

HOT TOPICS

A Newsletter for the Foodservice Industry from Hatco Corporation. 100% Employee Owned — Fall 2020, No. 66



Comments to: socialmedia@hatcocorp.com

Welcome to Hot Topics!



Challenge and rewards

by Dave Rolston

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CHALLENGE AND REWARDS

by David Rolston
President and CEO

Of the many gold medals available to participants in the Summer Olympic Games, none is more coveted than that for the Decathlon, a series of ten events based on sports popular in ancient times and represented at the early Olympics in Greece. The challenge that these events present is derived from the fact that they require seemingly contradictory examples of athletic prowess. For instance, while a slim physique is advantageous in the running, high jump and pole vault events, well-developed arms and pectoral muscles are an advantage in the shotput and discus throw. More than a matter of muscles and agility, the Decathlon is also challenging from the mental preparation required. Each event has to be approached with a clear but different mindset in order to achieve the right degree of concentration.

Such athletic versatility can only be acquired by what we call “cross-training,” a term introduced by Nike® in 1989 when they debuted their first cross-training shoes. Advertisements featured Bo Jackson, a superb athlete who played both professional football and baseball.

In business, too, the concept of cross-training has proven extremely valuable to both office and factory personnel. Years ago, it was common to hire employees, generally less-skilled ones, to perform a single function. One of the most vivid examples of this occurred on the early automotive assembly lines when workers reported to the same station and performed the same task for hours, days, and years on end. Over time, especially as the general education level rose, it became apparent that such boring and repetitious jobs not only affected the individual, who was typically isolated and deprived of advancement, but resulted in lower production and potentially dangerous mistakes.

In the 1970s, at its Kalmar, Sweden plant, AB Volvo tried a revolutionary experiment. They selected a group of workers and gave them the task of assembling an automobile engine in any sequence that they wished. Initially, until the teams became acclimated, production dropped. But subsequently, output improved, quality increased, and workers made important suggestions that improved both process and cost savings. Industry had learned a valuable lesson about the importance of cross-training to team building.

At Hatco, we’ve developed an extensive cross-training program for employees throughout our organization. We found that this not only relieves boredom but provides a ready avenue for advancement. By giving our people a wider view of the process, it has created enthusiasm and dedication that works extremely well in an employee-owned company.

As more advanced manufacturing methods and automation have become available, they have been readily embraced and augmented with significant team member input. In the offices, our people are continually exposed to the workings of other departments—something that has resulted in faster response times and improved customer service.

The interplay between our sales team with the entire organization creates a heightened sensitivity to customer needs, often enabling us to anticipate industry trends.

More than any commercial benefit, though, I am continually amazed by the limitless power of people when they are given the training, the resources, and the ability to express themselves. We pride ourselves in having the latest tools and methods, but the thing that makes it work is people, and cross-training makes that possible.

David Rolston
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Close to Home

How emergent trends are helping foodservice operators build local sales and strengthen customer loyalty

The rapid growth of several social and economic trends, such as working from home, home schooling, and internet-based home businesses, have created significant opportunities for foodservice operators who are tailoring their menus and services to their local markets. By successfully cultivating relationships with nearby customers, they are boosting sales through more frequent repeat orders, increased customer loyalty, and developing new profit centers.

Several ways of capitalizing on your “near-in” markets include expanded take-out service, small group catering, and supplying the “cooking at home” market.

- **Increasing sales of take-out orders.** The demand for restaurant take-out meals is one of the hottest trends to affect the foodservice industry in recent years. What started as an “add-on” business has, in many cases, come to dominate certain individual operations; and what was once limited to QSRs and pizza operations now involve family restaurants and fine dining establishments. As profitable as the take-out business can be, there are a number of challenges involved.

First and foremost is the logistical situation. Operators who initially prepared orders “to go” in the restaurant kitchen for pick-up quickly found that, without proper facilities planning, both the preparation and the traffic could be disruptive to in-house patrons. Solutions to this could be incorporating “ghost kitchens” (see our [recent Hot Topics feature](#)), where possible the installation of a take-out area (or drive-up window), and the incorporation of delivery services for “back door” pick-up.

Further accommodation has to be made for the ordering process, which is typically done verbally by phone or with a smartphone. In either case, it is essential that the menu portion of the website be accurate in description and easy to read and follow. Take-out has also enabled restaurants to offer more variations than previously. For instance, a dinner special geared to a particular night of the week could offer both the full meal or the opportunity to purchase items separately.

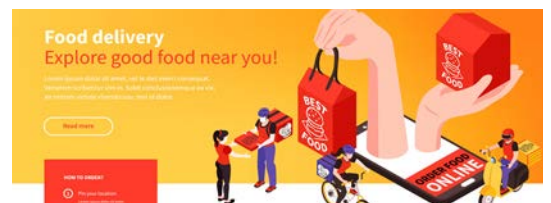
When it comes to more elaborate entrées, presentation remains important, and operators can choose to work with select services in designing containers that not only protect the appearance of the contents but reflect the brand image.



Another key factor involves advertising. Social media, local newspapers, radio, and other vehicles can let your target audience know that you are providing take-out services and serve as a means of alerting them to special offers and menu additions.

It's also wise to remember that one of the primary reasons for the popularity of restaurant take-out stems from the public's desire for variety. Even QSRs that built a reputation on a limited number of offerings have embraced both permanent and seasonal menu modifications. Take-out services provide an excellent opportunity to determine which of your items are the most popular and which can be modified, changed, or deleted to make way for other additions that will keep customers interested.

- **Catering.** To many, the term "catering" calls to mind weddings or other events requiring foodservice for several hundred people. For individual restaurants or operations, however, there are increasing opportunities involving smaller family gatherings, civic meetings, club events, and others. As with take-out, serious planning is required.
- **Menu selection.** You will want to modify several of your most popular dishes for smaller servings and buffet-style presentation. People will be choosing you based on their experience with your offerings, so in altering them for catering purposes, it is essential that they retain the taste and quality that is expected.
- **Infrastructure.** Items like hors d'oeuvres, desserts, or self-service sandwich ingredients that are not featured on your usual menu can be obtained from other sources. Local bakeries, confectioners, and deli departments in larger supermarkets can provide foods that you need without putting undue pressure on your kitchen. Also, your sources might be willing to work out advantageous pricing for you in anticipation of repeat orders for larger quantities.
- **Equipment.** Essential to maintaining your brand image is the way in which food is presented and served. You will need equipment capable of maintaining the correct serving temperature, that is easy for customers to access, and that reflects quality. (Check the [Hatco website](#) for our extensive selection of foodwarming and presentation equipment.)
- **Transportation and personnel.** You will want to consider investing in a van or other vehicle to transport the food and equipment to the customer site. Food should be accompanied by one of your staff who can ensure proper placement and layout and that everything is functioning properly. Once the event is concluded, leftovers and service equipment should be removed as soon as possible.
- **Communication.** When you're ready to go, make sure to mention your catering service with specifics as to the size of functions you are prepared to serve in all communications materials. In addition to your website, table tents in your facility and flyers to accompany all take-out orders should be considered. Also, post your menu and photographs on your website.
- **Tapping the "cooking at home" market.** The popularity of fusion dishes and more exotic fare and the demand for elaborately equipped kitchens have resulted in a growing number of individuals who enjoy cooking at home. The popularity of TV shows and internet offerings featuring noted chefs has spurred this trend. Companies like Blue Apron and Amazon offer delivery services for complete meals.



continued from "Close to Home"

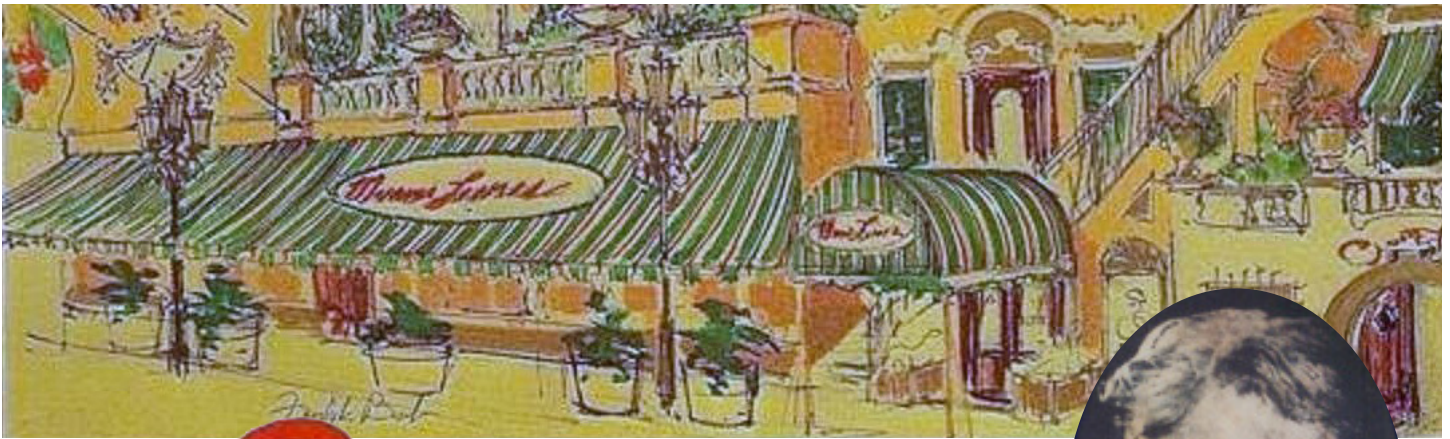
For home chefs, especially those outside of major urban areas, sourcing of key ingredients can be a problem. Certain cuts of meat, including veal and lamb, have all but disappeared in many locations except on a seasonal basis. Exotic spices and other condiments can be found online but often require multiple purchases and high shipping costs.



Any number of restauranteurs, both large and small—often those featuring ethnic foods—have found it profitable to dedicate a portion of their facility to the sale of food products that relate to their specialties. These can range from “mini markets” within or adjacent to the dining facility to a counter or cabinets with specialty offerings. In some cases, where a specific item has proven especially popular, it might be possible to obtain packaging under your own brand. If the demand is great enough, local groceries or markets could be willing to feature your products at their locations. (See the story on Brand Extension in the [Summer 2019 issue of Hot Topics](#).)

As with any business, foodservice presents its unique share of challenges. By looking at the big picture and incorporating additional profit centers into your operation, it can become not only economically advantageous but also serve as a means of ensuring your viability in slower seasons or difficult times. It is also an excellent way to build brand awareness. ■





Mamma Leone's

A legacy of great Italian specialties

For most of the 20th century, New York-based Mamma Leone's Restaurant was a "must visit" stop for residents and visitors alike. Founded in 1906 by Luisa Leone—with the encouragement of legendary tenor Enrico Caruso—the restaurant quickly became a gathering place for both the public and celebrities who were attracted by the extensive menu and generous portions.

Mamma Leone's closed in 1994, but thanks to the cookbook written by her son Gene (with a forward by no less than President Dwight D. Eisenhower), we can continue to enjoy the richly flavored dishes that made the restaurant a legend in its own time.

As Mamma used to say, "Serve good food and give the people plenty." ■



Spaghetti with Italian-Sausage and Eggplant Sauce

[Click here for recipe](#)

Glo-Ray 2-Go™ Heated Shelves

The “off the shelf” solution for your delivery and carry-out needs



GRS2G-3920-5
shown in optional *Designer Warm Red*



GRS2G-3920-5
shown in optional *Designer Navy Blue*



GRS2G-3920-4

Designed to hold large quantities of hot food at optimum serving temperatures, Hatco's new GRS2G models can hold bags and boxes up to 30 minutes at temperatures up to 200°F (93°C). Ideal for pick-up, third-party delivery, or any “food to-go” situation, they are available in configurations ranging from two to five shelves.

Features include:

- Shelves are 20" (508 mm) deep and 39" (991 mm) wide to fit pizza boxes and bags. Clearance is 13" (330 mm).
- Versatile touchscreen control with digital readout delivers separate heat and timer for each shelf.
- The cord is recessed into the bottom shelf at a 45° angle. This allows the unit to be flush against either wall.
- Your unit can be customized with our optional side and back panels that allow either pass-through or single-side access.
- Units include side wall mounting brackets, 6" (152 mm) adjustable flanged feet that can be bolted to the floor, and a 6' (1829 mm) recessed cord and plug.
- Options include *Designer Colors*, and controls and permanent panel on customer's right side.
- Accessories include 4" (102 mm) adjustable legs for select models.



GRS2G-3920-3



GRS2G-3920-2

Contact your Hatco representative or visit our website at www.hatcocorp.com and let us help you keep your carry-out and delivery items right “on the shelf.” ■