

AUTHENTICITY: TABLE STAKES FOR GEN Z

What is it now, and why does it matter?



- 20+ years consulting in foodservice
- Founded Menu Matters 8 years ago
- Focused on helping clients understand the strategic implications of macro trends on services, operations, menu/ product design
- Track consumer behavior, travel, fashion & beauty, operator issues and food/ beverage



Maeve Webster

President, Menu Matters





Authenticity

How is it being defined
now?



Broader definition,
focused on honesty





No peace since
the pandemic







Gen Z backlash



Naturalness

Heritage

Empathy

Purpose

Consistency

Localness

Genuineness

Reliability

Truthfulness

Transparency

Connection

Authenticity is at the core of Gen Z
identity...embracing quirks, flaws



92% of Gen Z believe being authentic, true to oneself is “extremely” or “very important”.

Share indicating “extremely important” increased 16 percentage points from pre-pandemic levels.





Government of
719-548-
getty









How is this playing out in food, beverages?

Authenticity in...

Messaging

Content

Claims/ Issues





TikTok

Sourcing, transparency

Whole ingredient functionality

Sustainability

Seasonal

History, heritage



Authenticity in...

Presentation/ plating

Tableware

Packaging

Authenticity in...

Concepts

Dining experiences



Dark pop ups

Dining anywhere/ unique locations

At home events

In-restaurant pop ups

All-inclusive menus



Authenticity in...

Ingredients

Flavors



VEGAN

Nostalgia with modern twist

Heritage ingredients

“Messy” preps (blistering, pickling, aging)

Bold colors, naturally

Black foods (sesame, squid ink, black garlic)

Whole ingredient plant-based

Authenticity in...
International cuisines



Borderless/ chaos cuisine

Nikkei, Viet-Cajun

“Weastern”

Global takes on American classics

Fusion fried chicken

Global salads, sandwiches

Experience is authenticity...



WARBY PARKER







Inconsistency is elevating the importance of experiences

It's about...
Control
Confidence
Value
Meaningfulness

Intangible
Uniqueness
Self-identity
Connection



CHEF'S
TABLE

LATIN

The Commission Will
be Opened for
Public Reception

Career Services

Final thought...

Authenticity is ownable, unique,
defensible

What is authentic can't be
replicated



Thank you

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