



May 11, 2016

How Campus C-Stores Are Schooling the Industry

More students are purchasing food on campus. What's attracting them?

CHICAGO -- More students are purchasing food from on-campus foodservice venues than they were in 2010. With the continuing rise of social and digital media, campus foodservice professionals are increasing their use of these technologies, according to a recent study by **Y-Pulse**.



"Seventy-six percent of the college students we surveyed reported that they were purchasing food at convenience stores on campus as opposed to only 22% in the previous study," said Sharon Olson, executive director of Y-Pulse.

College and university foodservice directors in charge of convenience-store and retail operations have more than doubled their use of social media in the past five years in order to connect with their consumers on campus.

The **Y-Pulse** study found that 75% of foodservice professionals now use social and digital media tools to engage their c-store and retail customers, compared to 32% in 2010.

It found that the majority of on-campus convenience and retail stores are on Facebook, Twitter or a website to digitally connect with their consumers. The largest digital platform increase occurred with 72% of foodservice professionals using a website to engage their c-store and retail consumers, whereas only 33% reported using one in 2010.

Overall, on-campus foodservice operators are showing an increase in understanding of social media technologies since 2010.

Highlights of the study:

- Top platforms that college and university foodservice professionals are using to connect with c-store and retail purchasers include Facebook (85%), Twitter (82%), a website (72%) and Instagram (54%).
- Top platforms students choose to obtain information about on-campus food options include Facebook (90%), Twitter (86%), a website (80%) and Instagram (60%).
- Ninety-three percent of students reported purchasing food on campus in 2015, a 26% increase since 2010.
- Sixty-nine percent of foodservice operators surveyed, whose responsibilities included the management of on-campus c-store and retail locations, believe they have a clear understanding of what they hope to accomplish in using social media for their operation, while only 37% felt that way in 2010.

Y-Pulse's study, released in April, queried 66 college and university foodservice professionals and 265 full-time students in October 2015 on their use of social-media platforms as it relates to campus foodservice venues. Questions included multiple choice, rating scale and open-ended queries to delve into social-media usage and preferences. Campus venues that were a subject in the survey included residential dining, convenience stores, quick-service restaurants (QSRs), vending and catering.