



The Why, The How, The Result – Maximizing 2015 Trends

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We are halfway through 2015. Conversations now begin to turn from the excitement propelling us in the beginning of the year to questioning current/future relevancy when discussing trends. A sharp, but needed contrast – as the implementation of a trend needs to be strategic and applicable to your brand, business, or consumer base.

It can be helpful to look at three areas:

Why – these top trends are viable and important to your business

How – these can continue to be implemented

Result – sales impact for your business

Here's a snapshot of the top 2015 overarching trends going strong, shaping menus and product development. Evaluate these cues to help accentuate your innovation pipeline and leverage momentum to drive your business through the end of the year. We will be delving into some of these trends on our blog.

Top 10 trends:

- Authenticity
- Health/Wellness
- Spice of Life: Spice/Seasoning Blends
- Craft Everything: Food & Beverage, Culinary Practices
- Southern Charm
- Chicken-Chicken, Winner-Winner
- FLAVOR

- Sour: Brightening Up Menus
- Bold Beverages
- Dessert Without Boundaries

Let's tackle two strong trends right off the top:

Authenticity

There is a common thread running through our food culture: authenticity. Whether the knowledge base is real or perceived, consumers have an increased understanding of regional and global flavors and now define and crave what authentic means to them. This will continue to be fueled by increased culinary media exposure, social media, ubiquitous digital information access, and the benefits of travels. Well-positioned chefs and companies can deliver on this new demand. Authenticity transcends food, relating to our daily lifestyles – which only adds to its staying power.

Strategic insight cues to evaluate:

- Food with a story
- Local and seasonal cues
- Regional American and global cues
- Connecting the food/eating experience with consumers
- Transparency in food practices – touting what is in your food and where it comes from
- Simplicity in culinary preparations
- Farm to table/counter movement growth, abundance of local farmers' markets
- Fast-casual segment growth (especially Italian)
- Transcends seasonality ebbs and flows
- Authentic packaging has even corresponded with the food offering

Health/Wellness

Health/wellness continues to surge and grow. There is a pull from consumers to make calories come from the most flavorful foods versus cheaper/processed foods. Health/wellness is not about trading down – it is about ingesting quality. Consumers understand that “healthy” can now denote “delicious.” Great food does not have to be expensive, as demonstrated in the rapid growth of the fast-casual dining segment.

Strategic insight cues to evaluate:

- Menu focus on veggies, fruits, and grains – larger % of COP
- “Better-for-you” foods are everywhere (even with “skinny cocktails”)

- Bone broths are surging
- Nut/dairy-free milks, natural sweeteners (agave, honey), coconut water
- Allergy awareness and gluten-free emphasis increases in food/beverage
- Removal of artificial flavors and dyes from foods
- Quality proteins and sustenance – especially at breakfast
- “Better-for-you” snacking
- Local food sourcing is a driver
- Evolution of prior superfoods; bringing the next “it” veggies across palates (berries, kale, cauliflower, chia, quinoa, hemp seeds, coconut oil)
- Revamping of kids’ menus
- “Health halo” descriptors – make consumers feel better about their choices
- Building consumer trust is a key component of health/wellness

We’ll continue exploring the top trends with interesting updates and insights in future posts. Be here to stay on top of it all!