



FOODBYTES

YOUR FREE DATASSENTIAL  
TREND REPORT

A LOOK AT  
**LIMITED-TIME  
OFFERS**



PUMPKIN  
SEASON IS  
HERE!

OK, not quite yet, but PSL  
season creeps earlier every  
year, which means the time to  
learn about LTOs is now.

**SUMMER SPOTLIGHT**

# BURGERS, BBQ, & HOT DOGS

ARE THE TOP FLAVORS &  
MENU ITEMS CONSUMERS  
ASSOCIATE WITH THE  
FOURTH OF JULY

*-Seasonal LTOs HotShot Report*

## STAT TO KNOW



# 63%

OF CONSUMERS'  
LAST LTO WAS AN  
IMPULSE BUY.  
CAN OPERATORS HARNESS  
THAT IMPULSE INTO REPEAT  
LTO SALES?

*-Limited Time Offers Keynote Report*



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### My favorite LTOs

Not gonna lie, I kinda love the McRib. I don't go so far as to check the trackers on when it's going to be back or anything, but I usually get it when it's available. I also LOVED McDonald's chicken tenders and wish they'd bring those back. Other LTO favorites include Starbucks' Smoked Butterscotch Latte and honey lattes at Peet's.

### Stats that surprised me

I'm pretty surprised that so many of consumers' last LTOs were purchased on impulse (see stat at left). The whole, "would you like to add X onto your meal?" question after I'm done ordering makes so much sense now, and I could see it working well for LTOs that can be added on for a low price.

I was also super surprised that 72% of consumers would want to provide input to help operators create a new LTO. That's awesome and something that could benefit both parties.

t seems like just yesterday I was writing an editor's letter screaming with joy that it was finally summer, but alas, that's all come and gone as I've just traded flip flops for UGGs and strawberries for pumpkin. Oh man, even just typing that as a joke scared me. Thankfully, it WAS just last month that summer made her appearance, and that was definitely just a big PSYCH on the cover about pumpkin spice being back already.

All jokes aside, though, there's actually not much time until we'll actually be reporting on the release of pumpkin spice lattes and all things fall—last year Starbucks released their iconic fall PSL on Aug. 24, and it seems like the date is earlier every year. But while pumpkin spice may be one of the more obvious LTOs, it's certainly not the only one. Last year, top U.S. chains released over 4,100 LTOs, getting the count back up toward what it was before the pandemic. In time for the summer season and right on track for fall planning, Datassential's Keynote Report team recently released its latest *Limited Time Offers Keynote Report*, and this issue of *FoodBytes* will give you a limited-time look at it. (Yes, we know, limited look probably doesn't sound uber appealing, but you didn't think we were going to give the *whole* farm away for free, did you?)

In the pages ahead, get a glimpse at insights from the full *Keynote Report*, including a look at everything from how often operators typically release LTOs to top challenges operators have in relation to LTOs to what exactly motivates consumers to try something new and only around for a limited time. Keep in mind, though, that the Keynote isn't limited to what's in this issue: reach out to your Datassential rep or email [hello@datassential.com](mailto:hello@datassential.com) to get the full report.

Renee Lee Wege,  
Senior Publications Manager



# WHAT DO CONSUMERS WANT MOST FROM AN LTO?

*fresh ingredients tops the list*

DIG INTO THE [FULL REPORT](#)  
TO DISCOVER WHAT OTHER  
FACTORS MOST DRAW  
CONSUMERS TO LTO'S

## THE LTO LOWDOWN:

# OPERATOR DATA FILE

As operators continue to battle everything from inflation to rising costs to shortages, where does innovation fit in? Here's a peek at a handful of operator insights you'll find in our full *Limited Time Offers Keynote Report*.

"Because Red Robin implemented a scaled-down menu pre-pandemic, its LTOs are now receiving more attention than ever," CEO Paul Murphy said.

And the executive has more than just anecdotes to point to. Since March, the 520-unit chain has featured the Whiskey River Backyard BBQ menu lineup, which includes the Smokehouse Brisket Burger and Tequila Sunset Cocktail — it's the third consecutive menu innovation to hit record levels of sales.

**The product followed the Cheesy Bacon Fondue Burger and Mozzarella Cheese Sticks, both of which were among Red Robin's best-performing LTOs of all time. The strength of these offers have driven average check, incremental margin, and attachment, Murphy said.**

- FSR Magazine, "Red Robin Keeps Releasing Record-Breaking LTOs"



## KEY CHALLENGES

## 34%

OF OPERATORS SAY LTOS ARE A CHALLENGE FOR THEIR STAFF TO IMPLEMENT. THESE ARE THE OTHER HURDLES SURROUNDING LTOS.

Datassential asked operators:  
What are your biggest challenges regarding LTOs?

35% RUNNING OUT OF PRODUCT

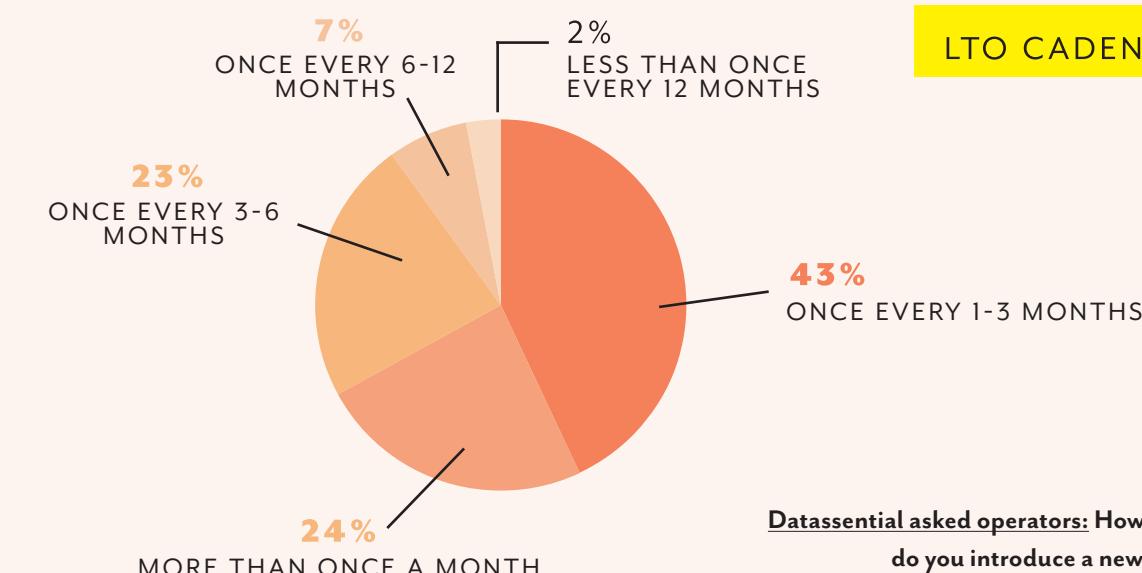
34% TRAINING STAFF TO MAKE A TEMPORARY ITEM

29% CUSTOMERS COMPLAIN WHEN DISCONTINUED

28% USING INGREDIENTS IN ONLY ONE ITEM

27% TRAINING STAFF TO SELL & MARKET LTOS

## LTO CADENCE



Datassential asked operators: How often do you introduce a new LTO?

## KEY STAT

# 4,109

# OF LTOS LAUNCHED BY THE COUNTRY'S TOP 250+ RESTAURANT AND C-STORE CHAINS IN 2021

LTO activity took a major hit during the pandemic, with only about 3,200 LTOs launched in 2020, but numbers are trending back toward pre-pandemic levels — nearly 4,800 LTOs were launched in 2019.

Discover even more about all things LTO-related in the full *Limited Time Offers Keynote Report*, including key data and insights from 1,000 consumers and 300 operators surveyed and Datassential's INSIDER database that tracks LTOs and new menu items from top chains.

# BURGERS ARE THE MOST OFTEN- ORDERED FOOD LTO



## **WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THE FULL REPORT:**

- top beverage LTOs
- last place consumers ordered an LTO from
- what motivated consumers' last LTO purchase
- the roles LTOs play in operators' businesses
- how to effectively price and promote LTOs

# LTOs IN ACTION

spotlight on  
BURGERS



What's all this talk about LTOs without some real-life examples? Below are a few recent standout LTOs featuring how they resonated with consumers in Datassential's SCORES database.

## STANDOUT BEVERAGE: MOCHA ICED COFFEE

DEL TACO



The Mocha Iced Coffee features rich chocolate flavor combined with our signature creamy iced coffee served over ice.



UNIQUENESS  
**33%**  
UNBRANDED PURCHASE INTENT  
**57%**

**The Breakdown:** While the Mocha Iced Coffee scored below average for Uniqueness, this \$1.29 coffee was a top performer in Value and Draw, two factors that helped boost it into being a Superstar.

## STANDOUT SANDWICH: PIZZERIA MEATBALL MELT

GET GO



Layered with hearty meatballs, gooey cheese, pepperoni slices, and our special sauce.



UNIQUENESS  
**42%**  
UNBRANDED PURCHASE INTENT  
**55%**

**The Breakdown:** Getgo's Pizzeria Meatball Melt also isn't the most unique sandwich, scoring only average in the metric, but the sandwich was considered an above-average value, and meatball sandwiches are a consumer favorite (60% love or like them, according to FLAVOR), making this meatball melt a star.



The Krunch Burger from Glory Days Grill scored a 92 and is named a Superstar in SCORES due to broad appeal as well as strong uniqueness.

The Krunch Burger combines Glory Days' award-winning chargrilled steakburger with Homerun Burger Sauce, melted sharp white american cheese, and house-made chips served on a brioche bun.

The high-ranking burger outperforms nearly all other burgers in Purchase Intent and received above-average ratings for both Uniqueness and Draw, further propelling it into superstardom.



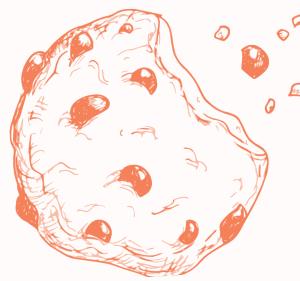
The Bacon Beast Burger from Carl's Jr. scored an 89 in our SCORES database, with a viability rating of Volume Driver. This means the burger has strong interest driven by product appeal and/or price.

The Bacon Beast Burger features a 3.5 oz. beef patty, tomato, lettuce, pickle, yellow onion, mayo, american cheese, four strips of applewood-smoked bacon, and special sauce on a seeded bun.

The burger's overall score was bolstered by top-performing ratings in Draw, Unbranded PI, and Branded PI, while it only received average ratings for Uniqueness.

i scored a **92** in SCORES!

i scored an  
**89**



## A FEW FINAL TREND BITES

Time is almost out on this issue of *FoodBytes*, but before this LTO runs out, we're leaving you with just a few final thoughts as we look forward to our next issue.

### 3 WAYS TO TAKE ACTION ON LIMITED TIME OFFERS

- Capitalize on opportunities.** There are endless opportunities for operators to experiment with new flavors and formats with LTOs. New mashup sandwich miss the mark? Perhaps it's in need of fine tuning. Summer lemonade selling out? Keep it on the menu longer! In our full *Keynote Report*, you'll find a list of key opportunities where there's a strong disconnect between the types of LTOs consumers are interested in and what's being offered by operators. Hint: bowls and milkshakes are two.
- Play to what consumers are willing to pay more for.** Inflation is the hot button topic of the moment, and rising costs of goods will continue to be top-of-mind in the near term, which means it's time to be smart about LTO strategy. For example, 55% of consumers say they'd be more likely to buy an LTO that features a nostalgic flavor or item, but only a quarter of them would pay more for it. Nearly half of consumers, however, are willing to pay more for LTOs with premium ingredients.
- Consider ease of execution.** Staff shortages are still rampant throughout the industry, and many operators voiced concerns about LTOs that were hard to create. Sidestep any extra stress by focusing on LTOs that are easy to execute (one of the top factors that operators said contributed to an LTO being successful) and don't require special ingredients (having to purchase one specific item for a temporary item can be a pain).



### LTOs FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Top chains are constantly innovating overseas with unique menu items and LTOs. Here are two recently released LTOs from around the world:

#### CURRY UP TO KFC'S NEW CURRYCANO ZINGER

"Enough curry is never enough," says KFC Singapore. The chain's solution is the Curricano Zinger featuring a Hot & Spicy Zinger Fillet with sliced cheese and a unique crispy "hash cup" that perfectly holds a pool of curry sauce — plus, it comes with an extra tub to pour more in.



#### THREE TIMES THE CHEESE AT MCDONALD'S CHINA

McDonald's China is tripling up on cheese with a new Triple Cheese Angus Thick Beef Burger featuring a thick Angus beef patty topped with cheddar cheese, cheese sticks, and cheese sauce.



## WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT MONTH?

Are pandemic-friendly plexi-glass barriers and social distancing signs going to be a thing of the past? Will any of the restaurant designs implemented during COVID last into the future? Next month's *FoodBytes* answers all these questions and more, showcasing the restaurant design trends you need to know.



**HUNGRY FOR MORE TRENDS?** Check out last month's Report Pro releases!



#### IC: Global Hotels

Last month's trek through global hotel trends is sure to inspire ideas — and a healthy dose of wanderlust.

Travel is coming back with a vengeance. Two-thirds of consumers are planning to spend the same or more on vacations, making it perfect timing to check into this issue of *International Concepts*, where we're showcasing the coolest concepts at global hotels and resorts. Discover everything from a Temptation Room filled with desserts at a resort in Capri to the world's first fine dining zipline experience to our hot list of hotel hospitality ideas from around the globe.



#### TW: Health & Wellness Trends

Read up on the latest health and wellness trends, including climatarian diets and carob.

In this issue of *Trend Watch*, get a glimpse into the past, present, and future of diet and health trends. Will climatarian eating be the next keto? What does a 'nutritionist to the stars' think defines healthy eating today? And discover the health-related trends that are heating up menus and retail shelves, from aloe to carob to CBD.



**Keynote Report: 2022 B&I**  
How has the pandemic changed the B&I segment? Find out in this *Keynote Report*.

First the pandemic and now continued hybrid and remote-first work policies have left Business & Industry segment sales in a hole. But the news isn't all bad — many employees are excited to head back into the office and have lunch with coworkers. See what employees want from their workplace foodservice offerings and discover how operators are adapting to the new normal.



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