

Industry Statistics

- 40% of consumers are “Extremely Concerned” about their intake of Fats and 33% of consumers are “Extremely Concerned” about their intake of Calories. – *Technomic February 2007*

- Consumer interest in health and nutrition is a long-term trend, not a fad. Desire for freshly prepared, high-quality food, which consumers link to health is growing. – *Restaurants & Institutions 10 Key Insights for 2007*

What’s in a Name?

Healthy. Fresh. Natural. Organic.

These words may have fairly similar meanings in general use, but apply them to a food label and the differences abound. The word “natural,” for example, has no federal definition according to the Food and Drug Administration, but has been defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as indicating a meat or poultry product that contains no artificial or synthetic ingredients and is not more than minimally processed.

“Healthy” has a comparable meaning only in that it refers to the inclusion or absence of certain ingredients. For a food to be properly labeled “healthy,” the FDA says it must be low in fats and contain limited amounts of cholesterol and sodium.

Additional guidelines apply depending on whether the product is a single-item food, a particular fruit, vegetable or cereal grain item, or a meal-type product.

Single-item foods must provide at least 10% of one or more of the following: vitamins A or C, iron, calcium, protein, or fiber. Sodium content cannot exceed 360 mg per serving.

Raw, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables and certain cereal-grain items not contain ingredients that change the nutritional profile. Enriched grain products must conform to standards of identity which call for certain required ingredients. Sodium content cannot exceed 360 mg per serving.

Meal-type products such as frozen entrees and multicourse frozen dinners must provide 10% of at least two or three of the following: vitamins A or C, iron, calcium, protein, or fiber. Sodium content cannot exceed 480 mg per serving.

A word widely regarded as synonymous with healthy, fresh actually refers more to production methods than ingredients. The FDA regulates use of this word only when it sug-

gests that food is raw or unprocessed. In this context, it can be used appropriately on foods that are raw, have never been frozen or heated, contain no preservatives, and have only minimal irradiation levels. Fresh Frozen, frozen fresh, and freshly frozen can be used for foods that are quickly frozen while still fresh. Blanching (brief scalding before freezing to prevent nutrient breakdown) is allowed.

Organic is another labeling term that refers to production methods rather than ingredients. A product that has been produced organically is the result of an agricultural system that integrates cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance and conserve biodiversity, according to the USDA. Furthermore, organic production methods prohibit the use of synthetic chemicals, sewage sludge as fertilizer, hormones to promote animal growth, antibiotics given to animals, biotechnology and irradiation during processing.

While organic is often equated with sustainable agriculture, the two have some important differences. Organic production focuses widely on conservation and avoiding the use of hormones, antibiotics and synthetic chemicals, whereas sustainable agriculture is primarily concerned with meeting food needs at socially, economically, and environmentally acceptable costs. The goal? Farms that produce perpetually, optimize the use of on-site resources, protect soil fertility and the natural resource base, and minimize adverse impacts on health, safety, wildlife, water quality and the environment.

Research

www.technomic.com

Technomic, a fact-based research and consulting firm, helps restaurants and food suppliers grow profitably with business building guidance. For over 40 years their consultants have helped clients anticipate and respond to customers’ needs—and competitive threats.

www.mypyramid.gov

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, an organization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was established in 1994 to improve the nutrition and well-being of Americans.

www.nrn.com

• Nations Restaurant News

www.rimag.com

Restaurants & Institutions

www.restaurantowner.com

Membership web based library of tools, forms and systems to help run your business profitably.

eNutrition

Any ingredient or recipe you are considering can be utilized in conjunction with eNutrition allowing independent operators to offer nutritional information for select menu items or the entire menu.

Menu Development

Portion Control

In addition to existing menu selections, also consider offering a reduced serving size of your existing menu selections at a reduced price to your customer. Since this is an added value, there's no need to reduce the price proportionately.

Alternative Side Selections & Desserts

Consider offering steamed vegetables, fresh fruit, brown rice, baked chips or sorbet

Explore healthy alternatives to current ingredients

- When using vegetable oil for baking, substitute applesauce
- When using mayonnaise or sour cream you can many times substitute plain yogurt
- Incorporate half whole-wheat flour into cookies, muffins, breads and pancakes
- Offer whole wheat pasta as an alternative to traditional pasta
- Add cooked bulgur, wild rice or barley to bread-based stuffings
- Build whole grains and fresh vegetables into casseroles, gratins and other layered dishes
- Add cooked wheat or rye berries, wild rice, brown rice or barley to soup
- Make risotto, pilaf and other rice like dishes with barley, brown rice, bulgur, millet or quinoa
- Build sandwiches from whole-grain bread

Training and Implementation

Front of the House

- Good topic of discussion for Pre-Shift Meetings
- Encourage the staff to sample Healthy Menu Selections – many times “healthy” is not perceived as satisfying. If they like it, they will suggest it.

Back of the House

- Update recipe manuals
- Educate your staff as to the importance of adhering to established recipe guidelines, especially for those items where nutritional information is provided.

Marketing

Menu

How are you communicating your healthy menu selections? Icons denoting healthy selections on existing menu, separate

menu of healthy selections, table tents, or feature board.

Electronically - Website or eNewsletter

Consumers are looking at a variety of indicators to determine if food is healthy (fat, calories, sodium, etc). It is imperative that this information be made available to them. Consumers will often look online for nutritional information on restaurant food. If you don't already provide this information on your website or in your eNewsletters, consider adding it. Your customers will appreciate it. – *Technomic February 2007*

Within the Restaurant

It would also be wise to provide your nutritional information inside your four walls. Not having this information at their fingertips when ordering will likely frustrate some of your customers. However, it isn't necessary to put it directly on the menu, where some consumers would prefer not to see it. Consider having a separate menu or an insert that can be provided to customers who want it. – *Technomic February 2007*

eNutrition

What is eNutrition?

- An Internet-based program that retrieves and presents nutrition information in a familiar easy-to-read format.
- A database of nutrition information that can be used to analyze, scale and print recipes.

Why use eNutrition?

- The current trend in the Food Service Industry is toward healthier foods and preparations. eNutrition allows users to nutritionally analyze products and recipes to create healthy menu options.
- The database uses multiple existing data sources and allows for future integration into other SYSCO systems.

Who will use eNutrition?

- Restaurateurs who want to provide healthier options for their customers.
- Schools and colleges who must comply with state and federal regulations.
- Healthcare Customers who need nutrition information to plan their menus.
- Sysco companies who need to provide nutrition information to their customers.

Benefits

- eNutrition provides nutritional information to assist customers with product evaluation and creating recipes and menus.
- Sysco operating companies and customers can access product nutrition information on-line quickly and easily.
- Users can create, nutritionally analyze, scale and print their recipes.
- eNutrition provides a competitive edge for restaurateurs who want to provide nutrient information or claims for their healthy menu items.