. "We can't keep them in stock."

"We started small," said Dooher, "And we've scaled up." Mildred's worked with brand packagers to help them take their products nationwide. Today they ship all across Canada and into the U.S., filling both individual and corporate orders. Some of those orders are massive, with up to 500 kits being delivered to reps across the country. "We did a huge order in January, $40,000 in revenue with one client, on pancake mix and syrup alone." Currently Mildred's Temple Kitchen is developing trial products in conjunction with Conestoga College providing nutritional and caloric analysis.

The process wasn't without challenges. The learning curve was steep when it came to transportation and shipping, and worldwide supply chain issues didn't help. "There was a time you couldn't get a mason jar if your life depended on it." But Dooher and her staff kept trying, kept refining their process. Not every experiment was successful, but they parked the misses under 'lessons learned' and moved on. "We've discovered a lot about our business, what works and what doesn't. The simplest things that we do really well—that our customers love—that's what worked."

Dooher credits the success of Mildred's retail adventure to three different aspects of community response. First, the response from her team. From senior management to social media marketing, "Everyone jumped in to make this happen. I'm constantly amazed at their flexibility, at how nimble and willing they were. That's what makes the industry so remarkable." She considers her suppliers part of that group, sincerely praising their willingness to work with restaurateurs. She also credits Restaurants Canada for all the great work they did on the ground, getting the word out to the public, and working hand-in-hand with policy makers.

Lastly, Dooher applauds the many passionate customers and guests of Mildred's Temple Kitchen, who expressed their support with words and regular orders. "Talking to customers as they came to pick up their order, feeling their support, made it worthwhile."

### SHAMELESS BUNS, VANCOUVER

Matt Brennan, co-owner and operator of a food truck and restaurant serving Filipino-inspired fare had always planned for scalability. The pandemic delayed his plans but didn't derail them. "We had created a few house-made sauces that people love, so we thought 'Why not try selling them?'" In addition to selling the sauces from Shameless Buns' truck and restaurant Brennan created Magkasama, a modern Filipino market highlighting Filipino entrepreneurs and products. "We don't make a fortune on it, but it's a great way for someone to become invested in our brand."

### ODLA, SASKATOON

Odla is a truly-farm-to-table restaurant, sourcing their fresh, seasonal ingredients directly from Farm One Forty. In addition to the restaurant, Odla offered a small market for take-home purchases. "The first thing we did when the pandemic hit was move our Odla Market to an online platform," says Lacey Sellinger, general manager and sommelier. "We essentially created an online store overnight." Today, you can shop Odla online for sustainable snacks, preserved fruits and vegetables, farm-fresh meats, locally-made beverages, and more.

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# WE ARE OPEN, BUT WILL OUR CUSTOMERS RETURN?

BY ANGELICA ZAGORSKI

Since the start of the pandemic, multiple lockdowns have forced restaurants to try to maintain their businesses on takeout, drive-th-ru or delivery services while keeping up-to-date on changing public health guidelines. As restrictions ease, consumer confidence is still on the mend. While Restaurants Canada's spring #DineInDoOver campaign focused on bringing people together to celebrate missed moments at their favourite restaurant, making sure customers feel safe and welcome is top of mind for many operators.

From coast-to-coast, restaurant owners are looking at the return to in-person dining as an opportunity to rethink customer service to include safety precautions to regain consumer confidence.

David Cooper, owner of Finn's in Victoria B.C., says that customer service opens the door for great business. Restaurants can improve their customer service by focusing on the basics:

1. Providing top-notch customer service
2. Sharing positive reviews and testimonials
3. Being transparent
4. Being reachable
5. Prioritizing safety, hygiene and quality as part of the restaurant's vision and mission statement






WELCOME
WE ARE
OPEN
PLEASE COME IN



> ***It was genuinely quite touching just how far out of the way customers would go to say how they felt for us and how difficult things must be for us."***
>
> - David Cooper, Owner, Finn's, Victoria, B.C.

Cooper says that customers have been extraordinarily gracious through these tough times. Consumers in Victoria have gone out of their way to be considerate and gracious and kind and concerned. "It was genuinely quite touching just how far out of the way customers would go to say how they felt for us and how difficult things must be for us. They were cooperating and understanding with things like showing us their vaccine passport. Just people going above and beyond to just try and make sure that they make things as easy for us as possible."

Amid the pandemic, it was unclear what the future of dining would look like, which is why transparency with consumers was so important for the restaurant business. Customers are more likely to return and support businesses when owners are transparent about the changes that are happening.



In order to stay afloat, many restaurants started implementing non-refundable reservation fees, increasing prices or removing menu items entirely in order to continue to turn a profit during the pandemic. Guy Pratt, owner of Studio East in Halifax, N.S., says that in order to keep his business standing he had to increase prices, as the cost of food and resources steadily increases. However, these changes have not affected the consumer base at Studio East because Pratt has been up front and direct about the changes.

"We just added a few extra cents to a few items. The value is still there, but I think most people understand that the price of food is going up for sure. So, we did increase some of our menu items on January 1," Pratt says.

Cooper says that the pandemic could completely change consumer/guest relationships as well as what's on the menu. His team opted to remove certain menu items that were no longer profitable instead of increasing prices. "We have removed items from the menu because the spikes of inflation have been so sharp that it would be a shock to our customers, and customers took that very well. It has really made a difference for us because just communicating to customers openly about the market dynamics but also committing to them that we wouldn't change our quality standards and our value standards made them trust us. It's helped us keep a good relationship with our customers," Cooper says.

Listening to feedback has also been an essential part of maintaining consumer confidence. Customers want to feel like their requests are being heard and understood, especially if they will be returning to an establishment. In restaurants like Famous Last Words, in Toronto, Ont., where their signature book-style menu is part of the customer experience, removing the physical menu due to COVID-19 restrictions has affected business and customer experiences. Many people have been disappointed as their physical menu was phased out during the thick of the pandemic restrictions. With restrictions now lifted, they can bring back the physical menu and restore customer experiences.

"For us, I think it'll be important because it's such a part of the experience to have that physical menu. And I think in a lot of fine dining and more upscale places, there's an expectation that you're going to get something that is nice cardstock and quality on the table. It's a major part of the experience," says Marlene Thorne, owner of Famous Last Words.

As restrictions lift across Canada, the way restaurants operate will be forever changed. Staying true to the experience and needs of the customer is how restaurants will maintain and increase their business.

Cooper says, "I would say that if you were a successful restaurant before the pandemic, I would my advice would take a moment and think about what made you successful. Think about what was successful about you're offering to your customers and go back to those values go back to those standards. Don't get swept away and feeling like you need to change everything."

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# The #DineInDoOver movement encourages Canadians to make up for the moments they've missed.

BY TIANNA GOGUEN





***Restaurants have joined the movement encouraging customers to dine in and redo missed milestones that weren't celebrated due to the pandemic.***

Over the last two years, the world watched as the COVID-19 pandemic brought forth some of the most unprecedented times in modern-day history. We saw catastrophic losses, and swift changes to life as we know it, all resulting in a mountain of economic challenges we'll be battling for years to come. With the customs of daily life nothing but a memory from the era of our own pre-COVID naïvety, one thing that did remain was our innate need for human connection. During the pandemic, we as a species quickly adapted to the virtual world to fill the void of what was once face-to-face interaction, leaning on technology for virtual hangouts, first dates, and parties. Our careers and office life even took to the virtual realm, leaving typical watercooler talk to the last five minutes of your weekly zoom meeting. We adjusted and made it work, but we know our species was never meant to deprive itself of real-life connections.

As we move forward from the last two years, and learn to live in a world with COVID-19, we've started to shift back to creating memories with friends; back to holding the hands of our new flame while sharing appetizers at the local bistro; back to catching up with colleagues at the nearby pub; back to celebrating connections. But what happens to those birthdays, first dates, career wins, holiday parties, graduation celebrations that we missed during the pandemic? Well, a 'redo' of course! Instead of relegating these milestones to the zoom void, Restaurants Canada sees value in redoing them and making these celebrations a catalyst for new memories.

This Spring, Restaurants Canada launched its #DineInDoOver campaign to help revive the foodservice and hospitality industry which has been devastated by two years of rolling COVID-19 lockdowns. A survey conducted by Restaurants Canada in February 2022 showed eight out of 10 restaurants have taken on debt due to COVID-19 with two-thirds of these businesses requiring at least a year and a half to recover. The #DineInDoOver campaign aims to kickstart the foodservice

# #DineIn DoOver

industry's road to revival by encouraging Canadian consumers and businesses to come together at local restaurants, move past the pandemic and 'redo' the moments missed over the last two years. This national call to action includes a do-over of birthdays, holidays, milestones, corporate celebrations, etc. that have been missed (or lost) as a result of lockdowns and restrictions.

Since the launch of the #DineInDoOver campaign, there has been an outpouring of support from restaurants taking to social media and their own communication channels to call on loyal customers to celebrate with dine-in experiences. Consumers have also joined in, sharing the memories they've 'redone' using the hashtag #DineInDoOver on social media, showing Canadians really have missed the memories made at restaurants, and have been eager to begin making them once again.

**To learn how you can take part in this initiative, help spread the word and get Canadians to make up for the moments they've missed, visit www.DineInDoOver.ca**









# It's Patio Season.
## Are you ready?





# Designing experiences for the elements, the environment and the long-term

BY SHANNON MURPHY

The first year Alessia Di Conti Vacca and her husband Fabio Vacca, owners of Decò Ristorante and Wine Bar in the Junction, Toronto, put up a patio for the CaféTO program, they learned a very important lesson: make sure your patio structure is secured to the ground. “There was a windy night and Sunday morning my neighbour called me and said your patio is upside down in the middle of the street,” says Fabio. “After that learning experience we built a patio that was impossible to blow away.” As restaurant owners head into the 2022 patio season, many of them considering a patio for the first time, it’s important to seek guidance and direction on the many uncertainties associated with building and operating a patio, and learn from the experiences of fellow operators.

One thing is for certain: Canadians love their patios. In many places across the country, the outdoor dining experience will begin as early as April and extend well into October, allowing for increased resident occupancy during the summer. With COVID-19 restrictions lifting it’s the perfect opportunity for many restaurants to take advantage of an audience that is eager to return to patios.

Additionally, many city programs that started during the pandemic are becoming permanent, such as the CaféTO program in Toronto which supported over 1,200 restaurants in 2021 and is offering a grant up to $7,500 this year to offset restaurant owners investment costs or the City of Vancouver’s temporary expedited patio program (TEPP) which in 2021 saw almost 700 patios approved throughout the city.

According to David Hopkins, President of The Fifteen Group, a hospitality consulting agency specializing in restaurant operations, “Patios are an easy way to make your existing restaurant operations more profitable. Revenue for restaurants is the most important thing driving profit. If your profit margin on a restaurant is 10 per cent, approximately half of any incremental revenue goes straight to the bottom line. So if you can get another $100,000 of incremental revenue from a patio over the season you’re potentially driving over $50,000 straight to profitability.”

Given the challenges the restaurant industry has been hit with over the last two years, any opportunity to increase profitability is welcome. More operators are realising the value in either expanding their outdoor spaces or improving their existing space. Patios allow for larger capacity throughout the restaurants with additional seating and more dining services throughout the day and night. Patios in particular are often more conducive to drinking alcohol, enabling restaurants to capitalise on higher margins. “When we were in lockdown, many people were searching out restaurants that had patios,” says Nathalie Kent, Communications Manager at The Fifteen Group,

> ***Before CaféTO, the Junction was not known for its patios and now, we're a patio lover's paradise."***
>
> - Matthew Mohan, Operations Manager, Junction BIA, Toronto

"but having a great patio with a welcoming ambiance and excellent service really bolsters a restaurants' value and offers more revenue streams for owners, resulting in increased resilience."

"The number one thing restaurant owners can do when preparing for the patio season is to plan," says Kent. "You need to know what kind of patio will work best for your business and understand the rules and regulations for operating a program in your city or province." If you're taking advantage of a government program, give yourself time to choose which patio layout is the best option for your business because the applications will vary based on the kind of patio you want to open. Take time to read over the guidelines and make sure your insurance and business licences are up to date. Most critical - don't underestimate how much time and work goes into the application process for government programs. For example, CaféTO requires most operators to submit a very specific and detailed site plan as part of the application process.

For Alessia and Fabio Vacca, the local Junction BIA was a big help in navigating the CaféTO program application process. Matthew Mohan, Operations Manager for the Junction BIA is a big fan of the program. "The CaféTO program has been a game-changer for businesses in the Junction in helping them to weather this immensely challenging time. Before CaféTO, the Junction was not known for its patios and now, we're a patio lover's paradise. Ultimately, the program not only brings additional promotion and foot traffic to our restaurant businesses, but to all small businesses in the Junction," he says.

The association also supports restaurant owners by staying in constant communication with their members, ensuring they do not miss any registration and grant deadlines and that they know what to expect out of the program so they can plan accordingly. "We work with CaféTO to ensure that owners are receiving all of the space that they need, and lobby on their behalf when regulations or guidelines require changes," says Mohan. The Junction BIA has also developed a program that provides their member businesses with complimentary promotion on their websites and via social media - last year's social media campaign resulted in almost 15,00 impressions. Mohan adds, "We also offer cross functional promotion opportunities via round stickers which will be affixed to all CaféTO patio tables and Muskoka chairs that will be setup through the area. For example if you are eating at a restaurant and scan a QR code, you will be offered a promotion for a neighbouring business."

On top of the business planning elements, there are a lot of atmospheric and experiential elements that go into building a patio. "Patio dining is all about selling people on the experience", says Kent. Many of the extended patios are on busy and noisy streets or down alleys, so it can be challenging to try and capture the ambience and intimacy from inside the restaurant." It was one of the main things Alessia and Fabio considered when building their patio at Decò. "We tried to create a European atmosphere," says Fabio. "The idea was to give our customers the most comfortable feeling possible." To keep the patio separate from the noise of the street they built a partition with wooden pallets that went as high as the CaféTO regulations would allow. "When you're sitting down you don't see the cars," adds Alessia, "it is very intimate." They also used decorations such as flowers and lighting that was consistent with their indoor space.

That perceived sense of separation ensures customers don't feel like they are eating in the middle of the street. "Barriers can do a really good job of creating that visual break between the patio area and the busy traffic area," says Kent. "They can be as simple as flower planters which also improve the visual experience of the customer."

Other patio best practices The Fifteen Group suggests restaurants implement are multi-levels of lighting, incorporating table decor and pillows for comfort, considering weather protection measures such as the use of umbrellas or awnings for sun protection and cover from the rain and heaters and blankets for those colder nights. Having a bad weather back-up plan is also important. "All of these elements will not only make the customer experience more enjoyable," says Kent. "But customers will seek you out again in the future." Another contributor to a successful patio is robust signage and wayfinding. Patios are generally a more transient space





and require guests to navigate a little more actively. Kent recommends setting yourself up for success by communicating effectively with your guests. “Simple things like making sure they know where they should wait to be seated will not only make life easier for your staff and servers, it makes it a better experience for your customer to know what is expected of them and where to go.” An often-neglected but very important consideration when building a seasonal or temporary patio is removal and storage considerations. Rentals can be a great option because you don’t have to figure out the offseason plan or storage strategy.

Accessibility is another key element operators need to keep in mind when designing a patio so that people with mobility challenges are also able to enjoy the outdoor experience. Ensure you have wide patio entrances (one metre or more) to accommodate a wheelchair or mobility device. If your patio is raised or lowered from street level, a ramp will be required and it’s always worthwhile to confirm all accessibility regulations with local government entities. In terms of more general design for accessibility, make sure you have furniture that can be easily moved or shifted and offer flexible seating to accommodate guests with mobility concerns.

Arguably the most important part of the patio customer experience is service. “Ten out of ten service is what will set you apart,” says Hopkins. “With a patio, restaurants must remember to stay focused on the core of what makes a restaurant successful: guest experience is the number one thing that drives repeat customers.”

Consider your patio menu and engineer it for the environment by focusing on items that are quick to execute. Include lots of sharable options that are conducive to groups on patios where the focus is more on drinking and snacking than individual plates. Consider how well your menu travels,  if it’s practical for a server to be making more than one trip per table and how to minimize the back and forth.

Patios are a great place to leverage technology such as QR codes for menus or incorporating software that allows you to have a digital menu that customers can order directly from and pay through. Make sure the checkout experience is efficient by placing plenty of remote POS machines on the patio for servers to leverage for quick service.

Guarantee your patio is set up for optimal service by developing a functional layout. Set-up stations on the patio that hold cutlery and linens and place self-serve water pitchers and condiment caddies on the tables. “Incorporate lots of smaller group seating options as opposed to larger tables to maximize your seating and thru-put,” recommends Kent. Make sure your staff is trained and supported on the patio. Meet with your team ahead of time so everyone understands who’s going to be in charge of what and what the expectations are to successfully manage the flow operationally.

Finally, be a good neighbour. Many of the extended patios are on properties that may impact neighbouring businesses. “Remember that you’re representing your brand so make sure that you’re a good neighbour,” says Hopkins. “How your neighbours and how the community sees you is really critical to your long-term success.” Be noise-considerate and sensitive to congestion, right-of-ways and flow of pedestrians who are not necessarily on your patio but may be going to a store on either side of your restaurant. “In the Junction we encourage restaurant owners to share their space during their off-hours with retail and service neighbours if possible,” says Mohan. “It’s a perfect opportunity for them to make use of the space to promote their own business.” Neighbourhood restaurants and bars are a big part of the community, so ensure that you take that into account when you develop your patio and execute your service.

For Alessia and Fabio, the patio season couldn’t come fast enough and they are well into their 2022 patio planning, focusing on that secure patio base and adding even more decor. “It’s a beautiful experience for us,” says Fabio, “especially in the summer, at night, with a nice breeze and the lights and the music. You feel like you’re somewhere else and that’s the whole idea.”  Adds Alessia, “and wine always helps.”



According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, the number of job vacancies in the foodservice and accommodation industry accounts for roughly one out of every seven job vacancies in Canada. Pre-pandemic, the industry was already struggling with more than 60,000 vacancies.

With the reopening of the economy amid constant rolling lockdowns, many employees were forced to seek employment outside the restaurant industry. As we are heading to the summer season, an estimated 210,000 foodservice and accommodation job vacancies is forecasted across Canada. Coupled with the demographic shift in Canada with a median age of 41, with more people leaving the workforce than entering, pandemic aside, there are still 9-10 years of labour shortages ahead. While automation, digital technology and improving of operational process can help some aspects of our industry, we need to include other strategies to address the growing number of vacancies in our industry.

To help fill these gaps, Restaurants Canada has been working with the federal and provincial governments to improve the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program. This program allows Canadian employers to hire foreign workers to fill temporary jobs when qualified Canadians are not available.

**Currently, there are an estimated 210,000 foodservice and accommodation job vacancies across Canada.**

# Addressing the Labour Shortage: How Temporary Foreign Workers may be part of the solution

Restaurants are ideal workplaces for TFWs as they can provide inclusive workplaces that reflect our country's enviable diversity. Women make up 58 per cent of the foodservice workforce. As well, 31 per cent of restaurant owners, operators and staff belong to a visible minority and half of all Canadian restaurants are run by talented, hardworking, entrepreneurs who came here as immigrants.

Immigration was vitally important to our industry before we were hit with COVID-19 and the pandemic has made the need for reforms even more critical. Restaurants Canada is working with the government to improve accessibility and turnaround of foreign workers through the TFW program and other avenues.

The current processing time can be as short as four months and can take up to one and half year, and increases to a minimum of six months in Quebec. To ensure that employers across the country can hire TFWs in a timely manner, Service Canada recently implemented a series of measures to increase capacity and expedite the processing of LMIA applications. This includes increasing staffing resources to accelerate the process. Some provinces have done the same, as the process relies on both federal and provincial governments.

On April 4, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Carla Qualtrough announced changes to the TFW program to improve access to this program by restaurants and foodservice operators. Here are the key changes to the TFW program that benefit the foodservice and accommodation sectors:

1. Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs) will be valid for 18 months, an increase from nine months. Prior to COVID-19, LMIAs were valid for six months.
2. The maximum duration of employment for High-Wage and Global Talent Streams workers will be extended from two years to three years. This extension will help workers access pathways to qualify for permanent residency, enabling them to contribute to our workforce for the long-term.
3. For seven sectors with demonstrated labour shortages, such as Accommodation and Food Services, employers will be allowed to hire up to 30 per cent of their workforce through the TFW Program for low-wage positions for one year. All other employers will be allowed to hire up to 20 per cent of their workforce through the TFW Program for low-wage positions until further notice, an increase from the former 10 per cent cap for many employers.
4. The government will end the current policy that automatically refuses LMIA applications for low-wage occupations in the Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade sectors in regions with an unemployment rate of six per cent or higher.

We are pleased to see that many of the changes introduced reflect the recommendations brought forward by Restaurants Canada in support of our broader National Foodservice Labour Strategy. But there is still work to do. While our labour shortage remains acute, we recognize there are still barriers to the TFW, including cost and administrative burden, and we will continue to work with the government to advocate for our industry.



# Keeping it Local:

## What Sustainable Supply Chains can do for Restaurants

In March 2022, Statistics Canada reported that the country's inflation rate rose to 6.7 per cent, a full percentage point higher than February. Prices rose across all eight major components: food; shelter; household operations, furnishings and equipment; clothing and footwear; transportation; health and personal care; recreation, education and reading; and alcohol, tobacco and cannabis. The increase in March of the consumer price index was the highest since January 1991 when the GST was introduced, and inflation increased 6.9 per cent.

The agency states that increase comes as the housing market remains hot, the geopolitical war in the Ukraine continues and ongoing supply chain issues affect prices in key sectors such as energy, commodity and agricultural markets. As well, the unemployment rate fell to a record low and in March, average hourly wages for employees rose 3.4 per cent on a year-over-year basis.

As people across the country re-evaluate their budgets and spending habits, many restaurants will be forced to do the same. According to Restaurants Canada's latest Restaurant Outlook Survey, menu prices are expected to increase by an average of 5.3 per cent in 2022. By segment, menu prices are expected to rise by 4.5 per cent at quick-service restaurants, by 5.6 per cent at table-service restaurants and by 5.5 per cent for all other foodservice establishments.

The expected increase is to cover the rising cost of food, higher wages, and other operating expenses (e.g., takeout containers, cleaning supplies). Supply chain disruptions for food and other supplies is another factor, affecting 96 per cent of the restaurants surveyed. Still, restaurants are doing what they can to minimize the impact on guests. Nearly half of respondents said they are absorbing or partially absorbing the cost increase.

Guy Pratt, owner of Studio East in Halifax, N.S., says that he has had to increase prices to keep in line with cost increases. "We just added a few extra cents to a few items. The value is still there, but I think most people understand that the price of food is going up for sure. So, we did increase some of our menu items on January 1," Pratt says.





**Supply chain disruptions for food and other supplies is another factor, affecting 96 per cent of the restaurants surveyed.**

**By farming vertically, GoodLeaf can stack growing levels several layers high, allowing for more crop cycles per year, producing significantly more per square foot.**



So how can restaurants minimize the impact of the supply chain challenges while maintaining margins at prices that customers believe are fair? Source sustainably, which in many cases equates to sourcing locally.

Located in Guelph, Ontario, GoodLeaf Farms produces a variety of greens year-round, from Ontario baby spinach and arugula to pea shoots and salad blends. Their greenhouses create the ideal growing conditions for their unique vertical farming system which uses no pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides.

By farming vertically, GoodLeaf can stack growing levels several layers high, allowing for more crop cycles per year, producing significantly more per square foot. In 2021, GoodLeaf produced 1.2 million pounds of fresh baby greens and micro greens in a 43,000 square foot greenhouse. The blue and red coloured lights in the greenhouses give off a purple hue, which mimics 18 hours of spring sunlight every day.

"Our greenhouses only use 18 litres of water to produce a kilogram of produce," explains Allison Vaux, Foodservice Account Manager at GoodLeaf Farms. "In contrast, a traditional farm uses 275 litres of water per kilogram of lettuce produced. We also recycle nearly all the water we use," says Vaux. "Our framing process gives the most consistent high-quality produce while minimizing the use of natural resources."

She continues, "but the biggest difference is sustainable pricing. Our greenhouses can grow produce 365 days a year, without seasonal disruptions or random weather events that can impact pricing. Our prices are generally stable. We don't have to account for the same increases that a traditional farm might. This gives chefs the knowledge that they can keep an item on the menu, with similar margins year-round."

According to Export Development Canada, there are benefits to looking at supply chain sustainability as a business practice and ensuring that a restaurant's products are sourced with a minimum impact on people (human rights, the health and safety of employees) and the planet. Supply chain sustainability helps:



- **Reduce energy and water consumption**
- **Generate less waste**
- **Adapt more energy-efficient systems/ processes**
- **Manage inventory to avoid overstocking**
- **Reduce logistics-related impacts**

**Having local supplier helped Chef Gene Cormier, owner and operator of Euston Park Social and Clos in Moncton, New Brunswick weather the pandemic. "I didn't have to wait for shipments for ingredients," says Cormier. "There are fresh micro green farms where we buy our produce. We're able to plan and let them know that we will buy from them during our season. Our cheese, eggs, fruit – all from people we know. A local baker makes our buns. I buy all my major proteins within a 30 kilometre-radius."**

With the increases in Canada's inflation rate and ongoing supply chain issues, fortifying your operations by looking at local, sustainable options may help weather the current storm.

# Eggs Get Cracking on Restaurant Recovery

***If there's anything we've learned from the last two years, it's that change is inevitable and remains the only constant. That has held especially true for restaurants, but one thing we can count on staying steady is that eggs always deliver on reliability.***



## LABOUR + PROFITABILITY

It's no secret that labour continues to be one of the biggest hurdles that restaurants must overcome. A smaller labour pool and rising food costs has required many restaurants to streamline their menus and hire less-skilled workers. Versatile ingredients with simple prep and execution are key components of creating a winning menu strategy.

No matter how they're prepared, eggs can be made quickly and easily by kitchen staff of any skill level and they don't require much prep, keeping your labour costs low. Eggs are also available in a variety of convenient forms including liquid eggs and ready-to-use hard-boiled pre-shelled eggs, reducing prep time and keeping execution consistent.

No longer just for breakfast, a fried egg can be added as a great high margin upsell on burgers, noodle dishes and even pizza. Deviled eggs make a versatile starter, especially when the filling is made with rotating in-season ingredients. Eggs are also a great protein alternative for flexitarian consumers looking to diversify their centre-of-the-plate protein.

With so many factors affecting rising costs for restaurants, the low-cost versatility of eggs makes them a standout ingredient in your menu toolkit.

## RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

Consumers are becoming more mindful of what they're purchasing, including where their food comes from. Today's food choices are motivated by both health and sustainability. A recent study conducted by Argus Reid in May of 2021 revealed that 87 per cent of Canadians of all ages are very or somewhat interested in ordering food sourced from local farms or made in Canada.

Sourcing local suppliers can positively impact your menu. Locally grown produce is picked at the peak of freshness. Proteins from local farms signify premium quality. In fact, more than 90 per cent of consumers trust the quality standards for food coming from Canadian farms.

The Egg Quality Assurance ™ (EQA®) program ensures Canadians get fresh, high-quality eggs produced by Canadian farmers, according to strict food safety and animal welfare standards. All EQA® certified eggs have met world-class standards of Egg Farmers of Canada's Start Clean- Stay Clean® program and Animal Care Program. The EQA® symbol on your menu will show your customers your commitment to quality.

A partner like Egg Farmers of Canada can help support your restaurant recovery by bringing you industry-leading consumer insights, innovation and marketing support. Discover critical food trends and how eggs can bring them to life on your menu with free resources like our 2022 Foodservice Trend Report at **foodservice.eggs.ca**.

get cracking®

# The Future of Managing Food Waste

BY SHANNON MURPHY



Globally, over 40 per cent of all food goes to waste and in Canada, that number is even higher. While we may believe we are an environmentally aware and sustainable nation, Canada ranks among the biggest food wasters in the world, with a whopping 58 per cent of all food produced — 35.5 million tonnes — lost or wasted each year. According to *The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste*, a 2019 report by Second Harvest, Canada's largest food rescue organization and **Value Chain Management International**, a leading public and industry voice in food waste, the total annual value of all food that is lost or wasted in Canada is a staggering $49 billion, or enough to feed every Canadian for five months.

Much of that waste occurs at the processing and manufacturing level, equating to approximately 4.82 million tonnes of food, worth nearly $21 billion per year. An additional 2.38 million tonnes of food, or more than $10 billion worth is lost at the consumer level. And while the waste in the restaurant and hospitality industry equates to 1.44 million tonnes and over $7.4 billion lost per year, there are massive impacts on restaurant operations and revenue. The pandemic-related restaurant closures, increasing labour shortages and ongoing supply chain issues, created the perfect storm for food waste.

In addition to financial implications, waste comes with environmental impacts. Each year, food waste in Canada creates some 56.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions. For comparison, in 2021 food waste accounted for 10 per cent of all greenhouse gases worldwide, while travel only

> All of us…need to rethink how we view excess food and change our habits, so that people can benefit, and an environmental crisis can be avoided."
>
> *– Second Harvest*




counted for one per cent. Food in landfills also creates methane gas, which is, "25 times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide," according to the report by Second Harvest. "All of us — from farmers to manufacturers, from producers to distributors, from stores to homes — need to rethink how we view excess food and change our habits, so that people can benefit, and an environmental crisis can be avoided," the report warns.

Nicolas Synnott, COO of Trendi, a company that uses innovative food waste solutions to help the farm and food industry by upcycling the organic food waste into delicious and nutritional products, is in total agreement. "It's not about producing more - at one point it's about using what we have," he says. "If 50 per cent of what we produce in Canada is wasted, are we going to be able to supply 50 per cent more moving forward or should we just look at the 50 per cent that we are already wasting and figure out how to do better?"

Trendi leverages innovative technology such as robotics and automation in the food industry to rescue, revive and redistribute nutritious food. At a manufacturing and processing level, Trendi has two products on the market – BioTrim and BioFlakes. BioTrim units go directly to the source to rescue food when it's freshest and process it on-site. By reducing its size and weight by more than 80 per cent, Trendi reduces emissions during transportation while preserving its taste. "Farmers tell us they pay in excess of $3 to $4 million a year to get their wasted product to landfills – they actually pay to get rid of waste," says Synnott. "We tell them they can transform that waste into $10 to 12 million of

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revenue. The output from the BioTrim units is BioFlakes, where one specific outcome ingredient comes from one specific waste source. For example, apples from food processors converted into food enhancers and flavour ingredients."

At the retail level, Trendi has developed a robotic smoothie machine, dispensing up to five unique beverages from smoothies to milkshakes, frozen cocktails, juice, slushies and any liquid mix. "It is the only food machine that uses upcycled products," says Synnott. "We take waste and transform it into a powder that is shelf stable for 15 to 20 years." The smoothie machines are placed in high traffic areas providing a quality product for a fraction of the cost, ensuring everyone in the entire chain makes additional revenue. The kiosks require little effort to staff, and there is an option to offer a reusable cup - in essence becoming a loyalty program. "The kiosk becomes a marketing story," says Synnott. "The company saves food by using these products and is offering the customer savings while also enabling them to contribute individually towards food waste."

Another organization leveraging technology to fight food waste is Too Good To Go. Founded in 2016 in Denmark, Too Good To Go is a B Corp certified, social impact company with one simple goal: save food that is Too Good To Go. Operating in 15 markets across Europe and the U.S., they launched their app in Canada in July 2021. They currently have over 20 million registered users with over 80,000 food stores and restaurants participating in the program.

Working with local restaurant owners, grocery stores and food retailers, Too Good To Go helps their partners achieve operational sustainability by offering customers the ability to purchase "surprise bags" of food at a heavily discounted price. For example, if a restaurant knows it will have food waste at the end of a service, they can create bags and place them on the app for customers to purchase at approximately one-third of the retail cost. "Food waste is unpredictable hence the surprise nature of the bags," says Sarah Soteroff, PR Manager, Too Good To Go, Canada. The app enables restaurants to scale up and down based on what they have in waste and change the frequency of when they sell the bags to suit their business needs. "It results in a win-win situation," says Soteroff. "The restaurant has a great avenue to eliminate waste and make some incremental profit and the customer feels they are doing something good for the environment."




It is vital that Canada focuses on innovative and preventative approaches to manage food waste. For years, France has had supermarkets that sell "ugly" fruits and vegetables at a discount. Too Good To Go is working with the French government to change literature around how food waste is taught in schools. In January, California introduced a law mandating national retailers, grocery and convenience stores donate unsold food, redirecting anything edible from landfills and composting anything inedible.

"It's important that restaurants begin to focus on this topic," says Synnott, "or they're going to see massive portions of their budget go towards managing waste in the future. There is always going to be food waste, we will never eliminate it, but the goal is to reduce it. We should stop seeing food waste as an expense and see it as an opportunity."

**Source:** Nikkel, L., Maguire, M., Gooch, M., Bucknell, D., LaPlain, D., Dent, B., Whitehead, P., Felfel, A. (2019). *The Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste: Roadmap*. Second Harvest and Value Chain Management International; Ontario, Canada



TRENDHUNTER CREATE THE FUTURE

BY SURESH PARMACHAND

# *Reading the Tea Leaves of Chaos:*

## How futurists and trendspotters can help lead the restaurant industry back to order

### ALTERED REALITY

What do you do when your industry is faced with its biggest challenge since the Second World War and the Spanish Flu? During these times of crisis, chaos, and change, the deck gets reshuffled and businesses are forced to think about their place in the industry and the world at large. Suppose you are an association like Restaurants Canada and you represent the industry's voice. In that case, you might reflect on your position and plan to adapt to the changing circumstances in order to lead your industry's evolution. In doing so, you can kickstart the industry's revival and seize the fresh opportunities that the altered market dynamics present.

### IDENTIFYING THE PATTERNS

However, this approach isn't simple–it requires both courage and foresight. When Trend Hunter began discussions with Restaurants Canada before the pandemic, they were already thinking progressively about the industry's opportunities and challenges by looking at sector economics and developing plans with their members. They were intrigued by how Jeremy Gutsche, Trend Hunter's founder and CEO, was able to articulate the commonality between times of significant upheaval like the Bubonic Plague and smallpox epidemic and how they were followed by times of change and innovation. In his 2021 keynote, he suggested the "Roaring 20s are back!" With their eyes on evolution, Restaurants Canada wanted to see if Jeremy could share his ideas on the patterns he was observing at the next Restaurants Canada Show. As we discussed that opportunity, it quickly became apparent that these two organizations were aligned in their vision of the future. As our organizations tried to imagine a bright future through all the murky uncertainty, we saw how Trend Hunter and our research platform, which represents the largest database of trends globally, could allow them to gain insights into what's on the horizon.

While neither organization forecasted the pandemic, we were both in talks about the




importance of work culture and diversity in teams. We recognized that these topics are not mutually exclusive and we shared how our **Innovation Assessment**, the industry's first cognitive assessment focused on innovation allows respondents to learn their innovation style. As a manager, this allows you to ensure that your teams have representation from all of these to gain the most from your organization's talent pool and leads to you delivering the best possible creative output.

As we watched the pandemic unfold, many of the challenges we faced as individuals and organizations pressure-tested our systems and uncovered gaps in our businesses. Restaurants Canada knew they needed to develop a plan to reassure and excite the industry as they adjusted to the new realities of the pandemic and post-pandemic periods. So, when they settled on the **Revival** theme for RC Show 2022, it was a natural fit for this era of reinvention. As our partnership progressed, we knew we could work together to provide a "**Taste of the Future**" for Restaurants Canada members and lead the way for the foodservice and hospitality industry.

As we look to guide the enterprising innovators that make up Restaurant Canada's membership, we plan to leverage Trend Hunter's global industry insights, developed through netnography and powered by our crowd-filtered AI, to empower them with the tools they need to succeed in this uncertain landscape. The research approach that informs our trend platform has allowed Trend Hunter to identify commonalities across industries that has led to a macro-levelf framework called **Patterns of Innovation**. These lenses provide new ways to broaden organizational perspectives and narrow focus on ideas that can stimulate ideation and foster innovation. This framework has been and will be invaluable in guiding industry innovators to their next level in this new era.

## THE JOURNEY BEGINS

We continued to share ideas and came up with the concept of an integrated campaign that would support and cement our partnership. Communicating our service offerings to Restaurants Canada leadership created thoughtful discussion and allowed us to draft a purpose-driven partnership plan that would serve the future of the industry. An essential element of this plan was creating memorable experiences for members during the Revival – A Taste of the Future campaign. Therefore, we needed to think about how Trend Hunter offerings complement the Restaurants Canada Show to bring industry leaders together, showcase the newest ideas and engage in meaningful dialogue–all while having fun.

We began with how our microtrend articles can highlight some of the unique ideas within the industry and how consumer insights, backed by our **18 Megatrend** matrix, can help innovators bring these ideas to life. This matrix represents evergreen consumer desires, developed through the same process of netnography and observation of our online crowd's behaviour as they view our articles, insights and reports. Additionally, we continue to leverage the patterns of these two frameworks for the basis of our thinking and approach to shaping change. Putting our Megatrend matrix and Patterns of Opportunity together allows us to unearth hidden ideas and proactively shape change.

Next, we needed to tackle creating memorable experiences, so our Trend Safaris were a logical first step. **Trend Safaris** are





> *Talent management quickly became a post-pandemic challenge for many businesses as they experienced what's now called "The Great Resignation."*

Trend Hunter's unique approach to bringing the trends shaping industry to our clients through immersive excursions that integrate the social, digital and physical realms. We provide curated experiences by identifying brands and businesses that align with business goals and allow partners to access a framework to create a self-guided or Trend Hunter Futurist-led experience. As we laid the groundwork for the start of our journey, we turned to the question of how we develop deeper discussions.

## UNLOCKING AN INDUSTRY ECOSYSTEM

The RC Show is always an exciting experience–and for this milestone year of **Revival**, we wanted to channel that energy into what we do best: transformative thinking. We set out to use this partnership as a stepping stone for association members to access the next evolution of their own organization. However, as we thought about evolution beyond the Restaurants Canada Show, we asked ourselves: what other forums might we leverage to enable members to develop value for their stakeholders, consumers and guests? After all, innovative, revolutionary ideas are nothing without the resources to build them, the will to execute them and the community to benefit from them.

This question provided a perfect opportunity for our team to share a new program we are deploying: **Innovator Exchange**. This qualitative research program taps into innovation frameworks from our toolkit as well as the broader innovation space to stimulate ideation and make these opportunities real for participants. Understanding that good ideas come from innovators on the ground, this program is a peer-to-peer experience that focuses on industry challenges or opportunities using an empathy-based, discursive approach. It leverages the experiences of a cohort selected to ensure diverse representation from all industry or organizational ecosystem levels.

Through the course of the program, we observe, listen and capture information through ethnography, then synthesize the discussion to develop insights that we present to the clients and participants through a formal research report. Innovator Exchanges stimulate value co-creation by broadening perspectives and sharing resources across contributing members while building stronger relationships with everyone involved. We all agreed this would be an excellent opportunity to engage, involve and allow members from Restaurants Canada to help develop the industry roadmap as we all look to the future. The next step was to identify the topics that matter most.

## MOBILIZING INDUSTRY COMMITMENT

Any significant change effort requires the support of leaders and influencers to build awareness, acceptance, adoption and advocacy. In order to accomplish this outcome, we knew that the topics needed to have broad appeal to industry constituents. Closely working with the Restaurants Canada leadership, we were able to identify a few industry challenges that were relevant and timely for their members.

Of all of these areas, one topic stood out as a particular challenge in the foodservice and hospitality industry, precipitated even further by the pandemic. Talent management quickly became a post-pandemic challenge for many businesses as they experienced what's now called "The Great Resignation." Through our discussions, we recognized the industry faced an onslaught of industry-specific issues in attracting and retaining talent. Even now, this lack of labour and resources is having a significant impact on the health of the industry moving forward, the questions that need to be answered are who and what will fill those gaps? What disruptions will occur if the industry fails to meet market demands? As leaders, if we don't look to history and take stock of our situation, we may fail to realize the



opportunities as we move through what Trend Hunter terms the Crisis, Chaos, and Recharting phases of this disruptive period.

The timely topic of talent management will lead our discussion at the Restaurants Canada show as we commit to helping tackle challenges for the industry. This presentation will cover the history and state of the industry, including resources, perceptions on careers within the industry, and the differences between the global and North American viewpoints. From there, we will explore Canada's labour market opportunities that may bridge the resource gap and serve as a primer for all three Innovator Exchanges:

**Innovator Exchange A**
**Topic:** Industry Labour Shortage
**Approach:** Patterns of Divergence, Authenticity, Personalization, Many-to-Many
**Overview:** Participate in a deeper discussion surrounding our presentation topic of foodservice industry labour shortages. Participants will leverage Trend Hunter's Divergence Pattern of Opportunity as the lens they use to examine examples from the Megatrends of Authenticity, Personalization, and Many-to-many. As we look toward a more diverse future, these Megatrends can stimulate creativity and support dialogue to build an action plan to tackle the industry labour shortage.

**Innovator Exchange B**
**Topic:** Futureproofing Integrated Supply Chains
**Approach:** Business Model Canvas
**Overview:** Join our sponsor and participate in a learning experience centred on a Business Model Canvas tool. Supply chains have been pressure tested throughout the past few years, whether you consider the pandemic, natural disasters, or other macro factors like globalization. We know the current models are not sustainable. However, what does the future look like for this crucial industry area? Participate in this Innovator Exchange, where we will leverage a Business Model Canvas to allow participants to collaborate and develop new business models for the industry to consider.

**Innovator Exchange C**
**Topic:** Differentiation Through Brand Experiences
**Approach:** Customer Journey Mapping
**Overview:** Join our sponsor as we explore how the social, physical and digital realms are merging and what that means for the future of brands. We will share how customer experiences will be the future measure of brand success through a series of industry use case examples. Participants will then work together to develop future state customer journey maps to be shared with peers. These maps will showcase the future of guest experiences in tomorrow's food and restaurant industry.



So, there you have the first phase of our partnership journey with Restaurants Canada But this is just the beginning. We need you to support us to realize the change required to help shape tomorrow's industry.

## MAKING IDEAS REAL

Don't miss this unique opportunity to listen, share, learn, and network. Join us and become part of this innovation journey as we look to shape tomorrow's food service and hospitality industry. Register at [marketplace url] as we identify ideas and make them real to roll out **Revival** for your industry. Let's Create the Future together.




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Don't miss Trend Hunter Founder & CEO, Jeremy Gutsche's keynote at **Breakfast with Champions.**

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**sunspun™ sliced bacon**
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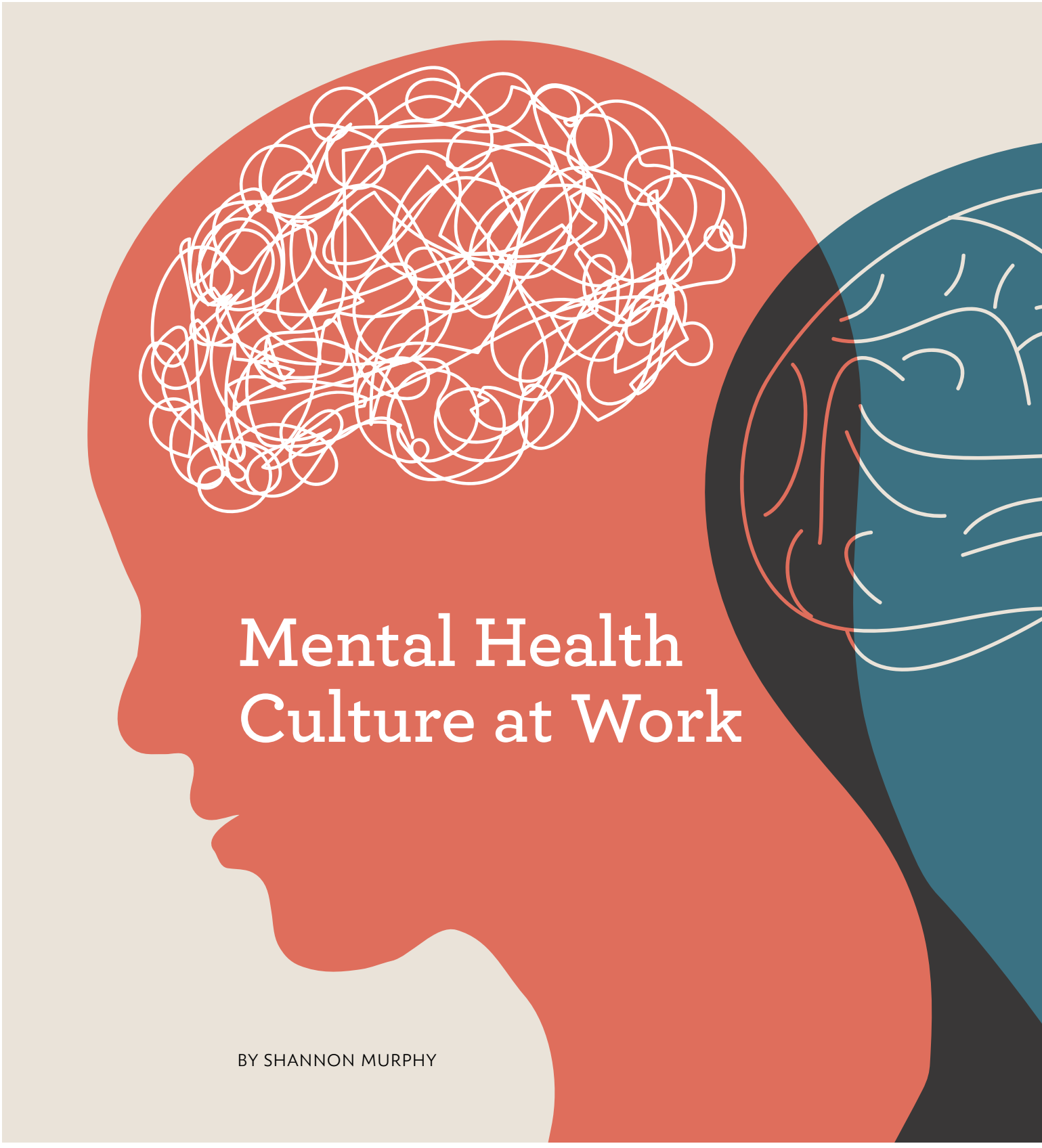


**sunspun™ cracked black pepper**
420 g



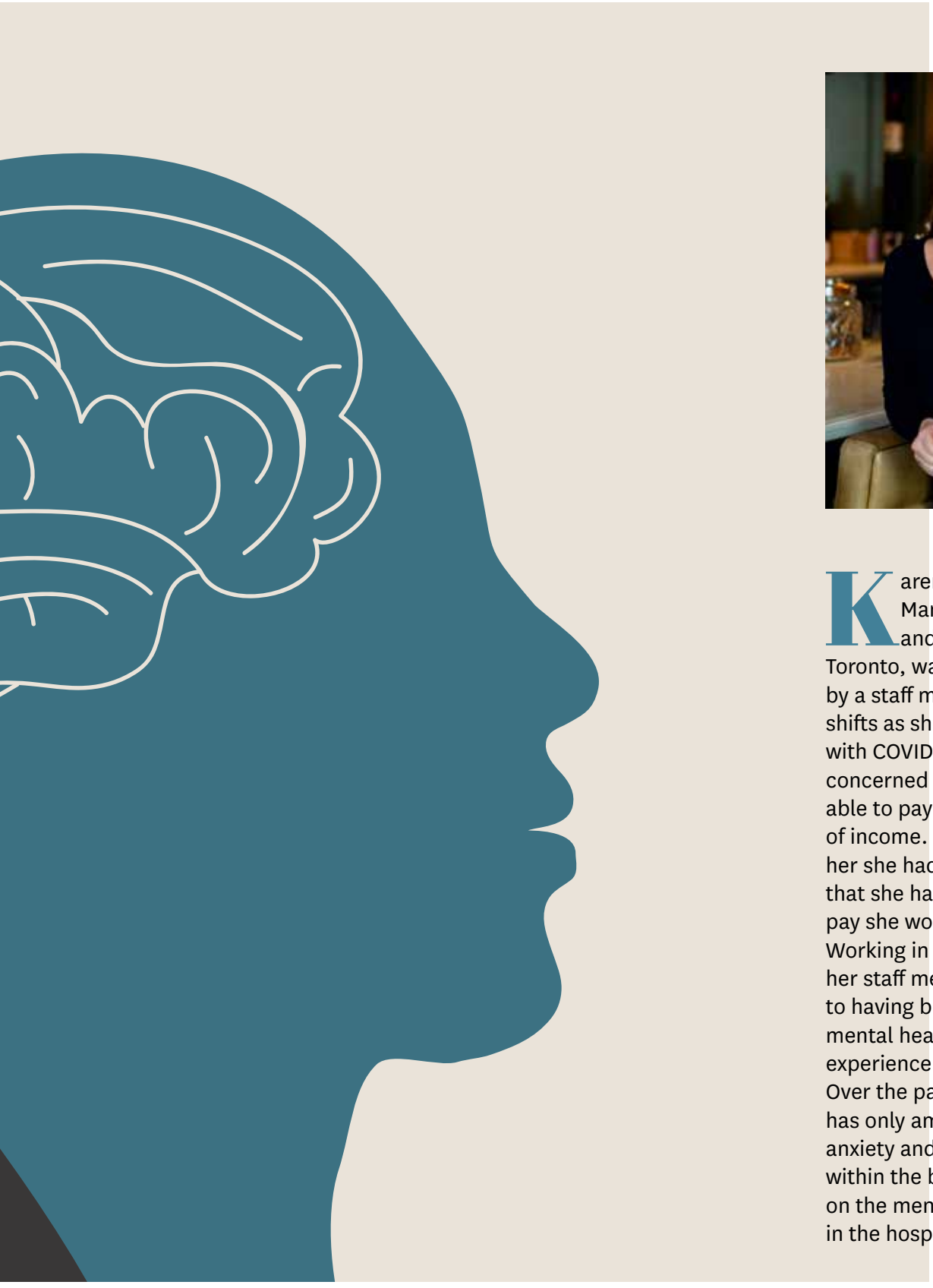
**sunspun™ mayonnaise**
20 L

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# Mental Health Culture at Work

BY SHANNON MURPHY





Karen Davidson, General Manager of Marben and the Cloak Bar in Toronto, was recently approached by a staff member asking for extra shifts as she had been off sick with COVID-19. The employee was concerned she was not going to be able to pay her bills due to the loss of income. Davidson had to remind her she had paid sick days and that she had not missed any of the pay she would normally generate. Working in the foodservice sector, her staff member was not used to having benefits or support for mental health, a far too common experience across the industry. Over the past few years, COVID-19 has only amplified the stress, anxiety and financial concerns within the business, taking a toll on the mental health of everyone in the hospitality environment.




The restaurant industry has yet to fully prioritize workplace mental health and psychological safety, yet suffers from some of the highest rates of mental illness in any field. Not only does the foodservice sector face unique issues such as demanding hours and unstable wages, a propensity for an extreme lifestyle, addiction issues and a susceptibility to sexual harassment, many employees don't speak openly about their mental health struggles for fear of being judged or stigmatized or even losing their jobs.

Stigma is one of the biggest barriers people face when dealing with mental health issues. While some progress has been made in terms of talking about mental health, the stigma of managing mental health remains prevalent within the sector. "If a restaurant manager or co-workers are stigmatizing people dealing with mental health concerns, that can prevent people from seeking help," explains Esther Fleurimond, Health and Safety Consultant at Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS). "While we may not be able to eradicate mental health challenges or illnesses, one of the things we can do is eradicate the stigma that accompanies mental health challenges and illness."

The kitchen brigade system still common in many operations is an artifact from the late 19th century based on the hierarchical system employed by the French military. While its purpose within the food sector is to ensure every person has a clear purpose in the kitchen and works to maximum efficiency, it can breed intense and potentially abusive and exploitative workplaces. "It's very rare that restaurant chefs come in from any culture other than rising up through the ranks," says Davidson. "If you've been screamed at by your boss, that's how you're going to manage your team as well."

Changing this environment is something that Davidson is passionate about, having grown up in the hospitality industry from a young age, experiencing toxic environments and abusive situations herself or witnessing it happening to other people. She's worked with numerous organizations such as Not 9 to 5, a non-profit global leader in mental health advocacy for the foodservice and hospitality sector. Their vision is to reimagine the industry by breaking stigmas and normalizing mental health training, sick leave, workplace accommodations and healthcare benefits.

Marben has introduced many measures to support their employees from a mental wellbeing standpoint. "First and foremost, we removed tipping from the building", explains Davidson. "We wanted to remove that toxicity that can be associated with having the guests decide your value and your performance and some of the entertaining struggles that come along with the tip culture." Marben has also implemented an Employee Assistance Program which offers staff free access to counselling and therapy as well as a health spending account for full-time staff members.

The reception from Marben's staff has been amazing. "When you step into the restaurant you recognize right away that we have a very healthy and happy team," she says. "My staff feel supported by the business and are excited to grow with us. We're also getting a lot of positive feedback from our guests."

This happy and healthy environment is a very attractive one, especially to an industry experiencing a massive labour shortage. According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, the number of job vacancies in Canada's foodservice and accommodation industry rose to 142,320 in December 2021, representing a 10 per cent increase over November, and a three-fold increase compared to December 2020. While the number of job vacancies has soared across all industries in Canada throughout 2021 due to the reopening of the economy, foodservice accounts for roughly 1 out of every 7 job vacancies in Canada, the highest share of all industries. It is vital that we are able to recover these lost jobs. While all other industries have recovered about 90 per cent or more of their pandemic job losses, at least 25 per cent of the foodservice workforce still has not returned to work within the sector.

As the Canadian restaurant economy continues its reopening journey, recruiting and retaining a talented workforce will be challenging due to the large number of jobs available across the nation. But recruiting is critical for restaurants owners to return to a pre-pandemic level of service and to thrive. By promoting mental health and wellbeing as a core workplace value, restaurants will improve their ability to attract and retain employees. Not only does focusing on mental health initiatives provide a hiring advantage, it can improve overall business profitability by reducing disability and absenteeism costs.

However, according to a Q3 2021 Restaurant Outlook Survey by Restaurants Canada, only 18 per cent of restaurants are offering benefits such as health care services in response to the current labour shortage.

The mindset has to change from the top and the industry needs to start rethinking its employee value proposition. "I think we need to hold owners and upper management accountable when it comes to mental health challenges in order for our industry to be sustainable," says Davidson. "It's important that the restaurant industry aligns itself with other industries." Fleurimond agrees. "Like the rest of numerous Canadian industries, the foodservice industry must adapt and adjust to a constant change of priorities and promote a psychologically safe work environment for all to ensure its economic survival." The response from the restaurant industry in incorporating mental wellbeing strategies has been "very timid" according to Fluerimond. "Many restaurant owners are perceiving that investment in mental health programs and resources such as funding an Employee Assistance Program for their employees is too great of a cost when profit margins are already so low and financial resources are strained by the pandemic."

This is why restaurants need to build that cost into their everyday operations. "An employee assistance program is surprisingly inexpensive for how much they offer," says Davidson. "I'm not going to claim that overhauling the business model is an easy thing to do, but if you start with understanding exactly what your team's needs are, that's a really great first step." She also suggests working with organizations like Not 9 to 5 which recently launched CNECTed, an online training and certification course developed to increase accessibility to mental health education while addressing specific pain points that exist in the hospitality and foodservice industry.

The WSPS also provides restaurant supervisors, managers, leaders and employees with mental health knowledge and resilience and trust building skills. It can also assist employers in determining how to fulfill the mental health and wellbeing needs of their businesses and provide concrete, actionable steps to promote mental health and reduce mental harm at work.

One of the simplest first steps for operators is talking to staff. "We had quite a few meetings with our team to discuss what they needed when it came to mental wellbeing support," says Davidson. Understanding whether health insurance is more desirable versus a health spending account, if the team requires access to therapy or how to successfully incorporate sick days into the business can help operators focus on key support elements that resonate with their team. For Davidson, speaking with her staff enabled her "to determine what would serve them best in order to feel supported and demonstrate that their mental health was a priority."

It's obvious that the current workplace environment and structure of the foodservice sector needs to be challenged and redesigned in order to evolve to reflect the divergent needs of its workforce. It's time to advocate for a psychologically safe environment by having non-judgemental and caring conversations about mental wellbeing. "It just feels like the industry that I love so much has done such damage to so many people," says Davidson. "We are in a significant mental health crisis and it's time to shine a light on what's happening with people working in our industry and create better systems for them so they can continue to do what they love in a safer setting. It's the right thing to do."

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO OPERATORS:

**WSPS**
**www.wsps.ca**
**Search "mental health" for resources.**

**Not 9 to 5**
**www.not9to5.org**

**Think Mental Health**
**www.thinkmentalhealth.ca**



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Don't miss: **It's Time to Walk the Walk: Mental Wellbeing in Restaurants**, presented by **Workplace Safety Prevention Services** on the Speaker Stage at RC Show 2022

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# *Three Simple Steps to*
# Lighten Up Your Menu for Spring

**Spring brings with it a feeling of renewal; a time to refresh our closets, clean our homes and tend to the garden. It's also the perfect time to refresh our fridge and our approach to cooking, incorporating lighter foods and more seasonal ingredients. Here are some simple ways to shift your menu and make the transition from comfort food to fresher fare for spring.**

## Shop Seasonal

The easiest way to lighten up your menu for spring is to incorporate seasonal ingredients. While winter is all about comfort food and heavier root vegetables, Spring is an opportunity to experiment with lighter options to elevate your dish and keep things fresh.

## Keep the Oven Off

Spring is a great time to integrate more cold cooking into your repertoire. Bulking up basics, like a traditional salad or charcuterie board, can transform them from side dishes to main entrees while keeping the palate light and the house cool.

## Lighten Your Staples

To transition your menu for spring, consider incorporating more seafood and lighter meats into your meals. Have fun with flavours and seasonal ingredients and you'll still get the dishes you crave without the heaviness.



*Try this:*

**Prosciutto di Parma Wrapped Scallops & Asparagus**

Wrap Prosciutto di Parma around your scallops to add a hint of richness to your dish. Lay on a bed of seasonal asparagus for the perfect light spring meal.

**Recipe courtesy of Icons of European Taste United States Brand Ambassador, Joanne Weir.**



*Try this:*

**The Ultimate Antipasto Platter with Grana Padano Cheese**

Create the ultimate family-style charcuterie board that will please all palates. Compliment Grana Padano cheese with nuts, honey, and vegetables for a well-rounded culinary experience.

**Recipe courtesy of Icons of European Taste Canadian Brand Ambassador, Chef Chuck Hughes.**



*Try this:*

**Chilled Pea Salad with Lemon & Prosciutto di San Daniele**

Salad gets a spring refresh with seasonal snow and snap peas and the delicate, balanced flavour of Prosciutto di San Daniele.

**Recipe courtesy of Icons of European Taste Canadian Brand Ambassador, Chef Chuck Hughes.**

**For complete recipe instructions and additional ideas, visit iconsofeuropeantaste.eu**

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# Inspiring Palates:

## Bringing the flavours of the world to your menu

BY CHRIS SZEGO







The Restaurants Canada Show is the largest foodservice and hospitality event in the country, showcasing the best and brightest people and products the industry has to offer. With live and virtual leadership programming, inspired and inspiring networking events, dynamic competitions and fantastic activations, RC Show 22 highlights the innovation and creativity of foodservice operators across the country and around the world.

The Canadian restaurant industry is proud of its diverse, multicultural community and offerings. The World Pavilion, a sizeable section of the massive trade show floor, reflects that pride, showcasing the unique culinary landscape of several different guest countries each year. As Canadian cuisine has welcomed influences from around the world, the World Pavilion at the RC Show is one attempt to share the influences and excitement of the rest of the world with Canada.

This year's featured guest countries will highlight the authentic flavours of their homelands. It's a chance for attendees to learn about new foods, techniques and production processes. Each nation has unique elements and traditions to share. Discover versatile ingredients and potential margin drivers. And most of all, hear the original culinary histories directly from the people who make it possible.



# BRAZIL

Brazilian cuisine is as rich and diverse as the country itself. Agribusiness is one of the mainstays of the national economy, and it's easy to see why. A large country with many distinct environments and terroirs, the unique and changing biodiversity provides chefs with a vast variety of aromas, ingredients and textures to work with.

Brazil's culinary history is a mix of traditions and techniques that come from both the Indigenous and immigrant populations. "As a result, Brazil has several peculiar regional and/or community cuisines," says Chef Roberto Smeraldi. Styles and main ingredients can vary substantially between regions. "There's an Indigenous base in Pará, an African base in Bahia, Japanese and Italian bases in some areas of the southeast. As well, there are broader culinary habits resulting from a fusion of cultures across large parts of the country during the colonization of central Brazil."



Chef Smeraldi will present a demonstration session on gastronomy from the Amazon region on the Culinary Stage. "We will focus on some ingredients and techniques from Amazonia, which hosts the largest rainforest on Earth and also is home to a diversity of peoples and cultures." Explore a massive array of tastes and textures and learn how the food system can both improve your menu and support the fight against climate change.

Brazilian producers will be on hand to feature homegrown favourites such as:

- **Açaí**, the superfruit from the amazon. These plump purple berries from the rainforest palm are full of healthy omega fatty acids, vitamins and minerals.
- **Pão de Queijo**, one of Brazil's best-known exports. Small delectable baked cheese buns, they're in demand as snacks and breakfast.
- **Plant-based meats**. Although meat and fish are often part of traditional meals, Brazil is also looking at more sustainable production, and plant-based meats.
- **Wine** is a relatively new industry in Brazil, but its roots go deep. Fresh, fruity and light, Brazil wines, both still and sparkly as the Brazilians themselves.



Savour the far-reaching variety Brazil has to offer. Their many ecosystems and culinary traditions means there's something - be it a spice, a style, or taste - for everyone.

apexBrasil

# ITALY

When we think of Italy, we think of food. Indeed, Italian cuisine is one of the world's best recognized and most popular gastronomies. The Italian passion for fresh ingredients combined into simple yet exquisite dishes is known around the world. Although there are noticeable differences in the elements and techniques of the northern and southern regions, all of Italy shares the tradition of devoting care to every step of growth and production. The result is a multitude of flavours honed by tradition into something extraordinary.

The Bellavita Expo, a traveling trade show dedicated to promoting Italian food and drink, will be on hand at the show to share their wealth of knowledge, products, and tastes. At the Bellavita Pizza academy, Master Pizza Chef Gianluigi Lannelli of Molino Vigevano will explain the best flours, toppings and equipment to craft authentic Italian pizza from scratch, along with all the top techniques.

Discover the enormous potential for new ingredients and dishes, and taste what makes Italy so celebrated. Bellavita vendors will showcase the finest wares from Italy including:

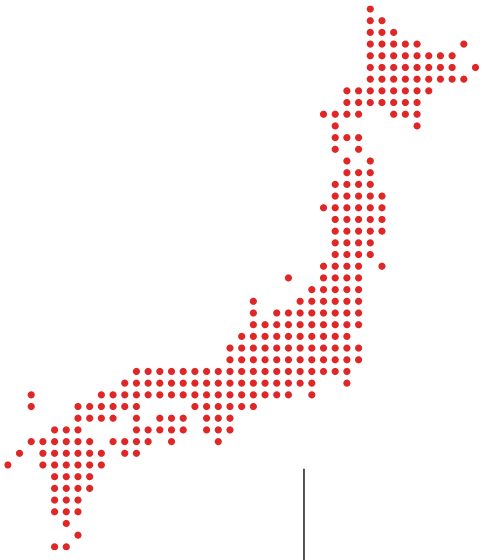
- Smooth, subtle, **prosciutto**. Slow-aged, and inimitably tender, discover the appeal of this famous Italian ham from the people who've made it for centuries.
- Along with prosciutto, Italy is also well-known for its smooth and savoury **salamis**. Different regions produce remarkably distinct flavour profiles.
- **Parmagiano Reggiano** is a perfectly aged cheese known worldwide, with extensive reach and potential. As an ingredient, a topping, or by the handful, see how it can compliment your menu.
- Why are there so many varieties of **pasta**? So that everyone can choose a favourite. Experience the vast variety of pastas Italy has to offer, and the myriad of sauces to go with them.
- Italy is the world's largest producer of **wine**, even larger than France. Let local vintners demonstrate the boldness, richness and varieties of their wines and proseccos.
- Round off the day with the pleasures of **Italian coffee**. The beans produce a smooth and robust blend, often with slightly less caffeine, that can be turned into a multitude of appetizing and appreciated beverages.

Heritage meets invention in Italy, where tradition and innovation go hand in hand. Let the passion Italian producers bring to their business reignite your own.













# JAPAN

The story of Japan's cuisine is long and intricate. Entwined through the shifts and advances wrought by centuries of social, economic, and political changes, Japan's culinary traditions are also rooted in regional environmental surroundings. Diligent attention to technique goes hand-in-hand with scrupulously selected ingredients, and care goes into every single part of the process. The results speak for themselves: currently Japan is home to more 3-star Michelin restaurants than any other country.

Geographically spread from north to south with four distinct seasons, Japan is blessed with an abundance of variety when it comes to biodiversity, growth conditions, and the resulting production of prime quality ingredients. With centuries of tradition mingling with modern innovation, Japanese food culture reflects their diverse landscape and the respect paid to nature. This unique approach to food is so deeply ingrained as to be listed as intangible cultural heritage with UNESCO.

- The basic tenets of Japanese cuisine are freshness and seasonality, and of course, **rice**.
- **Fish** plays a large part in the Japanese national diet. Ehime Prefecture, in the southwestern part of Japan, is a region known for fish farming. The natural environment allows for the careful cultivation of more than 20 kinds of fish. In addition to constantly improving quality, the farms in Ehime Prefecture strive to refine their world-leading aquaculture technology.
- **Beef** is also very much present on the national menu: wagyu beef from Iwate Prefecture is world-renowned. Perfectly marbled with unsaturated fat and meltingly delicious, wagyu is produced from cows fed with locally-grown rice.
- Made from rice, and in an alcohol category of its own, **sake** has been poured in Japan for more than 2500 years. Learn to compare the subtle flavours of sake, and how to pair with local dishes.
- Discover the many joys and tastes of Japanese ***teas***, whether to produce a perfect cup or as the secret star ingredient in a recipe.

Witness the versatility of Japanese ingredients when used in Western dishes. In conjunction with the Consulate-General of Toronto and the Japan External Trade Organization, exhibitors will share the secrets of their crafts and approaches, for attendees to incorporate into everyday fare.

JETRO

# Experience Flavour at RC Show 2022



## CCHAC

The Chinese Cuisine & Hospitality Association of Canada is a non-profit organization committed to promoting Chinese and Asian food culture in Canada. Formed by individuals and groups engaged in foodservice and hospitality, the CCHAC serves more than 700 entrepreneurs and 1000+ restaurant brands.

A guide for the development of the hospitality sector, the CCHAC is dedicated to promoting and cultivating Chinese culinary culture. The CCHAC operates training courses to enhance culinary skills and organizes food festivals to promote and honour their many food traditions.



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These are not your grandparents' food trucks! A decade of fast-paced evolution has seen food trucks turn from trundling vendors of ice cream and fries to truly mobile kitchens turning out a vast variety of menus and tastes. Today's food trucks are moveable, safely-distanced outdoor restaurants offering an extensive roster of international flavours and options.

Presented by JB Innovative Solutions, the Food Truck'N Experience features international menus served through the windows of some of Toronto's hottest food trucks. From perfectly roasted coffee to full-service catering, witness how the world can roll up to the curb.








## PERU

The culinary history of Peru is an amalgamation of Indigenous, European, Asian, and African influences. From the time of the Inca until now, Peru has been blending local ingredients and traditional practices into a singularly delicious cuisine. While the addition of seasonings, elements and tastes from immigrant populations has enriched Peruvian cuisine overall, colonization deprioritized original ingredients, in recent times Peru has made a concentrated effort to revive their native species.

Potatoes, for instance, are a staple of the national diet. Peru recognizes the importance of maintaining genetic diversity among its crops, and currently farms the widest variety of potatoes anywhere in the world. Other culinary pillars include corn, legumes, and Amaranthus species like quinoa. With a boundless array of fruits, vegetables, meats and spices Peruvian cuisine has built an original culinary adventure on the foundation of its own history. Chef Adolpho Perret will host a session on The Magic of Peruvian Flavours



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# Investing in the Future of Foodservice

## Dairy Farmers of Ontario backs emerging culinary talent with first-ever scholarships for four Ontario student chefs.

As the Canadian foodservice industry revives and recalibrates, there are signs it will build back better than before; however, overcoming the many challenges and losses the industry has endured over the last two years will take strength, faith and vision. Not to mention collaboration and support between the industry and its partners.

This spring, Dairy Farmers of Ontario (DFO) is awarding four talented student chefs scholarships of $5,000 each to help them continue their culinary training. The scholarship was designed and facilitated in partnership with Restaurants Canada and the Canadian Hospitality Foundation (CHF), on behalf of Ontario's 3,343 dairy farming families. "Young, up-and-coming chefs bring passion, enthusiasm and perhaps a fresh new outlook that can continue to embrace the culinary spirit and continue to support dairy with a sense of real authenticity", says Alan Grebinski, Director, Business and Educational Development at DFO. "DFO sees great value in supporting the foodservice industry and those who play integral roles within it."

Grebinski believes that industry partners need to support foodservice and work in tandem to help revitalize the industry. "In the short term, the industry and all those involved continue along the path to recovery and resurgence—all those within the industry have a role to play to reshape the future and contribute to its success. Everyone needs to roll up their sleeves and focus on the tasks at hand to create success and improve upon recent results. Consumers are more demanding than ever before and it will take a concerted effort to meet their expectations, so collaboration is important to focus on the common themes, interests and goals that can align strategic and day-to-day efforts. It's time for everyone to rise to the challenge!



## Tia Huszczo
### Niagara College

Tia was selected based on strong endorsements from other chefs and her Niagara College instructors. She plans to become a pastry chef and notes the role local dairy plays in culinary excellence. "The Dairy Farmers of Ontario Scholarship is very important to me because dairy products are essential in most baking - like cakes, pastries and custards. This is significant to me because in the future I will be furthering my education to specialize in baking and pastry arts. Dairy farmers make up a very large percentage of farmers in not only Ontario but in all of Canada as well. So, without the work of dairy farmers, many people including me could be put out of many jobs as there would be a significant decrease in baked good production without dairy. The connection between chefs and local food producers allows for the sourcing of local, quality ingredients. This will provide a distinct farm-to-table experience with every dish served, made only possible through the collaboration of chefs and agriculturalists."



## Ashlea Laszewski
### Algonquin College

Already a veteran of multiple restaurant kitchens and dedicated to putting her skills to work to feed the hungry in her community, Ashlea dreams of someday opening her own restaurant. In recognition of her skill and achievement, DFO is proud to have Ashlea as an inaugural scholarship recipient. "Support from industry partners and local farmers is important to many chefs," Ashlea notes. "It is important to the people using and eating the ingredients to know that they came from a local and trustworthy place. When different groups in the industry come together it helps build a stronger community, which especially helps younger chefs who are just starting to build a name for themselves. Dairy is something that I have cooked with and eaten all my life, my favourite dairy product to use in the kitchen has always been salted butter because it is extremely versatile, as it can be used for baking and savoury dishes, and it just always makes everything taste richer."



## Adam Rocha
### Niagara College

Adam's culinary journey began as a teenager with a plate of pierogies he made for his brother. Since then, he's enrolled in culinary school and developed expertise in local cheeses and meats crafting cheese and charcuterie boards. "Of the chefs I have worked with, the ones with relationships with local producers and local shop owners are the ones more likely to have a strong brigade system. I personally believe that working with a chef who has connections with many people shows strength in leadership which in turn shows strength in the whole kitchen", Adam shares. "Since I am going back to school for a third year at Niagara College for the pastry arts and baking program, this scholarship will help me pay for tuition. I also think an ice cream machine would be a perfect purchase with this money because I intend to make my own ice cream and have different flavour combinations I would want to try. I have always wanted to work in kitchens and work with food, and this scholarship will only push me to do more and be better."



## Yvonna Budimlic
### Stratford Chefs School

Yvonna's culinary skill and passion for local dairy really stands out. "When I read about the opportunity to showcase an ingredient I use in my daily life, I got really excited and thought to myself, "What are the chances that I would be picked as a candidate?", she shares. "At my time at Stratford Chefs School, I found that I surrounded myself with dairy articles and presentations. I thought it was really fitting for me to apply since not only do I love dairy products, but I learned so much about them! I think every chef can agree with me when I say that local and fresh ingredients are paramount in the restaurant business. So, having local farmers and groups partner with you is extremely important. Having that local support builds you as a chef and simultaneously helps those businesses thrive as well. And, the more we know about food, the more we understand the importance of it—what it pairs nicely with, where it comes from, its nutritional benefits and more. We live a richer and fuller life when we can make food from scratch and appreciate the taste of a meal when so much effort and care is put into it."

While supporting student chefs ensures more talented people reach their goal of joining the industry, Grebinski underscores the benefits to industry, partners and consumers. "Dairy is the largest agricultural sector in the province with approximately 3,400 family farms that have upheld a passion and tradition of excellence for generations. This is a grassroots relationship that allows local chefs to experience where dairy ingredients come from and explore the true source of local, fresh cuisine. We certainly hope that all young chefs will embrace the versatility and nutritional value that many dairy products can deliver to various menu applications. Our goal is to encourage them to explore all that dairy has to offer and showcase it to consumers in unique and creative ways that will surprise and delight their audience's taste buds. We can't wait to see where their paths take them."

**Savour Ontario**

Brought to you by Dairy Farmers of Ontario

SavourOntario

RC Show — Restaurants Canada — THE HOSPITALITY EVENT OF THE YEAR

Dairy Farmers of Ontario Scholarship winning chefs will be showcasing their skill at the **Savour Ontario booth (#2027)** at RC Show 2022. Stop by to meet them and sample their creations inspired by local dairy!




# POISE, POUR AND PROBE

## *A behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to be a sommelier*

What does perfect Champagne service look like? How difficult is it really to become a sommelier? If you check out this year's Sommelier Service Competition at the RC Show, you have the opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at one of the components required to become a sommelier. In this competition, top sommeliers from across Canada will compete in a service-based challenge for a chance to win an all-expenses paid trip to Champagne, France to visit the Piper-Heidsieck and the Charles Heidsieck Champagne houses. This customizable trip provides the winning sommelier with the opportunity to blend their own Champagne to serve at their restaurant

The competition was founded by Jeff Osborne from the TM Wine & Craft Spirits Team. "I watched the Behind the Rails competition at an RC Show and was inspired to bring that same level of excitement to showcase the top sommeliers in Canada," says Osborne.

First held at the RC Show in 2020, the competition is designed to mimic the service component of a Certified Sommelier Exam. Competitors are tasked with opening and serving a bottle of Champagne while constantly being peppered with questions from judges. This glimpse into the sommelier world provides spectators with the ability to see what perfect service looks like.




From start to finish, competitors must serve according to strict specifications, while constantly being questioned by judges on service and product knowledge. The competition demonstrates the exceptional grace, poise and talent required to pass the service portion of the sommelier exam. While answering questions correctly is one thing, how you answer when not knowing an answer is also judged. "The service component is where anything can go wrong," remarks Osborne. "The competition is extreme multi-tasking. It's not just about the perfect presentation and pour, it's about multi-tasking successfully, answering questions and showing how well competitors handle difficult questions and not knowing the answers."

This year's judges are among the best-of-the-best in Canada and are current proctors for the sommelier exam in Canada. The judges include Jen Huether, Master Sommelier and Director of Alcohol Curation, Fresh City Farms, Christopher Sealy, Wine Director, Alo Group and Elsa MacDonald, Master of Wine. "We really have the best group of judges – with deep knowledge of the industry. The competitors should expect some curveballs."

The competitors also represent the top tiers of their profession. Earlier this year, prospective competitors applied online and were accepted into the competition if they are a certified sommelier, live and work in Canada and currently work in a restaurant. After applying, competitors were narrowed down to the six competitors with the highest scores on the written exam which was proctored in multiple provinces. Each of the finalists will have 15 minutes to demonstrate Champagne service on stage at the show.

***Matt Landry – Stable House Bistro, Vancouver BC***
***Justin Madol – Don Alfonso 1890, Toronto ON***
***Christophe Reitz – Quatrefoil Restaurant, Dundas ON***
***Christian Perreault Hamel – Pompette, Toronto ON***
***Jose Luis Fernandez – Langdon Hall, Cambridge ON***
***Leagh Barkley – Aquafarina & Per Se Social Corner, Vancouver BC***

The quick pace of the competition also fosters inspiration. "The competition really demonstrates the best of service," says Osborne. "It's also a great opportunity to see what it takes to be a top sommelier, get inspired about service and see the depth of the talent that we have in Canada."



RC Show
Restaurants Canada
THE HOSPITALITY EVENT OF THE YEAR

Experience the **Sommelier Service Competition** at RC Show 2022.
**Monday May 9, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**
**Bar & Beverage Stage**

# BEER GOGGLES

## REN NAVARRO'S SUMMER CRAFT BEER PICKS

As the founder of Beer.Diversity, Ren Navarro has made a career of bringing two things that she's passionate about to the forefront – craft beer and bringing change to the brewing industry to become more diverse and inclusive. Recently named to VinePair's 50 list, that shines a light on talented individuals "doing cool stuff to make the drinks space and its immediate orbit better and more creative," Navarro shares her love of craft beer with a few of her favourite summer picks.






**After a long winter, typical spring weather and gloomy days, we're all ready to think about summer. And with summer comes… beer! Here are a few of my picks for some great summertime selections.**

**Daily Forecast Mimosa Sour | Collective Arts Brewing, Hamilton ON**
Is it a beer? Is it a cocktail? Yes! This is their take on a classic mimosa! With 30 per cent unfermented, freshly pressed orange juice, blended with a slightly sour beer base. Nothing like memories of brunch, all day long!
**collectiveartsbrewing.com**

**La Petite Duchesse | Little Beasts Brewing, Whitby ON**
You're having a catch-up with friends and you need something crisp and effervescent. This is a light, refined and highly drinkable Saison. The flaked rye adds subtle notes of spice while the Hallertau blanc hops add a light fruity note to the finish.
**littlebeastsbrewing.com**

**Cherryoperis | Four Winds Brewing, Delta BC**
I love homemade, tart cherry pie. This beer encompases that flavour. Aged in Okanagan red wine barrels, this Cherry Brett Saison is invigorated by wild yeast strain Brettanomyces and conditioned on local sour Montmorency cherries.
**fourwindsbrewing.ca**

**Hauler Lager | Farm League Brewing, Cambridge ON**
The sun is at its highest point in the sky, and you're HOT. You need a refreshing beer to reach for, and this the one. Using Pilsner malt and flaked corn, this golden, clear and crisp beer is the perfect sunshine beverage.
**farmleaguebrewing.com**

**Aromatherapy | Beyond The Pale, Ottawa ON**
On a perfect summer night, you grab your favourite hoodie and this IPA. Brewed in the spirit of freshly canned Vermont beers, this IPA is dry hopped with Citra and Mosaic hops to give the beer a rich stone fruit character and a fresh grassy aroma. It's a beer that you can sit around the fire with friends and enjoy in a nice, relaxed way.
**btpshop.ca**

RC Show
Restaurants Canada
THE HOSPITALITY EVENT OF THE YEAR

Love beer? Don't miss the **Leadership Panel on Beer** moderated by Ted Moros, President, The Beer Store at RC Show 2022!

Scan the code to learn more and register!


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# VENTURING INTO THE METAVERSE:



Introducing

365 MARKETPLACE

Powered by
Restaurants Canada

Have you ever wondered what a new set of bar stools would look like in your restaurant? Wanted to connect with operators about new products or equipment? Has there been a product that you saw somewhere but not sure who to contact for more information?

Now you need to look no further than Restaurants Canada's new 365 Marketplace, the first metaverse marketplace for the foodservice industry. 365 Marketplace offers a unique opportunity to connect Canadian foodservice and hospitality organizations and professionals with local and international sellers. With the industry ramping back up post-pandemic, the launch of the 365 Marketplace will help to fuel the economy by enabling buyers and sellers to seamlessly interact in real-time and globally like never before.

"The 365 Marketplace offers a one-stop-resource for international communities to connect with the Canadian foodservice market, and vice-versa," says Roy Little, Interim President and CEO, Restaurants Canada.

Designed in partnership with Nextech AR Solutions, a leading augmented reality, metaverse and communications technology company based in Vancouver, B.C., 365 Marketplace is a hybrid of virtual event space and international marketplace, with up to 5,000 virtual vendor profiles serving over 30,000 members.

"The 365 Marketplace brings the restaurant industry into the metaverse, providing a completely digital marketplace where 3D models and AR experiences, including holograms, can be utilized to connect buyers and sellers and provide a much more interactive experience than a traditional online marketplace," says Paul Duffy, President & Chairman of Nextech AR Solutions Corp.

Those bar stools you were considering can now be viewed in augmented reality in your restaurant, so you can see what they would look like before making your purchase. Buyers and sellers can access a consolidated directory of goods and service providers - contact information, on demand video courses, product demos, marketing and advertising opportunities, and virtual events can all be found in one place.

The 365 Marketplace will officially launch at RC Show 2022 with over 700+ vendor supplier members and will provide access to operators in Canada and beyond.

# YES,

*we can charge your phone.*
*(And so much more.)*

**Oongalee** brings tabletops, menus and phones to life. But it doesn't stop there.





**If you have been out at a restaurant, bar or café, noticed your phone's battery in the red, and relied on the kindness of a server or bartender to help you charge your phone, you are not alone.**

According to Statista, in 2021, there were 33.7 million mobile internet users in Canada with more than 70 per cent of Canadians spending up to 20 hours per week using mobile internet. If you are like one of the users in a recent study by Carnegie Mellon University that looked at smartphone charging habits, most people avoid letting their battery levels fall below 30 per cent before looking for a quick charge.

Out at a restaurant one night, Oongalee Techonlogies founder and CEO Amrit Sagoo asked a server at a restaurant to charge his phone. It's something he's done many times before, but this time was different. He never got his phone back. "It was stolen," says Sagoo. "I used to ask bartenders and servers to charge my phone all the time. But when it was stolen, it sparked an idea that led to the development of Oongalee."

Based in Toronto, Oongalee provides small, digital tabletop devices known as Gateways to restaurants. These devices allow patrons to charge their phones, while perusing a digital menu as well as digital advertising while sitting at their tables. Each Gateway comes with a rechargeable battery that lasts between 8-10 hours and comes equipped with cables for charging devices and wireless induction charging. The interactive display can also serve as a private TV for sporting events, offering an enhanced dining experience to guests.

For restaurants, the advertisements that display on the Gateways provide an opportunity to earn passive income through Oongalee's network. Revenue that's generated by the digital ads is shared with the restaurant. For advertisers, dwell time is key. "Being seen at a tabletop is an intimate experience with an audience that you can't get from a billboard," says Sagoo. "Many restaurants are seeing an increase in bill spend. Some people stop in just to charge their phone, so they order a drink while waiting for their phone to charge. Or some people are working from the restaurant for a change of scenery from their home office and plugging in their laptops and ordering from the menu."

This is an attractive option for many smartphone users. According to Restaurants Canada's 2021 FoodService Facts, younger Canadians are more likely to look for technology at restaurants than older Canadians. Fifty-nine per cent of Millennials look for technology that provides online/mobile or kiosk/tabletop ordering capabilities or technology that improves the overall experience. That number drops slightly with Gen Z at 50 per cent, with an average of 48 per cent across all demographics.

The Gateways enhance the dining experience rather than detract from it. "You can turn off the volume and display while you're eating or keep it on if there's a big game. But you can also order directly from the Gateway and ask for service or pay without having to wait for a server to come by," states Sagoo. The Gateways can be fully customized with a digital menu that highlights specials and upcoming events.

Restaurants also have the option of letting patrons order from the Oongalee devices as well as ask for their servers using the "Excuse Me" or "Bill Please" features. This is not uncommon in countries like Japan, but the idea is still new to Canada. Past studies by

> ***Many restaurants are seeing an increase in bill spend. Some people stop in just to charge their phone, so they order drink while waiting for their phone to charge."***
>
> - Amrit Sagoo, Oongalee Technologies Founder & CEO




Restaurants Canada found restaurateurs agree that technology makes their restaurants more productive, speeds up customer service and can help increase sales. The current labour shortage and rising costs will compel more operators to invest in technology to help control costs and boost efficiency. While in many scenarios the initial investment in technology might be costly, Oongalee's devices provides an easy entry point for restaurants. With more than Gateways deployed in more than 250 locations across Canada, this is just the start for Oongalee.

"We launched in 2020 and we've seen what restaurants have been through and continue to go through," says Sagoo. "We believe Oongalee will help restaurants by increasing sales and using the technology to help with operations, while providing brands with a new way to reach their key audiences."



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*Source: Global Dairy Top 20 2021, Rabobank

# THE MARKETPLACE

INSPIRE · INNOVATE · EMPOWER

## 365 MARKETPLACE



Created in partnership with Nextech AR Solutions this new digital platform showcases our industry's best suppliers using state of the art technology bringing buyers and sellers together to do business. 365 Marketplace is THE new place to go for live events, training, product demos and our webinars.
**Launching this month!**

## FEED IT FORWARD
CHEF JAGGER GORDON

Feed It Forward is Canada's largest not-for-profit food rescuing company that has rescued over 2.8 million pounds of healthy food in the past four years, preventing 3.2 million pounds of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere with a dual mission of environmental protection and hunger relief. They recover and redistribute perishable, nutritious, unsold food before it becomes waste to a broad network throughout Canada and the world that has fed 1.68 million people. Their new, free food-sharing app gives everyone the ability to share food from their own homes and from any business around the world in English and Spanish.

**Find their "Feed It Forward: Free Food App" in the Google Play Store and Apple App Store**

**For more information or to make a donation, contact: info@feeditforward.ca**



## *Tractor Beverage Company*

Tractor sustainably sources only the finest ingredients from certified organic farms around the world and constructs each beverage from the root, fruit, blossom, and bark using time-honoured methods to create naturally flavourful beverages. Tractor products are available exclusively through foodservice providers to help cut down on carbon emissions while also providing restaurants and partners with a cleaner, better beverage option to serve their guests.

**Learn more at: www.drinktractor.com**

## *MEIKO BioMaster®*

In restaurants, food waste simply can't be avoided. That means smells, clutter, pests – and managing it. BioMaster turns kitchen waste into a fluid-biomass that can be pumped through a closed system into a collection tank, and stored odourless for weeks. No more landfills or waste-water systems, so carbon emissions are lower. It can even be sent to a biogas plant to produce clean, renewable fuel.
**See MEIKO's GREEN Waste Solutions for food-waste management and processing at www.meiko-green.com/en/**



BEER STORE

## *Tap in Success with Draught Services.*

We provide line cleaning, installation of quality draught and alternative beverage dispensing systems, technicians across Southern Ontario, beer refrigerators and more.
**Visit DraughtServices.ca to learn more**.

Improving the draught experience one tap at a time.




## *Future Meatballs*

From Future Farm, this 100% vegan product is a clean label, using 100% natural ingredients. They are Halal, gluten-free, non-GMO certified, use round table responsible soy, and True Texture Technology that produces products that have virtually the same texture as animal protein. Future Meatballs also come with the BIO Seal for their biodegradable tray which was developed with innovative Eco-One™ technology.

**Learn more at: www.futurefarm.io**




## *Alfred*

The ultimate beverage inventory management solution that offers intelligent cellars through a sommelier app that improves efficiency and can save businesses time and money. Alfred optimizes a restaurant or bar's inventory, time, and ultimately profits by relying on bottle traceability technology that eliminates the need for complete inventory taking, optimizing the rotation of products, and ultimately allows establishments to focus on the things that really matter like their bottom line.

**Learn more at: www.alfredtechnologies.com**



## *Resto-Robotics from Smart Life Solutions*

Meet Bellabot Robot, a premium delivery robot, and KittyBot Robot, a delivery and reception robot! Supplied by Smart Life Solutions Canada, Bellabot offers superior human-robot interaction capabilities. Featuring an innovative bionic design language, cute modeling, multi-modal interaction and many other new functions, Bellabot provides users with an unprecedented food delivery robot experience. KittyBot is the latest delivery and reception robot that features advertisement display, customer guiding, AI voice interaction and delivery and dish-returning functions.

**Learn more at: www.smartls.ca**



## *Fellowes AeraMax™ Pro AM3 & AM4*

These air purifiers have been demonstrated, through independent laboratory testing, to be effective in eliminating aerosolized concentration of SARS-CoV-2 by 99.9999% through a single air pass test of the purifier. In addition, AeraMax Pro air purifiers reached 99.99% airborne reduction of a surrogate Human Coronavirus 229E in a 20m3 test chamber within 1-hour of operation in a separate test.

**Learn more at: www.aeramaxpro.com**

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