

THE INTELLIGENCE

TALKBACK Foodservice professional gives her view on one question

How do we attract more people to kitchens?

The foodservice industry in the US had a bad reputation compared to European kitchens. Over the last three decades, our culinary and branded restaurants have become accepted as excellent and we attract chefs, concept developers and other talent.

Culinary schools and public school programs have waiting lists to enrol. There have never been more opportunities for anyone to find a place in the food industry . There are culinary positions needed for research and test kitchens; quick -service and fast-casual restaurants; fine dining; colleges; corporate employee dining rooms; catering; hospitals; supermarkets; and cultural institutions.

The industry has done a terrible job in attracting people. While some kitchens do not have a good culture or develop their workers, most kitchens today are dynamic environments that build



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camaraderie and flexibility. The media focuses on the few bad apples instead of the opportunities and good working conditions for most people.

We need to focus on leaders in the industry such as Jose Andres. The industry can change by helping people of all types and skill sets realize they can have a place in the industry. I don't believe there is an industry problem, but an industry image and public relations problem. We need to position the industry as welcoming and professional with opportunity for all. ■