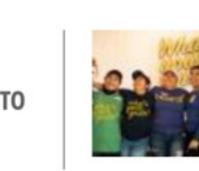






SCALING HEALTH: EVERYTABLE'S EXPANSION PLANS TO ACKLE FOOD NEQUALITY



GUSTO! IS BUILDING THE HUMAN-CONNECTION RESTAURANT BRAND

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## What Families Want from Fast-Casual Restaurants

restaurants because they perceive it as higher quality.

fast food instead. Why? Kids like the food AND they get a toy.

Families with kids bring in checks that are twice as high.

**OUTSIDE INSIGHTS** | JULY 28, 2023 | JENNIFER LOPER









Parents would often rather go to fast casual restaurants with their families than quick-service

ADOBE STOCK

The fast casual restaurant segment has seen tremendous success and growth in recent years.

According to Circana, Inc./CREST, while overall restaurant traffic was down 4 percent in 2022 compared

to 2019, fast casual traffic was up 9 percent. But there's one area in which it can improve: with young

Why should fast casuals work on improving with young families? Not only is winning over kids important to building a fan base among future guests, but families with kids 12 and under bring in checks that are more than twice as high as parties without kids. So, how can fast casual restaurants

attract this valuable consumer segment to their restaurants? C3, a leading agency specializing in kids and families in restaurants, conducted a study to find out. Fast casuals have the food... Parents would often rather go to fast casual restaurants with their families than quick service restaurants because they perceive it as higher quality and better-for-you, but their kids often ask for

...But lack kid-focus.

or entertainment.

families.

It is evident to the parents we talked to that most fast casual restaurants don't focus on the kid and family experience. As one dad said: "So at the end of the day, there's nothing relatable to a kid [...] If they have something specific that stands out and says 'Oh, so [this fast casual brand] does focus on kids now.' Yeah, then I think they would get the [family] business."

The key ingredients to kid-friendliness: Here are the top 2 things parents are looking for in a kid-friendly fast casual restaurant:

No. 1: Kids' meals. 85 percent of parents stated that a kids' meal or kids' menu is essential to making a

Even for brands that have kids' menus, they're often de-emphasized on the menu board and lacking in

options. In addition, most fast casual brands don't engage kids directly through packaging, messaging

### fast casual restaurant kid friendly. It signals to parents that that restaurant has food their kids will like.

kids cups with lids (that aren't too big and won't spill).

Kids' meals are table stakes. In addition, 52% of parents agree that a kids' beverage should be included in the kids' meal.

No. 2 Kids' give-aways (like toys/activities/coloring). These are the second highest items on the kidfriendly list, with 70 percent of parents agreeing that items that add fun and entertainment to a kids' dining experience—just like they've come to expect from fast food restaurants—are key to a good family experience.

These top 2 ingredients are followed by items that add to the kid-friendly atmosphere (like friendly

employees and a place that kids can get a little noisy without getting dirty looks) as well as basics like

What's at the bottom of the list? Things that parents often try to steer their kids away from: desert (only 20 percent of parents say this is important to kid-friendliness) and screens (only 11 percent of parents say restaurant apps or websites with kids games is important to kid-friendliness). These items might work for some brands, but they are not essential ingredients to attracting families.

Why are kids' give-aways so important to kid-friendliness? One of the opportunities that research revealed is for the fast casual segment to engage with kids directly. Kids' give-aways are a tool to achieve that. Not only do they improve the kids' experience of

the brand, but they also improve parents' as well! According to parents, kids give-aways...

Are something to entertain kids in the car on the way home (from drive-thru or take-out).

they'll get from most fast-food restaurants. In other words, families want food and fun! The

Parents have told us that they'd prefer to go to fast casual restaurants for the better-quality food and

atmosphere, while their kids are usually pushing for fast food, in large part due to the toys they know

Encourage kids' creativity, imagination, and pretend play. Make kids more excited about going to a non-fast-food restaurant.

Are something for kids to play with while parents eat.

Are a small gift for the kids.

Are an exciting surprise for kids.

Are fun for kids.

The business case for kids' give-aways:

If a fast casual restaurant brand were to provide kids' toys or give-aways...

80 percent agree: Makes that brand seem like a **better value** for their family.

Are something to entertain the kids while the adults have a conversation.

introduction of kid's give-aways would go a long way to help increase families' traffic to fast casual restaurants:

### 90 percent agree: It would make that brand seem **more fun.** 87 percent agree: Their kids would ask to go there more often.

that will benefit kids, parents, and your brands' traffic.

79 percent agree: They would take their family there more often.

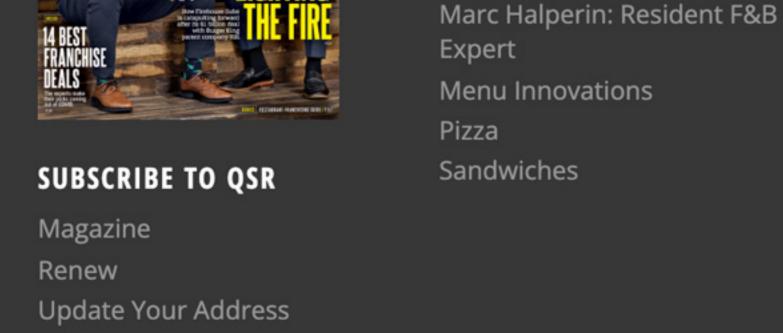
C3 is a Kansas City-based marketing and design agency that brings brands to life for families with children through experiences and entertainment. C3 uses insights, strategy and expertise to produce

industry partners connect with families wherever they are—in person, at home or in the community at

award-winning programs and custom products to help major restaurant, hospitality and service

If you're a fast casual restaurant looking for the next level of growth, consider adding a kids' meals to

your menu (if you don't already have them) and upping the fun level with an entertaining give-away



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# Pizza Sandwiches

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