

Social Media Increasing Visits to Campus C-Stores

Usage has doubled among foodservice directors in last five years.



CHICAGO — In the evolving world of social media, foodservice directors know it's important to stay connected with their customers, especially those on college campuses.

According to a recent **Y-Pulse study**, college and university foodservice directors in charge of convenience store and retail operations have more than doubled their usage of social media in the last five years in order to connect with consumers on campus.

A reported three-quarters of foodservice professionals now use social and digital media tools to engage their c-store and retail customers, vs. 32 percent in 2010. Overall, on-campus foodservice operators are showing an increase in understanding of social media technologies since 2010, **Y-Pulse** reported.

The survey also found that more students are purchasing food from on-campus foodservice venues than they were in 2010.

"[Seventy-nine] percent of the college students we surveyed reported that they were purchasing food at convenience stores on campus, as opposed to only 22 percent in the previous study," said **Sharon Olson, executive director of Y-Pulse**. "It is exciting to see that campus c-store operators have been so effective in attracting student consumers to their stores."

The majority of on-campus convenience and retail stores have a presence on Facebook, Twitter and/or have a website to digitally connect with consumers. The largest digital-platform increase occurred with 72 percent of foodservice professionals using a website to engage their c-store and retail consumers vs. 33 percent who reported using one in 2010.





Other findings from the Y-Pulse research are:

- The top platforms college and university foodservice professionals are using to connect with consumers are Facebook (85 percent), Twitter (82 percent), a website (72 percent) and Instagram (54 percent).
- The top platforms students choose to obtain information about on-campus food options are Facebook (90 percent), Twitter (86 percent), a website (80 percent) and Instagram (60 percent).
- 93 percent of students reported purchasing food on-campus in 2015, a 26-percent increase over 2010.
- Of the foodservice operators surveyed, 69 percent said they have a clear understanding of what they hope to accomplish using social media vs. 37 percent who felt that way in 2010.

Y-Pulse's latest study 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.

Chicago-based Y-Pulse is the research and consulting division of Olson Communications, a marketing communications agency serving the food industry since 1988.