

Social Media is Indispensable to Foodservice Directors



An increase in the use of social and digital media by on-campus foodservice venues is complemented by an increase in business.

The value of social and digital media marketing is now more realized than ever by college and university foodservice directors in charge of c-store and retail operations. These foodservice directors have increased their social media use substantially, in an effort to better connect with consumers on campus.

In fact, research from Y-Pulse has revealed that these foodservice directors have more than doubled their use of social media in the last five years. The recent study from **Y-Pulse** shows 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.

More students are purchasing food from on-campus foodservice venues than they were in 2010, and with the continuing rise of social and digital media, campus foodservice professionals are increasing their use of these technologies. **Y-Pulse** found the majority of on-campus convenience and retail stores are on Facebook, Twitter and/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.

"76% 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," **Sharon Olson, executive director of Y-Pulse**, said. "It is exciting to see that campus c-store operators have been so effective in attracting student consumers to their stores."

FACTS

- 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%).
- 93% of students reported purchasing food on-campus in 2015, a 26% increase since 2010.
- 69% 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.

