Traditional views of mealt ime can pretty much be tossed out the window. Driven by evolving lifestyles and cultural forces, today’s consumers are increasingly ‘outsourcing’ food preparation and cooking to food service providers and restaurants. Are you positioned to meet their needs and keep up with their expectations?

Consumer eating behaviors continue to change and evolve in relationship to shifts in lifestyle dictated by any combination of factors: demands of work, commuting to and from work, raising families, social interaction, holidays, kids’ after-school or weekend activities, etc. It’s little wonder, then, that today’s consumers are increasingly ‘outsourcing’ meal preparation and cooking to food service providers and restaurants.

When consumers make the decision to NOT cook for themselves, a series of considerations is set in motion on just how and where they will ‘outsource’ their food preparation and cooking for the eating and drinking occasion at hand.

Through this Food Service Experience 2016 syndicated research, food service providers, restaurateurs and other food and beverage purveyors will have the framework to understand the cultural relevance with regard to occasions that draw consumers to their establishments.

Food Service Experience 2016 will explore consumers’ food service experiences through the lens of food and beverage culture in America. The study will examine several channels to understand consumer expectations and food service establishments’ ability to satisfy them. The four channels in this study include:

- Quick Service Restaurants (QSR/Fast Food — e.g., McDonald’s, Burger King, Taco Bell, Subway, KFC, Dairy Queen)
- Cafés/Coffee Shops (e.g., Starbucks, Dunkin’ Donuts, Peet’s, Caribou, Krispy Kreme, Tim Hortons)
- Fast Casual (e.g., Chipotle, Panera, Cosi, MOD Pizza, Zoe’s)
- Full-service, Casual Dining (Olive Garden, Red Robin, Denny’s, Red Lobster, P.F. Chang’s, Applebee’s, Chili’s)

METHODOLOGY
An integrated qualitative and quantitative approach to understand the factors, trends and consumer expectations for experiences when they decide to outsource food preparation and cooking in four key restaurant and food service channels.

Quantitative: Online survey to a sample of 1,500 U.S. consumers 18 to 70 years of age who have visited at least one of the restaurant channels in the past two weeks.

Qualitative: In-depth, in-person “dine alongs” and discussions across a variety of food service channels.

REPORT COST
Before May 31, 2016: $12,500
After May 31, 2016: $15,000

FINAL DELIVERABLE
In-depth report (in PowerPoint) of overall findings, including executive summary, complete analyses and recommendations, and supported by full-color charts and visuals. Accompanying the general report will be a supporting set of data tables (Excel) with a breakdown of key demographics.
Overview & Scope

When America’s consumers choose to outsource food preparation and cooking for any number of eating-away-from-home occasions, they face a near-overwhelming array of choices in the marketplace: fine dining, fast casual, fast food, self-service (take-away prepared foods at supermarkets, specialty food retailers, convenience stores and drugstores), home delivery, curbside delivery and on and on.

Although traditional dining habits persist (e.g., eating out remains tied to celebration), consumers have outsourced food preparation and now eat out as a daily habit. When that new behavior is paired with our ongoing cultural fascination with global flavors, diet and health, we see greater demand for menus with fresh, healthy and sustainable options. These changes in food culture occur at the same time that operators face new challenges and unprecedented risks as food and beverage supply chains become more brittle due to numerous environmental, social and economic influences.

Since the focus of Food Service Experience 2016 is on food and beverage, for each channel included in the study, we will concentrate on what quality means and how well quality is executed/delivered.

Food Service Experience 2016 will measure “food” experience, “food” quality, etc., through questions such as:

- Why do consumers choose to eat out instead of cooking for themselves?
- How do they choose the restaurants they do?
- How does technology enter into consumers’ choice and evaluation of their experience?
- Given today’s accessibility to digital platforms and delivery services, how is the ritual process changing over time?
- What is the best way to engage consumers and provide the experience they both need and want?
- How do you delight your customers when there is so much competing for their attention?
- How concerned are consumers with the safety of the food served at restaurants? How can you instill confidence and earn trust in your food quality and safety?

As part of our deep dives into each channel, we will cover the diverse experiences of dine-in, take-out and drive-thru as appropriate for each channel.

The results will provide insights into how to maximize diner loyalty by channel and how restaurateurs can work to elevate their concept’s experience to meet and exceed their customers’ expectations, while remaining true to their brands.
Food Service Experience 2016
Participation Form

To reserve your copy of the final report, please fill out the form below and return by email or fax to:

Blaine Becker  
Senior Director of Marketing  
f: 425.452.9092  
e: blaine@hartman-group.com

Cost

☐ General report, before May 31, 2016: $12,500  
☐ General report, after May 31, 2016: $15,000

Terms: Due upon receipt of invoice

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Phone  
Email  
Signature  
Date

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A portion of the proceeds from this study goes to Emily’s Friends, an organization dedicated to supporting the well-being of children and youth in our community.