

Consumer Trends: Why We Eat Out

CHICAGO (PRNewswire) — Consumers decide to eat away from home for many different reasons. Maybe they're looking for a fun-filled environment or a family-friendly atmosphere. Or perhaps they crave a favorite menu item or simply a convenient, budget-friendly meal. Often the decision to eat out stems from more than one reason. Restaurants that genuinely understand consumers' most significant visit drivers can take important steps to tweak their operations and win incremental business.

"We see a strong relationship between different consumer dining occasions and the reengineering of operators' menus," says Darren Tristano, Vice President of Technomic. "We've identified several distinct dining occasions and they're directly influenced by consumer needs and industry trends. As operators and suppliers recognize how these occasions differ, they can spot opportunities to not only reposition menu offerings, but to update and revamp service elements, in order to meet the direct needs of customers for each occasion and gain valuable foodservice dollars."

To help foodservice executives better understand consumer behavior, preferences and attitudes regarding a variety of key dining-occasion needstates, Technomic has developed the [Menu Positioning & Occasion Driver Consumer Trend Report](#) [1].

Interesting findings include:

- 70 percent of consumers say they order shareable meals so they can try more than one item on the menu.
- Although most convenience-driven meal occasions are for takeout or delivery (58 percent), two-fifths are for dine-in (42 percent), indicating that speed of service is also a key factor for dine-in occasions.
- Cravings are strong foodservice purchase drivers; 50 percent of all consumers'—and 59 percent of younger males' (aged 18-24)—foodservice occasions are driven by cravings.
- 55 percent of consumers look for combo meals when seeking strong overall value for their money at restaurants and other foodservice locations.
- More than any other factor, 69 percent of consumers report that dining with friends contributes to a fun, exciting restaurant experience.
- When having a regular meal with family or friends, nearly three-fifths of consumers (58 percent) prefer comfort foods.

Technomic's [Menu Positioning & Occasion Driver Consumer Trend Report](#) [1] provides information on today's developments around how food and beverage offerings are being promoted on the menu to directly appeal to consumers for specific occasions. The Menu & Dining Occasion Trends section provides a comprehensive overview of current trends for key dining occasions. The Consumer

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Insights sections examines consumer definitions, patronage, purchasing behavior and preferences based on findings from an exclusive survey from 1,500 consumers. Finally, the report appendices feature detailed concept and menu profiles for 10 concepts that reveal how operators are positioning brands and menus to cater to consumers.

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[1] http://www.technomic.com/Reports_and_Newsletters/Consumer_Trend_Reports/dyn_PubLoad.php?pid=129