

Title: Food purchasing trends and their influence on menu compilation.

Student ID:

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It is important for companies to predict and understand external factors and consumer trends in order to adjust and adapt business views and their strategies. Without a research around the market, companies may result in failing their objectives. Political, environmental and social factors should be studied before to define the company strategy in order to minimize the costs and to improve revenues and so profitability. Digitalisation, covid 19 and other external factors have affected consumers trends and habits and so companies strategies. According to GOV.UK 33% of children between 5 and 10 years old suffer of obesity, this data raise in the adult stage in fact 63% of the population in UK suffer of bad eating disorder and so obesity (Gov UK, 2021). Obesity is in fact a global pandemic that affects population on a global scale, that makes people more predisposed to develop diseases; in fact, according to RAND's publication, obesity-related illness in the UK is responsible for more than 30.000 deaths per year. As a result, low quality diets and bad eating habits put people at high risk of health illness (D'Angelo et al., 2020.).

The Public Health Minister Churchill (Gov.uk, 2021.) affirmed that: "Our aim is to make it as easy as possible for people to make healthier food choices for themselves and their families, both in restaurants and at home. That is why we want to make sure everyone has access to accurate information about the food and drink we order. These measures form an important building block in our strategy to support and encourage people in achieving and maintaining a healthier weight." In fact, back in July 2020 the government has published the response of the mandatory calorie labeling for businesses: this strategy was introduced to empower people to choose healthier lifestyle, and 79% of respondents affirmed that menus should include calories labeling. According to RAND's publication about food consumption in the UK, most of the population still consumes too much saturated fat compared to fruits and vegetables, and the use of food delivery platforms is not helping people make healthier choices as most of the outside food is not healthy. Despite it, more and more people are more concerned about losing weight and choosing healthy options; according to Yamato website, after the pandemic almost half of the population is concerned about the way they select and buy their food and about provenance, as the demand for organic food is increasing. Another important change is the increased demand for veganism and vegetarianism that has increased 14% in the UK in the last few years, and has pushed people to consider the greener cuisine avoiding food waste. Examples of this new type of zero waste-vegan cuisine are chefs Alexis Gauthier and Max la Manna. Gauthier is a french chef who completely turned his restaurant in London into 100% vegan, moved by the idea of reinventing traditional french menu in a vegan way, similarly does Max, who uses social media to promote veganism and the importance of living a low-impact lifestyle; the chef is against any food waste, as a matter of fact he utilizes every part of the vegetables, and has published a cookbook named More Plants Less Waste in which he offers suggestions on how to start a greener lifestyle and plants-based recipes with zero waste. Chefs are also fighting to avoid food waste: Tom Hunt is a chef and climate activist who started a campaign around food waste a decade ago when he realized how much food he was being wasted, and he started to connect the topic of food waste to the biggest topic around climate change. On the other hand, it must be said that customers are the one who play a vital role in terms of trends and demand, and their habits can affect pioneer chefs: in fact,

based on his own experience, chef Gauthier affirmed that ‘‘I think many chefs are scared to take the plunge and are afraid to lose their customers’’ as when he changed his restaurant into vegan, he had to deal with a negative response from his customers (www.welcometothejungle.com.n.d).

Since the demand of these trends is increasing, when promoting a vegan or veggie menu in your restaurant, it is important to consider staff knowledge about the trend: employers should offer training for staff in order to make them prepared. The hospitality environment is adapting by offering online training; for example, there are some easy-to-use online training courses that aim to help staff know who to take care of veggie\vegan customers, in order to avoid complaints. In fact, these courses will cover contents as: what vegan\vegetarian people eat and drinks, points of service for vegan\vegetarian customers, hidden ingredients that are not suitable, give in-depth knowledge of dishes so that any customer’s questions can be answered, and avoid common mistakes when serving vegan food or vegetarian ([store.upskillpeople.com,n.d](http://store.upskillpeople.com.n.d)). There are also some vegan associations that provide training for catering staff, that include sessions on vegetarian and vegan diets, recipe development, menu planning, avoiding contamination, on-trend ingredients; it must be said that this specific course has a considerable cost (Vegan society, n.d.).

It is important for restaurant owners to consider the impact of these trends as research to support the increased demand of veganism showed that 825 new vegan menus and products were launched in 2021. According to Columbus website, almost 7.2 million adults in the UK follow a meat-free diet and it is predicted that by 2025 one quarter of the UK population is going to be vegan (Gilban,n.d.). In fact, more and more people choose to join the purpose of veganism, moved from more awareness of animal welfare, to the need for a healthier diet because consuming high amounts of meat can lead to major health risks, and at least for an environmental impact. All these factors may affect the supply chain because nowadays consumers look for transparency into the products that they are purchasing, so businesses should choose environmentally friendly suppliers and packaging. According to Our World in Data website, supply chains account for 18% of food emission; as the process of converting produce from the farm into final product requires energy inputs, many people think that supporting local producers is the key for reducing emission but the percentage of food emission is only 6% globally. Despite the overall percentage of the supply chain mission might seem high at 18% it is essential for reducing emissions by preventing food waste as one quarter of emissions of food production ends up as wastage, in order to avoid this long lasting packages and the use of refrigerators should be implemented. Since nowadays there are plenty of options available in order to support environmentally friendly organizations, such as using solar panels or using recycled materials, it is harder to decarbonize farms and production (Ritchie,2019.). According to RAND’s publication, food waste costs £20 billion in the UK annually contributing to circa 25 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emission while a change of diet based on reducing the consumption of meat can significantly reduce these numbers. Since the demand of vegan food is increasing, as a result it is also affecting the supply chain in hospitality, and since vegan consumers are hyper-aware of what goes into their food and where it is sourced from, businesses should make sure that their suppliers are aligned to the cause. In order to do it, businesses should ask suppliers ethical-related questions to ensure that the product provenience is truly ‘‘vegan’’ with no contamination of animal products, and make sure that suppliers have enough knowledge of sustainable vegan food (Certification, 2019.) In conclusion, since veganism is becoming more demanding in today’s society, the need to offer vegan food in restaurants is becoming vital for businesses to succeed. In fact, this is one of the most popular culinary trends of the current decade and is even predicted to keep growing over the next few years. The current demand for tasty plant-based food recipes and innovative drink options still continues to rapidly increase, as a result, keep going with all the new transformations in order to create vegan dishes to meet customer

eating preferences is a smart move for restaurant operators and owners who want to take advantages of this new billion-dollar opportunity in the food business as much as to survive to the hard competition in the sector. In fact, those in the business know that limiting the availability of plant-based foods could be catastrophic, as it could truly cause them to lose customers retention and as a consequence the restaurant industry is listening and responding to the demand for more vegan restaurant menu options, and even if the cost of vegan ingredients are not cheap, consumers seem to understand and are more than happy to pay more as long as they are offered the vegan options they want. From plant-based recipes to vegan desserts, smart restaurant owners and managers are quickly readapting their menus to support the vegan lifestyle, and healthy lifestyle (Bissegger,2022.).

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