Nutrition and Allergen Information

Moving beyond compliance to increase customer satisfaction and sales.

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Introduction

Your restaurant may already be working within allergen labeling laws, and new regulations from the FDA are changing the way restaurants approach disclosing nutritional information.

This legislation shouldn't be seen as a burden; improving the way you communicate this valuable information to customers is an opportunity to increase your appeal to a large and growing group of health-conscious eaters, and to improve the experience of all our guests.

Hungry for Information

Consumers are used to seeing nutritional and allergen information on food and beverage packaging — and are starting to expect same when they eat out, whether it's on the menu, your website, an app, or another source. Restaurant-goers understand that knowledge is power: our research shows that two-thirds of consumers want to know the nutritional information of every dish on the menu when they eat out[1].

The government is rightly concerned by the obesity epidemic, and people are increasingly mindful of what they consume. A recent survey by the National Restaurant Association[2] revealed that more than seven in ten adults are trying to eat healthier at restaurants than they did two years ago, while Inc.com reports that "eating healthier" is the number-one New Year's resolution.

Food service operators have an opportunity to appeal to this health-conscious group by providing healthy alternatives and making nutritional information easy to access. How? Fourth has the answer.

Get the Right Information

In order to properly communicate nutritional and allergen information to your customers, you need to make sure the data you have is accurate and up-to-date. There are a few ways you can do this:

- **Use laboratory analysis**. While this is certainly an option, the cost to have a laboratory analyze each of your dishes every menu cycle can be prohibitively expensive, not to mention time consuming. It also means that information for last-minute substitutions or customizations may not be included. Luckily, this is not the only way to obtain accurate data.

- **Ask your suppliers to upload the information**. With systems such as Fourth's Recipe & Menu Engineering Solution, the vendors you purchase from can enter nutritional and allergen information directly into your system.

- **Download the information from a reliable source**. Systems like Fourth's will allow you to download nutritional information directly from globally recognized and fully-comprehensive databases like the USDA.
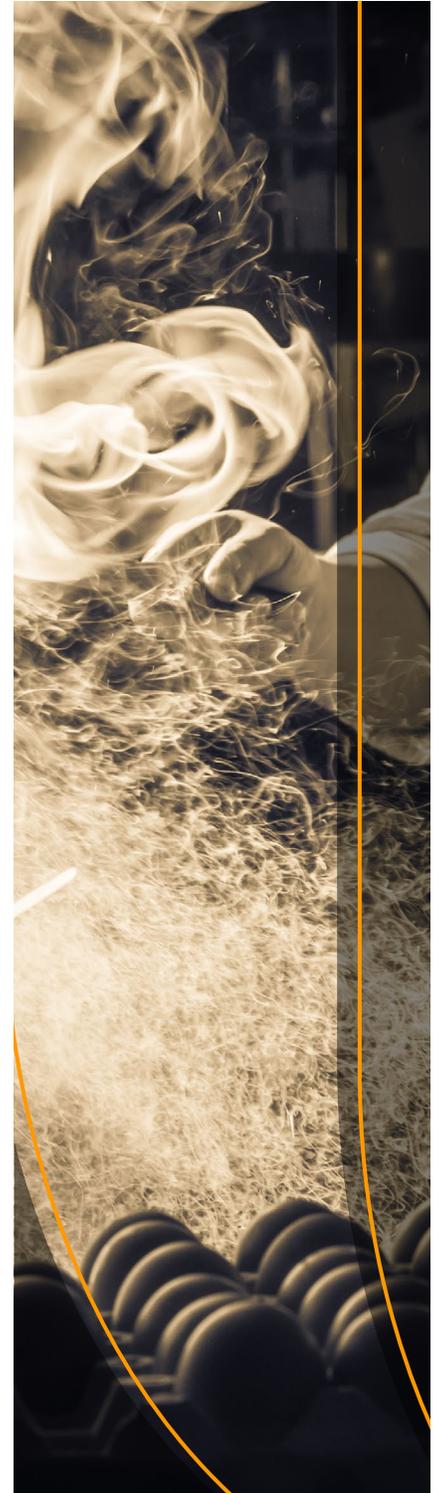
Develop the Right Dishes

Once you have all your data, you can more easily develop a menu that appeals to healthy eaters. Fourth's Recipe & Menu Engineering solution gives chefs creative freedom, while ensuring that nutritional and allergen information data for each ingredient flows into the recipe as it is being created. The result? The kitchen can quickly and easily design healthier and/or allergen-free menu options that are both affordable for customers and profitable for you.

Give Customers the Information They Want

With healthier dishes now on your menu, Fourth enables you to share clear information about them with your customers, both before and during their visit. Plus, Fourth's system allows you to publish the critical details to your website, app, digital displays, and POS in a single click.

> "The Fourth system is constantly challenging us, providing us real time information to ensure that we're delivering the product to the targeted cost. It allows us to tweak it up or down in real time to try and drive really cool trending flavors, and still meet that price point.
>
> **Kevin Miller**
> Senior Director of Culinary & Beverage Development, TGI Fridays

When Accuracy Really Counts

For some customers, this kind of information isn't just useful, it's critical. Food allergies can spoil an evening out — or have much more serious consequences. It's imperative that menu information be completely accurate, reliable, and easy to access.

Menu Personalization

Fourth's system can work in sync with your website and apps so that before coming, guests can filter out the dishes that contain ingredients they wish to avoid. You can also include variations of individual dishes, add-ons, and substitutions — and the nutritional information will update according to the version they select.
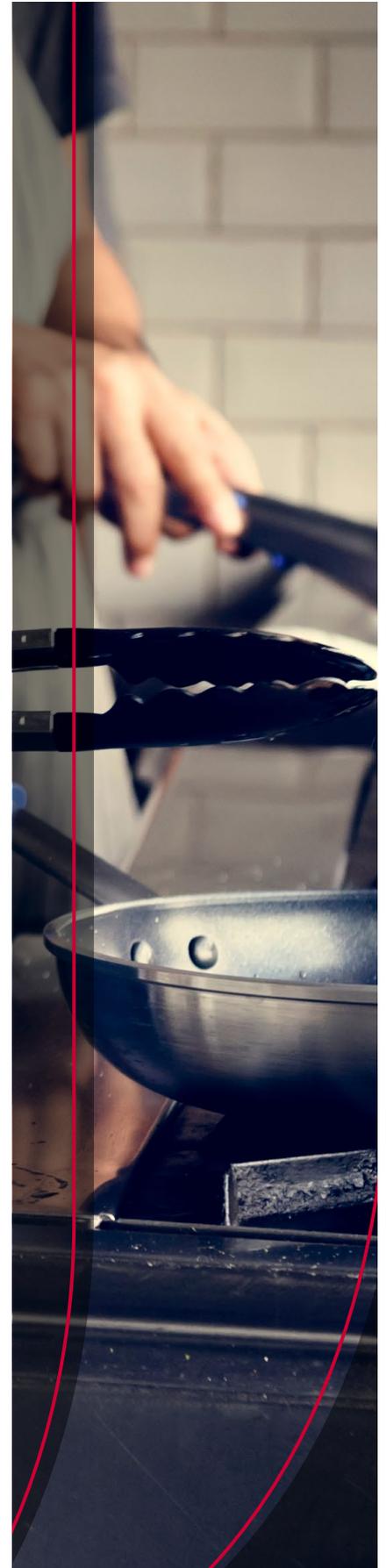
Enhance Your Brand

This kind of detail not only reassures your customers or prospective customers, but also creates a sense of competence that can be a huge asset, whether you're a sandwich shop or a fine-dining restaurant.

If a customer can quickly check the content of your menu items on their laptop or smartphone before they visit, they are likely to keep giving you their business. What's more, they will arrive relaxed and happy — which translates to higher sales.

Drive Sales

This solution allows you to communicate allergen information quickly and reliably, which builds trust and confidence in your brand. Guests with food sensitivities and those with severe allergies are often in charge of picking the place when dining out with friends and family. Empower them to keep choosing yours.

Confident Staff

Your staff will feel the benefit, too. No more scrambling to find answers to tricky questions in the middle of a busy shift. Now they can be confident they are giving customers accurate information even for brand-new dishes or frequently changing menus, as ingredient data can be instantly available on a tablet or mobile device.

Regardless of the number of sites you operate, you'll know that each is using the same up-to-date source. Your staff will be equipped with the information they need to deliver a positive guest experience.
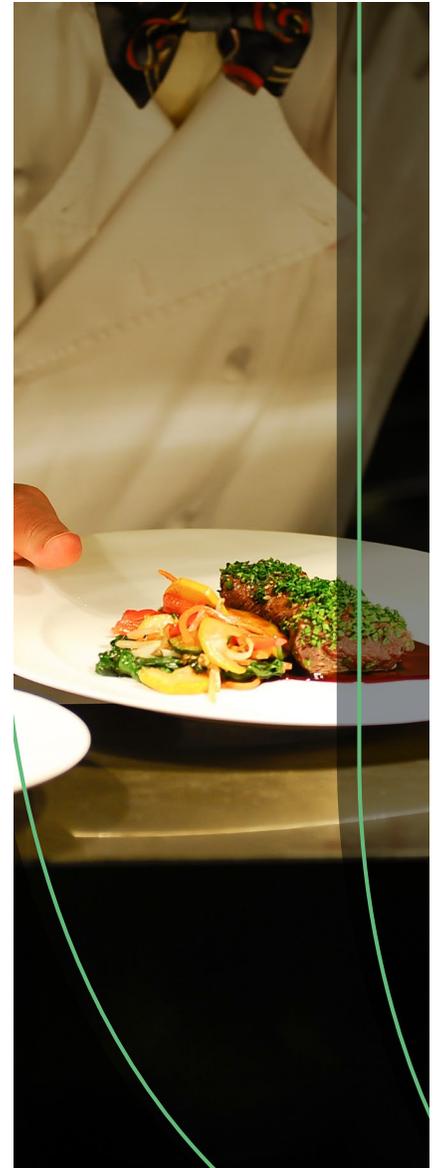
> Now that we've implemented Fourth's Recipe & Menu Engineering solution, it's become a part of daily life. We're now reliably able to provide information that customers need which includes nutritional and allergen information, and we can move on to include things like free from gluten ingredients. We know that our customers are increasingly interested in what goes into a plate of food, and the Recipe & Menu Engineering solution allows us to confidently provide that information.

Jonathon Swaine
Managing Director, Fuller's Inns

Build Trust

One customer with a severe nut allergy explains why advance information is so helpful: "It's quicker and less troublesome than enduring the long and embarrassing experience of asking someone. I think it shows they are competent in what they do and confident in what they serve — reassuring traits for anyone intending to eat the food they're preparing, whether they have an allergy or not!"

Summary

Customers want to know what they're eating, and governments are eager to help them — the need for nutritional and allergen information is here to stay. Smart hospitality operators will see this not as a chore but as a business opportunity.

Using Fourth's Recipe & Menu Engineering solution enables your chefs to create new, enticing dishes that appeal to a broad range of customers. You can also provide detailed and, in some cases, life-saving information to guests, giving them the confidence to visit your restaurant, and increasing their likely spend. This isn't merely a compliance issue – it's an important source of future business.

About Fourth's Recipe & Menu Engineering Solution

Aside from handling nutritional and allergen information for your business, Fourth's Recipe & Menu Engineering solution allows you to plan portion sizes, margins, costs and purchasing strategy in advance:

- Menu and supplier changes are easy to make — and that data can be deployed across all sites in real-time.

- Achieve a 1-3% margin uplift and eliminate supplier overcharge by ordering from accurate data.

- Gain total margin control with accurate cost calculations of individual dishes, full menus, and menu cycles.

- Easily understand your lowest-performing dishes with key business analytics.

- Quickly and easily plan menu cycles that have the right variety at the right price.

- Part of the Fourth Platform, a fully-integrated, complete back-office solution built specifically for the hospitality sector.

About Fourth

Fourth provides end-to-end, best-in-class technology and services for the restaurant and hospitality industries. Their supply chain and workforce management solutions, coupled with the industry's most complete data and analytics suite, give operators the actionable insights they need to control costs, scale profitability, improve employee engagement, and maintain compliance. Since its merger with US-based HotSchedules, Fourth serves more than 7,000 customers across 120,000 locations globally.

Questions?
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