

LABOR SAVING MENU CONCEPTS

In the highly competitive restaurant business, restaurateurs are looking for ways to most effectively manage their food costs and maintain or reduce labor costs, thereby increasing profits all while delivering the taste and quality their patrons expect. There are three primary ways that restaurants can accomplish these goals – Speed Scratch, Utilize Leftovers and Consistent Plate Costs.

Speed Scratch

Many manufacturers now use Chef's as part of their innovation process to assist in development of products that are more "menu ready" requiring less labor in the kitchen to prepare. The lower prep menu items allow the operation to dedicate labor to making the item unique, provide consistent quality, all while keeping labor and food costs within budget. Having predictable and consistent food costs is critical to overall profitability. And further value-added food products are a great way to achieve predictable food costs with consistent quality.

Utilization of Leftovers

For one reason or another, leftover foods is part of the daily life of a restaurant. When this occurs, it's critical to identify ways to utilize the food in other menu applications to maximize the food investment and minimize food cost. A consistent menu that incorporates leftovers can make a significant contribution to the bottom line.

Consistent Plate Costs

Anytime a restaurant can take product 'prep' out of an operations without impacting quality, it contributes to managing labor costs and allows for labor available to be dedicated to more value-added menu applications. Utilizing "pan ready" /pre-sliced/pre-portioned products provides consistent portioning and costs. Every plate will not only have a quality product that is consistent every time and addresses patron's expectations -- but also assists in managing food costs.

Though there is variation in menus, patrons and types of operation -- these tips are universal and can help any operator manage their costs.