

OUTLET: @TOTALFOODSERVICE FB POST
DATE: FEBRUARY 10, 2026
FOLLOWERS: 3,000



Total Food Service

3K followers · 333 following

Total Food Service is a monthly publication featuring informational news, tips, and product informati

Food & beverage \$

Learn more

Message

Follow



Total Food Service

8h · 🌐

New Issue Alert: Our February Digital Issue Is Live!

This month's cover features an exclusive Q&A with Richard LaRocca, CCM, CCE, Chair of the Club Management Association of America (CMAA), sharing leadership insights and industry perspective you won't want to miss.

In addition, the February issue delivers timely coverage on delivery settlements, sustainability efforts, dining trends, and more.

Inside the issue:

- Richard LaRocca Cover Q&A – pg. 36
- NYC Wins \$5M+ Delivery Court Settlement – pg. 4
- Denver Takes On Food Waste – pg. 6
- Houston Eatery Wins Over NYC Diners – pg. 8
- Philly Takes Aim at Reservation Scalpers – pg. 20

Read now. Link in Comments!

#newissue #foodserviceindustry #restaurantindustry #hospitality #totalfoodservice

THE POUR Trends, Techniques, Tips, and Inspiration for Beverage Pros

WHAT'S YOUR COMMUNITY STRATEGY? TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN 2026, THE LEAST INTERESTING THING ABOUT YOUR BAR SHOULD BE THE DRINKS.

More and more, younger people aren't looking to hang out just to place the drink. In fact, data shows that they're drinking less and less. Instead, according to Advertising Week, they are looking for a place to belong—filling a bar's core purpose from consumption to connection.

The trick to getting your bar a customer base in 2026 lies in what you do with the rest of your cocktail. It's all about making your bar a destination—a welcoming third place for the community. In 1985, sociologist Ray Oldenburg coined the term "third place" to describe a vital, informal gathering spot that's separate from home (the "first place") and the workplace (the "second place").

Your establishment can become that place, a space where customers feel comfortable spending time, meeting up with friends, and in general, living their lives. A successful business solves a problem and offers a solution.

In an era of remote work, social media that's more isolating than not, and an age of general loneliness and emotional disconnection, the problem is that we don't see it. So how can you make your establishment into a hub that naturally draws the community in? Here are three things you can do.

Start with a group of loyal readers, as well as thought leaders. Tony Lopez at Williamsburg uses his backspace for community events, poetry readings, and karaoke, as well as weekly specials like "Golf Dinners" featuring live music, 55 mini martinis, and



Clinton Hill offers pet portraits in the summer months.

The limit to events does not exist. There's flower arranging, acoustic guitar playing, bonus making, cheese pairing classes, embroidery workshops, clothing swaps, fundraisers for social justice, celebrity look-alike contests, the list goes on.

The best PR is word of mouth, and the best way to make connections with new customers is through shared experiences. We're seeing this with large corporations, which are investing heavily in experiential marketing. But you don't need a huge budget to make



this happen. It just needs to be authentic and simple.

All over, people are looking for work and spaces to showcase their talents. Stop thinking of them as events and start thinking of them as micro-residues.

If you welcome someone—say, a local singer chatting with a local card reader—into your bar for a residency one night of the week, you create a symbiotic relationship. You are giving them a free workspace and physical footprint; in exchange, they are bringing their dedicated Instagram following into your establishment. You

aren't just filling a table; you are creating a community. You gain their following, they gain your foot traffic, and it's the most cost-effective marketing strategy available because it turns your slower nights into ones that generate revenue.

So how do the economics of hanging out work? You need to change your mindset from selling drinks to selling time.

When a customer comes in for an embryonic class, they are "renting" their chair, the other, and their community connection. To make this profitable, your menu needs to adapt. If you are hosting a community event on a Sunday night, your non-alcoholic and low-ABV program needs to be as robust and high-margin as your liquor-based menu. People will partake without a fuss if they think they're getting something in return.

Your establishment can become the "third place," a space where customers feel comfortable spending time between home and work, meeting up with friends, and in general, living their lives.

Total Food Service
 FOODSERVICE NEWS • INDUSTRY TRENDS • EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

February 2026
 Vol 35 #200
 totalfood.com

Chair, Club Management Association of America

Richard LaRocca

Exclusive Q&A Interview on Page 36

NYC Wins \$5M+ Delivery Court Settlement on pg. 4
 Denver Takes On Food Waste on pg. 6
 Houston Eatery Wins Over NYC Diners on pg. 8
 Philly Takes Aim at Reservation Scalpers on pg. 20

BUILT FOR HOSPITALITY. DESIGNED FOR CHEFS.

DISCOVER KLAY.

arc cardinal SINGER

Visit Arc Cardinal at Booth #1816 at the New York Restaurant Show | Javits Center | March 8-10, 2026

TREND TALK WITH JOYCE APPELMAAN

DINING TRENDS FORECAST FOR 2026

As we look ahead to 2026, the restaurant industry is poised for a year of significant change. Key trends include a focus on sustainability, a shift towards experiential dining, and a renewed emphasis on community and local sourcing. These trends are driven by a growing consumer awareness of environmental impact and a desire for more meaningful dining experiences.

Key & Co. - Chef's Choice

At Key & Co., we're committed to creating a dining experience that is both delicious and meaningful. Our focus is on sourcing local, seasonal ingredients and offering a menu that changes with the seasons. We believe in the power of good food to bring people together and create lasting memories.

PLANT-BASED NEWS • TRENDS WITH CHERRY DUNN

CHARCUTERIE, REIMAGINED -- NO MEAT REQUIRED

CHEF JENNA MCPARTLAND OF JOYLARK PLANT KITCHEN & BAR ON DESIGNING PLANT-BASED BOARDS WITH BROAD GUEST APPEAL

Plant-based charcuterie is no longer just a niche market—it's a mainstream dining trend. Chefs are reimagining traditional cured meats and cheeses using plant-based alternatives, creating boards that are both delicious and sustainable. This approach appeals to a wider range of guests, including those with dietary restrictions and those who simply prefer plant-based options.

Key & Co. - Chef's Choice

At Key & Co., we're committed to creating a dining experience that is both delicious and meaningful. Our focus is on sourcing local, seasonal ingredients and offering a menu that changes with the seasons. We believe in the power of good food to bring people together and create lasting memories.

REWARDS LITERALS, PAGE 40

As the industry continues to evolve, rewards programs are becoming a key differentiator for restaurants. From loyalty cards to digital wallets, these programs offer a way to engage customers and increase repeat business. However, it's important to design a rewards program that is both attractive and sustainable.

Key & Co. - Chef's Choice

At Key & Co., we're committed to creating a dining experience that is both delicious and meaningful. Our focus is on sourcing local, seasonal ingredients and offering a menu that changes with the seasons. We believe in the power of good food to bring people together and create lasting memories.