



Editorial

iii

Opinion Piece

Geoff Scott

Do culinary competitions have any real benefit?

1

Articles

Siddharth Bajjal, Robin Hill, Ee Tan and Michael Potroz

New Zealand Hotel Industry Post-Pandemic Perspectives: Human Resource
Management

4

Xinye Qian, Shelagh Mooney, Claire Liu

Do managers actually walk the talk? Gender equality in hotel careers in Aotearoa
New Zealand

8

Gluseppe Incardona, Maria Gebbels and Thi Hong Hai Nguyen

Millennials' intentions to buy plant-based alternatives: insights for quick-service
restaurants.

11

Patrice Lucas

Managing the Implications of a Low-Carbohydrate Diet
for the Hospitality Industry

14

Hospitality Insights

Vision: To communicate hospitality research to practitioners in the hospitality industry in order to inform their thinking, processes and practices.

Editor-in-Chief

Associate Professor Shelagh Mooney, AUT, New Zealand. shelagh.mooney@aut.ac.nz

Associate Professor Tracy Harkison: AUT, New Zealand. tracy.harkison@aut.ac.nz

Editorial Review Team

Professor Tom Baum: Strathclyde University, UK.

Professor Tracy Berno: AUT, New Zealand.

Marisa Bidois: CEO, Restaurant Association of New Zealand.

Associate Professor Ralf Burbach: Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland.

Associate Professor Cheryl Cockburn-Wootton: University of Waikato, New Zealand.

David Comery: Chief Executive, Second Nature Charitable Trust, New Zealand.

Dr Abrar Faisal, AUT, New Zealand.

Dr Maria Gebbels: University of Greenwich, United Kingdom

Dr Warren Goodsir: AUT, New Zealand.

Associate Professor Tracy Harkison: AUT, New Zealand.

Professor Candice Harris: AUT, New Zealand.

Oliver Horn: General Manager, InterContinental Hua Hin Resort, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand

Dr Stephanie Jameson: Independent Scholar

Professor Peter Kim: AUT, New Zealand.

Professor Alison McIntosh, AUT, New Zealand.

Colin McLean: General Manager, New Zealand Hotel Operations, Sky City, New Zealand.

Associate Professor Heike Schänzel, AUT, New Zealand.

Dr Pola Wang: AUT, New Zealand.

Associate Professor David Williamson, AUT, New Zealand.

Hospitality Insights contains concise and accessible summaries of AUT's hospitality research. Our publication is aimed at a practitioner/industry audience, with a focus on relevant issues to help build a more sustainable hospitality industry for the future.

This journal operates as a tangible vehicle for meaningful outreach with local and international hospitality communities. Our objective is to stimulate dialogue between academic researchers and industry practitioners, as well as with other interested members of the hospitality community. We believe such a discourse can improve business practice, sustainability and workers' wellbeing, and lead to the creation of more healthy societies, whilst also engendering impact and uptake of academic research.

All content is made freely available to access with a [Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial International licence](#). For full details please read our [open access and copyright policy](#).

See our full [guidelines for contributors](#).

Editorial

Tracy Harkison and Shelagh Mooney

Mā te kimi ka kite, Mā te kite ka mōhio, Mā te mōhio ka mārama

Seek and discover. Discover and know. Know and become enlightened.

Kia ora tatou,

Our journal is for the hospitality industry and for our community. It provides peer reviewed pieces of research and/or opinions pieces – to engage and continue a conversation of issues that the hospitality industry is facing.

This current issue will give you some food for thought on the topics of competition, Human Resources and food choices. Our issue begins with an opinion piece on the hidden benefits of culinary competitions, from the perspective of industry, student and academia. The first research article tackles the important role that Human Resource Management is now playing post-pandemic in the areas of attracting, developing and motivating staff. The next article highlights the factors that affect hotel employees' decisions to seek a career in hotels; the findings show that insufficient job satisfaction, career support and gender equality are common barriers to progression. The final articles focus on food choices, the first article discusses the intentions of millennials when buying plant-based alternatives in quick service restaurants. Final article in this issue debates the implications of managing low carbohydrate diets for the hospitality industry, which could see the introduction of new menu items. We hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Hari Kirihimete

Do culinary competitions have any real benefit?

Geoff Scott

Geoff Scott is a Culinary Lecturer in the School of Hospitality and Tourism, Auckland University of Technology. His experience in three-star Michelin restaurants in London, Milan, Paris, Aix-en-Provence and Monaco developed his interest in haute-cuisine. Geoff is a Board member of the New Zealand Chefs Association, a Worldchefs-certified judge and Chief Judge for the New Zealand Ice-Cream Awards. His special areas of interest include youth development, mentoring and coaching, judging food awards and culinary competitions.



As a passionate culinarian, I was honoured to be asked to judge at three recent junior chef competitions in Auckland. Having previously been a junior competitor, a chef in industry, a restaurateur, and now, a culinary lecturer, I questioned the value of culinary competitions as a pracademic. A large amount of time and effort is invested by competitors, coaches, judges, sponsors, and organisers. What is the benefit of culinary competitions? Is there any real reward for students? What outcomes are there for the hospitality industry, and does academia have a part to play in this at all?

Historically, people have enjoyed the spectacle of chefs competing. One of the first recorded culinary competitions took place in Medieval Baghdad, more than 1,000 years ago. Since then, there have been many culinary ‘battles’ but they did not become a major part of popular culture until television and print media made ‘stars’ of chefs in the late 21st century [1]. In January 1987, the Bocuse d’Or, a biennial world chef championship, was first held in Lyon, France, and in 1991, the very first James Beard Foundation Awards were presented in New York City. Two years later, ‘Iron Chef’ was launched in Japan, and at the same time, the Food Network in America was established; now we are bombarded by culinary competitions in many formats.

From a student’s perspective, there are numerous benefits to be gained through competing. It is an essential part of skills development, enabling an environment that tests students against their peers. While keeping up with culinary trends, competitors develop creativity, enhance their cooking abilities, build confidence, self-discipline, and even learn humility [2]. Through their training for competitions, competitors are exposed to the discipline and expectations of professional competitions. They must demonstrate impeccable hygiene practices, excellent knife skills, speed, and creativity. Their expertise develops exponentially faster than their peers through learning advanced and innovative techniques. They also develop fundamental life skills; managing stress, performing

under pressure, being organised, showing resilience, maintaining motivation, and above all, a desire to learn. These attributes benefit individuals, particularly when they enter the workforce.

The hospitality industry has much to gain from culinary competitions. Firstly, more highly skilled and motivated young chefs enter the working kitchen. Employees with competition experience are highly sought after. The kitchen gains a positive 'rub-off' effect from the employee's high hygiene standards, productivity, creativity, work ethic and overall professionalism. Establishments that hire competition chefs also benefit from their chef's online presence. Through Instagram, Facebook and TikTok, chefs can market their creations, share recipes, and showcase their accolades, skills and artistic flair to a wider audience. The career opportunities for these new employees, are now almost assured. They are the future culinary leaders of the hospitality industry.

From an academic perspective, there are also advantages when students compete. Competitors generate a positive vibe in the kitchen, which benefits the entire class and lecturers. Not only is morale heightened, but the level of skills, attention to detail and professionalism increases in the learning environment. The hospitality industry needs graduates who have trained with reputable academic providers. These providers, such as AUT, can benefit by sharing the success of their students on media and social media platforms. Likewise, lecturers who actively engage, encourage, and mentor students to participate in culinary competitions, will find the journey enormously rewarding.

In conclusion, culinary competitors have become successful restaurateurs, respected Culinary Masters, hospitality leaders and, in some cases, television celebrities. We should, therefore, encourage aspiring culinarians to compete in competitions, as the experience will enhance their professional development and career prospects. The hospitality industry should continue to support competitors by collaborating with local culinary institutions. The result will be chefs with a higher level of knowledge and expertise. Culinary lecturers and academics should encourage and support participation in culinary competitions. By recognising the outstanding benefits, academia has the potential to influence, and enhance, the future of culinary arts. Ultimately, it is through the discipline of rigorous competition that culinary excellence is established.

Corresponding author

Geoff can be contacted at: geoff.scott@aut.ac.nz

References

- (1) Stevens, A. D. When cooking became cut-throat: A brief history of the culinary competition. *Salon*. <https://www.salon.com/2022/07/13/when-cooking-became-cut-throat-a-brief-history-of-the-culinary-competition/> (accessed Sep 29, 2024).
- (2) Newman, L. What are the benefits of culinary competitions? *Club + Resort Chef*. <https://clubandresortchef.com/what-are-the-benefits-of-culinary-competitions/#:~:text=Competitions%20can%20be%20an%20essential> (accessed Sep 29, 2024).

New Zealand Hotel Industry Post-Pandemic Perspectives: Human Resource Management

Siddharth Bajjal, Robin Hill, Ee Lin Tan and Michael Potroz

Siddharth Bajjal is a senior lecturer and postgraduate programme coordinator at the Pacific International Hotel Management School (PIHMS). With expertise in hospitality service, departmental and operational management, training methods, e-learning, performance appraisals, and staff turnover. His research interests span various aspects of the industry. As the stream leader of operations, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to his role, contributing to the advancement of hospitality education and practice.



Robin Hill is a senior lecturer and stream leader at the Pacific International Hotel Management School (PIHMS) with a background in psychology and human resources. He is an

Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) plays an important role in the acquisition, development, and motivation of employees in an organisation [1]. Humans are complex beings and tend to focus on negatives rather than positives (positive-negative asymmetry) [2], typically undertaking a deficit-remedial, rather than an appreciative approach [3, 4]. Following the Covid-19 Pandemic, the image of employment in the hospitality industry has taken on a negative connotation; organisations who wish to overcome this and promote resilience and success in their employees are paying greater attention to their management practices, especially in terms of employee motivation and mental well-being [1].

Context

In December 2022, The PIHMS Hotel Leader Conference was held in Auckland, hosted by the Pacific International Hotel Management School, in collaboration with the AUT (Auckland University of Technology) School of Hospitality & Tourism. Six industry leaders participated in a focus group to discuss post-pandemic human resource management practices in the hotel industry. The discussion was recorded and transcribed using a web-based application. Thematic analysis of the transcript revealed four key themes: employment practices, human resource trends, staff attraction and retention, and creation of a hospitable work environment.

Employment Practices

Employment practices in the NZ hotel industry have improved because of COVID 19. More hotels are aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, by prioritising fair work

organisational psychologist and at PIHMS specialises in postgraduate research and is the research stream leader. His previous research has focussed on emotionally toxic workplaces and applications of personal construct psychology.



Ee Lin Tan is a research assistant and is involved in academic quality assurance. With a background in engineering and information technology, her research interests revolve around exploring the use of technology in innovative management practices, leveraging technology for enhanced educational experiences, and the impact of ICT in the hospitality industry.



practices such as, setting objectives to pay a living wage to 80% of their workforce), and reducing the gender pay gap. This transformation can be attributed to a combination of factors, including increased competition for talent within the industry, growing consumer and employee awareness of labour rights, and the changing social and economic landscape. In the current climate, consumers and employees are more willing to support companies who treat their workers better. The group proposed the establishment of a certification programme for labour sustainability, the aim being to further improve working conditions by (1) facilitating informed consumer choices, (2) incentivising ethical behaviour, and (3) ensuring company accountability through greater transparency in employment practices.

Human Resource Trends

Human resource practices continue to improve, with a growing emphasis on employee well-being, cultivating a positive work culture through leadership, and diversifying recruitment channels. To address staffing shortages and resulting issues re work-life balance and burnout, employee well-being is being prioritised by fostering honest communication with staff. To foster a positive work culture, leaders should cultivate approachability, empathy, communication, and gratitude towards employees, and provide support mechanisms beyond contracts, especially for new hires. Diversifying recruitment channels requires engagement with schools and communities, and recognising the growth potential of non-traditional candidates, e.g., new parents wishing to return to the workforce, and those who lack industry experience or qualifications.

Staff Attraction and Retention

The attraction and retention of staff continues to be a challenge, as the hotel industry strives to find a 'new normal', following the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as increasing base salaries, a range of other initiatives are being utilised. Non-salary practices that incur a direct cost include investment in staff development and ensuring individualised training. Practices which incur no direct cost, include improving leadership, promoting a positive work environment, and where possible, offering job flexibility. In addition, it was agreed that leaders should promote a positive mindset within their teams by encouraging employees at all stages of their career to continue to learn, to seize opportunities for advancement, and to seek new pathways within the industry.

Michael Potroz is the Master's programme coordinator, research coordinator, and dean of academics at the Pacific International Hotel Management School (PIHMS). With a focus on management practices, e-learning, and education, to advancing knowledge and expertise in organisational management. Through research and leadership roles, he contributes to the development of effective management strategies, innovative educational approaches, and the continuous improvement of academic programmes.



Creating a Hospitable Work Environment

Many in hospitality recognise the importance of a hospitable work environment. Practices that underpin excellent customer service, e.g., 'personalisation', and 'surprise and delight', are being applied internally to provide a more positive work culture. An effective method of demonstrating appreciation of an employee is through the use of personalised recognition that considers individual preferences, i.e., takes into account the employees' wider family and social commitments. At a basic level, genuine verbal recognition, whether significant or small, formal or informal, has become increasingly crucial for motivating and showing appreciation towards employees. The utilisation of innovative and unexpected recognition strategies which provide surprise and delight, can prove to be more effective than anticipated, or routine rewards.

Conclusion

The post-pandemic era has spurred transformations in human resource management practices within the NZ hotel industry. These have been driven by a multitude of factors, including increased competition for talent, heightened labour rights, raised awareness among consumers and employees, and a shifting social and economic landscape. Notably, there has been a marked prioritisation of fair employment practices, sustainability, and diversity, with many hotels setting ambitious goals, such as paying a living wage and reducing gender pay gaps. Simultaneously, to tap into non-traditional candidate pools, the industry's focus has shifted towards prioritising employee well-being, fostering a positive work culture, and diversifying recruitment channels. These changes reflect an industry that is not only adapting to evolving employee and consumer expectations but is also taking crucial steps to address the well-being and motivation of its post-pandemic workforce. These insights are instrumental in guiding the future of HRM practices within the New Zealand hotel industry, while fostering a more resilient and successful work environment.

Corresponding author

Michael Potroz can be contacted at mikep@pihms.ac.nz

References

- (1) Azizi, M. R.; Atlasi, R.; Ziapour, A.; Abbas, J.; Naemi, R. Innovative human resource management strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic narrative review approach. *Heliyon* 2021, 7 (6), e07233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e0723>
- (2) Peeters, G. Evaluative meanings of adjectives in vitro and in context: Some theoretical implications and practical consequences of positive-negative asymmetry and behavioral-adaptive concepts of evaluation. *Psychol. Belg.* 1992, 32 (2), 211. <https://doi.org/10.5334/pb.833>
- (3) Cooperrider, D. L.; Whitney, D.; Stavros, J. M. *Appreciative inquiry handbook for leaders of change*, 2nd ed.; Crown Custom Publishing, 2008.
- (4) Cooperrider, D. L.; Srivastva, S. Appreciative inquiry in organisational life. In *Research in organisational change and development*; Woodman, R., Pasmore, W., Eds.; JAI Press: Greenwich, CT, 1987; Vol. 1, pp 129–169.

Do managers actually walk the talk?

Gender equality in hotel careers in Aotearoa New Zealand

Xinye Qian, Shelagh Mooney and Claire Liu

Xinye Qian holds a Master degree in International Hospitality Management from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. The article is based on her research and she can be contacted at Xinye7426@gmail.com



This article offers insights into factors that affect hotel employees' decisions to pursue a career in hotels. These factors are important as there are differences between men's and women's career expectations. Globally, career progression in the hotel industry tends to be linear, from entry-level to senior management positions [1]. Employees' career expectations and values drive individual choices and influence outcomes [2]. Factors such as personal interests, family background, educational level, and gender/race/ethnicity [3] all shape individual career hopes, and industry and geographical context change career progress and paths. Previous research in Korea and China have examined women's career expectations. However, no study has examined men and women's career expectations in hotels in Aotearoa New Zealand, where the workforce is migrant and female dominated [4]. The original contribution of this article is to show that lived experiences change career expectations in distinct and measurable ways for men and women, even with a small sample size. Therefore, any employer's commitment to gender equity principles and practice is only recognised as authentic when senior management highlight and champion their equal opportunity policies and initiatives.

The study on which this article is based adopted a quantitative descriptive research approach to explore the career expectations of employees working in the New Zealand hotel sector. An online survey collected data from hotel employees with over three years of experience in the hospitality industry. Respondents were initially recruited through posts on professional Facebook and LinkedIn sites, and completed the survey via a link to the REDCap platform hosted by New Zealand universities. Based on Kim et al.'s [5] and Kong et al.'s [2] measures of career expectations, 49 questions were developed. A total of 64 valid responses were analysed, of which 54.7% respondents were women and 45.3% were men. In terms of

Shelagh Mooney is an associate professor at the School of Hospitality and Tourism at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Her research focuses on ethical leadership for a sustainable hospitality and tourism workforce.



Claire Liu is a senior lecturer in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Her research areas include sustainable tourism management, tourism entrepreneurship, sustainable tourist behaviours, and tourism and hospitality education.



their work experience, more than half the sample had worked from three to five years in hospitality, and almost a quarter had between six and 10 years of experience. The majority were of Asian ethnicity (56.3%), followed by those who identified as New Zealand European (25.0%). Most worked in 5-star hotels (89.1%), with 42% in Food & Beverage. Regarding job positions, 53.1% were entry-level attendants, 12.5% were supervisors and 15.6% were operations managers. Most had permanent contracts (74.6%), with 60.3% paid by the hour; 17.7% were temporary workers.

Three common barriers to progression in the hotel industry emerged for employees: job satisfaction, career support, and gender equality. First, more than half of the respondents were unhappy with their wages/salary and benefits—a similar result to other surveys that have looked at working conditions in the New Zealand hospitality industry [4, 6], and the mental health of chefs in Australia and New Zealand [7], which revealed that low pay and low-quality jobs characterise the New Zealand hospitality industry.

Second, nearly half of the employees expressed negative views about the career support provided by their hotels. They had the perception that their achievements or contributions were not recognised, and doubted if their personal career plans were valued or considered. This result is problematic, as managerial recognition of an employee's efforts increases motivation and is strongly linked to superior performance and increased effort work effort [8].

Lastly, the results revealed that gender equality matters! Despite diversity and inclusion initiatives, the majority of respondents lacked confidence in the existence and efficiency of gender-specific policies, or initiatives that promoted gender equality. Alarming, nearly half of the respondents disagreed that their employers demonstrated any commitment to gender equality, either in practice or outcomes.

The study's findings have practical implications for hotel managers. Globally, the hospitality industry is experiencing acute labour shortages [9], addressing frequently voiced issues—such as unfair remuneration and lack of recognition—while implementing personalised career development plans and effective gender equality policies, can enhance employee retention.

There are limitations to the generalisability of these results due to the limited sample size and composition. Future studies could replicate the study design to attract a more representative sample. Not all employees seek a career rather than a job. They do, however, seek appreciation and fairness, and will leave workplaces where

these basic needs are not met. 'Walking the talk' is more visible and powerful than managers realise, as is its absence.

Corresponding author

Xinye can be contacted at: Xinye7426@gmail.com

References

- (1) Wang, Y.-F. Constructing career competency model of hospitality industry employees for career success. *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* **2013**, *25* (7), 994–1016. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-07-2012-0106>.
- (2) Kong, H.; Wang, S.; Fu, X. Meeting career expectation: Can it enhance job satisfaction of Generation Y? *Int. J. Contemp. Hosp. Manag.* **2015**, *27* (1), 147–168. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-08-2013-0353>.
- (3) Metz, A. J.; Fouad, N.; Ihle-Helledy, K. Career aspirations and expectations of college students: Demographic and labor market comparisons. *J. Career Assess.* **2009**, *17* (2), 155–171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072708328862>.
- (4) Williamson, D.; Rasmussen, E.; Palao, C. *Voices from the front line* (pp. 1–31) [Research Report]; Auckland University of Technology: Auckland, New Zealand, **2022**.
- (5) Kim, Y. H.; O'Brien, K. M.; Kim, H. Measuring career aspirations across cultures: Using the career aspiration scale with young Korean women. *J. Career Assess.* **2016**, *24* (3), 573–585. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072715599538>.
- (6) Williamson, D.; Rasmussen, E. *He Tāngata - A research report on tourism and hospitality employment conditions in New Zealand* [Research Report]; MBIE-AUT: Auckland, New Zealand, **2023**. <https://aut.ac/hetangata>.
- (7) Robinson, R. N. S.; Brenner, M.; Mooney, S.; Doan, T.; Steffens, N.; Lodge, J. The mental health and wellbeing of chefs in commercial kitchens: An Australasian study (p. 36) [Industry Report]; Auckland University of Technology: Auckland, New Zealand, **2023**. <http://hdl.handle.net/10292/17072>.
- (8) Lee, H.-W. A career stage analysis of the U.S. Federal employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention: A comprehensive overview. *Rev. Public Pers. Adm.* **2020**, *40* (4), 717–742. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X19856082>.
- (9) Ladkin, A.; Mooney, S.; Solnet, D.; Baum, T.; Robinson, R. N. S.; Yan, H. A review of research into tourism work and employment: Launching the Annals of Tourism Research curated collection on tourism work and employment. *Ann. Tourism Res.* **2023**, *100*, 103554. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103554>.

Millennial's intentions to buy plant-based alternatives: insights for quick-service restaurants

Giuseppe Incardona, Dr Maria Gebbels and Dr Thi Hong Hai Nguyen

Giuseppe Incardona,
BA Hospitality Management
Graduate,
University of Greenwich,
School of Management and
Marketing



Dr Maria Gebbels,
Associate Professor in Hospitality,
University of Greenwich,
School of Management and
Marketing.



Rapid population growth, shifting consumption patterns, and environmental stresses, are challenging food security, and raising concerns about the global food system's ability to sustainably feed the projected 9.3 billion people by 2050. In addition, the increasing demand for Quick-Service Restaurants (QSRs, also known as 'fast-food chains') [1] has intensified environmental concerns. The large-scale food production and factory farming practices of these types of operations are significant contributors to environmental degradation and issues around animal welfare. In response to growing consumer awareness relating to these issues, QSRs have begun to incorporate plant-based alternatives into their menus, to align with sustainability objectives and appeal to eco-conscious consumers, particularly millennials. The UK plant-based food retail market, one of the largest in Europe, saw a 9% sales increase from 2020 to 2022, reaching £963.8 million. This growth indicates rising consumer interest and market potential.

While demand for plant-based products grows, not all alternatives are seen as equally beneficial. The healthiness and sustainability of plant-based meat vary by ingredients and production methods, and consumers may resist products viewed as being overly processed, or containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) [2, 3]. For QSRs wishing to introduce these alternatives into their menus, an understanding of market purchasing intentions is essential.

This research examined millennials' intentions to purchase Genetically Modified Plant-Based Meat Alternatives (hereafter referred to as plant-based alternatives) at QSRs in the UK, using Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) [4] to explain the intention. The TPB is a psychological model that predicts human behavior based on three factors: attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These influence an individual's intentions and actions in various contexts. Millennials are a key demographic for QSRs. They are noted for their environmental consciousness [5], and in 2020, they comprised 14.26 million of the UK population. Their distinct preference for convenience, speed, and affordability, has driven the rapid expansion of the QSR industry [6].

To reach UK millennials, the data collection for the research involved distributing a questionnaire via online forums and social media, using snowball sampling. Among the 207 responses, millennials showed a negative attitude towards Genetically Engineered (GE) technology and a low intention

Dr Thi Hong Hai Nguyen,
Associate Professor in Tourism
and Events,
University of Greenwich,
School of Management and
Marketing.



to purchase plant-based alternatives at QSRs, both of which were influenced by their views on GE technology and prevailing social norms

According to TPB, belief-targeted messages, such as persuasive communication, can effectively influence attitudes, which in turn affect behavioural intentions and actual behavior [7]. In this context, QSRs can use persuasive communication within their marketing mix, including promotional activities, to improve customer attitudes (e.g., millennials) towards GE technology and plant-based alternatives, thereby increasing purchase intentions.

An essential part of this approach is the creation of belief-targeted messages that align with the environmentally conscious values of the UK millennials. Marketers of QSRs can promote the adoption of plant-based alternatives by addressing the misconceptions associated with GE technology, and highlighting the benefits, e.g., improved nutrition and sustainability. Messaging could highlight GE technology's role in mitigating climate change, and reframe the description of plant-based alternatives from, 'ultra-processed', to 'sustainable'. Social media and online ads are effective channels for reaching this demographic.

In order to enhance message effectiveness, it is crucial, however, that scientifically backed information and trustworthy sources, (e.g., government organisations), be relied on. For example, the UK Food Standards Agency conducts safety evaluations, and establishes labelling regulations for genetically modified food [8]. Therefore, successful integration of plant-based alternatives in the QSR industry requires collaboration among all parties to facilitate productive dialogue around GE technology. This will help to increase millennials' confidence in making informed food choices, and could positively change their attitudes towards genetically modified organisms.

Millennials value the opinions of significant others, i.e., the social norms, and QSRs can effectively leverage influencer marketing that promotes plant-based alternatives, by collaborating with the athletes, chefs, and nutritionists who resonate with millennial values. Partnering with reputable environmental organisations can also reinforce the sustainability message, and highlight the positive environmental impacts. These strategic partnerships can encourage millennials to adopt plant-based alternatives as part of a healthy, sustainable lifestyle.

Corresponding author

Dr Maria Gebbels can be contacted at m.m.gebbels@gre.ac.uk

References

- (1) Mendocilla, M.; Miravittles Matamoros, P.; Matute, J. QUICKSERV: A service quality assessment tool for the quick-service restaurant industry. *Br. Food J.* **2021**, *123* (13), 241–259. <https://doi.org/10.1108/bfj-12-2020-1108>.
- (2) Rizzolo-Brime, L.; Orta-Ramirez, A.; Puyol Martin, Y.; Jakszyn, P. Nutritional assessment of plant-based meat alternatives: A comparison of nutritional information of plant-based meat alternatives in Spanish supermarkets. *Nutrients* **2023**, *15* (6), 1325. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15061325>.

- (3) Jahn, S.; Furchheim, P.; Strässner, A.-M. Plant-based meat alternatives: Motivational adoption barriers and solutions. *Sustainability* **2021**, *13* (23), 13271. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132313271>.
- (4) Ajzen, I. The theory of planned behavior. *Organ. Behav. Hum. Decis. Process.* **1991**, *50* (2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T).
- (5) Clark, D. Millennial population by age 2018 | Statista. *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/630938/uk-millennial-population-by-age/> (accessed Jun 17, 2024).
- (6) Okumus, B.; Ozturk, A. B.; Bilgihan, A. Generation Y's dining out behavior. *Int. Hosp. Rev.* **2021**, *ahead-of-print* (ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1108/ihr-07-2020-0023>.
- (7) Fishbein, M.; Ajzen, I. *Predicting and Changing Behavior: The Reasoned Action Approach*; Psychology Press: USA, 2009.
- (8) Food Standards Agency. Genetically modified foods. *Food Standards Agency*. <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/genetically-modified-foods> (accessed Mar 14, 2023).

Managing the Implications of a Low-Carbohydrate Diet for the Hospitality Industry

Patrice Lucas

Patrice Lucas is a patisserie lecturer at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. He has completed coursework at the Quimper Trade School in France, obtaining a diploma in professional excellence in Patisserie. Currently, Patrice is focusing his studies on food science integrating food science into his teaching, focusing on biochemistry in food and human metabolism. Combining practical experience with theory, helps students enhance the texture, flavour, and consistency of food preparation while understanding the nutritional impact of food.



The foundation of low-carbohydrate diets can be traced back to historical shifts in human dietary patterns, particularly, the advent of agriculture, which resulted in changes in food consumption and provides insights into the origins of this dietary approach [1]. Research indicates that this dietary intervention positively impacts various health-related outcomes, contributing to weight loss and improving metabolic markers such as BMI, insulin resistance, blood lipid profiles, and systolic blood pressure. The adoption of a low-carbohydrate diet as a management approach for chronic diseases has garnered substantial support.

The fundamental concept revolves around the hypothesis that reducing carbohydrate intake alters metabolic processes, particularly insulin levels, which results in enhanced fat utilisation and potential weight loss. This approach, often called the 'carbohydrate-insulin model' [3] has gained traction due to its possible benefits in weight management and improved metabolic function. Furthermore, the financial considerations associated with adopting a low-carbohydrate diet are noteworthy, as fresh produce and foods rich in protein tend to be more expensive than carbohydrate alternatives. Despite these cost implications, the potential long-term health benefits, including improved cardiovascular health and sustainable weight management, underscore the value of such dietary changes.

However, the low-carbohydrate trend presents challenges and opportunities for the hospitality industry, particularly for hotels and restaurants. In Aotearoa, there has been a growing public demand for healthier policies. In the case of dining options, it is the hospitality industry's role to meet these demands.

This realisation has prompted establishments to reconsider and propose menus that assign healthy fats, proteins, and non-starchy vegetables, thereby playing a crucial part in promoting public health. Hotels and restaurants can produce health-conscious dishes on their menus by minimising refined sugar and starches. Today, as

consumers seek healthier options, they are shifting their preferences towards 'better for you' alternatives. In this context, the low carbohydrate option becomes pivotal.

To cater for this demand, establishments can implement various strategies, such as identifying 'Keto' or 'low carb' dishes on their menus; these should include 'net carb' values for transparency. Restaurants could also provide a selective menu featuring low-carb options, such as almond flour bread and vegetable pasta (e.g., shirataki noodles), instead of higher-carb alternatives. Additionally, training employees on low-carb foods and dietary requirements ensures that they can provide informed recommendations, and accommodate customers with specific preferences. By adopting these practices, establishments can more effectively align with consumer preferences and the growing demand for healthier choices.

In summary, this article contributes to existing literature by demonstrating the practical implications of a low-carbohydrate diet for health outcomes. Low-carbohydrate diets, in addition to assisting with weight management, have been linked to improved metabolic markers and a reduced risk of developing chronic diseases (e.g., Type 2 diabetes and various cardiovascular conditions) [4]. As consumers seek healthier options, the hospitality industry is encountering challenges and opportunities in adapting to this trend. Hotels and restaurants can promote healthier eating habits through their menus, by reducing refined sugars and starches, and redesigning them to highlight non-starchy vegetables, healthy fats, and proteins. In this way, hotels and restaurants can meet public health demands and promote healthier eating practices. Despite initial cost considerations, the long-term health benefits tied to low-carbohydrate diets indicate a promising future in addressing modern dietary challenges.

Corresponding author

Patrice can be contacted at: patrice.lucas@aut.ac.nz

References

- (1) Andrews, P.; Johnson, R. J. Evolutionary basis for the human diet: Consequences for human health. *J. Intern. Med.* **2020**, *287* (3), 226–237.
- (2) Peniamina, R.; McNoe, B.; Kerr, J.; Cleghorn, C.; Signal, L. Strong public support for healthy food policies in Aotearoa. *Public Health Expert Briefing*. <https://www.phcc.org.nz/briefing/strong-public-support-healthy-food-policies-aotearoa> (accessed Nov 23, 2024).
- (3) Nicholas, M. Adapting to healthier habits. *Australian Hotelier*. <https://theshout.com.au/australian-hotelier/adapting-to-healthier-habits/> (accessed Nov 23, 2024).

- (4) Hall, K. D. A review of the carbohydrate-insulin model of obesity. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **2017**, *71* (3), 323–326.
- (5) Crowe, T. C. Safety of low-carbohydrate diets. *Obes. Rev.* **2005**, *6* (3), 235–245.