

TALKING POINTS

To help you craft your presentation, letter to the editor or other communication, we've included in this section some general talking points about the restaurant industry that underscore the Cornerstone Initiative messages. The talking points are organized under general areas of interest so that you can easily pick and choose which facts you'll need. Use the talking points as a guide to create your own presentation and mix in your own personal anecdotes and experiences. All statistics are provided by the National Restaurant Association, unless otherwise noted.

Economic Impact

- ★ Restaurants are the cornerstone of the nation's economy.
- ★ 2008 marks the 17th consecutive year of real growth for the restaurant industry — sales are expected to jump to \$558 billion this year, a 4.4 percent increase over 2007 (0.9 percent in real terms).
- ★ The restaurant industry's sales equal 4 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. The overall economic impact of the restaurant industry will exceed \$1.5 trillion in 2008.
- ★ On a typical day in 2008, 13.3 million individuals will be foodservice patrons.
- ★ Restaurants now account for 48 percent of what Americans spend on food.
- ★ There are now more than 945,000 restaurants in the United States.
- ★ Every dollar spent by consumers in restaurants generates an additional \$2.34 spent in our nation's economy.
- ★ For industry sales by state, e-mail astensson@restaurant.org.

Career & Employment Opportunities

- ★ Restaurants are the cornerstone of rewarding career and employment opportunities.
- ★ The restaurant industry employs 13.1 million people — nine percent of all working Americans. It continues to be one of the largest private-sector employers in the country.
- ★ By 2018, restaurant-industry employment is expected to reach 15.1 million.
- ★ The restaurant industry is a critical force in providing both entry-level training and advancement opportunities for millions of Americans, offering myriad positions in a wide variety of fields. Consider these facts:
 - Nearly half (47 percent) of all American adults have worked in a restaurant at some point in their lives.
 - 32 percent of all American adults got their first job experience in a restaurant.
- ★ During the last 10 years, the restaurant industry added an average of 250,000 jobs each year.
- ★ Recruiting and retaining quality employees remains a top priority for the restaurant industry as competition for workers with other industries — like retail and health care — is increasing. Restaurateurs must pay close attention to compensation, benefits, scheduling flexibility, training, mentoring, and advancement opportunities to stay competitive.
- ★ Increased hiring of “non-traditional” employees — for example, foreign-born workers and older workers — continues to offer opportunities for restaurant employers.
- ★ The restaurant industry is committed to diversity and inclusion and takes pride in employing individuals from all backgrounds and cultures.
- ★ More than one in four eating-and-drinking-place employees (26 percent) speaks a language other than English at home.
- ★ Nine out of 10 salaried employees in restaurants started as hourly employees.

- ★ There are more minority managers in the restaurant industry than in any other industry.
- ★ The number of minority-owned restaurant firms is growing at a faster pace than restaurant ownership overall.
- ★ The restaurant industry workforce is comprised of 20 percent Hispanics, 11 percent African-Americans and 6 percent Asian-Americans.

Community Involvement

- ★ Restaurants are the cornerstone of local communities.
- ★ More than nine out of 10 restaurants are involved in some type of charitable activity on a local, state or national level, from sponsoring a youth sports team to raising money for charities to providing meals to those in need.
- ★ Restaurant operators participate in programs to fight hunger primarily by donating prepared food to shelters or food banks, participating in fundraisers for anti-hunger organizations or making cash donations.

Travel and Tourism

- ★ Travel and tourism has a big impact on the restaurant industry. Travelers and visitors account for a median of 20 to 40 percent of sales at tableservice restaurants and 15 percent of quick-service sales.
- ★ The restaurant industry is the leading source of travel industry jobs in the United States.
- ★ A projected 55.6 million international visitors are expected to travel to the United States in 2008, according to the Travel Industry Association of America, and the number of domestic trips will reach nearly 2.1 billion.
- ★ The emerging trend of culinary tourism is taking hold among American travelers. Culinary travelers make up about 17 percent of all leisure travelers; half of those say food is central to their travel decisions, six in 10 say they are likely to eat in a different restaurant most nights when traveling.

Restaurant Industry Priority Issues

- ★ The restaurant industry supports and works for sound tax policies that will sustain continued economic growth.
 - ★ Restaurants support legislation that will help grow the industry's future workforce. The industry works for sensible immigration policies and lower health-care costs.
 - ★ Food safety and food security remain the industry's top priorities, as food safety is non-negotiable. The industry continually works with legislative leaders and key regulatory officials to develop food safety and food security measures that protect American consumers.
 - ★ The restaurant industry is committed to professionalism and to training its workforce on a variety of topics. The National Restaurant Association offers a variety of programs and courses in various formats, including bilingual materials.
 - ★ Restaurants are responding to nutrition-conscious Americans without government mandates. Restaurant menus are, and have always been, dictated by consumer demand.
 - ★ Although 76 percent of meals are prepared and eaten at home, Americans have a wide variety of menu options at a wide variety of venues when they do dine out at one of the nation's 945,000 restaurants.
 - ★ Restaurants, like any business, are vulnerable to lawsuit abuses. A top priority for the National Restaurant Association and the industry is to reduce frivolous litigation, including obesity-related claims. High-priced liability insurance and exorbitant out-of-court settlements should not be a cost of doing business in the restaurant industry.
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Risk Management, Recruitment and Retention

- ★ The ServSafe® Food Safety Training program is accepted by more federal, state and local jurisdictions than any other food safety training program in the country. More than three million restaurant-and-foodservice managers worldwide have been certified via this program.
 - ★ Recruiting a skilled workforce is a top priority for the restaurant industry. The National Restaurant Association and the NRAEF offers several programs and initiatives to nurture and grow the future workforce, including the ProStart® Program, which is a nationwide system of high school restaurant-and-foodservice courses linked with mentored worksite experiences; and the Scholarships and Mentoring InitiativeSM.
 - ★ The importance of providing students with scholarships to pursue a restaurant-and-foodservice education is vital to maintaining the restaurant industry's role as the cornerstone of rewarding career and employment opportunities. The NRAEF provides scholarships for excellence to high school students, undergraduate students and educators.
 - ★ The ManageFirst Program™ teaches college students the management skills defined by the foodservice industry as those necessary for success.
 - ★ The ServSafe Alcohol™ Training and Certification Program takes a holistic approach to educate all levels of operations in proper alcohol serving policies and state liquor codes.
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