Do: Record Webinar!

Introduce yourself: Chef Brenda Wattles, RDN and Shane McDonald.

Say: Welcome to today's webinar on food photography and Video Creation! As the demand for captivating culinary content continues to grow, mastering the art of food photography and video creating has become increasingly important for marketing school meals. If you are just getting started, remember, just like everything, it takes time to learn a new skill like food photography. Getting started is the first step. The skills grow the more you practice and learn.

Throughout this webinar, we will explore basic and advanced techniques and tips for creating stunning visuals that showcase your school food. From lighting and composition to styling and editing, we will cover essential principles to help you capture images and videos that engage and inspire your customers. So, grab your camera or smartphone, get ready to take some delicious shots, and let's dive into the world of food photography and video creation!

USDA Funding and Non-Discrimination Statements:

Say: In today's webinar, we will be discussing how to create appealing food photos and how to turn still photos into videos for marketing and training purposes. We will also be discussing how to implement basic food photography setup and techniques to take appealing food photos. We will wrap up with two videos to demonstrate how you can create videos using still photos and video shots.

Professional Standard Learning Codes

- Communications and Marketing - 4100

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Say: This webinar's professional standard learning code is 4100 Communications and Marketing.

Why Photos and Videos

- Marketing School Meals
  - Highlight local foods, scratch cooking, student inspired meals
- Providing Nutrition Education
- Highlighting Job Postings

Say: Photos and videos are powerful tools for marketing school meals and promoting various aspects of school meals.

Marketing school meals with photos and videos showcasing appetizing meals can attract attention and generate interest among students, parents, and the community. Visuals can highlight the diversity, freshness, and appeal of the meals offered, enticing more students to participate in your school meal program. We will be discussing more about Marketing School Meals in our upcoming webinar on March 21st.

Photos and videos can spotlight locally sourced ingredients used in school meals, emphasizing the importance of supporting local farmers and businesses. By showcasing these foods, schools can foster a sense of community, pride, and connection to local agriculture.

Images and videos can capture behind-the-scenes footage of chefs and kitchen staff preparing meals from scratch and speed scratch. This demonstrates the dedication to quality and freshness while debunking misconceptions about school cafeterias. In addition, visual content can feature

student-inspired recipes or menu items, showcasing the creativity and input of students through recipe contests.

Let's not forget about the importance of utilizing photos and videos to promote healthy eating to students and parents! In addition, visual content is great for announcing job openings in school food service departments. Highlight your staff's character as marketing, just as we did here with Chef Andy. Who wouldn't want to work for Chef Cyndie and the K12 team with this kind of fun!

Photography and Video Creation Best Practices

- Social Media
- Daily Menu Marketing
- Local Food Options
- Student-Inspired Meals
- Nutrition Education
- Job Announcements & Highlighting Staff Members

- Cafeteria Marketing
- Bulletin Boards
- Video Monitors
- Menu Marketing
- Photos and videos in software programs
- Flyers for parents
- Food selections at the beginning of serving lines

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Say: Leveraging visual content across social media platforms and school cafeterias can enhance the effectiveness of district marketing efforts. We cannot forget the impact of marketing on our school bulletin boards, video monitors, and even our menu planning software programs. Rotating themes such as "Local Food of the Month," "Nutrition Nuggets," and "Meet our Cafeteria Team" keep students and staff engaged.

By strategically utilizing visual content across these various channels and platforms, schools can effectively market their meal programs, educate students and parents about nutrition, and create a welcoming and engaging environment that promotes increased participation.

Say: Photos and videos are great ways to create effective training materials for staff, including new hires, kitchen substitutes, and teacher training for breakfast in the classroom. In addition, creating visual aids for kitchen safety procedures and recipe directions are very effective in schools.

Taking Marketing
Ready Food Photos

Say: Let's get started with discussing how to take marketing ready food photos.

Staging Set Up with Equipment

Say: If you participated in the director training this past fall, you'll likely recall our innovative approach to setting up a photo station. We utilized umbrellas to manage the lighting precisely, securely fastened lights with pots and chairs, and employed budget-friendly backdrops to showcase our trays. While it does demand some time and space, this method proves to be an excellent means of establishing a photography station for capturing stunning school food tray photos.

Staging Set Up Without Equipment

Say: While having a fully equipped setup for food photography may seem ideal, it's not always necessary or practical in school nutrition. You can achieve great results with a simplified setup using items you already have on hand. Begin by utilizing school cafeteria tables, chef tables, or even natural-colored backdrops like construction paper. Pair this with just a cell phone, and you're ready to go. While natural lighting from a window can be beneficial, it's not always essential. These photos were taken within a school environment using just a cell phone.

The broccoli and Pico de Gallo were taken directly in the kitchen. Getting the cell phone up close allowed the cell phone camera to adjust the lighting perfectly.

Taking close-up shots is a smart approach as it eliminates any distracting backgrounds and draws the viewer's attention directly to the food. In fact, the tray featured in the photo above was actually a student's tray. Asking students to place their trays on a table near a window to leverage natural light is an excellent way to capture the perfect shot.

Say: Let's discuss the importance of lighting and exposure when taking food photos.

Lighting Positioning

Say: When considering lighting, it's crucial to properly position your light source, whether it's a lamp or natural light streaming in from a window. An additional key point to keep in mind is to position the light from the side or behind the food, steering clear of front lighting. This technique enhances depth and texture, decreases the chance for shadows, and creates more visually appealing food photographs.

Natural Light

Say: In this example, you'll notice the use of construction paper to introduce a natural color backdrop. Additionally, natural lighting from the window is being utilized. This technique is particularly effective for capturing school trays. Leveraging natural light from the windows in your kitchens or cafeterias can greatly enhance the quality of your photographs.

Smart Phone Lighting
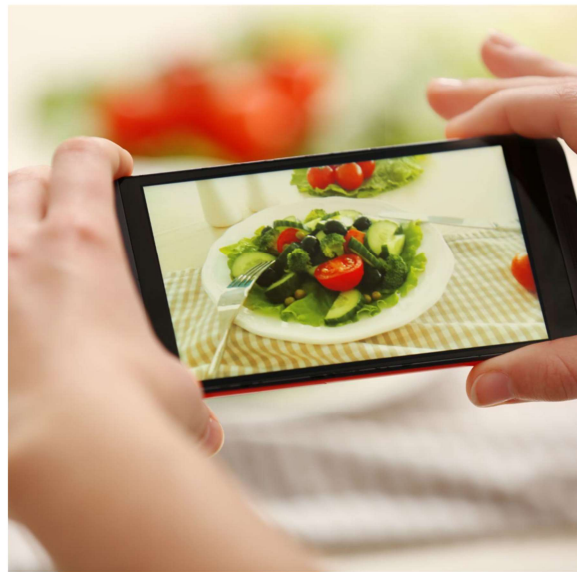
Say: Smartphones can be valuable tools for managing lighting in photography. Smartphones offer manual or semi-manual settings that allow you to adjust exposure, white balance, and other parameters to optimize lighting conditions.

Adjusting Focus and Exposure on Cell Phones

Apple

1. Open camera.
2. Tap the screen to show the automatic focus area and exposure setting.
3. Tap where you want to move the focus area.
4. Next to the focus area, drag up or down to adjust the exposure.

Android

1. Open camera.
2. Tap on the area of the screen where you want to focus until the camera adjusts.
3. Press and hold the screen with your finger to adjust.

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Say: Optimizing focus and exposure settings on your cell phone significantly improves lighting in your photos. These settings directly influence the amount of light that the camera's sensor receives, effectively directing light to where it's needed most for optimal image capture.

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Smart Phone Portrait Mode

Say: Utilizing portrait mode is another effective method for adjusting exposure on your cell phone. As demonstrated in this photo, portrait mode creates a blurred background, drawing the viewer's attention directly to the food item you want to highlight, as seen with this pasta dish. To access portrait mode on both Apple and Android devices, simply open the camera app and select the portrait mode option.

**Positioning & Styling
Food Trays**

Say: Positioning and styling food trays can make a big difference when it comes to taking great photos. Let's discuss some basic tips.

Say: To position your meal fully in the frame with nothing cut off, follow these steps:

1. Experiment with Distance and Angle: Move your camera around to find the best distance and angle relative to the tray or container. This might involve stepping closer or further away and adjusting the angle of your shot to ensure the meal fits entirely within the frame.
2. Avoid Distracting Elements: Be mindful of items touching the edges of the frame or each other in a distracting way. Adjust your composition as needed to remove any distractions and keep the focus on your meal.
3. Ensure Focus: When taking photos with your phone, tap and hold on your phone screen until the camera locks focus on your meal. This ensures that your subject remains in focus throughout the shot.

By following these steps, you can capture your meal fully in the frame, ensuring a well-composed and focused photograph or video.

Angles

Say: Different types of food items call for different angles when it comes to food photography.

Taking a photo from the top view is ideal for soups and salads, as it allows you to capture the entire dish in the frame. Ensure you don't block the overhead light, as it can create unwanted shadows or reflections.

Taking straight-on angled photos is best suited for sandwiches, burgers, and layered foods, like you see here with the parfait. This angle showcases the layers and ingredients effectively, making the food appear more appetizing.

Angling your camera is often perfect for capturing full meals and trays. Angling adds depth to the photo and provides a comprehensive view of the spread, making it visually appealing.

By following these suggestions, you can highlight the features of various dishes and create enticing food photography.

Focusing

Say: When taking photos, ensuring proper focus is very important. Don't miss the perfect shot because you forgot to focus.

When using a smartphone camera and many digital cameras, tap on the screen where you want the focus to be. This tells the camera to adjust its focus to that specific point. Tap on your food item to ensure it's in focus.

Using a smartphone or camera stand helps to prevent any moving or shaking which can cause the focus to change while taking photos.

Say: To avoid creating distractions and pay close attention to the composition of your shot.

This photo may be good to use for training staff on how the tray should look, but not great for marketing. – Where you use photos depends on your purpose.

Tips for avoiding distracting elements include:
1. Adjust positioning by moving your camera or adjusting the position of your tray to prevent items from touching the edges of the frame in distracting ways. Sometimes a slight shift in angle or distance can make a big difference.
2. Try changing your perspective or angle to view to eliminate distractions. This might involve crouching down, tilting the camera, or shooting from a different vantage point.
3. If possible, zoom in or crop the image to post-processing to remove any distractions from the frame.
4. Simplify the composition by removing unnecessary elements or adjusting the framing to create more space around the tray.

5. Take moment to carefully inspect the frame before capturing the shot. Look for any potential distractions and make adjustments as needed.

By implementing these techniques, you can create cleaner and more visually appealing composition without distractions.

Taking Photos of Student Trays

Say: Establishing connections with students can significantly streamline the process of capturing tray photos efficiently. One effective approach is to identify students who frequently choose a variety of fruits and vegetables from salad bars and encourage them to collaborate by allowing you to photograph their trays. Simply request that they assemble their trays and meet you near a cafeteria window for a quick snapshot. Alternatively, if windows aren't available, aim for close-up shots of the trays. Additionally, utilize the focus and exposure

settings on your cameras, as previously discussed, to mitigate the color distortion often caused by fluorescent lighting in school cafeterias, particularly minimizing the prominence of yellow and green hues.

Basic Editing Skills

Say: During the fall director's workshop, we discussed using phone applications and software programs like SnapSeed and Lightroom to edit food photos. Now, let's revisit some fundamental editing techniques.

Basic Editing Skills

- Smart Phones
  - Auto correct
  - Lighting
  - Crop
- Food photo before and after editing examples to see the difference.
- Using professional apps.

Say: Utilizing your smartphone's autocorrect feature can be incredibly helpful, although it doesn't always produce the desired outcome. Therefore, we recommend taking precautionary measures before editing any photos by saving a duplicate copy. This ensures that if any mistakes occur during the editing process and you're unable to revert to the original, you still have an untouched version. Also, having both versions allows for easy comparison between the pre-editing and post-editing photos. This gives you the option to determine which one you prefer.

Basic editing skills are readily available on cell phones, including adjustments to lighting and cropping. Additionally, apps like Snapseed and Lightroom offer advanced editing capabilities. Some of you may have had the chance to explore Snapseed during the fall workshop. Snapseed offers editing features such as object removal and other helpful AI editing tools.

The size of photos and videos can make a difference on social media platforms. Canva is a great place to start when it comes to choosing the right size. It will automatically size your photos appropriate for each platform. When it comes to websites, the size of the photo depends on what looks appealing to

the eye. Working with a graphic designer can be helpful to determine what size photos should be on a website.

Using AI for Editing Photos

Say: There are many apps and computer programs that use AI technology to help with editing photos. It's a good idea to research different ones to see which works best for what you need. These apps have tools to make photos look better, fix colors, and even get rid of stuff you don't want in the picture. But it's usually better to take a picture without elements you want to remove.

Some of these apps can also make pictures that look real from other pictures. AI has been getting

better and better, but it might be a bit tricky to use at first. Be sure that whatever you post represents what you are serving in your cafeteria. You would not want to lose your customers' trust. Like anything, the more you practice, the better you'll get!

Also, some apps let you erase backgrounds you don't like and replace them with something more appealing. This may be a place you would want to start when learning about AI.

Say: Transforming photos into videos.

Example Video

This Week's Menu Highlights

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Say: Utilizing still photos to craft video content can be highly effective and offer versatility for repurposing content. In this video, we will demonstrate this approach using still food images from recipes developed by Chef Cyndie and the K12 Team. As an example, we used The VDOE-SCNP logo. Let's take a look.

After video plays, **Say:** This type of video is great for social media, played on cafeteria video monitors, it may also be played in classrooms where teachers

can play videos as students are getting settled into their desks in the morning or after morning recess.

Creating Videos on Canva
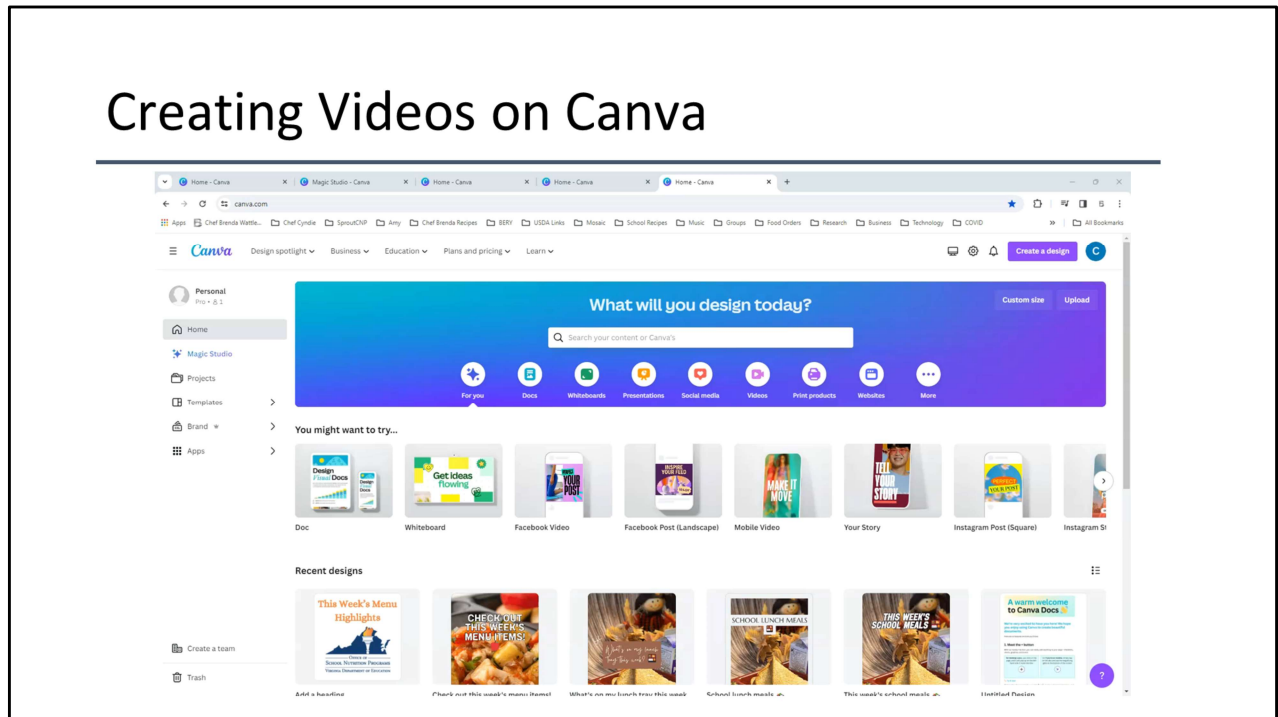
Say: We wanted to give you an idea of how you can repurpose or use still photos using Canva. Let's take a look.

Questions

Say: We would love to take this opportunity for you to ask any questions about the presentation, food photography, or video creation. Please feel free to type any questions in the chat or unmute yourself.