AFFORDABLE: EVERYTABLE

CASE STUDY: Equity in a Los Angeles Restaurant Chain

Everytable has a simple belief: Healthy Food is a Human Right. This mission drives their goal to make “nutritious, fresh food affordable and accessible for all.” All too often, the overlap in the Venn diagram of affordability and accessibility narrows in low-income neighborhoods, meaning that healthy food is not easy to find or purchase.

Residents in these communities must often choose between staying in their neighborhood and eating more inexpensive – but unhealthy – prepared food, often from fast food restaurants, or they must travel outside of their own community to buy more nutritious meals that often take a big bite out of their budget. In certain communities, where neighborhood markets lack nutritious options, and are flooded with fast-food restaurants that occupy every commercial block, obtaining healthy, prepared meals takes significantly more effort for its residents than it does for those in more affluent neighborhoods.

Thus, Everytable has a unique approach to addressing this gap. In their eight restaurants, which are located in both high and low income neighborhoods, as well as on college campuses, they offer healthy meals like Chickpea Tikka Masala, Trap Kitchen Curry Chicken, and Salmon Superfood Salad, which are inspired by the communities that they serve. All meals were designed to be free of refined grains, artificial preservatives, and other methods of preparation with dubious health benefits.

The key differentiator for Everytable? Meals that cost $8 in more affluent communities like Brentwood are priced at just $5 in lower-income areas like Watts and Compton. Everytable is now also offering Smart Fridges for businesses and a subscription service as well. This business model prevents Everytable from operating at a loss. While profit margins on $5 meals are low – typically just 50 cents a meal, they are offset by more generous profit margins at higher-priced locations.

Other restaurant chains with healthy meal items have tried other approaches to making affordable lower prices in underserved communities. Most famously, Panera Bread launched Panera Cares, a restaurant that allowed customers to pay what they could, leaving donation boxes with signs saying, “Take
what you need, leave your fair share.” However, the experiment ended after less than three years, the company unable to sustain the cut to profits at locations operating as Panera Cares. Everytable has been running for five years now, and their locations have expanded from two to eight.

In addition to supporting healthy eating for residents of Los Angeles County, Everytable hires local cooks to prepare the food at its central kitchen in LA. Community health is never built on just one or two pillars. Everytable has made it their goal to address nutrition, economic contributions, and more through the best means possible: delicious, and affordable meals.