Darren Tristano is an Executive Vice President at Technomic Inc. and is focused on expanding the foodservice industry knowledge base and sharing this intelligence with operators, suppliers and other key players. Over the past 20 years, he has overseen the growth of Technomic’s Information Services division. On Technomic’s consulting side, Darren leads the company’s Restaurant Practice, providing operator clients with actionable findings and insights. Drawing on this experience, Darren also puts Technomic’s research findings into context, speaking frequently to the media and at industry conferences.

Industry Experience and Expertise
Darren is responsible for industry tracking services and reports that foodservice executives rely on for market intelligence. These “industry standard” sources include Consumer Brand Metrics, MenuMonitor, PriceMonitor and the Digital Resource Library.

Since 1999, he has led advisory group services for Technomic’s operator clients. These groups have been essential to maintaining close contact with the industry and providing unparalleled access to frontline industry issues.

Darren also serves as group publisher of Technomic’s Consumer Trend Reports and conferences, including Technomic’s Restaurant Forecast & Outlook, Consumer Insights, Canadian Trends & Directions, and Menu Innovation and Insights events.

Currently, he is leading initiatives to expand Technomic’s operator knowledgebase in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

Media

Speaking Engagements
Darren is a frequent speaker at conferences sponsored by the National Restaurant Association, Nation’s Restaurant News, Restaurant Hospitality, Restaurant Leadership Conference and The Canadian Restaurant and Foodservice Association.

Education
Darren earned his B.S. degree from The University of Illinois at Chicago. He is a Certified Public Accountant.
Future of “Local”:

1. Awareness and understanding
2. As a dining influence
3. On the menu
4. Amid emerging supply chain models
5. To leverage “food with a story”
Consumers report seeing more "local" foods at restaurants.

Understanding on the decline

72% of consumers say they understand what "locally sourced" means in restaurants.
What does “local” mean anyway?

75% of consumers say “from my city”

School program: within the state
Distributor: the Midwest region

As a dining influence:
A trend that has arrived

57% of consumers say they seek out restaurants offering locally sourced products at least sometimes

“Locally sourced” items have been in the NRA’s Top 20 food trends forecast since 2009
Why local?

“It's fresher”

“It supports local business”

The closer the sourcing, the greater the willingness to pay more

Willing to pay up to 5% more for food:

- From my city: 37%
- From within 100 miles: 34%
- From my state: 29%
- From my region: 25%
- From any specific location: 22%

Source: Consumer Brand Monitor: Q4 2014
3 On the menu: Interest in local spans food categories

Items important to be sourced locally (top two box)

- Vegetables: 66%
- Fruit: 60%
- Dairy: 56%
- Baked goods: 53%
- Poultry: 52%
- Beef: 51%
- Pork: 45%
- Fish: 44%

Mentions also rising across mealparts

- Appetizers: 82%
- Entrées/main dishes: 137%
- Dessert: 150%
- Non-alcoholic beverage: 367%

Source: Technomic Menu Monitor 2010-2015
But “local” positioning still developing

Descriptors perceived to make poultry more healthy and tasty than “local”

Descriptors more likely than “locally raised”
To increase willingness to pay more for beef

Emerging supply chain: Large-scale, and small-scale

Chipotle served more than 20 million pounds of local produce in 2014
Distribution channels responding

Percent increase in local food channels since 2007

- Farm-to-school programs (2011-12 school year): 430%
- Regional food hubs (2014): 288%
- Farmers’ markets (2014): 180%

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Food Nutrition Service, National Farm to School Network

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Barriers persist in operators’ minds

- Time
- Limited availability
- Inconsistent product
- Commitment
- Inconvenience
- Lack of knowledge

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Leveraging “food with a story”
Local foods will broaden their culinary cachet

Frogs Leap Public House

Fried Green Tomatoes & Focaccia Cheese “Sandwich”
Parmesan Logan Smoked Goat Cheese Focaccia/Breaded Red Pepper Sauce 15.0
with Market Greens 7.0

MC Fish & Chips
H. W. Lodge Battered Haddock Natural Cornmeal Potato Chips
Salt & Vinegar Shuck Funk/Multi Vinegar/English Mustard Sauce 14.0

Mexican Honey Glazed Sliced Deer Loin Ribs
Salt & Vinegar Glazed Cornbread Mexican Slaw 17.0

FDNY Polo Park
Texas Cheeseburger & Johnny Cake
Two BBQ Seasons/Cornbread/Shaved Red Onion 13.0

Sides
Local Collards & Smoked Ham Hash/McVegan 2.0
Salt & Vinegar 3.9
BGQ Sweet BBQ Sauce 1.8
Local Collards Side 7.0
Nacho Fries 4.9
FDNY Fried Cheese Curds 3.9
Frogs Leap Tangy Baked Fries 1.5

Country fried Southeast Family Farms aged angus steak/Fried Farm egg/Nueske’s bacon/Logan Turnpike smoked cheddar grits/Saw Mill gravy/bacon poached peppercorns

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Local Chef's Menu

WINE DIVE CLASSICS

SMALL PLATES

Wine Dive Specials

Fried Chicken & Champagne...
Why the Hell Not?!

Fried Chicken & Champagne...
Why the Hell Not?!

MAIN COURSES

Small plates and sides

Local Chef's Menu

MAX'S WINE DIVE

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Local Ingredients

$5.00 Publican Pork Sausage
Topped with Shack cheddar and American cheese sauce and crispy ShackMeister Alle- marinated shutoffs
$3.25 Hot Dog
Chicago’s own Vienna beef dog

Salted Caramel ’L:’
Vanilla custard, banana and Glazed & Infused
salted caramel old fashioned doughnut
Local Farm
Key Takeaways

Consumers are aware of and place value on locally sourced products in restaurants

Lack of a standard definition can be a help or a hindrance

Innovative operators are working with suppliers to address issues of availability, consistency, price

Growth opportunities lie in targeting menu items and positioning in the consumer's mind

Connect

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About Technomic

Technomic Inc. has been tracking the global foodservice industry for more than 45 years, providing industry intelligence, forecasts, data and training support to manufacturers, operators, distributors and others allied to the field. Our numerous publications and online products—featuring informative newsletters, annual reports, training handbooks, sales guides, restaurant chain profiles and analysis tools—help industry leaders keep a finger on the pulse of the entire global foodservice terrain. Technomic delivers distinctive, premium content to its customers. To learn more about our products and services, visit us at technomic.com