

ON-CAMPUS HOSPITALITY

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Survey Tracks Young Adult Dining Preferences

According to a recent survey, young adults ages 18 to 33 report being heavily motivated by price and variety, and the dining venues they are choosing confirms that. Results of the survey can be useful to college and university operations.

Y-Pulse LLC, a food industry research and consulting firm, conducted a dining preferences survey of 315 young adults. “Young adult diners are eating more often at quick-serve restaurants than at any other restaurant type,” said Sharon Olson, co-founder of Y-Pulse. “At least half of all respondents reported never ordering food and/or drink at coffee shops, fast-casual and high-end restaurants in any given week. Meanwhile, pizza restaurants were the second place they are most likely to dine.”

Important findings related to service included:

- The top lunch and dinner service factors reported by respondents were low prices, great service and proximity to home or job.
- Frequent discounts and coupons were the next most sought after service factor followed by “a place where their friends also go.”
- These respondents also highly rated restaurants where they felt they were welcome to stay as long as they like and that offered rewards for frequency of purchases or visits.

Findings about menus included:

- The top reasons cited by respondents for picking lunch or dinner restaurants were establishments that offered the food they wanted to eat, followed by those with a wide range of menu items.
- Free drink refills came in third.
- The fourth most sought after menu factor was “to go” options, although that was more important at lunchtime (90 percent) than at dinner (83 percent).
- A variety of healthy/organic menu items came in fifth, while a variety of ethnic offerings scored sixth most important.

Free soft-serve ice cream or yogurt also made the list of desired menu factors, chosen by two-thirds of respondents.

DINING at USF