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Campus Foodservice Operators Keen on Social Media

A study conducted by Y-Pulse, a foodservice research and consulting firm, reported that 95 percent of college and university campus foodservice operators surveyed say they use social media to connect with their customers.

Of these, 91 percent say they use Facebook, while almost one-third use Myspace, 22 percent use Twitter, and 5 percent use LinkedIn.

Almost six in 10 of those surveyed (56 percent) say they put information about foodservice operations on a Web site, and some are even using customized apps for foodservice venues.

"Campus foodservice operators are definitely ahead of the curve when it comes to embracing social media because they are so closely in touch with their students," says Sharon Olson, co-founder of Y-Pulse.

Operators find that social media makes their operations appear more relevant and responsive to customers, but they also reported that the immediacy of the medium can be a negative, causing mistakes and misinformation to multiply rapidly.

Students are largely positive or neutral toward foodservice use of social media, with 49 percent of respondents feeling that the practice is positive or very positive. Only 6 percent say they felt negative or very negative toward the practice.