

A case of convenience

Convenience food – from greater choice to home delivery

By Charles Manners (pictured), Director, Turpin Smale Catering Consultants

Everyone will have noticed supermarkets have opened a huge number of local stores (Morrisons excluded) mainly to recognise that people did not want to drive and shop; requiring greater convenience to buy their food more frequently often within walking distance of where they live, with the certainty of the brand's prices and quality.

The internet and access to 4G is driving this change, and the supermarkets have been developing sophisticated internet home delivery options (Morrisons included). Food service is following the retail market in offering convenience with the restaurant chains developing home delivery options. There has been a huge growth in companies developing takeaway platforms such as Just Eat and Hungryhouse, and Pizza Express has announced 150 stores will offer a home delivery option. The latest AlixPartners/Peach report states that some 1,770 new restaurants opened in the last 12 months; this amounts to some 7% growth, leading to the thought there will be saturation in certain markets.

With the growth in home delivery, where does this leave university caterers, who traditionally have offered a delivered



hospitality service (which has become increasingly sophisticated utilising technology, combined with a reduction in T&C's, shorter order times and improved product quality)? With internal budgets coming under pressure, the challenge is on to find new sales opportunities.

There is also evidence that consumers are spending less time going out and switching spend from meals to snacks ('grab and go' and breakfast are the only segments seeing real growth, which is good news for university caterers).

There will be increasing demand for convenience and delivered takeaway products, not just from traditional customer groups, and technology will no doubt help in the logistics; but this business may not be incremental, which financially is going to be challenging, with money spread across campus but at an increased cost. This is what the supermarkets and, increasingly, restaurant chains will find; and there could be lessons for university food service caterers!

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Seasonal boost for Leeds Trinity



The university is transforming its on-campus catering

Leeds Trinity University has recently appointed food provider Aramark to deliver a range of food services on campus to provide the students with fresh, seasonal food.

The University prides itself on offering students an enjoyable and unforgettable

experience during their time at university and the provision of healthy food is no exception.

Aramark's appointment will help Leeds Trinity University to transform the experience of catering on campus. This transformation has already begun, with work now underway to refurbish the dining room and Atrium Café. The

servery area and deli bar are being refurbished with new equipment, including hot counters and display units along with a demonstration cooking station. Wall, floor and ceiling finishes will be renewed within the servery area, as well as with new lighting and signage. The Atrium Café is being replaced and will include a Starbucks concession, which will offer enhanced facilities for staff and students.

Howard Nelson, Chief Operating Officer at Leeds Trinity University, said: "The reason behind changing the way catering is delivered on campus is centred around enhancing the student, staff and visitor experience. Here at Leeds Trinity University, we are continually investing in the campus with new, sustainable developments to improve facilities, ensuring that students have the best experience they possibly can. To date more than £15m has been invested in Leeds Trinity University's infrastructure and a further £25m is in the pipeline."