



Industry News - AM

Restaurant diners want more chicken, breakfast and burgers

By Rita Jane Gabbett on 4/21/2011

A recent survey showed two-thirds of diners at fast casual restaurants indicated they would come out to eat more often for a wider variety of chicken and breakfast menu items, while casual restaurant diners would do so for unique, premium burgers.

In March, Radius Global Market Research surveyed 510 U.S. consumers aged 18 to 64 who had dined out recently and had ordered and paid for their own meal.

"While value is still the main driver of frequency of dining out and spend per visit, there are ways to offset that and preserve the bottom line," said Chip Lister, Managing Director of Radius, in a news release. "The consumers we spoke to had clear ideas about what would make them increase the number of times they ate outside their home."

Nearly two-thirds of respondents said they would be willing to dine out more often if restaurants acted on their suggestions, including:

- Fast Casual eaters want a wider variety of both chicken and breakfast menu items.
- Almost one in four fast casual diners said they'd likely act on promotions delivered via social media networks like Facebook and Twitter.
- In the casual dining category diners said they would come more often for unique premium burgers.
- Diners in all categories said that increased access to calorie counts and other nutritional information at restaurants would influence how often they visit.
- Customers visiting fine dining establishments prove the toughest to motivate. Nearly half of respondents indicated that their current habits could not be changed by anything other than price.

Survey results indicate that coupons continue to be the primary way that consumers control spending when dining out. Respondents expect deals and coupons across all foodservice categories, including fine dining.

A vast majority of diners surveyed (86 percent) said they find ways to trim the bill at every restaurant visit, up 10 percent from a similar survey taken in 2009.

"Our survey shows that consumers are becoming even more firmly entrenched in their value-based behavior," Lister added. "But it's important for foodservice marketers to realize that there are additional ways beyond coupons to attract consumers such as menu innovation and social media promotions."

