



Crafting an elevated customer experience and boosting hospitality amid labor challenges

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After more than a year of dining room capacity restrictions, both operators and consumers are more than ready to get back to life as they knew it. But as diners head back to onsite dining, operators are wise to rethink their offerings—and not just on the menu. In order to attract diners back into restaurants, operators are reassessing all aspects of the dining experience, updating procedures and streamlining operations so that every guest has a great time. Amid these shakeups, however, many restaurants are currently facing labor challenges and smaller staffs; job vacancies have hit high numbers—according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, as many as 33% of all job openings were unfilled as of May 2021.

With these stresses, there's a ripple effect on restaurants; if staff shortages mean worse service, diners won't return, which in turn causes even more problems for operators. Thus, operators are working overtime to rise to the occasion and innovate to ensure nothing gets sacrificed amid the current situation.

For those still looking for inspiration, there are a number of ways to craft an elevated customer experience despite labor challenges—and some of the solutions may not be as obvious as one might think.

Use quality glassware to contribute to labor savings

Durable glassware such as Chef & Sommelier Krysta® glassware can help contribute to a higher level of cleanliness within restaurants. That is, because they are stronger than standard crystal glasses, they can be put into a professional dishwasher rather than needing to be handwashed—saving time in the back of house among workers washing dishes as well as boosting cleanliness as an industrial dishwasher is bound to provide a cleaner and more sanitary wash than a handwash. Traditional crystal glasses typically can't stand up to commercial dishwashers, as they are too delicate

and break easily, and especially now, many restaurants may not have someone on hand whose job is to hand-wash and polish crystal glassware.

By switching to highly durable Krysta® glassware, restaurant staff can confidently put glassware through the dishwasher, saving time and labor without worrying about breakage. While some other crystalline products boast durability, they lack the brilliance and clarity needed for a truly upscale experience. Chef & Sommelier glasses are the leader in durability, brilliance, transparency and acoustics—it's a brand that does it all! What's more, these glasses remain transparent



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and crystal clear even after more than 2,000 turns in the dishwasher, so operators and guests are guaranteed a brilliant glass for the very best wine and cocktail experience.

Ensure sanitation and safety

Many diners are more than happy to be heading back out to bars and restaurants, but some may still be hesitant, with concerns about safety and sanitation at the forefront of their minds. Technomic's *2020 Future of FSR: Family Style and Casual Dining Consumer Trend Report* found that even after the pandemic subsides, many attributes surrounding cleanliness will remain top of mind for diners: 37% of consumers think it's still important for employees to wear protective equipment, 27% say social distancing enforcement is still important and 25% say readily available sanitizing stations

for consumers are important. Other attributes consumers may be looking for when choosing where to dine include whether the restaurant offers or requires testing/health screens for their employees, whether tables are spaced out and whether customers are required to wear protective equipment.

For operators, ensuring cleanliness and safety need not be cause for stress—many of the processes needed were likely already implemented during the height of the pandemic, so operators may just need to make some tweaks or be more vocal in promotional material about what they are doing to ensure customer and employee safety.

As for streamlining the labor that goes into ensuring these processes, the load can be split among employees' existing duties. For instance, if temperature checks are warranted, the host

can perform that task prior to seating each party. For sanitation stations, if one isn't set up, operators can have servers hand out single-use hand wipes or hand sanitizer when each table is sat.

Streamline menu options

One of the first options that may come to mind when thinking of ways to deliver a great experience with a smaller-than-ideal staff is to trim the menu. In fact, according to Technomic's *2020 Future of FSR: Family Style and Casual Dining Consumer Trend Report*, 67% of operators reduced the number of menu items in response to COVID-19. By eliminating less-popular menu items and only keeping core items and customer favorites, operators set themselves up for success while eliminating the need for kitchen staff to be at the ready to make dozens, if not hundreds of dishes at any given time. By streamlining the menu, kitchen staff can more efficiently prepare for each shift, from chopping vegetables to making sauces ahead of time.

This way, diners get their orders more quickly, tables can be turned over more frequently and customers leave satisfied, not frustrated with how long their food took.

Upgrading or updating kitchenware

This may not be a strategy that operators initially think about





when attempting to boost hospitality in the current climate. However, durable, beautiful dishes, flatware and glassware can really make a difference. One in five consumers say that service and amenities influence their perception of value at a restaurant, according to Technomic's *2021 Value and Pricing Consumer Trend Report*—and when it comes to service, friendly waitstaff isn't all it takes. Clean dishes and appropriate glassware for cocktails, beer and wine, and even soft drinks and water, can make a big difference in diners' opinion of their experience. Think about it—a plastic drinking cup feels a lot less indulgent and tailored to creat-

ing a warm, inviting experience than, say, a crystal wine glass or faceted cocktail glass.

Of course, many operators opt for more durable options—heavy, thick wine glasses that can stand up to less-than-delicate washing procedures. While these are a satisfactory option, operators do have alternatives to choose from, such as Krysta® glassware from Arc Cardinal. Made from extra strong crystalline glass, it provides superior strength and long-lasting brilliance operators need from glassware, without the risk of being easily broken like some delicate glassware. It offers 30% extra rim strength compared to standard crystal glass, and its stem is twice as strong as standard glassware as

well. Despite the added strength, however, Krysta® glassware has a sheer, delicate rim, elevating the tasting experience—no thick rim to disrupt the flow of wine—or any other drink.

Using this durable, elegant glassware gives operators the opportunity to upgrade the entire tabletop experience; the glasses can be used for more than one single application. That is, wine glasses can be used to serve cocktails, too, for a unique presentation and upscale experience.

Streamline operations and elevate diners' visits

By implementing just a few strategies, operators can ensure their guests all still have stellar experiences, even amid a time of unprecedented labor challenges. With many restaurants facing staff shortages, it's more critical than ever to pay attention to the little things that make up a great dining experience, such as a strong menu filled with only hits, no misses; personalized touches, such as individual sanitation solutions; and high-quality tableware and glassware, which makes the entire dining time feel a bit more special. Make life easier on staff, and make restaurant visits fun, all with upgraded glassware.

To learn more about the benefits of Krysta® glassware from Arc Cardinal, [click here.](#)

