

Dining trends in senior care



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by ResMed

Here are the latest trends and tactics in dining operations

Senior living organizations have been looking for new opportunities in dining technology that will help them maintain food and operational costs while driving resident satisfaction. From December 2022 to January 2023, MatrixCare MealTracker conducted our annual survey to find out more about current dining trends in senior living, and the tactics organizations are using to deliver on quality, efficiency and resident experience.

In this era of limited resources, procurement instability, and high food costs, MatrixCare MealTracker is pleased to present these survey results in hopes that they will help you strengthen your dining program and focus on ways to address these challenges.



Amy Wootton, RDN

Director of Nutrition



Executive summary

Our 2022 dining survey shows that our customers have seen some challenges persist, such as staffing shortages and staying compliant with residents' nutritional requirements. But the past year also threw some new road blocks in the way, with supply chain issues and steep increases in food costs among the most notable.

These new issues are affecting nearly all senior living facilities that provide skilled nursing, senior housing and senior care, while they continue to deal with previously existing challenges. This eBook offers a snapshot of the state of dining services in out-of-hospital care settings, and identifies key trends including:

- > Finding ways to manage higher food costs
- > Ensuring special dietary needs are accommodated
- > Using menu management and resident profile features to strengthen dining programs
- > Using technology to improve dining services

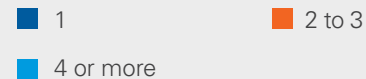
Respondent overview

We collected 650+ responses from our customers. Most responses were from dining services managers or chefs, but dietitians, administrators, assistants, nurses and other roles also gave their feedback.



Dining venues

Most facilities have a single dining venue, but nearly one-fifth have four or more venues. Staffing limits may be causing more facilities to reduce the number of dining venues they offer.



Frequency of menu updates

Facilities described their menu style as:

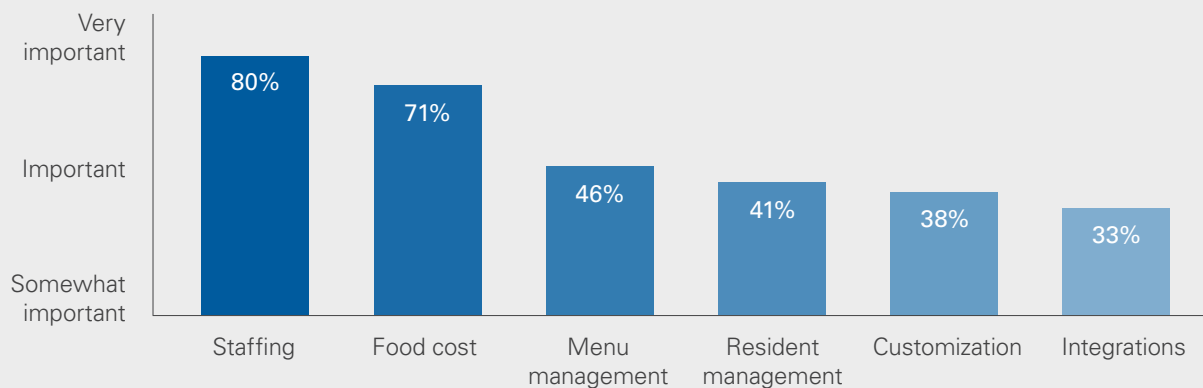


Survey findings

Top challenges largely unchanged from 2021

Although the challenges of the Covid pandemic are largely behind facilities, there are persistent, ongoing issues that have remained stubbornly challenging. Technology can help manage challenges including menu management, staffing and food costs, and ensuring accurate resident information.

Please rank the top challenges facing your dining operations today. (Ranked Very important/somewhat important/important)



Most facilities rely on pre-built menus

More than one-third of respondents build their own menus, while others use menus offered by a world-class software solution with customizable menus designed by experienced teams. Using built-in menu services is one way to streamline planning and help staff work more efficiently.

Do you build your own menus or purchase pre-built menus?

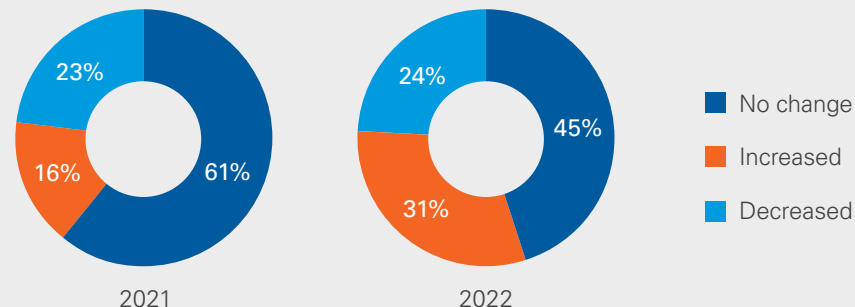
37% Build own

36% Use MealTracker menus

16% Purchase pre-built

Rising food costs put pressure on budgets

Despite sharp increases in prices for many food items, nearly half of the respondents reported no change in their food budget. But compared to the 2021 survey, more facilities saw increased budgets. Technology that provides exact production details and analyzes costs as menus change can help facilities stay on budget and meet residents' nutritional needs.

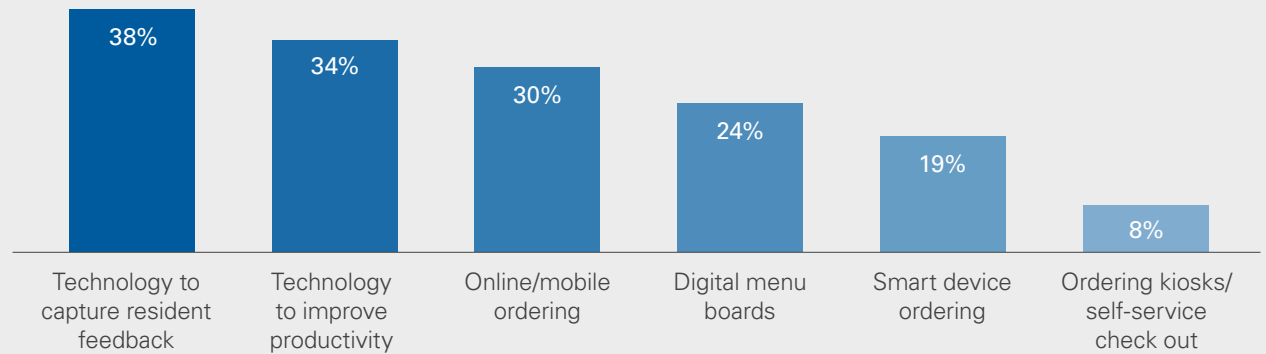


Survey findings

Investing in technology

Many respondents noted the need to use technology to improve their dining services and remain compliant, and are making investments to meet those goals.

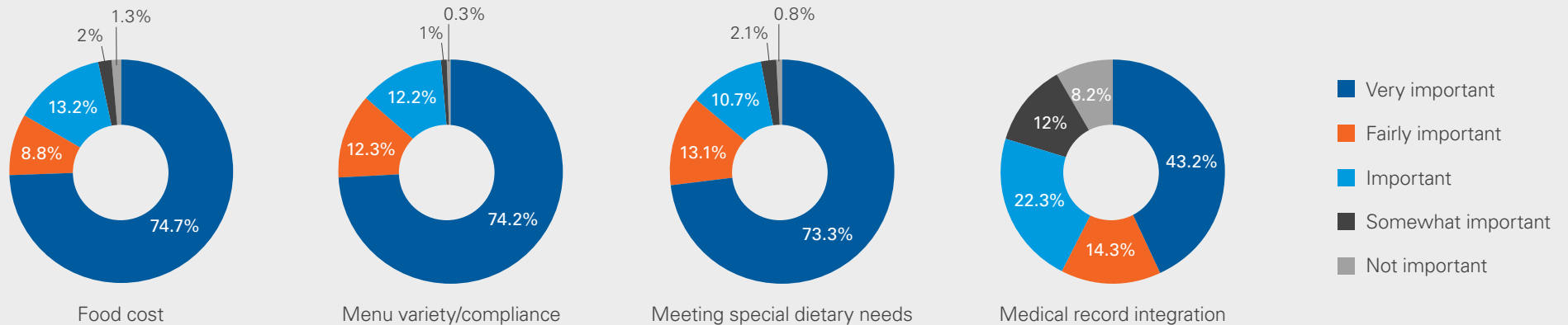
What dining technology investments have you made or do you plan to make?
Choose all that apply.



Most important dining components to drive success

Respondents ranked the importance of various dining program elements. Concerns about food costs, menu variety, meeting special dietary needs and integration with medical records remain top of mind.

Rate the importance of each element to your dining operation's success.

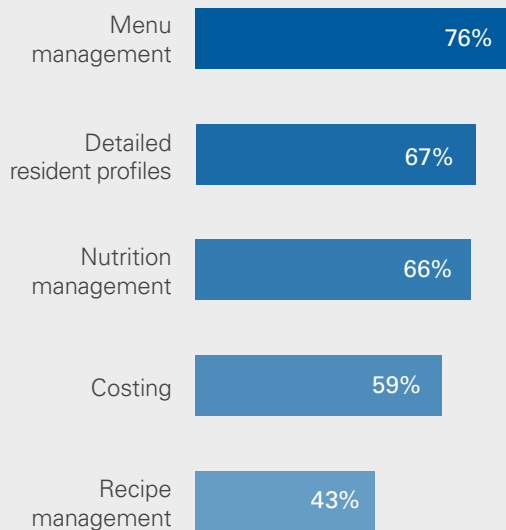


Survey findings

Features that strengthen dining programs

Dining service operators look for technology features that can help them deliver the best nutritional management and dining experiences for their residents. MealTracker's Menu Services feature can help dining operators focus on service, productivity and resident care.

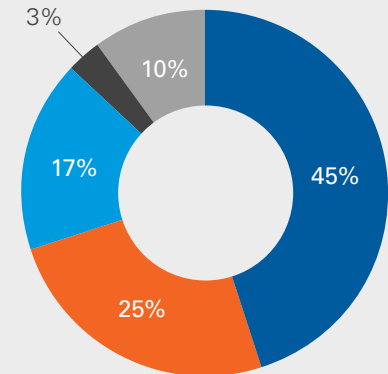
Rate in order of importance the features you feel strengthen your dining program. (Ranked Very important/somewhat important/important)



Gradual increase in using new IDDSI standards

Compared to last year's survey, a few more facilities have adopted the new International Dysphagia Diet Standards Initiative (IDDSI). Elite nutrition management software allows for texture modifications and therapeutic adjustments so users can comply when new standards and regulations are released.

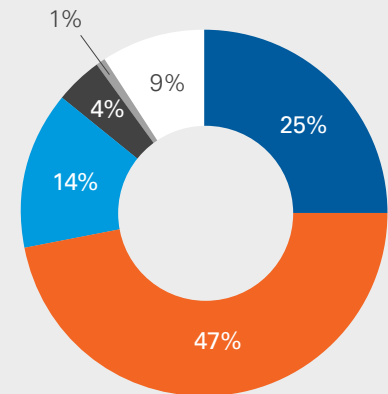
Have you implemented IDDSI at any level?



MealTracker helps drive resident satisfaction

MealTracker users reported that nearly three-fourths of their residents have above average satisfaction with their dining options and experience.

What was your most recent food service customer satisfaction score?





Get technology to meet both facility and individual needs

Managers and dietitians all want to offer a dining program that meets individual needs and allows menu customization. The right software can help, with automated nutrient analysis and the ease of a system that gives staff more flexibility. MealTracker can help you make sure residents are happy with the meals you offer while also ensuring their individual nutritional needs are met.

Visit matrixcare.com or call **866.469.3766** for more information or to request a demo.