2016 Menus of Change Impact Survey

Menus of Change is deeply committed to the measurement of change: What impact is the initiative having on the foodservice leaders who engage with it, and on the industry as a whole? In its annual survey of attendees of Menus of Change leadership summits, the CIA aims to find out how operators use the initiative’s guidance throughout the year. Respondents are based in locations throughout the United States and represent operations ranging from quick-service restaurants to K-12, from catering and healthcare/senior care to corporate dining and college and university foodservice.

A remarkable 87 percent of respondents to the 2016 survey had acted on the guidance provided by Menus of Change. Among those who had made a change of some kind, 77 percent had introduced new recipes; 69 percent had revised an existing menu or dining format or concept; 62 percent had revised existing recipes; 39 percent had introduced a new menu or dining format or concept; 39 percent had changed sourcing practices; and 27 percent had changed operational practices. Encouragingly, among those who had made a change, 44 percent had done so across their entire operation. Another 36 percent had made the change at multiple locations.

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Eighty-seven percent of respondents had also shared information from Menus of Change with others. For those who had shared the information, nearly two thirds had shared it digitally with their coworkers, and the same proportion had shared it with coworkers through a presentation; over half had presented to their senior leaders or owners, and the same proportion had presented to their customers or clients; a third had conducted a formal training for coworkers, and the same proportion had presented to their suppliers.

Here are some highlights of the changes that have taken place at operations whose leadership has been inspired by Menus of Change:

- We converted one of our smaller outlets into an entirely vegetable-forward concept with Middle Eastern flavor profiles.
- Changed all chicken purchases to "never had antibiotics, cage free, vegetarian diet only" poultry.
- We have started a new concept called Roots and Shoots, featuring a variety of plant- and grain-based salads paired with demi sandwiches. We are beginning to more closely monitor the amount of meat served per customer.
- We've changed our menu design for our main dining hall to be more seasonal and nimble.
- We took an all-beef burger in a single location and replaced it with a beef and mushroom blend burger. It has been very well received. We also introduced a "plant-forward" station at our salad bar, which is comprised of many composed salads, mostly vegan options.
- Increased the non-meat menu offerings and made them more appealing as center-of-the-plate options.