

# ★ IPAP *Weekly News*

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## CONSUMERS TO CUT BACK WHILE JUMPING AHEAD

*Dining out & spending may dip, so operators should focus on value, convenience & menu quality to win customers*

After a tough 2011 marred by spikes in commodity costs, price competition and the general lack of consumer confidence, restaurant chains saw the dining public split into two categories: the one percent, or high-end diners who are spending again; and the 99 percent, who are searching for affordable meals that don't sacrifice quality.

"The industry most certainly is rebounding, but slowly," said Adam Werner, managing director and co-leader of the restaurant and foodservice practice for AlixPartners. "Companies are going to have to become more defensive. It's more of a share game. In order for me to grow, I have to steal from you."

While quality food remains the number one factor influencing restaurant choice, value, convenience and healthfulness are also key trends for the year ahead according to a new report from AlixPartners LLP.

Consumers said they plan to pay about five percent less in restaurants in 2012 compared to last year, in part because of promotions and dining deals that drive traffic.

"Discounting is here to stay," Werner said, and restaurant chains will continue to use bundled meals to convey value. Pricing, then, will also become more sophisticated with many restaurants using tiered strategies, varying prices by region and raising prices only on select or non-core items.

Digital and social media is expected to increasingly influence dining decisions, especially among 18- to 34-year-olds.

"No one really has social media figured out in terms of impacting decisions. When someone does figure it out, it'll be game changing," said Eric Dzwoncyk, managing director and co-leader of AlixPartners' restaurant and foodservice practice.

Interestingly, although many consumers say they tend to order healthful options more often for their children than themselves, several restaurant chains are now seeing their healthful or low-calorie menu items become top sellers.

"Over the past 36 months or so, what was more of a fad is now a trend. It's sticking," Dzwoncyk said.

## CHIPOTLE BBQ CHICKEN AND ALTO® CHEDDAR CHEESE SLIDERS

# Saputo

Saputo Foodservice—a primary IPAP supplier—has a team of artisan cheesemakers who bring nearly a century of old world heritage, pride and passion for excellence to every cheese made by its Master Cheesemakers.

Saputo's Cheddar Cheese is an artisan crafted American classic...introduced by Saputo from the Heartland. Call your IPAP Account Manager today for more information on Saputo's premium line of cheeses and to try their recipe below.



### Ingredients

- ◆ 3 cups Pulled Chicken
- ◆ 1 cup Barbeque Sauce
- ◆ 1 Tbsp Chipotle Tabasco Sauce
- ◆ 8 Slider Buns
- ◆ 2 slices Alto® Sliced Cheddar Cheese
- ◆ 2 leaves Romaine Lettuce
- ◆ 1/4 cup Red Onion, slices
- ◆ 8 slices Pickles

### Method of Preparation

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the barbeque sauce and chipotle Tabasco sauce. Add the pulled chicken and combine until chicken is covered in Chipotle BBQ sauce.
2. Cut the Alto® Sliced Cheddar Cheese into quarters. Cut the romaine lettuce to fit the slider buns.
3. To assemble place 1/4 cup of Chipotle BBQ onto the bottom half of a slider bun, top with cheddar cheese and place into an oven just until the cheese melts.
4. Finish with a lettuce piece, sliced onions and a pickle slice, and place the other half of the slider bun on top.

