

Foodservice Brand Ethics - US - 2021

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This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumer attitudes and foodservice brand ethics.
- What consumers think about the top ethical dilemmas facing restaurants today, from sustainability to employee welfare.
- Ethical issues as payment and visitation motivators among consumers.

82% of restaurant customers say health insurance for employees and living wages for employees are important to them, indicating the universal demand for better treatment of restaurant employees that transcends political and demographic lines. Consumers also overwhelmingly expect restaurant chains to shoulder these costs with their own profits.

COVID-19 revealed racial and social inequities in the US, including those within the restaurant industry. Between consumer demand for better treatment of employees and the competitive job market during economic recovery, restaurants are forced to reconsider starting wages and benefits packages sooner rather than later.

Immense logistical, supply and cost challenges face foodservice operators trying to come up with more ethical packaging solutions, especially with a quickly accelerated off-premise industry from COVID-19. However, consumers will increasingly scrutinize the recyclability and reusability of packaging, forcing continued sustainability investments.

With immense challenge comes great opportunity for innovation: for example, think of how circular packaging economies can potentially benefit restaurant loyalty, as the necessity of returning or reusing takeout packaging (eg for a deposit refund) drives repeat visitation.



“Restaurant customers overwhelmingly embrace foodservice brand ethics, desiring to see employee welfare, animal welfare and sustainability improvements at restaurants, and this is especially true for quickly growing demographics such as younger, multicultural consumers.”

– Jill Failla, Senior Foodservice Analyst

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