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Industry Insights

A roundup of noteworthy Canadian foodservice findings for the week of Oct. 19, 2020

Nontraditional Off-Premise Formats Gain Traction

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has inspired greater curiosity in alternative foodservice channels. For example, almost six in 10 (59%) Canadian consumers have expressed interest in ordering from ghost kitchens. Some of the new ghost kitchens in the market include Joey Restaurants launching two in British Columbia and Ontario, and Quiznos recently partnering with Ghost Kitchen Brands to help serve both delivery and in-store customers.

Nontraditional off-premise formats are especially appealing to younger consumers ages 18-34. For instance, half (50%) of consumers within this age bracket state that they would order food

delivered from a restaurant by automated system/robot or a self-driving car (55%).

Modern technologies that assist with off-premise ordering are also appealing to younger demographics. In fact, almost half (48%) of consumers ages 18-34 report that they would use a voice-ordering device for takeout or delivery (e.g., Amazon Alexa). And chains are listening to this consumer demand. For example, KFC launched a feature earlier this year that enables customers to place orders through voice-powered Google Assistant on Android and iPhone devices.



Halloween-Themed Items Spook Up Menus

With Halloween just around the corner, chains are launching creative spooky-themed fare and beverages for a limited-time.

For example, Krispy Kreme debuted five Halloween-themed doughnuts, including Wolfie, a glazed doughnut dipped in chocolate icing and decorated to look like a werewolf. And, The Alley launched its Eyeball Catcher bubble tea, featuring a large eyeball made from flavoured coconut jelly.

These visually appealing offerings are resonating with consumers, especially during COVID-19. In fact, over half (58%) of consumers state that food

and/or beverages that are aesthetically pleasing put them in a better mood, especially during the pandemic.

Beyond Halloween-themed items, other opportunities for chains to make menu items more visually interesting include incorporating fantasy elements, such as unicorns or aliens, and offering a tie-dye colouring or colour-changing effects.



Source: Technomic Ignite menu data featuring the July 2020 Canadian Omnibus survey, 1,000 consumers

Krispy Kreme's Halloween-themed doughnuts
Image Source: Krispy Kreme Facebook

Boosting Brand Image

As social responsibility becomes increasingly important to consumers, brand image has taken on a new importance. Operators are now being forced to evaluate their company's core values and the extent to which they communicate and take action based on these values. It is becoming imperative for operators to speak up because more and more consumers are taking notice of operators' concrete actions to support their values and mission statements.

Participating in top-of-mind social responsibility issues helps to reflect brands' authenticity and thoughtfulness. Showing commitment to the greater

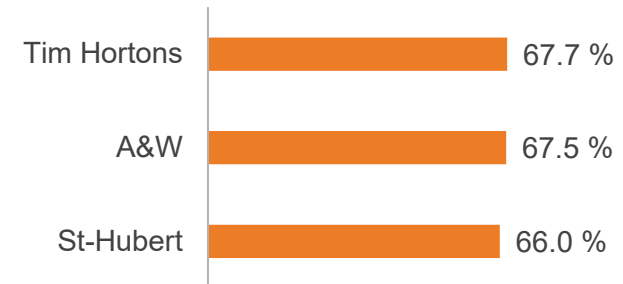
community especially resonates with younger consumers ages 18-34 and can help brands stand out among the competition.

Tim Hortons leads in supporting local activities and values in part due to its high brand awareness throughout the country and how the chain clearly communicates these programs both within and away from restaurants.

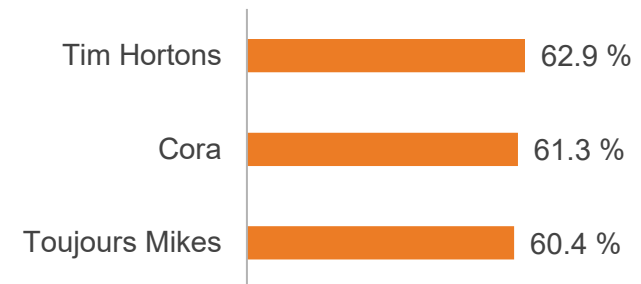
Source: Technomic Ignite consumer brand metrics data, 5,400 Canadian consumers ages 18+ per quarter, Q2 2019-Q2 2020

TOP BOX RATINGS (PERCENT OF CONSUMERS WHO STRONGLY AGREE)

SUPPORTS LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES



HAS VALUES SIMILAR TO MY OWN



Home Kitchens Inspire Menu Innovation

Since lockdowns hit markets worldwide this past winter and spring, chains have been recreating viral foods and drinks made famous during home quarantines.

Dalgona coffee made the biggest splash (and continues to), but several other home kitchen-inspired recipes have landed on the menus of restaurant operators. Here's a small sampling.

Burnt Cheesecake

Basque cheesecake popped up as a food trend a few years ago, but at-home baking during lockdowns rekindled the popularity of this visually interesting treat. It continues to make its way onto chain menus. Starbucks has a [Halloween variation](#) on its menu in Singapore.

Sushi Bakes

Cross a sushi roll with a casserole and this is what you might get. This trend started in home kitchens and made its way to countries in parts of Asia and beyond. It's been especially popular in the Philippines. Local chainlet Ooma recently added a [Ebi & Soft Shell Crab Tempura Aburi Bake](#) to its menu there.

Tom & Jerry No-Bake Cheesecake

[Popularized in Japan](#) in late spring, this cartoonish dessert has huge visual appeal for social sharing. It's not been observed on many chain menus yet but that might change soon. McDonald's recently added a [Jerry's Cheesecake](#) to its McCafe menu in Thailand.

Source: Technomic Global Foodservice Navigator Program



McDonald's new Jerry's Cheesecake in Thailand looks like a wedge of cheese but is made of cheesecake mousse coated in white chocolate
Image Source: ThaiPR.net

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312-876-0004
info@technomic.com
technomic.com