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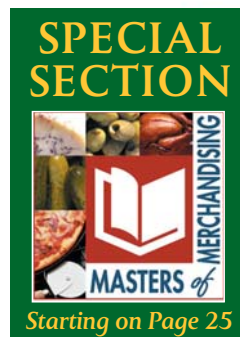
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Starting on Page 25



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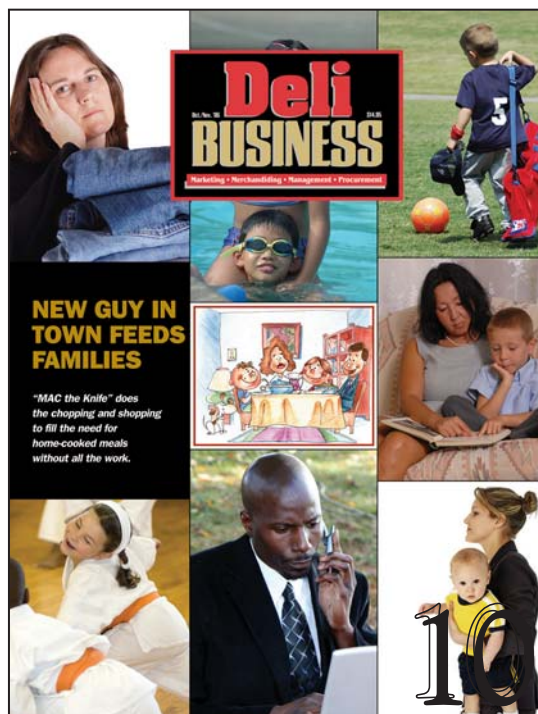
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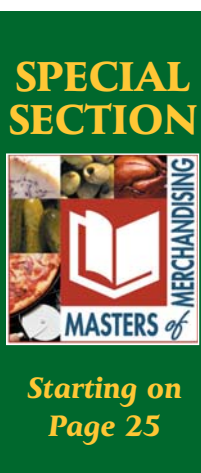
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DELI BUSINESS QUIZ



LISA WATERS

Executive Director
California Cheese & Butter Association
Clayton, CA

Lisa has been with the California Cheese & Butter Association (CCBA) since 2006. CCBA is a voluntary not-for-profit organization for any person, company or organization engaged in the manufacture, sale, promotion or distribution of cheese or butter in California.

As the executive director, she is responsible for the day-to-day management of the association. She also co-ordinates all CCBA events and is the editor of the CCBA newsletter, The Mooos About Town.

She has been reading Deli Business seeing assuming this position and likes reading the advertisements, particularly the ads run by CCBA members. She also enjoys the articles and says she keeps her abreast of the industry.

As the winner of the Aug./Sept. Quiz, Lisa wins an anti-gravity lounge.

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To win the DELI BUSINESS Quiz, the first thing you have to do is enter. The rules are simple: Read through the articles and advertisements in this issue to find the answers. Fill in the blanks corresponding to the questions below, and either cut along the dotted line or photocopy the page and send your answers, along with a business card or company letterhead, to the address listed below. The winner will be chosen by drawing from the responses received before the publication of the Feb./Mar. 2007 issue of DELI BUSINESS. **The winner must agree to submit a photo to be published in that issue.**

Quiz Questions

- 1) What is the toll-free number for Rose Packing? _____
- 2) What is the street address for Champion Foods? _____
- 3) What is the e-mail address for Perdue? _____
- 4) What is the phone number for Campofrio? _____
- 5) In what city is Stefano Foods located? _____
- 6) What is the fax number for Tribe Foods? _____

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Please send answers to:

DELI BUSINESS QUIZ: Dec./Jan. 2007 Issue

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DELI WATCH

Announcements



Paula Deen And Smithfield

Celebrity cook, restaurateur, author and TV personality Paula Deen has joined with Smithfield Foods, Smithfield, VA, in an exclusive partnership aimed at promoting meals that encourage families to spend more time eating together. Deen will be involved in community outreach efforts, personal appearances, Web-based recipe and meal preparation tips. Visit www.smithfieldfoods.com

Reader Service No. 401



New Culinary Centre

Roth Käse USA, Monroe, WI, celebrates 15 years of specialty cheesemaking by unveiling its new Culinary Education Centre and state-of-the-art Affinage Facility. The Centre's ribbon cutting was the keynote to the anniversary celebration in October. The Education Centre is part of a two-phase expansion, which concludes after three years of hard work. Visit www.rothkase.com

Reader Service No. 402

New Products



Slide-out Refrigeration

Structural Concepts, Muskegon, MI, introduces the innovative Breeze refrigeration system in select bakery/deli/beverage display cases. The Breeze slide-out refrigeration system, in temperature-controlled display cases, automatically adjusts the duration of the defrost cycle. Visit www.structuralconcepts.com

Reader Service No. 403



Slow Roasted Dinners

Bob Evans, Columbus, OH, has expanded its line of slow-roasted dinners with the addition of beef stew with vegetables and meat loaf with gravy. Both refrigerated meal solutions are ready in under 10 minutes and come in microwavable containers for easy clean-up. Each entrée is 20 ounces with 3.5 servings. Visit www.bobevans.com

Reader Service No. 404



New Alpine-Style Cheese

Fiscalini Cheese Company in the San Joaquin Valley near Modesto, CA, has introduced a new signature Alpine-style cheese named Lionza. Semi-hard, savory and fragrant, Lionza is rich and nutty with a touch of fruitiness. It also offers a wide range of recipe uses — from salads and pastas to egg dishes, sauces and gratins. Visit www.fiscalinicheese.com

Reader Service No. 405



Eye-Catching Graphics

Robbie Manufacturing, Lenexa, KS, has introduced new PromoSeal Designs from the leader in printed self-adhesive merchandising bands. The new multi-purpose cellophane tape features brighter, eye-catching graphics designed to provide tamper-resistant protection to in-store packages while differentiating signature product. Visit www.robbiemfg.com

Reader Service No. 406



Portable Meals

Go Go Organics, Chicago, IL, unveils a new line of fresh, portable organic pre-packaged meals for grocery, specialty and convenience stores, as well as the food-service areas of schools, hospitals, airports and more. The new line, which includes organic salads, sandwiches, wraps, pizzas, deli salads and cookies, combines gourmet recipes and fresh ingredients. Visit www.gogoorganics.com

Reader Service No. 407



Kung Pao Chicken Sauce

Lee Kum Kee, City of Industry, CA, presents ready-to-serve Kung Pao Chicken Sauce. The rich, spicy sauce with a deep, complex flavor is available in easy-to-pour half-gallon plastic containers for foodservice. Just stir-fry chicken strips with vegetables and peanuts and add sauce. Visit www.LKK.com

Reader Service No. 408



Globe End Weight Handle

Globe Food Equipment Company, Dayton, OH, has designed a new, easier to hold end weight handle now featured on all new 3600 and 4600 model slicers. The ergonomically correct handle, specifically engineered for operator convenience and productivity, contains antimicrobial protection. Visit www.globeslicers.com

Reader Service No. 409



Fresh Mozzarella

Churny Company of Glenview, IL, presents Polly-O fresh mozzarella cheese, available in four sizes to suit retailers' needs and control costs. Polly-O is known for its consistently excellent quality, and this premium water-packed mozzarella is made daily from natural ingredients in state-of-the-art facilities. Visit www.churny.com

Reader Service No. 410



DELI WATCH is a regular feature of DELI BUSINESS. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: **Editor, DELI BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810217 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0217 • Phone: 561-994-1118 • Fax: 561-994-1610 • E-mail: DeliBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com**

Meal Assembly Delis



By
Jim Prevor

Editor-in-Chief of
DELI BUSINESS

Minneapolis — Bob Waldron is engaged in one of the food industry's fiercest battles. Sitting at a small conference table in his office, he recently revealed his latest, not-so-secret weapon.

"This might seem small to you," he said, tearing open a box of hamburger helper — the new Philly Cheesesteak variety — and pouring its packet of french-fried onions across the table, "but we generally have not had a crunch before."

The crunch is a big deal to Mr. Waldron, vice president for marketing at General Mills Inc. and the man currently responsible for Hamburger Helper. After 30 years as the undisputed king of dinner mixes, Hamburger Helper suddenly faces a challenge. The food industry, obsessed for years with making products ever readier to eat, has had a revelation: Americans want to do a bit, but just a bit, of actual cooking.

Food Industry Battles for Moms who Want To Cook Just a Little, The Wall Street Journal, March 7, 2001

The cover story on Meal Assembly Centers (MACs) brought to mind the long ago cover story from *The Wall Street Journal* excerpted above. The article was about "convenient-involvement products" of which Hamburger Helper is emblematic.

The basic idea is that products can be made too convenient. Although Hamburger Helper was introduced in 1971, during a time of soaring beef prices and economic malaise as an economy tool to help harried homemakers extend a pound of chop meat to a dinner for five, its almost instant and long-sustained success has indicated it drew on a reservoir of guilt by parents, especially working mothers.

Turns out that no matter how many other things they may be doing, no matter how justified their use of takeout or convenience foods, many Moms feel an important obligation to prepare dinner for the family. And "prepare" is the operative word.

Even if the budget allows, just buying takeout and putting it on the table doesn't satisfy the need of many primary caretakers, and especially of mothers, to be actively involved in the preparation of their families' meals.

This issue's cover story is filled with genuine insight into consumers' thoughts on this new MAC phenomenon. In these venues, consumers can come in, prepare meals and take them home to freeze for later consumption. The shopping and clean-up is all done for consumers.

Consumers sing the praises of the product because they can adjust recipes to their families' taste and avoid unhealthy ingredients, like too much salt, etc.

In her column on page 8, Lee Smith, publisher of DELI BUSINESS, notes supermarkets may want to consider opening their own MACs to capture this market and serve as a venue to keep consumers involved with the supermarket. She is right on. With ready access to all ingredients, ability to not add an additional stop at another venue to the schedule of a busy consumer and the fact that consumers could shop on the same trip, supermarkets are poised for a win.

The problem is that we don't yet know if MACs are viable. As the article points out, they are booming — but almost all are franchises, and the small footprint of most of these stores allows them to open easily in many locations. In addition, it is an easy concept to understand, and most peo-

The important lesson for delis may not hinge on the success or failure of the MAC as much as on understanding the emotional resonance of these stores.

ple looking to start a business would find this concept accessible.

But are these stores earning an adequate return on capital? Do the families that own them earn an acceptable wage for their work? We really have no idea.

The fact that few of the stores are corporate-owned may be a bad sign. Past experience

with fast-food restaurant chains taught us that those that have good concepts may want to keep franchising to grow fast but corporations usually like to get in on the profits from company-owned restaurants as well.

It is certainly worth experimenting with, and every chain should be building a few in a remodel or new store.

Yet, win, lose or draw, the important lesson for delis may not hinge on the success or failure of the MAC as much as on understanding the emotional resonance of these stores. As mentioned above, many consumers feel a little guilty if they just open a prepared food from the deli.

The way to capitalize on the motivations behind the MAC phenomenon is to look at the whole product line and find opportunities for consumer involvement.

One problem is that retailers invest so little in researching their customers, their desires and their motivations, especially their feelings toward cooking. *The Wall Street Journal* article referenced earlier included this quote: "Companies such as Pillsbury and Nestlé have done exhaustive research on how many pots and pans harried chefs want to use and how long they want to spend at the stove so that they can still feel good about the result (answers: one [pot] and 15 minutes). Psychology is almost as important as flavor."

This lack of research makes it very difficult for retail foodservice operations to sit down with vendors and direct product development in a direction that will ultimately please consumers and sell well.

But the gist is that there is a big market out there that wants both real convenience (15 minutes cooking and one dirty pot) and involvement (stirring and browning in the case of Hamburger Helper) — and supermarket delis need to experimenting with this as well.

The key is to understand that whether MACs are the next big thing or not, there is a consumer need that delis can't answer by simply making product more convenient.

This is a problem... and an opportunity.

DB

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Of This And That



By
Lee Smith
Publisher of
DELI BUSINESS

The cover story of this month's issue, *New Guy In Town Feeds Families*, is an article everyone should read. Meal Assemble Centers are growing and the reason they are growing is explained through a proprietary research project done by Olson Communications, headquartered in Chicago, IL. Getting in the game could be a real winner for retailers looking for something new that will differentiate them from the competition. Pay attention to this one.

Speaking of new, I've just returned from SIAL in time to write this column. For those of you who aren't familiar with SIAL, it is one of the largest food trade shows in the world and is held in Paris, France, every other year. To give you an idea of the immense size of this show, over 150,000 people from all over the world visited seven halls, each one larger than the largest show in the United States. I also had the opportunity to travel with the Cheese Importers Association of America — a special treat. This is a great value for executives who want to travel to SIAL, network with other professionals and get some guidance about whom and what to see. I highly recommend it.

One of the great delights of the show was finding my friends David Gremmels and Cary Bryant from Rogue Creamery with a booth of their fabulous blue cheeses and cheddars. Just so happens that they were next door to the booth of one of our sister publications (AMERICAN FOOD & AG EXPORTER), so I was able to watch people come by and taste their cheeses. It usually started off with a polite but skeptical look that turned into raised eyebrows, broad smiles and a second taste as all negative misconceptions about American specialty cheeses disappeared. If that was all that happened, I would be very happy for these guys — but that was only the start!

It took two years of hard work for Rogue Creamery to get a certificate to export raw milk cheese, making Rogue Creamery the first U.S. company to export raw milk cheese. Kudos to them. I wasn't the only one to appreciate their efforts; SIAL's staff voted Rogue's Smokey Blue into the innovation center. The foodservice committee's analysis concluded: "A smoked soft-ripened cheese to expand the well-seasoned cheese offer. The trend was 'sophistication.'" This is a real honor for an American specialty cheese company, and it was the only raw milk cheese to win the award. I'm hoping that next year there is a better representation of American cheesemakers.

Packaging is an area in which European companies have us beat. Just seeing the new packaging innovations was worth the trip, especially when it comes to specialty cheese. There was vacuum packaging for fresh goat cheeses and parchment wrap for specialty cheeses. Something new, for

me anyway, was paper wrap over cheese slices that had been vacuum wrapped. Also, more use of traditional consumer packaging with cheese. The paper wrap added a lot of class and let the cheesemaker include more information about the cheese when compared to typical U.S. packaging that produces the blah sea of yellow often referred to by one of our columnists, Jeffrey Spear.

On to another subject, but still talking European, here's more about Kalamata olives. A little less than a year ago, I wrote an article about olives that stated "real" Kalamata olives come from the Kalamata area of Greece, a point that some suppliers disagreed with, pointing out that Greek Kalamatas come from the area around both Kalamata and Sparta, where more of the olives are grown. Sparta also is the city most Kalamatas are bought and exported from,

regardless of where they are grown. Sparta and Kalamata are about 155 miles apart and the olives are grown in contiguous areas, making for little to no distinction.

The official position of Greece is that Kalamata olives come from Kalamata and the prefecture (department) of Messina. I met with Bruno De Boni, program manager, promotion of agricultural products of the European Union and Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss the issue, and he confirmed that the application filed by Greece and accepted by the European Union for PDO status says that Kalamata olives must come from Kalamata and the prefecture of Messina.

Practically, olives called Kalamata are being shipped out of Greece and they may or may not come from Kalamata, Messina. Olives from the Sparta area in the prefecture of Laconia are still called Kalamata and labeled as such.

This has put retailers, importers and wholesale distributors in a very difficult place. What really matters is that Greek Kalamon olives are, practically speaking, Kalamatas regardless of place of origin. It is impossible for U.S. suppliers to undertake the task of differentiating specific growing areas if Greece is not willing or able to label exports appropriately. It is also very difficult for Americans to voluntarily abide by a system that so soundly breaks all the rules.

Out of fairness, Greece does have a period of time to implement the program and they also have the ability to amend the PDO to include olives grown in Laconia or whatever growing area they decide. It is my understanding that they are now in the process of reviewing the application. It is unreasonable for U.S. suppliers of Kalamatas olives to sort through all the problems. So, once again, I recommend that buyers know what they are buying, but also understand that Greek Kalamatas olives should be grown in Greece and, other than estate grown olives, they are all one and the same. More on this subject in our next issue. **DB**

I was able to watch people come by and taste Rogue Creamery's cheeses . . . A polite but skeptical look turned into raised eyebrows, broad smiles and a second taste.



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FRESH INNOVATIONS.

NEW GUY IN TOWN FEEDS FAMILIES

*“MAC the Knife” does the chopping and shopping
to fill the need for home-cooked meals without all the work.*

By Sharon Olson



D

ELI BUSINESS first reported on the new make-take-and-bake option of meal preparation services in an editorial, entitled *Cashing In on Cook & Carry*, in the August/September issue. Meal Assembly Centers (MACs), as this category is called, let customers assemble a week's worth of meals in two hours. The meals are popped into a freezer at home until they are needed.

Retailers cannot take their eyes off this new version of “MAC the Knife.” It is a new category of competition for the consumer's food dollar and its success indicates consumers find added value in putting a home-cooked meal on the table. They want a hands-on experience in making dinner, but they happily skip the trip to the store and the chopping and dicing.

Olson Communications, Chicago, IL, asked 286 random consumers how they felt about cooking evening meals. The survey results paint a picture of everyday folks who are in a bind: They want to serve home-cooked meals, but they do not do it often.

For retailers and foodservice operators, the good news is these folks still want to cook. Only a handful of the consumers surveyed have actually used a MAC, but deli operators cannot celebrate yet. Consumers' lifestyles indicate these are exactly the consumers MACs are geared to serve.

What could be troubling for supermarkets and restaurants is that MACs are popping up in markets across the country, and they are thicker than dandelions in the spring.

Most of the consumers surveyed were enthusiastic about cooking and believed in making meals from scratch. But in this time-pressed world, more than half routinely turn to carryout or delivery to put dinner on the table.

A rapidly growing number of entrepreneurs see this disconnect as a major profit opportunity. In short, it may be only a matter of time before MACs take a significant share of business away from the prepared food section at supermarket delis, as well as away from restaurants.

MACs are opening every week to give these time-pressed, wannabe, wish-I-could cooks a way to do it all. The growth of this trend is staggering. The first MAC operation appeared in the U.S. Northwest in 1999, and the concept took off in 2002. At the end of September this year, there were 331 MAC companies with 951 outlets in the United States and Canada, according to the Easy Meal Prep Association, the industry's trade group headquartered in Cheyenne, WY.

The expansion momentum increases, seemingly daily. From May through September of this year, 97 new meal prep companies

came on the scene, and 176 new outlets opened their doors, according to the association's website. That is more than one new outlet a day.

This is robust growth, but it is probably just the tip of the iceberg. For example, the Midwest's largest MAC, Dinner by Design in Grayslake, IL, has opened 40 locations, according to its spokesperson Laurie Hobbs. But, she adds, the firm has already selected the locations for 38 more.

families outside of metropolitan areas. The most recent investigation identified an exception to the center-city no-go zone. Dinner by Design plans to open two outlets in downtown Chicago before the end of the year.

This may require a tweaking of the concept that was born to serve families of four or more who do not have access to a variety of high-quality restaurant carryout, notes Hobbs. "We are holding

focus groups to be sure we'll be on target with what our potential customers want. For instance, we know freezer space will be an issue, and we are going to deal with that," she says.

WHO ARE THESE MACS SERVING?

Reports in the press about the "Meal Assembly Center experience" usually focus on the party atmosphere of having

THE SURVEY SAID

Of 286 consumers over 18 surveyed in September 2006:

1. Most — 61 percent — said that they sat down to family meals most evenings.

2. More — about 70 percent — were enthusiastic about cooking, but nearly half of this group would cook more if they had the time.

3. About 70 percent had pretty high standards, saying it was important that family dinners should be cooked from scratch.

4. But more than half — 55 percent — indicated carryout or delivery play a big role in their evening meals

5. There was room for improvement in their enjoyment of the "dinner drill." One-third wanted more recipes, and more than 40 percent wanted help in the kitchen — be it advice, extra helpers or "someone to do it all for me."

DB

WHO OPERATES MACS?

Another interesting feature is ownership of these MACs. It looks as if this new foodservice concept involves entrepreneurs in a big way.

Although MAC franchises are available, so far most companies are single-outlet operations. Of the 331 total MAC companies listed on the Easy Meal Prep website, more than 300 have just one or two outlets. There are big players: Currently, the two largest firms have 149 and 160 stores, respectively. But their next largest competitors are six companies with more than 20 — but fewer than 40 — outlets.

The report discussed in the August/September issue discovered that MACs appeal to mainstream consumers with



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wine, music and snacks while friends gather to put meals together. But operators say that usually a customer will come to one or two of the party events and then return on her own to quickly put her chosen meals together.

A focus group member agrees, saying, "Once you have done it, you realize the best way to make it work for your lifestyle." It seems the party glitz attracts attention, but the convenience and speed of the process is winning long-term customer loyalty.

Testimonials posted at various MAC websites show the concept appeals to a variety of consumers. The most common response is from working parents who treasure the family time around the dinner table that MAC meals make possible. A good many customers are fans because MAC menus get them out of the rut and monotony of the same old recipes and takeout pizza.

Other comments testify to the concept's broad appeal. One mother took her college-student son to a MAC session when he moved into an off-campus apartment and was thrilled to learn he was already planning his next month's trip to fill up his freezer. And, it turns out

MACs are life-savers for times when consumers cannot shop as they normally do, such as when they are heading off to a cabin in the woods or are new moms.

SO, WHAT ARE THEY SERVING?

After checking on MACs around the country, several issues were not found: They did not offer dishes usually thought of as "specialties of the region." That is to say, there was no focus on salmon in Washington, no barbeque in Texas. This suggests that offering consumers something different, a new taste treat, is the way to succeed. Deli managers should take note.

This is what we mean. When asked about its most popular dishes, the folks at Cena To Go in Tumwater, WA, cited authentic chicken enchiladas; at Dinners Ready in Southlake, TX, Philly cheese steak meat loaf; and at Super Suppers in Fort Myers, FL, King Ranch chicken. And, every MAC changes its menu monthly, which encourages customers to try new tastes.

WHAT MAC USERS SAY

MAC customer preferences fall into several categories. Here is what they liked

A TRIP TO A MAC

Here is what happens for typical Ms. Customer: The MAC offers a dozen meal choices a month. Ms. Customer places her order and picks a 2-hour time slot to go to the MAC's assembly store. She arrives at a stylish store outfitted with commercial workstations and finds all the shopping and prep work has been done. The ingredients for each of her main dishes are organized at separate workstations. Following clear instructions, she quickly assembles her first meal, customizing it to her family's taste as she goes, and packs it into freezer-friendly containers.

Since she has selected several more entrées to make this visit, she moves on to a new pristine workstation set up for her next main dish. And so it goes. The process is fast, convenient and, perhaps best of all, she never cleans up. There is someone to do that for her. **DB**

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most about their experiences:

No mess, quick and easy: In the MAC focus group, everyone loved two things: walking away from the mess and the timesaving of having the planning, shopping and prep done for them.

Good value: They also approved of the fresh ingredients in their meals and that help was handy if they needed it. Overwhelmingly, they felt their MAC meals were a good value, cheaper than a restaurant meal and at least as healthful as one, if not more. Costs ranged from \$3 to \$4 per meal per person for 12 meals that serve four to six. Some outlets offer smaller-sized portions for two to three and charge proportionally less. Virtually all operations are happy to have customers split meals up between themselves.

Interesting dishes: The MAC users enjoyed the new flavors in their dishes, which they described as having interesting flavors that were not overpowering or overly salty. This is seen as clearly superior to "speed scratch" alternatives such as flavor packets from supermarkets.

Favorites from the group included new tastes such as honey lime chicken, Caribbean pork chops and Moroccan chicken, which paired chicken breasts with couscous, almonds, raisins and

mint. Comfort foods also were well received, with pizzas "as good as delivery and even quicker," kielbasa sausage with potatoes and meatball sandwiches getting raves for being easy and tasting homemade.

Freezing is OK: No one had a problem with freezing their meals and did not feel it changed the meal quality. However, they realized the meals probably should be cooked within a month.

"Mine" and what they did not say: An extremely important facet of MACs is that customers can customize their meals. According to one consumer, "I can control the fat and salt while I am assembling them." And what they did not say, but what can be inferred, is that because of this, they feel that they are really cooking.

All this assembling, heating and putting on plate at the dinner table is their version of "cooking." Kitchen veterans would be more likely to call it "convenience cooking." But today's consumers consider it just as real as the scratch cooking done 50 years ago. The emotional satisfaction of bringing a meal to the family table is just as real as cooking experience for today's families as cooking from scratch was for their grandmothers.

Compared to home cooking: When the group compared a MAC meal to their own scratch cooking, they said their MAC meals were more expensive (but worth it) and more interesting, though they suspected their home cooking was more healthful.

Compared to groceries and delis: When the focus group was asked to compare MAC meals to a cooked entrée from a grocery store or deli, the participants felt their MAC meals were clearly superior on key counts. They appreciated knowing exactly what was in their MAC meals, which they felt were more healthful, better tasting, more interesting, fresher and better quality than prepared foods from the grocery store.

Clearly, deli operators have their work cut out for them to change these consumer perceptions. The typical MAC delivers breakaway value for the mainstream consumer. A trip to a MAC is not the equivalent of dashing to the deli department for rotisserie chicken or ribs as a convenient way to add variety to dinner. Consumers who use MACs are buying the concept that everyday meals can be special.

In that sense, MACs are not aiming as high as many upscale gourmet delis that

create chef-inspired meals on par with upscale restaurants. But what MACs are doing, with precise targeting, is tapping into a need customers have to give their families what they consider to be a real home-cooked meal.

MACs understand that there is an emotional element to putting food on the table. They also understand today's time-pressed consumer is willing to pay someone to do part of the job, whether it is coming up with menu ideas or lightening the load when it comes to shopping, special ingredients, prep work and clean-up.

But it is also clear that operators of supermarkets and deli departments have significant resources the average entrepreneur opening a single-location MAC does not have.

Customers know where the supermarkets are and visit them frequently. Supermarkets know the food business and which products their local market is buying. They have trained employees, loyal customers and thousands of products already in the stores.

Retailers need to take a fresh look at what they are putting in their deli cases.

They need to add some zip and zing to their entrée offerings. If they are smart, they will learn how to give their customer a way to make that dish her own, so she gets the emotional satisfaction of providing a home-cooked meal for her family.

Deli operators probably need to borrow some of the marketing ideas the MACs use... notably, using websites to entice customers to choose their main dishes and explaining menu ingredients and cooking methods in detail.

After all, deli operators create successful salad bars every day. Are "dinner bars" with all the ingredients for a dish, right down to the spices, so much different? The consumer who looks at the specially made rotellos of beef, spinach and feta in the gourmet meat case might be more inclined to buy that pricey concoction if she watched it being assembled for her, with each ingredient and seasoning added under her watchful eye and according to her family's taste.

"Made-to-order masterpieces" like this may be what deli operators need to do if they are going to keep their fair share of the prepared-food business. **DB**

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Fresh Pizza

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR DELIS

Take-and-bake expands the possibilities beyond traditional pizza programs.

By Melinda Warner

Deli departments around the country are getting their slice of the fresh pizza action. While competing with pizza restaurants might seem futile to the uninitiated, there are several ways to make the growing trend of take-and-bake work for your deli.

Eric Jacobson, commercial director of the refrigerated deli division at the Schwan Company, Marshall, MN, believes take-and-bake pizza is the next deli department megatrend. "The big trend for consumers is that they are going to their store's deli departments looking for refrigerated items that are fresher, and they are looking for variety."

Several quality suppliers offer a plethora of shapes, sizes, toppings and pizza dough, including par-baked and self-rising dough. Deli managers can also look to many suppliers to respond to their specific requests.

Regionality accounts for taste differences among U.S. consumers. Bob Horth, vice president of sales and marketing for Delorio's Frozen Dough in Utica, NY, notes that, in general, people in the Midwest prefer a sweeter, darker sauce profile while East Coast consumers tend to like less sugar and a lighter colored sauce.

There is no strong regional pattern of topping preference, he says. While the top three sellers are pepperoni, cheese and supreme, Horth notes certain areas prefer a blended cheese topping of cheddar and provolone for the intensity of the flavor, and other areas prefer straight mozzarella. He also notes many in the Midwest want sausage on their pizzas. As demand grows for these types of take-and-bake pizzas, a wide variety of tastes will have to be accommodated; flavors and toppings are likely to expand as the market matures.

Jacobson believes smart retailers know that offering a wide variety of flavors is the way to attract customers. Schwan's plans on

adding exciting new flavors. "In 2007, we will be introducing temporary, limited-time offers on Hawaiian and barbecue pizzas. We are not just coming out with flavors that people in our test kitchen like. New flavors are based on research into what is popular."

Jim Storner, national sales manager for Connie's Pizza in Carol Stream, IL, says the company's roasted vegetable pizza is popular with health-conscious consumers regardless of geography. Gourmet pizzas such as chicken Alfredo are on the company's horizon, as are a steak pizza and possibly a steak fajita pizza, based on requests from Hispanic consumers.

Champion Foods, New Boston, MI, has just patented a product called Take2Bake Pizza & Breadsticks, according to Jon Newsom, national sales manager, who describes Champion's offerings as all about quality, convenience and value. Take2Bake Pizza & Breadsticks consists of two large squares of pizza on one side of the package and eight individual breadsticks on the other. Both pizza and breadsticks are baked at the same. The garlic breadsticks come with a garlic butter sauce that gets spread over the breadsticks after baking. "We also have the same concept with half pizza, half cinnamon breadsticks that come with sugar and butter in packets," Newsom explains. "Another flavor is Italian seasoned



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Grab-And-Go Extends To Pizza Category

Pizza is more than just, well, pizza. Other traditional products, such as calzones, stuffed breads (strombolis) and panini sandwiches, also naturally fit into the pizza category. These products are most often pre-cooked and ready-to-heat-and-eat, making them ideal accompaniments to any pizza program, but especially take-and-bake programs.

Calzones and stuffed breads are similar to pizza, in that the ingredients are much the same — bread, cheese, tomato sauce and various toppings, only the shape and form are different. Perfect for quick lunches, snacks and entertaining because they can be easily cut into smaller pieces, calzones are generally described as a half-moon shaped stuffed pizza. Strombolis are pizza-style ingredients wrapped in dough. They can be individual servings or larger family-size products. In traditional Italian neighborhoods, these popular products are available at local pizzerias.

Stefano Foods, Charlotte, NC, a division of Smithfield Foods, was started in 1976 by the son of an Italian immigrant, who wanted to bring original recipes from Sicily to New York City consumers. Starting out as a single store, the business evolved into a national supplier of pizza products.

According to Enrico Piraino, vice president of marketing for Stefano Foods, these products are perfect for grab-and-go sections and take-out sandwich offerings. They also fit with any pizza offering, whether pizzas are sold hot or cold, self-service or made-to-order. Stefano's Rip-n-Dip Stuffed Pizza Rings are perfect for parties or quick family dinners. Stefano's products are available in single-serving sizes, packaged in clear plastic packing for easy display, good looks and portability.

There is no doubt Americans love pizza, regardless of shape or form, but retailers need to know there is no substitute for fresh, high-quality ingredients. **DB**

cheesy breadsticks, also with garlic butter sauce in packets. These new choices give the deli a unique item that is not found in the frozen aisle."

If a retailer wants certain toppings on a regular basis, Champion will try to meet those requests. "We have a lot of flexibility in

our company to react quickly and meet the needs of what people want in terms of different types of toppings. For instance we are doing some organic pizza now," according to Newsom.

He encourages retailers to offer incentives, such as a 1-liter bottle of soda with every take-and-bake pizza, as a means of building traffic and loyalty.

Dough Options

Most take-and-bake pizzas are sold in a 16-inch size, which compares favorably to the traditional 12-inch frozen pizza. Horth says Delorio's offers 7-, 12-, 14- and 16-inch take-and-bake pizzas.

Different suppliers also offer a variety of options, such as personal size, square, deep dish, thin crust and artisan style.

"We also have our pizzas in several styles of dough," Horth notes. "[Besides traditional dough], we have multi-grain, whole-wheat and herb and onion. Offering a more healthful pizza makes the offerings more upscale. Delis can buy the dough already rolled out, as a dough ball or in a par-baked format, which means the crust has been shaped and very lightly baked, frozen and then shipped out. The retailer just thaws it out and adds the toppings."

Many suppliers offer par-baked pizza dough, which is usually very moist. "A par-baked crust that uses self-rising technology features a crust that is tolerant of the distribution cycle," explains Champion's Newsom. "The two patents that we have create a crust with 5 percent higher moisture than the rest of the par-baked pizzas in the industry. It's a very good crust. The higher moisture makes for a tastier pizza, and one that is better-designed to handle the stresses of distribution and freezing."

The pizzas, which arrive frozen, can be thawed out as needed at any time during their 6-month frozen shelf life. Consumers are often surprised at the taste and quality of take-and-bake pizzas, and for this reason Newsom encourages delis to offer samples. Once consumers taste them, the quality promotes purchasing.

According to Delorio's Horth, if a customer gets an inferior par-baked pizza, he or she may find it too dry after it is baked the second time at home. "What we have done is come out with a product that has a lot of moisture baked into the shell," he says. "This is a very important point. It does boil down to the quality of the product. Any one component can ruin that pizza if it is on the cheap side. The goal is to get the consumer back. Our feeling is that it is more important to use top quality components and not use so much so to speak. You don't need a lot of

a bad cheese; you need the right amount of a good cheese."

Jacobson says Schwan's offers consumers a pizza assembly program. "We have a component program that we call 'Build and Bake,'" he notes. "This is where consumers can purchase a crust and then take it home, assemble and cook their pizza."

Newsom says take-and-bake pizzas are designed to be baked in a home oven. They bake in less than 10 minutes as opposed to frozen pizzas that take 15 to 20 minutes.

Traditional Pizza Programs

For deli departments with existing pizza programs, it is easy to make the transition to — or addition of — take-and-bake programs. For delis without current hot pizza programs, take-and-bake does not require a great deal of space or equipment. There are a variety of pizza-specific ovens that would provide a high-quality finished product. They are generally belt-style ovens that are similar to the pizzeria-style process. Delis can also use a convection oven that blows hot air around.

Horth says the investment a deli wants to make depends on the size of store and its anticipated volume. "The conveyor type is

Different suppliers offer a variety of options, such as personal size, square, deep dish, thin crust and artisan style.

ideal," he says. "There is also a counter-top tray oven for \$600 that does a great job for up to 16-inch pizzas."

Delis (with or without a café setting) can sell pizza by the slice and then offer fresh whole pizza in a refrigerated display case for shoppers to take home and bake themselves for the rest of their family.

"Here in Chicago," said Connie's Storer, "a lot of retailers will take orders over the phone. Or the customer will come in and order a pizza, then go shopping and take it home hot."

This type of hot service offers much to the store. A hot program can help reduce shrink. As a product approaches its expiration date, rather than throw it away, the store can bake it, sell it by the slice and introduce customers to a thawed out take-and-bake pizza. **DB**

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Grab-And-Go — The Challenging Opportunity

*Deli retailers can entice consumers looking
for convenience, quality, healthfulness and value.*

By Bob Johnson



Not long ago grab-and-go meant rotisserie chicken or some low-cost food whose only virtue was convenience. But producers have come up with a wide variety of interesting gourmet meals that can be purchased as grab-and-go items and quickly prepared.

The new wave of grab-and-go deli products brings with it a new wave of deli merchandising challenges. The world of grab-and-go deli foods will never be the same.

How Much Space Can You Spare?

The deli section is more crowded than ever before. As the popularity of grab-and-go increases, retailers must decide how much space the category warrants.

"Devote as much space as possible to self-serve — especially for those items con-

sumers recognize and trust," suggests Lee Mitchell, retail deli manager for Fresh Express, Salinas, CA.

Mike Foley, associate brand manager for the Pittsburgh, PA-based Heinz Deli Division is more specific, recommending retailers devote one-fourth of their deli space to self-service items.

However, even as the grab-and-go category grows, service will remain an important part of the deli section. "Grab-and-go could capture as much as 30 or 40 percent of the deli section business," according Julie Jeremy, president, Native Kjalii Foods, San Francisco, CA. But, she adds, "There should always be an attendant available to ask customers if they need help."

There is a tradeoff between self-service and service by an attendant. "Traditional deli

includes items that require assistance from behind the counter — like sandwiches and salads — where the consumer can customize," explains Jon Amidei, corporate vice president sales and marketing, Okami, Inc., Sun Valley, CA. "The tradeoff is that more of the customer's time is required. They have to wait in line, order the items and wait for the service person to cut, slice and serve the item. Grab-and-go deli serves the customer who values time and convenience. Both customers want good taste, convenience and quality. The Okami sushi lineup of products is a great complement for those customers."

Other insiders agree there is a difference in what customers want when it comes to service. "There is a definitely a fine balance between having food ready to go and having

Prepare For Liftoff

However you slice it, grab-and-go figures to become even more important in the next few years. "We're going to be seeing more grab-and-go," notes Julie Jeremy, president, Native Kjalii Foods, San Francisco, CA. "It's already been quietly emerging for about the past five years."

Some of the newest grab-and-go items are designed to be eaten at highway speeds – literally. Tara Downing, product manager, Robbie Manufacturing, Lenexa, KS, explains, "The potential growth is large, considering that nearly 10 million people now drive more than an hour to work and Americans today eat an average of 32 meals a year in their cars, according to researcher Harry Balzer at the NPD Group."

Cup holders were not introduced until 1982 but they now outnumber seats in many cars. "This trend doesn't seem to be declining, which is why we recently introduced the grab-and-go pouch that fits in a car cup holder," Downing adds.

Much of the market will focus on customers who have cut down on their restaurant visits. "I believe we have not even scratched the surface of grab-and-go sales potential within retail," relates Mark Phelps, vice president, InnovAsian Cuisine, Kent, WA.

"Retailers possess a major competitive advantage over all restaurants with grab-and-go. Consumers can make their meal decision more quickly and combine the decision with other purchasing decisions. Takeout pizza and Chinese require an extra stop. Look what happened to the frozen pizza business in supermarkets after Kraft and Schwans significantly improved the frozen pizza!"

A quality grab-and-go deli section can even provide more customers for the entire store.

"I think this category is huge, and the key factor here is that this category should be viewed as a traffic builder for stores," says John McGuckin, executive vice president of sales at Blue & White Food Products Corp., Astoria, NY. "If the grab-and-go section of a deli is a destination category for your customers, that can be leveraged to effectively trigger other sales. Cross-merchandising can be very effective, inspiring customers to move from grab-and-go to purchase eggs, juice and milk, for example. If you make the self-service section a direct destination category, you may find customers driving past competitors to visit your store or finding new routes to work to benefit from your selection, store cleanliness and environment."

DB

an actual employee serve the consumer," says Tara Downing, product manager, Robbie Manufacturing, Lenexa, KS. "One-on-one contact is crucial for maintaining good relationships with consumers. However,

consumers want food that is fresh and hot and ready to go when they are. They do not want to stand in line to be waited on. Having product ready in a grab-and-go case with a clock indicating the time the product was

made will enhance the consumers perception that the food has been recently prepared and is fresh."

One way to find more space for the fast-growing grab-and-go category, while still



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maintaining deli service, is to set up a hot case outside of the deli section. "Having a hot case at the checkout stand along with side dishes, improves sales of grab-and-go items with that impulse shopper," she adds.

Deli grab-and-go relates to other convenience foods found in other sections of the supermarket. "We own the Old Wisconsin Sausage Company that produces snack items in the form of beef sticks and snacker stackers (crinkle cut summer sausage).

Many of those items are grab-and-go and consumed on the fly," says Tom Buddig, vice president of sales and marketing at Carl Buddig and Company, Homewood, IL. "These items can be found in several area in the stores."

Visibility is important to the extent that these are impulse purchases. "Grab-and-go should be positioned as a highly visible impulse item, and preference should be given to products with a strong visual impact,"

advises Donna Williams, vice president of marketing at Seattle, WA-based Sahale Snacks. "Almost by definition, grab-and-gos are impulse items. They should be easily accessible, not stuck behind lines."

"Almost by definition, grab-and-gos are impulse items. They should be easily accessible, not stuck behind lines."

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Sahale Snacks

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Sahale produces all-natural, gourmet nut-blend snacks products packaged in grab-and-go 2-ounce pouches and re-sealable value-sized 5-ounce packages. Sahale Snacks hold 39 percent of the trail mix grocery market share according to Spins data, even though the product was only launched nationally in 2005.

"The amount of space devoted to self-service should depend on the size of the store," suggests John McGuckin, executive vice president of sales at Blue & White Food Products Corp., the Astoria, NY, manufacturer of the Sabra brand of hummus and other Mediterranean salads. "Cleanliness is king and convenience is queen when it comes to self-service, so you want to make sure you have enough space to avoid any type of queue. Customers need to get in and out in a hurry. The size of the self-service section should be related to the size of the store and your customer volume."

However the space is divided, the grab-and-go self-service display must fit with the overall image of the deli section.

Quality And Image

Every deli section projects an image designed to appeal to its particular clientele. When grab-and-go foods are displayed prominently, they should fit with that image.

"Self-service grab-and-go items should not be offered if the quality and image do not meet or exceed the retailer's overall quality and image offering," notes Mark Phelps, vice president, InnovAsian Cuisine, Kent, WA. "There are categories that should not be offered as self-service. Product displayed in hot case the day before should not be chilled

and sold as grab-and-go the day after. Products like meat and a side sauce, which, when combined over time, result in compromised quality of the individual components, should not be offered."

The question of which grab-and-go items to include in the deli display is not only about the products but also about the customers. "Target the type of consumer you want to attract — for example, white collar women looking for high-quality, healthful lunch solutions to take to work," Phelps suggests. "Do not merchandise a high-quality center-of-the-plate item with a low-end side. How would you feel if you went to a restaurant and got a great steak but lousy mashed potatoes?"

The cleanliness of the grab-and-go section will go a long way toward determining its impact on the image of the deli. "Self-service can take away from the image of a deli or it can greatly contribute to it," McGuckin says. "If your self-service area is not maintained in terms of cleanliness, it will take away from the image. The grab-and-go section must be as clean as the rest of your establishment, carefully kept free of leaking, stains or any type of product damage."

Appearance also goes a long way toward deciding if the product will move. "If the product looks unappetizing, out-of-code or doesn't fit the food profile of your consumers, it will detract from the deli," Fresh Express' Mitchell cautions. "All products should eventually find their way to a self-service platform as long as food safety and consumer appeal are maintained."

Some of the newer convenience foods can actually enhance the image of the deli section. "We are finding a great deal of success and interest in the deli department," Williams says. "We are a premium-priced product offering retailers a high ring to the less price sensitive deli consumer. Our MSRP are \$2.99 for the 2-ounce and \$5.99 for the 5-ounce. We are a gourmet and all-natural product, and both gourmet and all natural are fast growing segments in grocery. Our products can be eaten on their own and are also very popular on salads. They have no shrinkage, which contributes to their profitability."

If done well there are no categories that should never be self-service, according to Heinz' Foley. "Self service doesn't take away from the image of the deli. It adds incremental consumption to those looking for a quick lunch or dinner option. It rarely cannibalizes frozen, center-of-store or other deli items."

Where's the Beef — And Poultry, Ham And Sushi?

Poultry is the most important food in the

grab-and-go category, according to Foley. And, as the category grows, the most important new products will also be main dish items.

"The most important part of the grab-and-go decision, I feel, is the center of the plate, the main dish selection," InnovAsian's Phelps notes. "This is where the most dollar investment is made and where the consumer is building the meal decision-making criteria around."

The growing demand for grab-and-go high-protein items has attracted new producers to the field. "We're moving into the grab-and-go with items that have more protein," says Native Kjalii's Jeremy. "You need proteins. You don't need green beans or potatoes. You need proteins that the customer doesn't have to prepare."

Even traditional sandwich meats do not always make it as far as the center of a sandwich. "The original products that we have made for 60 years are in a 2.5-ounce package and found in nearly 90 percent of all the supermarkets in the United States and Canada," Buddig's Buddig explains. "At that size, it is often used as a single serve and over 10 percent of that size package never gets into a sandwich but is consumed right out of the package."

Very substantial meat products are now being offered warm and ready to go. "We have seen the emergence of items like pork roasts and tenderloins available in the warming case over the past year," according to Robbie's Downing. "We have seen many processors who are now capitalizing on this trend by expanding their presence from the meat or frozen case to the deli by supplying packaging alternatives like the Hot N Handy Pouch. They are recognizing the limitations many retailers have with providing the right package for the right product. With the streamlined, slim profile of the Hot N Handy Pouch, it can be packed directly in with the meat product for a truly turnkey packaging alternative to yesterday's rigid deli packaging that is bulky."

However, not all of the new protein products are meat based. "Clearly hummus is important," Blue & White's McGuckin notes, "but in reality, consider the way Sabra has offered its hummus. To Go is packaged creatively with crackers and soon with pretzels. To Go requires no additional silverware



or plates, and I think the ease of use is a key element for this category.

"Additionally, protein-based foods — filling, healthful and fresh grab-and-go items — are important moving forward. We have also seen growth with grab-and-go foods such as standard bagels and yogurts as well as more premium items like cheeses, sandwiches and puddings," he continues.

The Ethnic Gourmet Answer

Native Kjalii Foods has been known for offering quality and freshness in salsa, chips and related items, but Jeremy intends to introduce Thai, Vietnamese and Hispanic high-protein items with that same fresh flair. "People want something more substantial than a taquito or an egg roll," she says.

Other producers are also supplying high-quality center-of-the-plate foods. "Consumers are more familiar with a wider palette of food flavors — and expect to find those flavors when they shop," notes Okami's Amidei. "Think smoky, fire-roasted, picante, sweet sour, chipotle, sesame ginger, honey baked, infused essence, etc. Read any restaurant menu and you'll see that these descriptors are not limited to the white tablecloth establishments."

Gourmet ethnic "fast" foods are not limited to the main dishes. "Wet salads of all varieties are also important," Amidei says. "Again, go a step or two beyond the 'standard' macaroni salad and find ways to create tantalizing salads using interesting pastas and noodles with combinations of exotic dressings and vegetable/fruit garnishes, like the Okami somen noodle salad with cilantro lime dressing."

Ethnic foods could be important enough in the category to consider giving them their own section within the grab-and-go area. "Retailers should merchandise ethnic offerings together, such as Asian, Italian, Mexican, etc.," InnovAsian's Phelps says. **DB**

PACKAGING SETS THE TONE

Product packaging has become a way to establish differentiation and ensure consumer loyalty.

By Barbara Robison



Convenience is still extremely important, reports Mona Doyle, president, Consumer Network, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. Consumers want resealable packages and, if appropriate, microwavable packages. They want to see the food, and they want product information quickly. "The package needs to speak to the customer."

"Seeing the product clearly helps sell the product. We are emphasizing the clarity of the package by using clarified resins in our products," says Susan Weiss, president,

West Springfield, MA-based Plastic Packaging Corporation, a manufacturer of high-quality, injection-molded plastic containers.

Viewing the product is especially important for hot foods in the deli. "Merchandising the visibility of the cooked chicken and other meats is important. We have an anti-fog coating on the lids of our package domes so the package will do a better job of merchandising the product," says Mark Spencer, manager of market development, Pactiv Corporation, Lake Forest, IL.

The Hubert Company, LLC, Harrison, OH, markets a Meal Master container for takeout ribs, with FogGard that prevents steam from fogging the dome lid. The container withstands temperatures up to 180° F for up to eight hours.

To allow the consumer to view the product clearly and make a selection quickly, Robbie Manufacturing, Lenexa, KS, continues to improve upon the anti-fog capabilities of its Hot N' Handy pouch, which can ensure clarity in the hot or cold case for up

FEATURE

to three hours, according to Tara Downing, product manager.

Merit Paper Corp., Inc., Melville, NY, markets the Chic-Kit product, which provides ready viewing of rotisserie products. It is an easy-to-handle, resealable, leak-resistant, microwavable, flat-bottom bag that holds a 2½-pound chicken. "In the past six months we've come up with a formula for our bag so there is less condensation, making it more fog-free than the present dome used for hot foods," reports president Ed Sussman.

Flair Packaging International, Menasha, WI, offers "a three-layer laminated bag, made with quality film construction, printing and presentation, which does not leak and is cost

Consumers, who now take visibility for granted, want to be able to reseal the package.

effective," notes Cheryl Miller, marketing and sales. "The bag has eye appeal, and we feel it has less waste than domes or trays."

Beyond Visibility

Consumers, who now take visibility for granted, want to be able to reseal the package. According to Doyle, the snap zipper is losing appeal to the slide zipper in packaging; consumers are unhappy when the zippers do not work a second time. She also notes consumers seem to find the containers with snap-on-lids more effective and they like containers with handles.

With more than 200 patented zipper profiles, Zip-Pak, Manteno, IL, a division of Illinois Tool Works Company, has introduced a new packaging format featuring Zip-Pak slider technology built into the "fin" of the package, creating a wider opening for more convenient access. For added convenience, a new slider has been developed for large format, gusseted pre-made pouches.

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Zip-Pak has also developed an easy-open resealable packaging feature applied in the transverse direction to maintain the hermetic properties of food packaging. A special seal below the zipper profile and a proprietary end seal create a hermetic package that can be perforated or scored for one-step access to contents without the need for scissors or knives. The application allows for greater visibility of graphics and marketing messages to help boost shelf impact at point-of-purchase.

"This approach combines the freshness protection of resealable technology with the marketing benefits of brand-enhancing packaging," says Robert E. Hogan, director of international sales and marketing. Key applications include packaging of food products that must be airtight until consumption, including shredded cheese, pre-packaged deli meats and prepared foods.

Packaging firms recognize the demand for microwavable products in the deli and are providing a range of packaging options. "The ability to microwave directly in the package purchased is just one more value-added convenience consumers are demanding. They are also looking for a built-in handle for carrying and a leak-resistant package to prevent unwanted spills from the checkout counter to the table," says Robbie's Downing.

A new Flair product allows the consumer to take food from the freezer to the microwave without opening the package. "It is self-venting and can be used with foods from scrambled eggs to soups, pastas and sauces. If cooked ribs or chicken are marketed by the retailer, extra barbecue sauce or gravy can be made available in the new

pouch for easy home use," explains Miller.

Product Safety

"Product convenience is a continuing growth area, but along with that is the need to insure food safety," says Bill Bishop, president, Willard Bishop, Barrington, IL.

Many new tamper-proof products are being introduced. "A tightly sealed package can keep food at its optimum freshness. Both our Crystal Seal and Home Fresh deli containers offer tight, leak-resistant seals that keep air out and liquids in to help extend shelf life and provide fresher products, leading to more satisfied customers and repeat sales," states Laura Stewart, marketing director, Placon Corporation, Madison, WI.

Inline Plastics Corporation, Shelton, CT, has created Safe-T-Fresh PET (polyethylene terephthalate) tamper-resistant and tamper-evident clamshell containers. Herb Knutson, director of marketing, explains: "The containers incorporate a unique locking mechanism and our patent-pending Safe-T-Gard tear strip hinge. The containers are manufactured as clamshells, which allows for convenient handling and closing.

"Once the container has been closed, the Safe-T-Gard tear strip hinge must be removed to gain access to the contents inside, thus assuring that the product has not been tampered with," he adds. "When the tear strip is removed by the consumer, the container becomes a conventional two-piece container and is easily reclosed for storing leftovers. As a bonus, the Safe-T-Fresh containers are highly leak resistant and are frequently used for wet salads, cut fruit, olives,

salsa and a variety of other foods. The container also eliminates the need for wrap-around labels or shrink bands."

"Green" Issues

"Sustainability and environmentally friendly are key words with more and more of today's consumers," comments Bishop. Cost of packaging is also a major consideration. Cost of the packaging itself as well as transportation and storage are increasing, and retailers are taking a look at these costs. Ethanol is now being examined in some

"Product convenience is a continuing growth area, but along with that is the need to insure food safety."

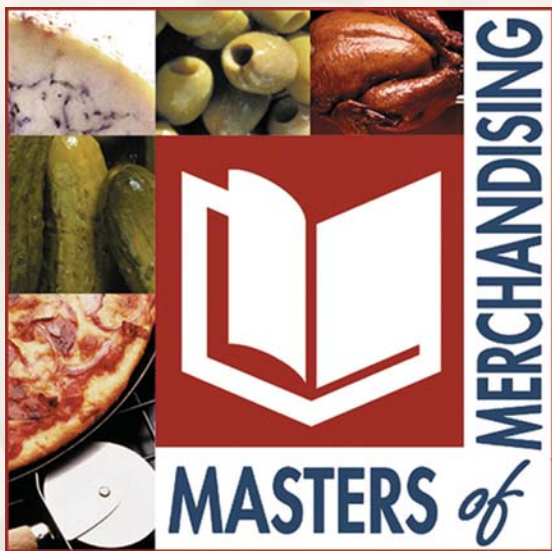
***— Bill Bishop
Willard Bishop***

packaging products to reduce costs but also to be more environmentally friendly.

Consumer Network research also shows an increased interest in the environment. Does the package help or hinder environmental efforts and is the company demonstrating environmental concerns? These questions offer marketing opportunities. "There is also a growing concern among consumers about heating foods in plastic," says Doyle.

Inno-Pak, Inc., Delaware, OH, is making package solutions as environmentally friendly as possible, according to Gary Bechtold a company partner. "We work on a product from its conception to its dissipation. We want to know how safe the product is in use, if it is recyclable, and also how it will fit into a landfill and be destroyed in the end. This includes actually looking at the length of time it will take a container to disintegrate when past its usefulness."

DB



*y*ou can be a buyer or a seller — these words of wisdom are from a deli director now long retired. But, the truth is, while almost anyone can buy products at a good price, only the masters know how to sell them. There is not a huge gap between the products offered from one store to the next — the critical difference is how effective retailers are in generating sales.

The Masters of Merchandising guide provides the missing link that brings products through the retailer and into the hands, or mouths, of consumers.

Each category has been sponsored by a merchandising master that has shared its expertise with the editors of DELI BUSINESS in order to bring retailers a comprehensive guide full of merchandising ideas for selling the products they purchase. Each section contains information on how to display products, cross-merchandise products with other items in the deli department or the produce, meat and grocery departments.

There is information on point-of-sale materials, advertising, innovative promotions and creative ideas about building sales; backroom preparation and storage

information also is shared. Manufacturers explain what information, products and point-of-sale materials they will make available to retailers.

While some stores may not be able to use all the ideas, each category has information, provided by our Masters of Merchandising, that was garnered through years of

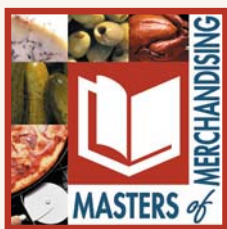
There is not a huge gap between the products offered from one store to the next — the critical difference is how effective retailers are in generating sales.

experience dealing with the most successful retailers as well as their own internal research.

The deli industry has grown by leaps and bounds over the past 20 years, and the merchandising strides retailers are currently making are bound to make delis a continuing focal point in the battle for the share of stomach. **DB**

Masters of Merchandising





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CHICKEN — FRIED

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Juicy, home-style chicken is an ideal grab-and-go item for today's busy consumers. On-the-run shoppers will love the convenience of fully prepared chicken and will always take home a variety of complementary side items. The secret to a successful deli counter is to always maintain a full display of freshly prepared chicken. The sumptuous aroma will capture attention and draw customers. Serve your chicken in buckets and containers that are easily reheatable and easy to store in the refrigerator.

Health-conscious shoppers will be delighted to find your deli counter includes tender, marinated chicken breast fillets. Display menu ideas right in your case and show your fully cooked fillets in a chicken sandwich, on top of a salad or on the center of plate accompanied by wholesome vegetables.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Menu boards that are easy to read will attract more customers. A menu suggestion or recipe idea for a quick dessert will keep the shopper's attention. Special featured items give customers the idea that they are getting a better bargain for their money. The goal is to get the customers to purchase items that can be reheated and served over the next few days, as well as the meal they are thinking about at the moment, making the best use of their shopping time.

Clear legible lettering in the deli case is very important. Suggestive selling ideas with picnic baskets, sports themes and signage will give consumers ideas.

VARIETY

All shoppers are looking for delicious meals, but they want variety. Pilgrim's Pride has many options for them to choose from: the rotisserie wog with a variety of seasonings, popcorn chicken, breast strips, fried chicken parts and, of course, breaded or marinated wings.

New items will keep the customers from being bored with the selections. Since the idea is to keep the impulse



buyer's attention, always have a variety of fresh, quick items on hand.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Feature a meal-planning section, where the consumer can pick up prepared hot foods ready to go. Create plate displays to show how attractive the meal will look and promote cross-selling of other items. Create motivational contests to do suggestive selling with the deli personnel. Regularly allow the employees to try new products so when customers ask questions, they will have positive responses.

QUICK TIPS

■ Ready to go pre-packaged items are attractive to customers in a hurry!

■ Use suggestive selling signs, giving menu ideas and quick hints for dinner or sporting events. Be creative, use bright colors.

■ Neatly written price signs are essential. The cost-conscious consumer wants to know "How Much?"

■ Be sure to have some items designed just for kids — prepackaged chicken drumsticks or wings are an easy seller!

SHELF-LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

All prepared items should be kept fresh and hot in the deli case. Any item in the grab-and-go section should have sell-by dates clearly marked. Allow time for the consumer to keep the product after the sell-by time.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Chicken is a wonderful opportunity for cross-selling! Traditional items would include mashed potatoes and gravy along with fresh green beans and deli rolls that can be warmed. But think of all of the other possibilities. For tailgate parties, include baked beans, soft drinks and fruit. The list is endless with baked goods, chips, and prepackaged salads.

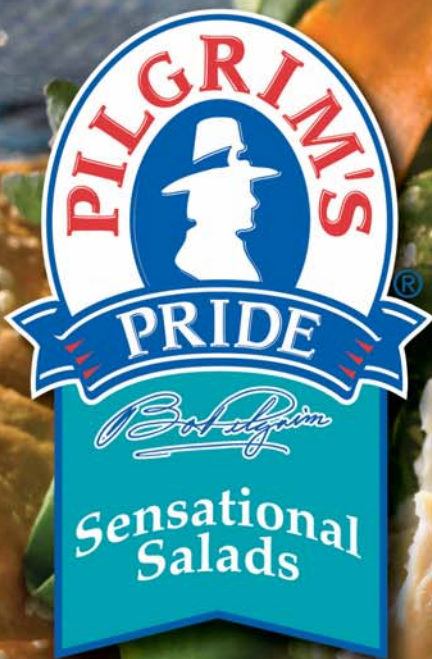
Other cross-merchandising opportunities exist for non-deli related items. A variety of hot sauces and prepackaged green salad mixes from the produce department are just a few of the products that can make your fried chicken offer more exciting.

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Chicken can be prepackaged in a variety of sizes so the grab-and-go customer can pick it up quickly and be on his or her way. Attractive containers that allow the shopper to see what is inside are best. Convenience is important! The packaging should not leak.

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- To draw attention to your deli, give away buckets of chicken, along with tickets to the local games, on the radio station!
- Have a few deli trays pre-made on special game days for the impulse buyer.
- Offer special deals on platters of wings, drumsticks, and tenders.
- Throw in the sauces when more than one tray is purchased.



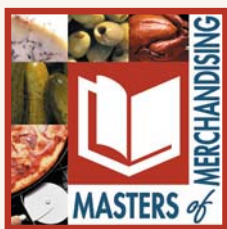
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Today's consumers are demanding high quality, ready-to-eat salads in the deli. They want fresh homemade flavor without all the work. When it comes to salads, the best choice is the freshest choice – Pilgrim's Pride Gourmet Deli Salads. Our patented process holds freshness 2 to 3 times longer than other brands – to deliver the maximum in food safety. Pilgrim's Pride's delicious salads are perfectly blended with tender portions of chicken breast,

or albacore tuna and selected seasonings for a distinctive made-from-scratch flavor.

You know that deli protein salad sales are sure to continue to grow. That's why it is so important to team up with a manufacturer who can consistently deliver the quality your customers demand. With Pilgrim's Pride Gourmet Salads, you'll be selling the best choice – the freshest choice. For more information about our complete line of Gourmet Salads, call us at **800-824-1159**.



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RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Condiment sales increase with multiple displays in different areas of the deli department. Condiments are high impulse-purchase products; increase the number of locations consumers can find the product, and you will increase sales.

Encourage impulse purchases by building displays on top of the deli case, near the sandwich station and near the grab-and-go area. If you have the room available, build a pyramid-type display that is sure to increase sales. The cheese island is also a prime location.

Beano's Original Submarine Dressing is a great impulse item that will turn into a repeat purchase item. Beano's carries countertop displays as well as an attractive new stand that is very space-efficient and can display all of Beano's products very nicely.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Impulse sales increase when products are signed to attract customers' attention. Your customers are always looking for easy ways to prepare tasty foods. Signage should include menu suggestions. For instance, signage suggesting sandwich ideas will create interest and generate sales.

On top of the specialty cheese island, a selection of mustards will find interested customers. A simple hand-written sign letting customers know which cheeses go with each mustard will encourage your customers to try something new. Rotate different cheeses with different mustards and condiments to keep customers interested all year long.

Employee suggestions incorporated into signage will also help increase the interest level. For instance, a sign such as "Our Deli Manager's Favorite Roast Beef Sandwich is made with Beano's Heavenly Horseradish Sauce."

VARIETY

At least one variety of sandwich dressing should be offered, along with condiments for cheeses, wings and other products. Sales of condiments are incremental sales, meaning they add to the total purchase and don't "steal" sales from other products.

Include a full line of Beano's condiments.

- Beano's Original Submarine Dressing
- Heavenly Horseradish Sauce
- Bold & Tangy Deli Mustard
- All American Sandwich Spread
- Honey Mustard
- When Buffaloes Fly Chicken Wing Sauce (hot sauce)
- Pepper Relish
- Southwest Sauce
- Wasabi Sauce



QUICK TIPS

■ The more the better — multiple placements will increase sales!

■ Use Beano's Original Submarine Dressing to create a signature made-to-order sub or sandwich.

■ Sign products to increase interest.

■ Use floor and counter displays to increase sales.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Condiments are the ideal products for cross-merchandising with:

- Specialty cheese
- Sandwich stations
- Meat and cheese deli counters
- Wing bars
- Grab-and-go locations
- Sushi bars

SHELF-LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

Shelf life is not something that the deli needs to be concerned about. Shelf stable condiments have a one-year shelf life. Just make sure to rotate product when filling displays.

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

POS countertop displays are highly recommended. Beano's Original Submarine Dressing comes pre-packed with 12 8-ounce bottles in a countertop display. Just pop the header up and place it on your deli counter.

Also consider permanent floor displays, party packs, self-feeding black steel counter racks and 1/2-ounce portion packs. All these also are available from Beano's.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

- Promote a sandwich of the week using one of

Beano's special condiments.

- Silent demos. Slice a few loaves of Italian bread and have an open bottle for customers to taste using pieces of bread. Surround the demo with bottles for sale.

- "Buy two bottles of Beano's and receive a 1/2 pound of — fill in the blank — free." Beano's is happy to work with other companies to promote sales.

- Feature condiments in your weekly circular along with other products. For instance, feature a wing sauce when your store has wings on sale.



CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- November to January — include a bottle of Beano's in gift baskets, in the center of sandwich rings or party platters
- September to November — create a tailgate promotion display next to 6-foot subs
- May to November — place a few bottles in a picnic basket display alongside a few prepared sandwiches and subs
- January to May — include a bottle of Beano's for Super Bowl catering options as well as rib and wing promos featuring Beano's wing sauce

Now Serving #1.



When you concentrate on
doing one thing well, it's no

surprise when you become #1 in the category.

Beano's deli condiments have been number one
on deli menus since 1986. Ever since then,

we've gained a faithful following of satisfied
customers. Adding Beano's deli condiments to

your product offering is your best opportunity

to increase add-on sales. When you offer Beano's,
your customers will be lining up for servings

of the #1-selling deli condiments.

Now *that's* the ticket!



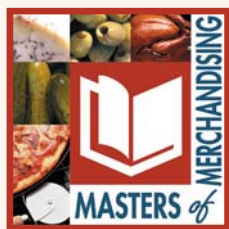
Genuine original.
Genuine opportunity.

Counter Top Rack
Height 5 1/2"
Depth 15"
Width 20 5/8"
& Holds 4 cases



Height 60" Depth 16"
Width 15 1/4"
& Holds 7 to 8 cases





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The original Fontina comes from a mountainous natural environment in the territory of the Autonomous Region of Aosta Valley in northern Italy. Aosta Valley boasts a long and rich tradition of the working of milk with the first mention of Fontina dating back to 1270 AD.

During the summer in pastures averaging 6,825 feet in altitude, the Valdaostan cows graze in Europe's highest meadows. Alpine flowers and water from the glaciers are just some of the ingredients that give the milk such a delicate fragrance. During the winter, in the cowsheds at the bottom of the valley, the cows are fed hay whose nutritional properties are essential for the production of the good quality milk ideal for making Fontina.

Fontina is made from full-cream raw milk taken from a single milking and immediately transformed into cheese. The purest calf rennet is used for curdling, and during this initial phase the temperature is brought up to 97° to 99° F. Then the mixture is heated until it reaches 117° to 118° F. Once taken out of the cauldron, it is placed in cheese hoops and pressed to ensure all the whey is removed.

Maturation takes place in tunnels excavated in the rock where the temperature varies between 46° to 50° F and the relative humidity is about 90 percent. At least three months are needed for the cheese to take on its special characteristics. During this period, the Fontina is tended daily by hand alternating dry-salting and brushing with salt water.

In 1996 Fontina Valle d'Aosta obtained the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) recognition from the European Union.

DISPLAY IDEAS

- Fontina must be refrigerated at all times at a temperature of 39° to 46° F at 60 percent humidity.
- Display whole or half-wheels with the certification side showing (stamped with mountain peaks outlined in green, bearing the word "Fontina") along with cut wedges available for quick purchases.
- Since Fontina is a washed-rind cheese, do not cut wedges too far in advance. Cut what you can sell in one to two days.
- NEW! Pre-cut wedges from 250 grams (8½ ounce) will be available in 2007 with a shelf life of 90 days. Ask your distributor for additional information.

SIGNAGE

- Always use the full name "Fontina Valle d'Aosta" to distinguish this PDO Italian original cheese from its many imitators.
- Use the PDO seal with your signage.
- Tell the story to your customers, emphasizing the characteristics that make Fontina so unique — mountain pastures filled with wild flowers, clear glacial streams and pure air combine to produce one of the most traditionally made Italian cheeses.
- Use signage to let customers know Fontina is a complex cheese with herbaceous overtones of alpine pastures.
- Explain that Fontina is also an excellent melting cheese as well as a superior cooking cheese and a favorite for gratins and fondues.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

- Include in all Italian cheese promotions.
- Display all PDO cheese together for an international promotion. Cross-merchandise with other PDO products.
- Promote for fall and winter tailgate parties.
- Include in upscale cheese platters and label "Perfect for



Fondue" during the holidays.

- Use recipes to entice customers to purchase.
- Put together fondue kits for the holidays, including Fontina Valle d'Aosta.

PRODUCT VARIETY

- Whole wheels (weighing approximately 20 pounds), halves, quarters and wedges are available in three styles.
 - Classic Selection — Cave-aged for a minimum of 100 days. Mild, mellow and herbaceous.
 - Summer Pasture — Cave-aged a minimum of 100 days and available from September to February. The most herbal with flavor of mountain pastures.
 - Extra Aged — Cave-aged a minimum of 150 days. More complex, very balanced, herbaceous with nutty notes.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING

- Display with apples and nuts, especially walnuts, for holiday entertaining ideas.
- Merchandise all the ingredients for holiday fondues in one location.
- Create a display with PDO products from every department.
- Italian food promotions with authentic Italian products to create added excitement.

SHELF LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Whole wheels — 90 days and up to 150 days if well tended by brushing rind weekly with salt water.
 - Half- and quarter-wheels — 45 days
 - Wedges cut at store level — 1 week, which will give the consumers another 7 to 10 days of shelf life at home.
 - Pre-cut wedges from Italy — 90 days
- Because the cheese has a biologically active rind, Fontina should not be smothered in plastic wrap for an extended period of time. Tell consumers to place plastic wrap only on cut surface and then wrap in cheese paper, wax paper or foil so rind can breathe.

QUICK TIPS

■ Use POS materials to tell the story.

■ Do not confuse Fontina Valle d'Aosta with its many imitators. If a cheese has a brown or red wax rind, it is not the original Fontina Valle d'Aosta, which has a beautiful natural light brown rind touched with terra-cotta highlights.

■ Use the PDO label on individual pieces of cheese.

■ Offer samples.

■ Do not smother in plastic wrap.

■ Always display under refrigeration.

THE GREAT CHEESE ROBBERY



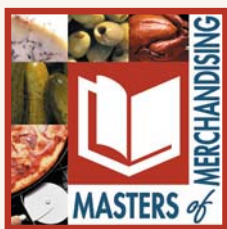
ONG, LONG AGO a group of Swedish warriors descended upon their Danish neighbors and stole everything in sight including a cheese with a legendary reputation. The Swedes were elated but little did they know that the cheese they had stolen from the Danes wasn't the legendary FONTINA VALLE D'AOSTA. It was merely a copy of the cheese that the Danes had stolen from the Italians; and not a very good copy at that. The Danish Fontina lacked the firmness, suppleness and subtle flavor of the original FONTINA VALLE D'AOSTA—a flavor that reflected the lush Alpine meadows and pure glacial streams of the Italian Alps.

And the Swedish Fontina? To be kind, it bore little if any resemblance to FONTINA VALLE D'AOSTA—a regrettable situation for many.

Namely, those who continued to pay for the original.

And only got a copy.





HORMEL DELI FOODS

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Website: www.hormel.com

GRAB-AND-GO



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

See that blur in the supermarket aisle? That's today's consumer – pressed for time, torn in three different directions at once. The days when most shoppers had the time to browse, read – maybe even savor the shopping experience – are long gone. Today it's in and out. Which is exactly why the grab-and-go section continues to flourish.

Retailers are increasingly turning the grab-and-go section into their own mini-store by adding variety. They've found that the more depth and breadth they can give the section, the more they can satisfy rushed consumers looking to capture a bit of the full-service experience.

In addition, it's good to remember that not all time-starved consumers are shopping during regular hours. As part of their time-shifting, many are visiting stores when main departments aren't open. This means retailers need to think of the grab-and-go section as being a round-the-clock deli by giving it a full range of items that look fresh. Items that appear pre-packaged and pre-processed won't sell as well as those that look as though they were packaged behind the counter.

Finally, don't forget about the noontime-crunch crowd. Once again, these customers have little time but a big appetite for "homemade" food. This is where signature sandwiches can really shine. Retailers who create sandwiches made in-house from special recipes using out-of-the-ordinary ingredients will find consumers returning again

and again to see what's new or to bring one of those special sandwiches back to their desk.

VARIETY

Even though in many cases they're not shopping the full store, consumers don't want to feel they're being given a second-class experience when visiting only the deli.

That's why variety is the watchword in the grab-and-go section. By presenting consumers with a wide array of choices, retailers let their time-starved customers know that their patronage – and time – are valued.

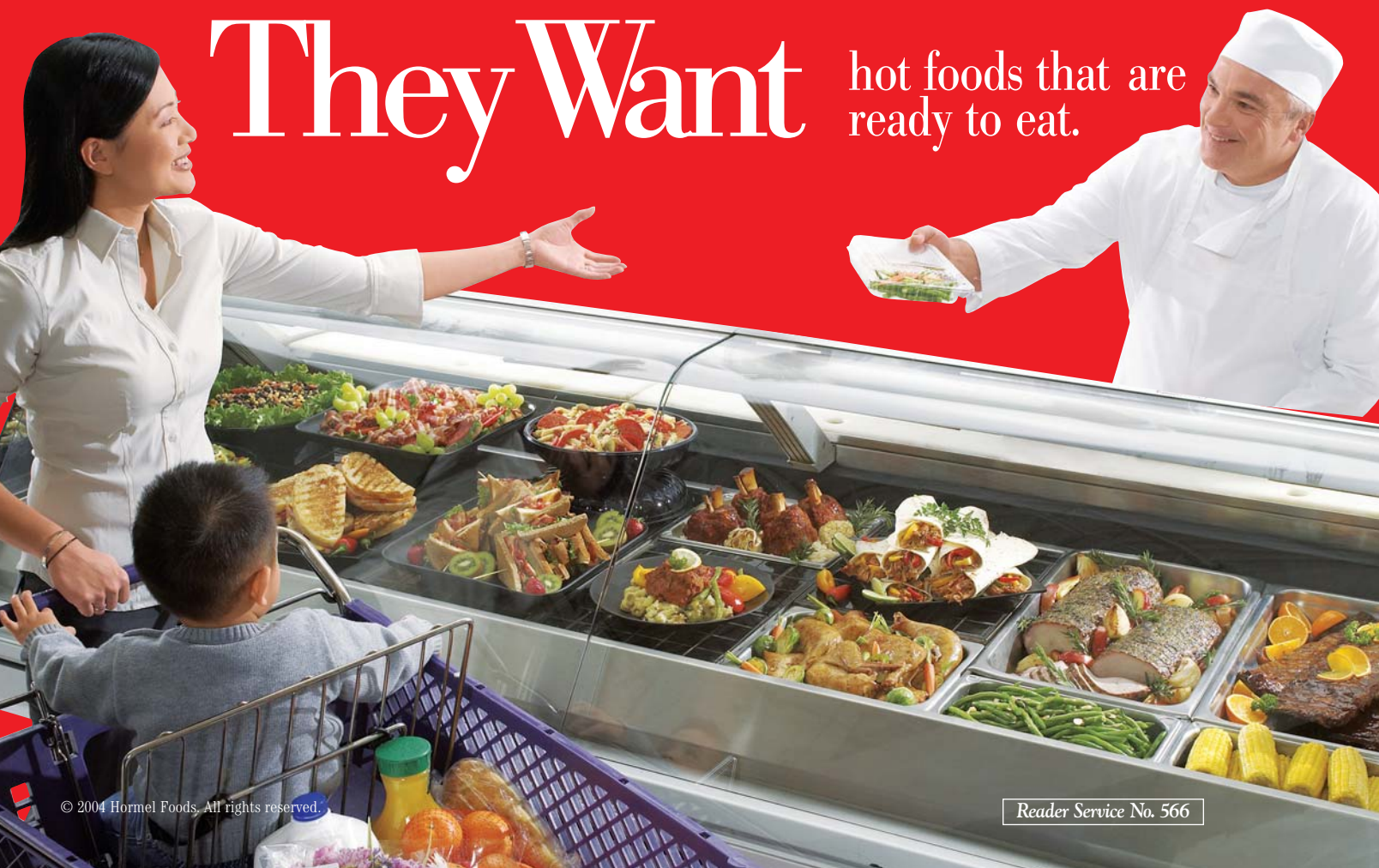
In this case, variety doesn't mean stocking only an assortment of different proteins. Variety means letting consumers make the 21st century decision to choose a more healthful product. HORMEL® deli foods, for example, has several prepackaged items that have no preservatives yet feature great taste.

Always keep the calendar in mind when stocking the grab-and-go section. Consumers who are short on time today will be short on time all year long. So help them by stocking time-savers like party trays during the holiday season and at graduation time, and snack trays during the indoor sports seasons. The line of HORMEL® deli foods includes pre-made trays for delis that find they save store personnel a lot of time as well.

QUICK TIPS

- For promotions, products, displays, think in terms of saving your customers time.
- Give customers a "complete store" experience by providing a lot of product varieties.
- Cross-merchandising lets customers get in and out in no time ... exactly what they want!

They Want hot foods that are ready to eat.



SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Many deli sales are lost because a retailer assumes consumers already know or understand something about the deli. The trick is to see the deli from the rushed consumers' eyes. Consumers who enter the deli thinking "I need roast beef" may add incremental sales to their tab when interesting, intriguing signage is added.

Simple signs like "Perfect for lunch tomorrow" or "Ask for a free sample of anything" can go miles toward getting consumers to open their minds ... as well as their wallets.

The noontime shopper who comes in for a pre-made sandwich today could walk out with a grocery bag full of tomorrow's lunch fixin's if the deli retailer merchandises the ingredients in one spot and gives them thought-provoking signage such as "Here's everything you need for tomorrow's lunch!" The consumer gets two lunches for the price of one shopping trip. What a time-saver!

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

While noontime cross-merchandising can pay for itself, retailers have discovered that there may be additional money to be made by merchandising dinner ideas in the deli.

Dinner is where prepared grab-and-go foods really shine. Consumers who don't have the time or desire to make homemade meals can buy them fresh simply by stopping in.

The retailer can make the trip shorter – and more enjoyable for time-conscious shoppers – by adding a refrigerated case of simple heat-and-serve side dishes like potatoes, rice or vegetables. It not only saves consumers a trip down the frozen

food aisle, but it may also give them new mealtime ideas – something their families will appreciate.

Even bags of shredded lettuce and a salad dressing display will help these busy customers save a few steps and minutes.

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

To most consumers, deli is synonymous with fresh, so retailers will do well to stock items that promise to help preserve that freshness. The **HORMEL®** sliced deli meats line is a perfect example. It features **SLIDE RITE®** packaging, which gives consumers the assurance of a positive seal. This helps the consumer justify a deli purchase – and a deli price – in the long run.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Saving the customer time is the key to a successful promotion. The more you can create an in-and-out atmosphere in the deli, the more likely your store is to see repeat business.

As mentioned, cross-merchandise "meals" in the deli. Grab-and-go lunchtime packages that feature a sandwich, chips, dessert and drink will help your deli effectively compete with the fast-food restaurants in the neighborhood.

Grab-and-go dinners can help put dollars that normally go to restaurants into your registers.

Create a weekly promotion that consumers know they can count on for fast service and good food. A "Mid-Week Mid-Day Meal" promotion every Wednesday will create a loyal following, provided you keep the menu varied and interesting.

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- During football season, turn your deli into a pre-game stop on Fridays and Saturdays by cross-merchandising game-day snacks and trays.
- Get your customers thinking about holiday entertaining early by giving them an "early bird sign-up discount" for reserving party trays several days in advance.
- Give customers a party tray (or other item) discount based on the outside temperature or your home team's last game score. ("The colder it gets, the lower our price gets.")

I Want hot trends that are ready to sell.

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No one makes it easier to give customers the meal solutions they're looking for, with value-added prepared foods that fit your operation.

Like smoked, pre-cooked BBQ ribs and chicken. Sandwich-ready pre-sliced deli meats. Trend-inspired ethnic meats. And a full range of juicy, tender pork selections. All tried-and-true tastes that have been served to millions of patrons in thousands of restaurants time and time again.

The choice couldn't be easier. For your customers. Or for you.

When you're both looking for something hot, get together with the hottest name in deli: **HORMEL®** Deli Foods.

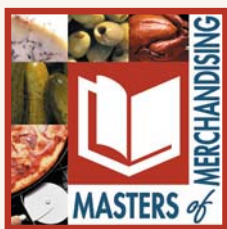


Together
we make it
happen.™



Deli Foods





SAPUTO CHEESE USA INC.

25 Tri-State Int'l Office Center, Suite 250, Lincolnshire, IL 60069

Phone: 1.800.824.3373

E-mail: stellacheese.com

ITALIAN CHEESE

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Group Stella® cheeses by general type — Italian hard cheeses, blues, fetas, etc. Wedges display nicely when reformed into wheels or half-wheels, which also helps to communicate a “fresh cut from the wheel” message. Convenient cup forms (shredded, grated and crumbled cheeses) can be stacked deep in wells, shelves or on the cheese table.

When cheeses are advertised, build mass end-caps or bunker-style displays of higher volume cheeses. Augment displays with real or faux whole wheels, especially when the displays are of pre-cut wedges, shreds or grated cheese.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Every cheese should be clearly labeled so that consumers know what cheese they are selecting, the price per pound and the cost of the individual piece they are purchasing. This will also make it easier for store clerks to reorder and not miss any varieties.

Use cheese “flavor cards” provided by Stella or created by the store to communicate flavor profiles, wine pairings, usage suggestions, etc. Information about cheese characteristics, as well as telling the “cheese story,” is helpful in stimulating purchases.

Place Stella coupons, recipes and shelf-talkers and danglers to add value and stimulate sales. They also add visual appeal, attracting consumers' eyes and breaking through the “noise” of hundreds of products grabbing for consumers' attention.

VARIETY

Italian cuisine has clearly become “mainstream” and Italian cheeses sell well year-round, warranting a large and diverse display of many varieties. The choice of variety varies from chain to chain and from store to store, depending on the area's demographics, the area of the country and the individual store/chains characteristics. However, all stores, regardless of their client mix, need to have Italian cheeses, including provolone, mozzarella, hard grating cheeses, Gorgonzola, Asiago and others. In upscale areas and in better cheese departments, artisanal and imported specialties should be added.

Columbus Day is the traditional “kick-off” date for Italian cheese advertising and promotions. Sales of Italian cheeses usually spike during the fourth quarter holiday selling seasons. Sales continue to be strong during the colder months of January and February and during the Spring Lenten season.

Blue cheese sales also spike very high around Christmas and New Year's. Blue cheese sales are substantial and growing during the summer months as specialty cheeses become more popular salad additions. Fresh mozzarella is a favorite summer feature, especially when local tomatoes are in season.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Stella exact-weight deli cups and wedges allow for very attractive price-point advertising, BOGOs and hot multiples (e.g. 2 for \$5). Featuring multiple items at the same price can be used to advertise many items from a single brand at the same time. Always feature the main product, such as Parmesan in the advertising text, in signage and in photos. Use sub-headers to also include secondary varieties, such as Asiago, Romano and Fontinella.

CROSS MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Display Stella fresh shredded or shaved Italian deli cups with fresh pasta and/or bagged salads in the product department. Blue cheese, Gorgonzola and Feta cups also are naturals in produce cases.

Stella shelf-stable dry grated cheeses can be displayed near bakery racks, Italian breads or with dry pastas. Secondary displays with everything it takes, including wine, to put together an Italian dinner can help build incremental sales by appealing to people who are looking for an easy delicious dinner.

Italian cheese and wine merchandise well together. Display wine with “necker coupons” next to the Italian cheese for added excitement.

Packaging Recommendations

Always display a variety of Stella packaging options. Include cups, wedges, crumbles and whole wheels as part of the display. Different customers are looking for different options.

QUICK TIPS

■ Don't run out of the fastest-selling varieties! For Italian cheeses, this would be Parmesan cups and wedges. Parmesan will sell three to four times more when compared to Romano, Asiago, etc., and should be ordered and displayed accordingly.

■ Allocate space according to sales. Top volume items and brands need more space to avoid out-of-stocks. Slow selling specialty items are needed for variety but do not require large displays.

■ Make sure your item selection is rational and optimized for the selling space. Do you really need 14 flavors of Feta and 8 variations of Danish blue?

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- Call attention to specialty cheese varieties by featuring in pizza programs, salad bars, sandwich programs, soups and hot food bars. Use your foodservice departments to introduce consumers to new usage ideas and then let them know these cheeses are available in your specialty cheese case.
- Start an international cheese “passport” that gets stamped each time a cheese purchase is made. Try one stamp for different varieties and/or different countries. Filled passports can be redeemed for future discount or prize drawings.
- Promote a “Blues Festival” featuring blue cheeses using a blues as the music motif.
- Partner with Stella to drive your specialty deli cheese sales.



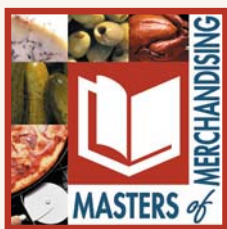
RETAIL MERCHANDISING DRIVES IMPULSE SALES OF SPECIALTY DELI CHEESE!



With Stella® merchandising tools
you can generate incremental sales everyday!



**Stella® merchandising tools will be available in
January 2007 to drive your deli cheese sales!**
Call your broker or contact your Saputo representative.



CHLOÉ FOODS CORPORATION

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KOSHER



Kosher sales improve year after year and can even double during the holiday season. Our Joshua's Kosher Kitchen and Mendel's Haymish brands offer a line of kosher products popular with discerning, health-conscious customers seeking certified products and customers following kosher dietary laws. We are unsurpassed in our offering of old-world favorites like kasha varnishkas, egg barley with mushrooms, potato pancakes, chopped liver, gourmet knishes, cocktail knishes and delicious puddings. We specialize in cooking for your customers' everyday needs and holiday gatherings.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Our knishes are ideal to merchandise in the gourmet and deli sections of the showcase, as well as the grab-and-go section of the department.

GRAB-AND-GO AND GOURMET

- Be sure that the display case is always fully stocked.
- Display product in prominent locations.
- Ensure high margin products are given high visibility.

DELI SHOWCASE

- Eye appeal stimulates buy appeal.
- To give knishes eye appeal, brush lightly with a light vegetable oil.
- Stack a minimum of four knishes high and round off the display.
- Use white paper in between layers ensuring it is not visible.
- We recommend one row of each variety of knish.
- Display what is needed for the day, ensuring product is fresh daily, allowing a good variety and reduced shrink.
- Keep displays full and fresh throughout the day.
- Knishes also display well in baskets with a doily, black trays or fancy bowls; always use POS.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

- Use easy-to-read signage with a clear description of the item, price and promotion.
- Add color to bring interest and attention to the item displayed in the showcase and grab-and-go section of the deli department.
- Display holiday promotions and bonus packs at the front of the showcase.
- Always display logo on signage.
- Make point-of-sale signage prominent.

SHELF-LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Always follow the manufacturer's recommended shelf-life.
- Fresh product has a 14-day shelf-life.
- We offer a full variety of fresh and frozen products with the advantage of longer shelf-life and less shrink!

VARIETY

- Joshua's Kosher Kitchen and Mendel's Haymish brands offer over 40 products in bulk and packaged and are available fresh or frozen.
- Our varieties include: potato, strudel, baked, gourmet, kasha and cocktail knishes plus potato pancakes. Old-world favorites include noodle and potato puddings, chopped liver, egg barley with mushroom and kasha varnishkas.
- We offer pre-packaged items ranging from 2 to 10 pieces per pack and 16-ounce packs of cocktail knishes in assorted varieties.
- Our Mendel's Haymish line includes a full variety of popular products ready for sale.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

- For all Jewish holidays, we offer an extensive variety of chopped liver, knishes and side dishes.
- During summer BBQ season, what's better than grilled franks with warm knishes?
- For any party or holiday, including Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, our potato pancakes and cocktail knish varieties are fantastic, as are our side dishes, noodle pudding and potato pudding, cut into bite-size pieces.
- During sporting events such as the Super Bowl, offer a warm bucket of Joshua's famous potato knishes.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

- Merchandise knishes with franks in the deli or meat department.
 - Merchandise knishes with our old-world favorites during Jewish holidays.
 - Display knishes next to BBQ chickens and ribs in the deli department during the year.

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Take advantage of our new packaging and labeling of over 40 varieties of Joshua's kosher knishes and Mendel's Haymish products.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

- Rotation helps maintain a fresh, wholesome, quality product.
- Defrost frozen products before displaying.
- Store fresh foods below 40° F.
- Store frozen foods below 10° F.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Space allocation and consistency is important to grow this category.
- Heat up product and sample during dinner hours.

QUICK TIPS

■ Cross-merchandise knishes, with franks, chicken and ribs to help drive sales and increase revenue.

■ Point-of-sale signage must always be prominent on display.

■ Display less more often — the key to maintaining fresh product.

■ Eye appeal is buy appeal!

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- Special sale on bonus pack knishes for the July 4th, Labor Day, Memorial Day; set up large displays in both meat and deli departments.
- Display knishes next to franks or BBQ meal displays.
- Special promotion for Jewish holidays featuring puddings, chopped liver, cocktail and gourmet knishes.
- Special promotion for holidays — "Buy 2 side dishes, get one FREE!"
- Display bite-sized pieces with packaged product: Best for noodle pudding or potato pudding.
- Display packages and/or loose knishes next to EZ Cuisine hot soup display in store. Offer "Buy a cup of EZ Cuisine soup, get a knish FREE!"
- Display a portable fridge in the mustard aisle with 2 to 4 varieties of knishes.



Old World Favorites

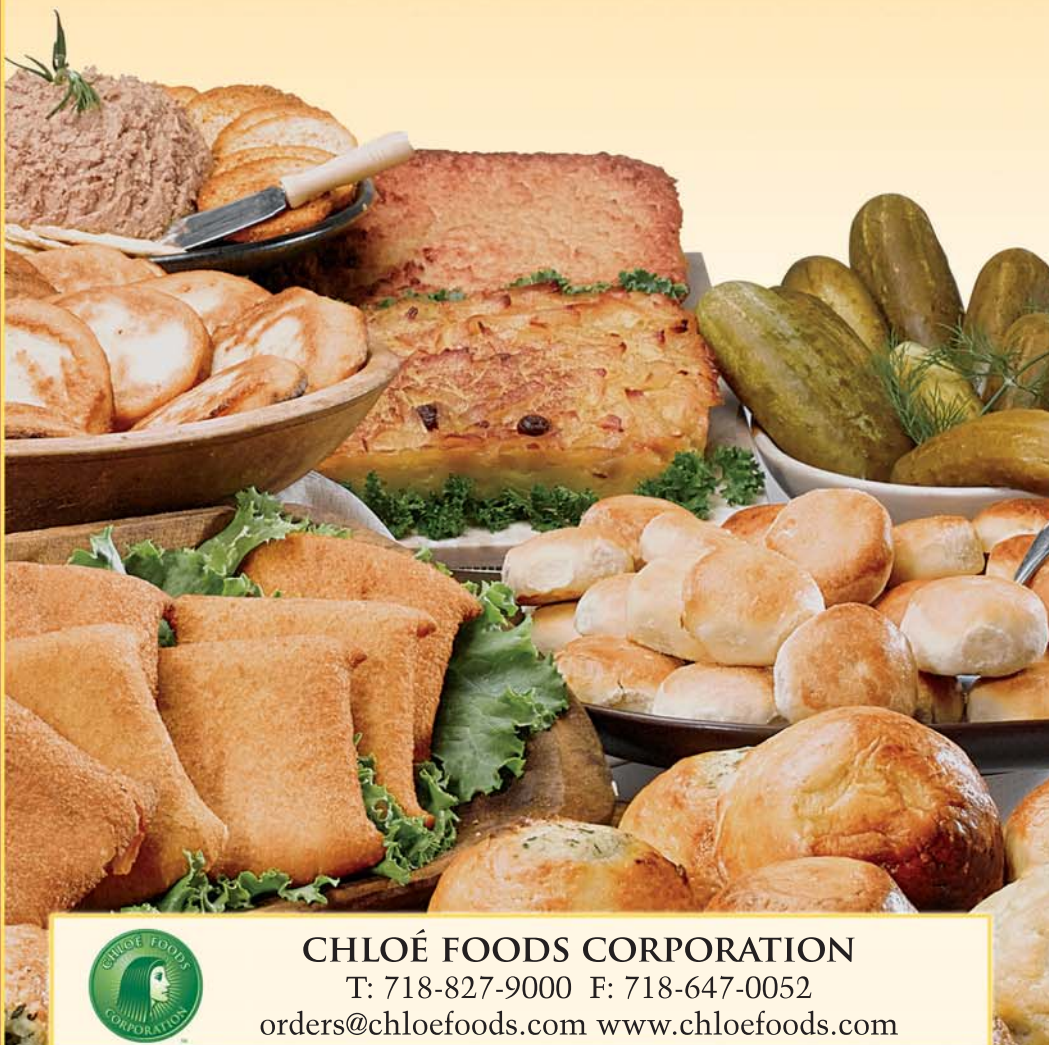
**Joshua's Kosher Kitchen "Old World Favorites",
not just in Coney Island, now in your neighborhood too!**

Knishes and a whole lot more!

Our Joshua's Kosher Kitchen and Mendel's Haymish brands are popular with discerning, health conscious customers seeking certified products and customers following kosher dietary laws.

We are unsurpassed in our offering of old-world favorites like kasha varnishkas, egg barley with mushrooms, potato pancakes, chopped liver, gourmet knishes, cocktail knishes and delicious puddings.

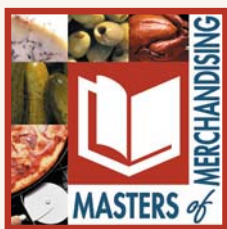
We specialize in cooking for your customers everyday needs and holiday gatherings.



CHLOÉ FOODS CORPORATION

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FORMAGGIO ITALIAN CHEESE SPECIALTIES

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E-mail: support@formaggiocheese.com • Website: www.formaggiocheese.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Within the last few years, the mozzarella category has expanded from five items sold in Italian ethnic markets to a full line of products that warrant separate space within the specialty cheese section. Formaggio now produces over 57 mozzarella products, available in both bulk for the full-service deli and pre-packaged for display in the self-service cheese case.

Within the specialty cheese department, it is recommended to set a separate section aside for mozzarella specialties and display “like” items. The categories include fresh mozzarellas, smoked mozzarellas, string cheeses, marinated mozzarellas, mozzarella salads and rolled products.

Fresh mozzarella also sells well out of the full-service deli case in either the salad section or the Mediterranean section. Include the 1-pound mozzarella, ovoline, bocconcini and ciliengine. Make sure fresh mozzarella is covered in water at all times, in order to preserve both the shelf life and the flavor.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Include signage that explains why mozzarella is best eaten at room temperature or slightly warmed. With mozzarella, it is all about the fat. In fact, “fat is where it’s at” for the most flavorful product. Like most products high in butterfat, serving at room temperature greatly improves the flavor.

Both full-service and self-service displays also should include POS signage that explains the different usages for each category, including recipes. Formaggio supplies retailers with POS materials that inform the customer and help sales associates provide new and delicious ways to use mozzarella in everyday dining or snacking.

VARIETY

Every specialty cheese mozzarella section should include, at a minimum, the following varieties: An 8-ounce individually-wrapped fresh and smoked mozzarella, a prosciutto or pepperoni roll, a twisted mozzarella string cheese and a marinated string cheese. Additional basic varieties include a ciliengine cup (a cherry-sized, fresh mozzarella packed in water) and a marinated mozzarella salad.

Sustained growth within the mozzarella category is driven by new item introductions. Stores should include at least one new or rotating item each month. This item should be promoted at the point-of-sale and in the weekly advertising venues. New items now represent about 20 percent of the growth in the category.

PACKAGING

- Packaging should be as simple as possible: never hide the product.
- Whenever possible, demand clear packaging rather than opaque packaging from suppliers.

- The “inside” of the product should always be the same as the “outside” appearance.
- While the shelf life is lower, always display fresh mozzarella 1-pound and 8-ounce balls in a hand-wrapped clear plastic film because the sales are dramatically higher.

SHELF-LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

Follow the manufacturer’s “sell by” date for all pre-packaged items.

It is very important that fresh mozzarella be kept exactly that — fresh! In order to maintain freshness and get the full shelf life for bulk fresh mozzarella products, it is very important to keep the mozzarella submerged in water.

The water is the only protection fresh mozzarella has, so it is very important to keep it free of possible contaminants and to keep the product completely covered. Only display a minimum of product — not the entire tub — in order to minimize shrink.

Air will cause drying and yellowing and will affect the taste. Once this occurs, the mozzarella cannot be brought back to life by submerging in water.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

- In-store demos are strongly suggested. Mozzarella should be brought to room temperature or grilled in order to bring out the flavor and texture.
- Advertise in flyers, weekly ads and at the point-of-sale.
- Create a “mozzarella of the month” promotion and feature different Formaggio mozzarella products.
- Increase the number of varieties, especially salads, rolls and the smaller bocconcini and ciliengine mozzarella balls during the holidays.
- During the fall and winter “cooking” holidays — Christmas, Thanksgiving and New Year’s — build special displays of 1-pound fresh mozzarella, the size most frequently bought for cooking. In Italian ethnic areas, this is a must.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

- Create an “Italian Garden” by displaying fresh tomatoes, 8-ounce fresh mozzarella and fresh basil together in a freestanding, refrigerated case at the front of the store or in the produce department.
- Within the mozzarella specialty cheese section, include salami, pepperoni and other specialty Italian deli meats.
- Many cheese islands have an area in the middle of the case for the display of dry products, so use it to display a variety of crackers, olive oils, sun-dried tomatoes and balsamic vinegars. Create a total Italian market display.
- Include floor displays of fresh baked breads from the bakery department.

QUICK TIPS

- Remember — Fat Is Where It Is At — when judging and comparing mozzarellas.
- Introduce at least one new or rotating item every month.
- Sample using in-store demos or sample from on top of the deli case.
- Create a mozzarella section or Italian Market within the specialty cheese case.
- Serve at room temperature or warmer for best flavor.

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- Include a variety pack for easy holiday/party ideas and include in catering brochures.
- Try these signature products:
 - Prosciutto, sun-dried tomato, mozzarella and fresh basil sandwich.
 - An entrée of grilled chicken topped with prosciutto and mozzarella.
 - A vegetarian sandwich of fresh mozzarella, grilled veggies and our famous marinade.
 - Stuffed meat loaf using one of our mozzarella salads.
- During the summer, take any of the above Formaggio creative appetizers and add them to fresh greens using our marinade as salad dressing.



"The Bigger Deal"



*New 16oz
Packaging
25% "More"*

*New Exciting
Cracker Friendly
Specialty Rolls
"More Servings"*

*Food Safety
#1*

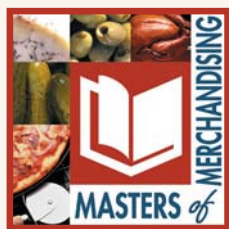


Formaggio is Truly the "Trendsetter
Setting the Trend Throughout the
Specialty Cheese Industry".

Ph: 845-436-4200 • Fax: 845-436-7076



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Deli Foods

HORMEL DELI FOODS

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Website: www.hormel.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Even though natural foods have been in the public eye for over a decade, they haven't lost their cachet. Media attention has focused on the term, and the idea still enamors consumers. According to ACNielsen, consumers are willing to pay up to 20 percent more for natural foods.

Deli retailers would do well to label the natural items on their shelves and highlight the benefits. Adding the words "No artificial flavors or colors" or "no preservatives" can capture consumers' attention and give them further reason to purchase.

Hormel Foods' new NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats contain no preservatives, artificial colors, flavors, added MSG or gluten. But because the products are behind the glass, deli shoppers may not immediately recognize their benefits. Retailers that add signage highlighting those benefits will add incremental sales. A small flag on the packaging or a note on the glass next to the product will spotlight them.

Educating deli customers with signage can help them make intelligent choices. Smart delis are helping customers find their way through the terminology maze by posting signs listing the official definitions of terms like organic, natural, cage-free and free range.

VARIETY

Freshness and variety have always been two of the major hallmarks of the deli. People of all ages and backgrounds shop the deli for exactly those benefits. And with their auras of fresher and more healthful, natural products truly are a natural in this arena.

Because natural products seem to be following in the footsteps of organic products, retailers have looked to that segment for guidance. Four years ago researchers found out organic products appealed to a significant number of Caucasians, African Americans and Hispanics alike. (Source: *Prepared Foods*, May 2003). As far back as 2001, the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) had already determined that markets for those products included a majority of Baby Boomers, Gen-Xers and older adults. The lesson learned was that, for these products, there are seemingly no age or racial boundaries.

But the parallel may end there. Today natural has far surpassed organic in acceptance, garnering an even larger chunk of the market – 95 percent household penetration (compared to organic at just 46 percent, according to ACNielsen).

When it's time to bring in a line of natural products, deli retailers need to take this wide, diverse appeal into consideration and add products with a variety of flavors and proteins.

When Hormel Foods introduced NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats, it gave retailers the opportunity to appeal to the need for variety with four ham products and two roast beef varieties. That line was complemented by five turkey SKUs from Jennie-O Turkey Store. The NATURAL CHOICE® deli meat selection will continue to grow as the need for even more variety increases.

Variety can also mean giving consumers the ability to choose allergen-free products. NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats contain no gluten, no nitrites or nitrates, and no lactose. It's a variety choice a growing number of consumers will truly welcome.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

One of the most notable suggestions made by the International Dairy/Deli/Bakery Association in its 2006 edition of *What's In Store* was to "tell customers how deli products can be part of a healthful diet."



This educational aspect goes hand-in-hand with clear, explanatory signage. If retailers point out the not-so-obvious benefits of specific deli products, customers are more apt to make a purchase today and repeat purchases tomorrow.

With household penetration for natural foods at 95 percent, the most difficult part of the education process has been completed, but it's still vital for retailers to get consumers to notice those products – to point out which is which. That's especially important when you consider that \$1 out of every \$10 is spent on natural and organic foods.

Consumer acceptance is half of the equation for success. The

other half is helping customers understand how to fit natural products into their daily lives. Menu suggestions, recipe cards and leaflets, and sampling can go a long way toward getting natural products out of the deli case and into consumers' homes. Employee training—showing deli employees how to sell natural products, suggest natural alternative and surprise their customers with new ideas for natural products—is also important.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Cross-merchandising opportunities for natural products are limitless; they are growing so rapidly that retailers can help customers make lifestyle choices.

Develop an "It's Lunchtime... Naturally" program by cross-merchandising signature sandwiches made with natural ingredients like HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats, gluten-free bread and organic vegetables. Then add natural sides like preservative-free chips and drinks like organic iced tea.

Also, don't miss the opportunity to educate consumers on how to use the natural products in everyday meals. Create a flyer or brochure filled with enticing recipe ideas made entirely with natural ingredients found throughout the store.

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Packaging for freshly sliced meats and cheeses should further the perception of deli freshness. Consider adding resealable bags behind the counter to be used exclusively for freshly sliced natural deli products. It shows your customers how special you think these products are and will reinforce the products' no-preservatives attribute.

Even if stocking special bags isn't possible, add distinctive stickers to the deli wrapping of freshly sliced natural products.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Consumers are looking for natural products, so adding them quietly is counter-productive. Any natural product added to your line-up should be touted in both your store's weekly ads and in the deli itself. Adding excitement to natural products' arrivals helps get your customers' attention adds to the aura of your deli. It also tells consumers you're constantly on the lookout for the newest, the freshest and the most healthful.

Sampling any new products is a bonus that shows customers natural products can taste as good as – or in some cases better than – their preservative-laden counterparts. Sample products like HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats and explain that customers are finally getting to taste the true flavor of meat without layers of chemical preservatives overpowering its natural taste.

QUICK TIPS

- Add signs to highlight natural items and educate customers
- Stock a wide variety of natural products that appeal to all segments
- Partner natural products together in special promotions or displays that will get customers' attention and let them know the products are in the store

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- Create a "Natural Corner" in the deli by gathering a range of natural products from around the store. Be sure to point out the items' store locations, since customers may not know the products even existed, much less where to find them.
- Literally flag natural products in the deli (and throughout the store) with attention-getting green flags or stickers to make them easier for customers to see and find.



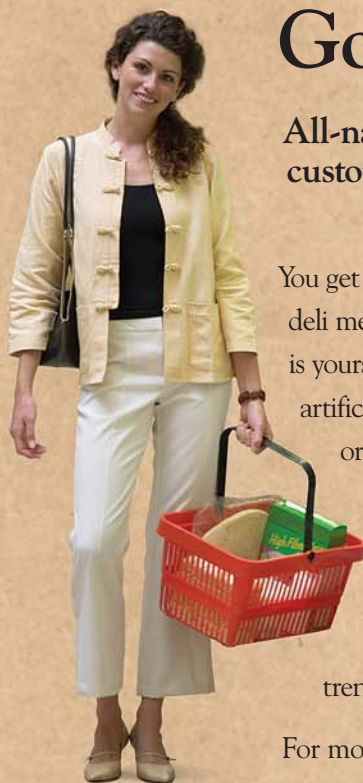
Good for everyone.

All-natural, wholesome deli meat for your customers. Hormel Foods' comprehensive support plan for you.

You get it all with HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats. The opportunity to offer natural options is yours with a deli meat that has no preservatives, no artificial colors or flavors, no added MSG, no nitrates or nitrites and is gluten-free. You'll also benefit from the strong brand recognition of HORMEL® and unique marketing support that makes your deli stand out from the competition.

Get more than you expected with all-natural, on-trend HORMEL® NATURAL CHOICE® deli meats.

For more information, call 1-800-523-4635 or contact your local Hormel Foods representative.



{your customer}

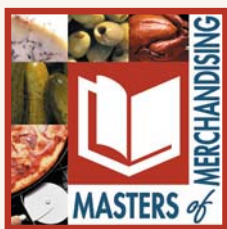


{you}



Great taste. Naturally.

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PACKAGING — PREPARED CHICKEN



ROBBIE MANUFACTURING, INC.

10810 Mid-America Avenue, Lenexa, KS 66219
Phone: 913.492.3400 • Fax: 913.492.1543
Website: www.robbiemfg.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Printed pouches can add color and merchandising flair to your hot display case. Replace the plain dome with a colorful HOT N HANDY® Pouch to attract your customers' attention and build sales. As a bonus, you will be able to fit more birds into your display case, a big help during the high volume lunch and dinner hours.



In addition, a pouch will solve your customers' biggest complaint with rotisserie chicken packaging — leaks. HOT N HANDY® Pouches contain the juices and thus solve your leakage problem and save deli staff from having to deal with messy clean-ups.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Rotisserie chicken can be an impulse item, so signage is important to gain sales. Signs closest to the product work the best. Use small signs on the front of the case or larger signs on top of the case.

A great way to differentiate your store is to use signs to promote both your package and your product. Provide information on the features of the HOT N HANDY® Pouch and show customers that, in addition to the high quality and taste of your rotisserie product, you are providing added value through advanced packaging technology.

VARIETY

Increase sales of rotisserie chicken by offering both regular and larger-size chickens. The larger birds are perfect for value-oriented families.

Increase your grab-and-go sales from the hot case by using the large family of designs and sizes from HOT N HANDY® Pouches. They are great for prepacking fried chicken or rotisserie chicken for the busy lunch and dinner rush. Specially vented HOT N HANDY® pouches were designed to keep fried products crispy longer in the hot case and rotisserie products moist, making for an attractive display that will increase impulse sales. This also works well for chicken nuggets, tenders, hot wings and assorted other hot fried products.

Other meats give your customers a wider range of tastes to choose from and will keep them coming back. Hot ham, either sliced or whole, can be used as a special feature one or two days a week. Another customer favorite is pork ribs. A special HOT N HANDY® Pouch has been designed to add carrying convenience to a full slab of ribs, making it

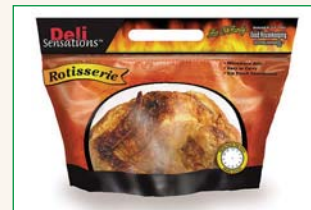
easy to pick up and carry home.

With its exclusive offering of technology, branding, designs and sizes, only HOT N HANDY® can give you the precise pouch to do the job for each of your deli applications.

By increasing variety in your hot case, you get more dollars from the same space and increase your return on investment.

BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Many retailers use standard domes to package and sell rotisserie chicken leaving only a hand-applied label as a way to display their name. HOT N HANDY® Pouches were designed in a way to make it easy to capitalize on your store's name by either adding your logo to our stock design or creating your own custom pouch with up to 10 colors of brilliant printing. HOT N HANDY® Pouches also make it easy to add important messages like heating instructions, UPC codes or nutrition and recipe information.



SHELF-LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that rotisserie chicken remain in the hot display for no more than two to four hours. For best quality, the bird should be held at an internal temperature between 150° to 160° F.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Another idea to increase rotisserie chicken sales is displaying in multiple areas of your store. Use the deli hot case as your primary display, put some birds into the cold case and add a hot case at the checkout for impulse purchases. This is a proven technique to build sales.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Storage space is always at a premium in the deli, so saving space with pouches is a key feature of this package style. Domes typically take seven times more space to store than pouches.

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Research found that consumers consider leaking to be a major problem with typical dome packages. When shown the difference between domes and zipper pouches, consumers chose the pouch over the dome by a 2 to 1 margin.

Consumers also demand convenience features from their packaging — a handle for easy carryout, a zipper for reclosability, reheating instructions on the package and the ability to microwave right in the package.

QUICK TIPS

- Give customers convenient packaging — handle, zipper closure and microwave-ready.
- Provide a variety of hot meat entrées and snacks to broaden your deli customer base — fried chicken, hot wings, ham or ribs.
- HOT N HANDY® Pouches are the choice for retailers looking for an alternative to leaky, bulky rigid containers.

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- Promote the advanced features of HOT N HANDY® Pouches in your weekly ads to differentiate your store and drive traffic to the deli.
- Place a story in your local newspaper's food section about your new pouch package for rotisserie chicken packaging. Draw in your competition's best customers to try your chicken in this interesting new package.

Join the Deli Packaging Revolution... ...with Hot N Handy Pouches!



The first package to win Good Housekeeping's Good Buy Award and the FMI Retailer's Choice Award!

Now's a perfect time to update the look of your deli packaging with Robbie's new line of Hot N Handy Pouches. The new line of pouches was designed with vibrant colors specifically selected to enhance the color of the cooked product inside and with eye-catching graphics assured to draw the attention of the consumer.

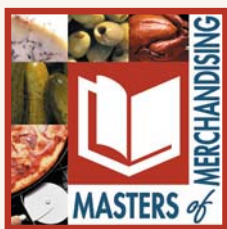
Designed for easy product identification in the hot case, new Hot N Handy Pouches have large block letters printed close to the top of the pouch identifying the food product inside.

Join the Revolution...
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for a Free Sample.

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VINCENT GIORDANO



2600 Washington Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19146
Phone: 215.467.6629 • Fax: 215.467.6339
Website: www.vgiordano.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Roast beef should be displayed in the service deli case with the other sliced-to-order deli meats. Ideally, roast beef should be faced so the customer can see the quality and rareness of the meat. Displaying your top selling premium roast beef, ham and turkey together in the center of the deli meat section will generate customer attention.

In high-volume stores, think about taking your top quality roast beef products and building a center-of-the-case display with each variety displayed out of the wrapper on its own garnished platter. Recommendations include a top-of-the-line, Choice-grade top round with the cap off, an eye round and either a corned beef, pastrami or flavored beef, depending on the area.

- Always make sure the case is neat, clean and well signed.
- Always ask the customers how they want their roast beef sliced.
- Always show the customer a slice before you continue slicing his or her order.
- Offer samples.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Shelf tags in the service deli case should be clean and include the brand name, the type of roast beef and an easy-to-read price.

VARIETY

There are four main characteristics of roast beef to consider when deciding what varieties to carry. They are the grade of the meat, the cut of the meat, the flavor profile of the meat and the amount of "cook" your customers desire.

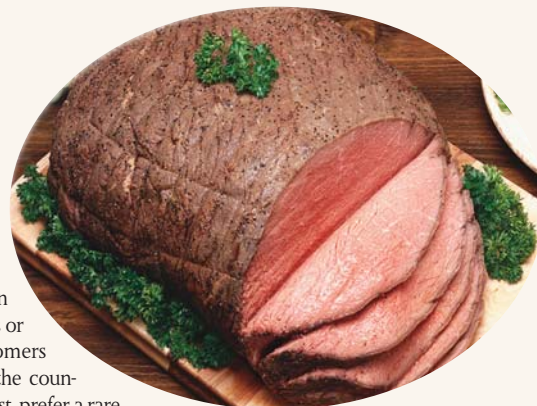
The main grades of meat are Prime, Choice, Select and Utility. Other names such as "Black Angus" depict a level of quality as good or better than choice. Most roast beefs are Select quality meats. Consider a premium grade for your stores' top-of-the-line product.

The most popular cuts of roast beef are top rounds (cap on or off), bottom rounds and eye rounds. These are all whole muscle products. It is recommended that stores wishing to carry a premium product look at a top round with the cap off. Roast beefs that are made by using different cuts of beef and compressing them are called "re-structured" and are excellent, less-expensive products for price-sensitive markets.



QUICK TIPS

- Ask the customers how they want to have their roast beef sliced.
- Offer customers different cuts, flavors and degrees of "cook" in order to satisfy everyone.
- Use roast beef in a featured sandwich.



Flavored roast beefs, the most popular of which is the Italian-style roast beef, are gaining popularity in some areas.

Another consideration is the degree of wellness or "cook" your customers desire. Many areas of the country, such as the Northeast, prefer a rare product, while other areas prefer a well-done product. In many locations, it is important to give customers a choice.

A basic lineup for most stores is a top-of-the-line product, a less expensive whole muscle product, an eye round and at least one variety of flavored roast beef. Stores may also want to consider a re-structured product that can be sold for less money.

Vincent Giordano has a long tradition of working with individual clients to develop the appropriate products for individual markets and chains.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

- Use roast beef in sandwiches, wraps and salads.
- Cross-merchandise with bread and rolls.
- Cross-merchandise with condiments, such as sandwich spreads and mustards.

SHELF-LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

Do not sell product past the manufacturer's recommended sell-by date. Opened product should be used quickly, within five days, and product that is displayed without its wrapper should be sold in two days for optimum freshness and eye-appeal.

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Sliced roast beef should be neatly layered and not folded or crushed, even if the customer wants it sliced very thin. Place the product carefully in the deli bag. The best deli bag is one that shows the store logo as well as care and handling directions for deli meats and that has a reclosable seal.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Roast beef should be featured at least one time per month in your stores' weekly ads and/or circulars. Roast beef is a sandwich favorite, and a featured sandwich of the month using roast beef will help build incremental business. Try suggesting different cheeses to accompany roast beef in sandwiches and wraps.

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

- Develop a hot roast beef sandwich program to complement your hot food and sandwich program.

BRING YOUR BEEF SALES TO NEW HEIGHTS

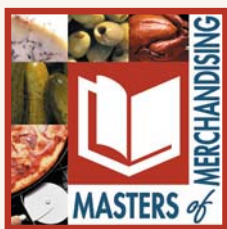


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ROTISSERIE CHICKEN

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS Catch customers' eyes – and their business.

Perdue encourages displaying rotisserie products in multiple locations with the primary display located in the service deli. Perdue® Rotisserie items should be utilized as the anchor of the convenience foods program, as their popularity continues to attract customers. Perdue also recommends that retailers display hot rotisserie items whenever possible.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS Maximize rotisserie product sales with POS from Perdue.

Retailers who market Perdue® Rotisserie products have access to a full array of signage to maximize the effectiveness of in-store Rotisserie programs. Branded point-of-sale signage should be utilized throughout the store and deli whenever possible. Mobiles, easels, banners, floor signage and static clings from Perdue can be used to boost interest in Perdue® products.

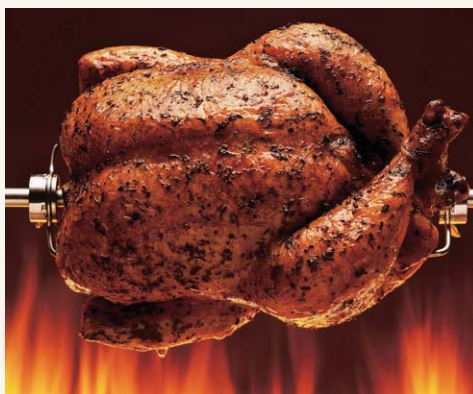
VARIETY SELLS

Build repeat business with a wide range of flavors.

It is important to work with a poultry supplier that offers a full range of flavored Rotisserie products. Perdue has a complete line of Rotisserie items, including six rotisserie chicken flavors and a variety of additional cuts – including roaster breast, roaster leg quarters and turkey breast – to appeal to ALL shoppers.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES Customers will appreciate safe practices.

- Rotisserie products should be stored immediately upon arrival in the department cooler at 34° F or below
- Note "USE BY" date on the box end label
- Rotate always using the oldest products first ("first in, first out")
- Do not open the CVP bag until you are ready to skewer the chicken
- Once the bag is opened, the product must be used within 24-48 hours
- Discard all products received at higher than 40° F
- Sandwich the thermometer between two lobes outside of the bag to measure;



be careful not to puncture inner bag

- Keep raw product away from all other foods in cooler
- Copies of Perdue® Rotisserie Chicken: Your Guide to Care, Handling and Presentation and the Perdue® Rotisserie Chicken: Your Guide to Care, Handling and Merchandising video can be obtained by writing to us at tradeinfo@perdue.com

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Bundle related items to sell more.

Bundle rotisserie products as a "meal deal" with other side dishes and beverages from the service deli. Make it easy for customers by displaying accompanying items in eye view.

SHELF-LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS

Quality and freshness ensure your customers' trust.

- Label dome containers with price, flavor, recipe and time cooked
- Place cooked, packaged chickens in the warmer case immediately for no longer than 2 hours (if traditional) or 4 hours (if marinated)
- Keep hot foods at a minimum of 140° F
- Refrigerate cold foods at 40° F or less

PACKAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Presentations for your demographic.

Perdue recommends utilizing custom branded labeling and/or packaging for leveraging brand strength. Perdue can work with you to develop a merchandising solution.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Let everyone in on the secret.

When promoting rotisserie chicken, capitalize on the attributes that customers desire and Perdue can provide: plump meaty products, freshness, consistent and delicious flavor. Perdue goes the extra mile by providing retailers a variety of methods to promote the brand. Promotions can be done through radio tags, direct mail, loyalty card-based programs and customer-specific programs.

CREATIVE & UNCONVENTIONAL MERCHANDISING IDEAS

Try something different for surprising dividends.

- Utilize unique packaging opportunities to make it even easier for consumers to "Grab 'N Go"
- Enticing customers and driving them to the service deli is easier once you set up a stationary or mobile sampling station within the store
- Create excitement in this area of your store by making freshly cooked rotisserie a destination for your customers

A SOPHISTICATED CHOICE AT A PICNIC OR DINING ROOM TABLE.



New applewood smoked flavor with a touch of honey makes every bite of our Petite Carved Breasts absolutely delicious. They're perfect for any occasion—from a tailgate party or picnic to romantic dinner by candlelight. Make your deli the destination for customers who crave exceptional taste. Call your Perdue Deli rep today.

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Reader Service No. 571





KING'S HAWAIIAN BAKERY WEST, INC.

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Phone: 310.533.3250 • Fax: 310.533.8732
Website: www.kingshawaiian.com

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

The most important things retailers need to consider when developing displays are their space, store layout and customer needs. Most delis incur space restraints when adding new elements to their available counter displays. King's Hawaiian developed free-standing bread racks that are eye-catching and made with a variety of materials (depending on customer needs). By placing the racks in close proximity to the deli counter, retailers can create a depth to the visual appeal of the deli department without limiting the deli display "real estate" to a crowded counter space.

VARIETY

Deli buyers need to provide consumers with variety and convenience. Increasingly during the past 10 years, delis have needed to advance their position as one-stop stations for pre-prepared meals, in addition to offering traditional deli wares. Noting this trend, King's Hawaiian has partnered with deli retailers throughout the nation on meal deal programs that allow customers to combine precooked fried chicken, turkey or ham with side dishes and King's Hawaiian rolls. This has been a huge success. To accommodate different palates and flavor profiles, the company added Savory Butter and 100% Whole Wheat dinner rolls to its line of Original Recipe Hawaiian and Honey Wheat offerings. The variety of products – paired with the company's top spot in national brand-

QUICK TIPS

■ Keep the product handy during the holidays. While the company holds the overall top spot for branded roll sales, King's Hawaiian sees the largest consumer demand through the holiday season months: November through January. Avoid empty shelves by keeping ample stock to meet your local market demands.

■ Keep it simple, keep it quick: meal deal programs are a forward-thinking tactic for delis to utilize in attracting younger generations of consumers that are devoting meal dollars to fast-casual and quick-service restaurant concepts.

ed roll sales – has boded well for deli retailers utilizing King's Hawaiian meal deals.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Consider versatility: the advent of the holiday/game day party season can provide deli retailers with a wealth of opportunities to market their services for catering. King's Hawaiian has worked with delis in the past to create a "Super Sandwich" promotion for holiday entertaining, tailgate parties or at-home events. Retailers can use the company's 16-ounce Original Recipe round loaf as an enlarged bun for a super-sized sandwich that can be cut like pie wedges to serve at least eight guests. Additionally, King's Hawaiian rolls are a year-round meal solution for meat and cheese platters to accommodate customer requests for mini-sandwiches.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

King's Hawaiian bread is known by consumers because of its distinctive taste and cake-like texture, among other attributes. Ensuring the texture depends greatly on the retailer in their expediency during backroom receiving and preparation. King's Hawaiian bread possesses a shelf-life of about 14 days for peak flavor, texture and overall quality. The company provides retailers with collateral materials to remind them of this timeline and is happy to answer additional questions.

— Increased sales never tasted so good. — LET KING'S HAWAIIAN® LEAD THE WAY!

When Robert Taira baked and sold his first loaf of deliciously soft, sweet bread back in 1953, the Hawaiian sweet bread category was born. Since then King's Hawaiian has grown from local favorite to a national powerhouse. We are the #1 selling branded roll in America! Use King's Hawaiian rolls in your deli bundling and meal replacement programs. Drive profits by connecting with our loyal customers.



The King's Hawaiian advantage:

- National Brand with great awareness and popularity
- Originator of the category—the first and the best!
- Convenient sizes—12-packs and 4-packs for large or small families
- Widen profit margins due to the low unit cost of King's Hawaiian rolls and the added value of the pre-prepared meal offerings
- Let our brand help you generate new deli customers

Meal Replacement—bundle your chicken and a side salad with a 12-pack of King's Hawaiian Rolls for a wholesome and nutritious meal for the family.



Healthy Bundling Program—add 4-packs of King's Hawaiian rolls to your soup and salad bar. The perfect meal for today's busy lifestyle!

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Food Bars

By offering convenience, quality and taste, food bars can increase department traffic and boost sales.

By Jason Cangialosi

The once ubiquitous salad bar — filled with homey, familiar, dependable salad fixings, puddings and gelatin desserts — has all but disappeared from deli departments; in its place stands the food bar — an example of consumers' growing sophistication and their demand for ever-increasing food variety. Today's consumers are looking for quality, cleanliness and diversity in every item offered. Rather than being seen as a liability, a new or unusual item is more likely to be perceived as an asset.

"This is the advent of high-end quality food items at the grocery stores. As consumers, it's really that we appreciate what we eat more with age, but we don't want to sacrifice quality or taste," explains Jim Daskaleas, vice president of product development, Walker's Food Products, North Kansas City, MO.

Food bars are gaining popularity, but, Daskaleas notes, "We've been touting this for a very long time at Walker's — converting what restaurants have been doing and training retailers to think like restaurateurs. It's been about the last 10 years that they have really been pushing home meal replacements. We can fully complement this as culinary professionals at Walker's, with staff knowledgeable in both food service and grocery retailing."

For several producers, supplying food bars is a natural extension of their deli department business. According to Steffanie Smith, president of the deli/prepared foods division of Taylor Fresh Foods, Salinas, CA, "We are supplying a lot of behind-the-glass types of salads that are sometimes set up in a self-serve format. We continue to get some demand for support of salad bar programs, which is similar to many of our food-service programs, supplying bagged product that they display in a salad bar environment."

Shirley Leonard, marketing manager at Sandridge Food Corporation, Medina, OH, mentions some popular items for food bar inclusion. "Some of our best-selling products in food and salad bars have been our unique pasta salads, potato salads and coleslaws. Not only do these salads look fresh, colorful,



and appealing, but they also have their own one-of-a-kind dressings that give them that homemade taste consumers crave."

Traffic Builders

Food bars offer retailers several benefits, if they are willing to invest the time and resources to their upkeep. Food bars offer convenience, freshness, quality and an ability to personalize meals. [Editor's note: Please

see *New Guy In Town Feeds Families* on page 10 for an indication of the importance of this issue.]

Leonard believes freshness is crucial for food bar success. "Products sold from food bars must look fresh, clean, crisp and colorful to be successful, in addition to being great tasting. Food bars are a wonderful way to satisfy consumers' growing needs for grab-and-go products. And they enable con-

sumers to tailor the product to suit their personal tastes."

Smith also notes the benefit of consumer empowerment. "Customers can create the salad of their choice. [The food bar] creates traffic through the deli and while it takes labor to keep the salad or food bar up, it is somewhat of a self-serve product. It also allows the retailer to showcase its variety and what makes its store or chain different."

Sabrina Bewley, category manager of customer development, Tyson Foods Deli Division, Springdale, AZ, says convenience as the food bars' greatest benefit to retailers. "In a Tyson deli prepared foods survey [Tyson Deli Prepared Foods Brand Equity Study, Mills Consulting Group, 2006], we asked consumers to rate reasons that visiting a grocery store deli is better than visiting casual restaurants, and 44 percent of consumers surveyed stated convenience. For the 18 percent that stated food, 9 percent of those stated variety. A food bar certainly has the opportunity to deliver on both the convenience and the variety that consumers expect out of the deli."

According to Kevin O'Conner, national sales manager, FoodMatch, Inc., New York, NY, "What we've seen with the retailers we work with is that the olive bar is a very interactive display; it's colorful and much different than picking up, say, a piece of cheese. It puts traffic into the deli section, where consumers are looking at specialty cheeses and meats. The whole phenomenon of upscale olive bars is fairly new, and it really has evolved into the larger Mediterranean bars. There is a lot of the excitement in this growth."

"It's about visual appeal and variety that begins with creating an image of quality," O'Conner continues. "At FoodMatch, we focus on regionality and try to bring a 'flavors of the world' concept to the



table. This is what makes an olive bar really exciting and the draw for consumers is to experiment with new flavors."

The range of variety and size of food bars is diverse, O'Conner explains. "Some run from as little as 12 items anywhere up to 80 items. The growing varieties of antipasti, with onions, dolmas, artichoke hearts, roasted peppers, olives and salads fit today's lifestyle, and these items can put together a meal or augment a meal. Some stores are even starting to experiment with stand-alone antipasti bars, which could give a retailer a little room for flexibility in what it puts on the bar."

Asian food bars have really taken off in the past few years, thanks to pre-made sushi as well as other Japanese, Chinese, Thai and Indian dishes. Mark Phelps, vice president, InnovAsian Cuisine Enterprises, Kent, WA, notes an "improved customer satisfaction with the retailer's department. The speed of getting in and out is a plus, and food bars are a better vehicle to try new foods or dishes without investing in a set price or a whole meal. It's a great sampling mechanism to introduce new and unique dishes."

Partnerships Breed Success

Although food bar complexity is a variable, all retailers must be concerned with freshness, shrink and the level of staff knowledge and education.

According to O'Conner, "It's all over the map. Some retailers are starting from scratch and some are just looking for new items. We've narrowed the process down to minimize things like shrink and can work with the retailer to make continuity of personnel easier. That being said, it can be the nature of the beast that we may have to be in the store a number of times, retraining."

"Certainly retailers have to be able to

dedicate people to the food bar and get them trained, he continues. "Once a retailer decides the format of the bar, the next step is product selection. Then a producer like FoodMatch can work towards the training of dedicated personnel with the retailer, adjusting methods to the particular store. It starts with commitment at the store level, and to make that happen, we work very closely with brokers and retailers. We're in stores almost once a week doing some kind of training. Overall, an olive bar is worth the investment of time and traffic and the numbers perform quite well."

Close working ties between retailers and suppliers are key to ensuring a successful program. "InnovAsian Cuisine helps execute with retailers in the following areas: help in designing menus, identifying the best-sellers and how much space to allocate, the recipe design and modification, equipment design and financing, in store signage development, sampling, couponing, promotion and advertising recommendations, as well as training materials design and hands on implementation," notes Phelps.

With a close working partnership, he emphasizes, "Self-serve food bars can increase customer satisfaction greatly if executed properly. Increased customer satisfaction can create a destination for that retailer's department in the consumer's mind. Increased consumer satisfaction results in shopping more often, sharing positive feedback with friends and family and will lead to increased purchases."

When starting up food bar programs, says Daskaleas, Walker's tries to remind retailers that food tastes are not universal, and that a good supplier will employ creative teams to create products that appeal to a wide range of tastes. "There are food teams, people that have diverse tastes; the team

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needs to bring in a consensus of what consumers want, and this is sometimes neglected in product selection.”

The Long Haul

A food bar's long-term success comes back to consistency of personnel. “We will, or one of our distributors will, sit down together with a retailer about once a quarter and look at the numbers,” notes Food-Match's O'Conner.

Such a process can spot trends and make sure the varieties offered fit the retailer's clientele. For example, he says, although a desire for organic foods is gaining momentum, “Free standing organic olive bars have not been as successful, as there isn't variety of the mix yet, and the nature of an olive bar, or food bars in general, is the variety of tastes.” Editor's note: Please see *The Organic Lifestyle* on page 53.]

Bewley also stresses the importance of partnering to follow trends and create consistency. “Tyson Deli partners with retailers to determine their best-case scenario. The Tyson Deli sales and customer development teams can work to help retailers determine their best assortment, price, promotion, brand and consumer message to help drive sales and consumer loyalty. One example of Tyson Deli delivering insights to drive business is in the wing category. Tyson Deli offers branded programs in the wing and boneless wing category that can help retailers drive sales in an on-trend category while helping consumers solve their meal problems.”

In Daskaleas' view, “The problem is labor in the grocery stores to maintain the kitchen and the food bars, but the stores have excelled at finding good quality manufacturers. At Walker's we develop recipe-specific items to complement what retailers want to appear as items hot out of the kitchen but also that the consumer perceives as a really nice, upscale product. Furthermore, we specialize in laborsaving techniques using multiple applications for the same item. It's a process of teaching retailers to think inwardly and to use items they currently have economically.”

Several recipes display the company's use-it-before-you-lose-it mantra. “For instance, our spiced apple can be used hot or cold on any number of dishes,” he explains. “Also our spinach artichoke mix is a wonderful cold item for a catering tray, great for vegetable dipping. At that same party, the consumer may want a warm appetizer and can heat it up for tortilla chips or spread it on bread. Finally, as a meal tip, it can be turned into a spinach quiche or soufflé. It is economical for the retailer and consumer, and it's also a way for employees to stay active, since they are

Image Is Everything

At the point of sale, Mark Phelps, vice president, InnovAsian Cuisine Enterprises, Kent, WA, sees a “greater effort in maintaining display. When consumers help themselves, they may pick through dishes — picking out proteins or veggies — which may be more sloppy-spilling displays. Displays must be kept full, fresh and clean at all times to maximize sales potential.

“With shrink, it's similar to behind-the-glass problems with how much to put out of what or when and also the additional issue of consumer snacking before weighing/checkout process. The packaging must be sturdy and seal well or it will result in spillage. Typically packaging is pre-stickered with per pound plus,” he adds.

According to Steffanie Smith, president of the deli/prepared foods division of Taylor Fresh Foods, Salinas, CA, a major part of food bar maintenance involves labor. “To keep the image of a very clean, sanitary program, it takes attention from the staff. It will only sell if the customer deems the program clean, appealing, fresh and full of variety. So meeting the variety and keeping it up means the team must understand what is moving in order to keep shrink in line. As a supplier, we need to make sure we are providing appropriate pack sizes in order to ease the filling of containers and keep the shrink in line as well.”

Shirley Leonard, marketing manager at Sandridge Food Corporation, Medina, OH, believes food bars can help retailers control some of their perennial issues. “Food bars can actually solve some of these problems for delis. Shrink can be minimized through multiple uses of the same product displayed in the deli or produce sections as well as in the food bar. When retailers buy these products from Sandridge, they reduce their labor and improve sanitation because there is less handling and preparation at the store level. We have done most of the work for them.

“Retailers should weigh the costs of shrink, labor, sanitation and packaging done at store level versus buying from a fresh-foods manufacturer that provides excellent delivery, consistency of product, and high quality every time,” she continues. “As our motto states, Sandridge ‘delivers freshness.’ Fresh foods. Fresh thinking. Fresh ideas.”

For deli employees, it all comes down to this question Smith poses, “Can they make it look good, day in and day out? People buy with their eyes. They want to see something that looks good and then delivers on a fresh and delicious meal!” **DB**

not just heating up containers in the microwave and putting them on display.”

Daskaleas continues, “Twice baked potatoes are a very big item for us but, it is important to keep in mind, they're dangerous for employees because they're hot. As a multiple item, they can take the potato boat fillings and serve them in a hot bar, but they can also be made into a cheese and bacon mashed potato or turned into a shepherd's pie. There also is baked potato salad — take this same item, put it in a pan and you've got baked potato casserole. The entire category has grown to about 20 items geared specially toward multiple recipes and is fairly inexpensive, with multiple recipe directions on the packaging.”

According to *Tyson Deli Defining Attitudes and Behavior By Segment Nov. 2004*, deli consumers revealed the following attributes to be most important to their shopping experience: Deli area is clean and neat — 88 percent; food items offered are fresh — 88 percent; deli personnel look clean and neat — 74 percent; food items offered are high quality — 69 percent; and

deli personnel are friendly — 47 percent.

Bewley notes, “For retailers offering self-serve wing bars, it is important that they allocate the necessary labor towards keeping product fresh and they feature quality products that consumers can trust. There also is an opportunity to leverage brands to help communicate the quality of their products. Using a brand on product signage is a great way to reduce the consumers' perception of risk and it helps consumers gauge product quality.

“In addition, packaging is a very important attribute for wing bars and other deli grab-and-go type products. In 2006, Tyson Deli conducted qualitative research projects with consumers to better understand their perceptions around deli packaging. Consumers are frustrated that packaging does not keep hot products hot and cold products cold. Consumers also commented on several occasions that the packaging was too generic. There is an opportunity for supermarket delis to focus on the functionality of packaging designs in order to better meet consumers' expectations,” she continues. **DB**

The Organic Lifestyle

A rising demand or a deli department dilemma?

By Jason Cangialosi

Growing consumer interest in healthful eating is the catalyst behind the expansion of organic foods. Once primarily the purview of the produce industry, organics now encompasses a wide range of processed foods. Consumers who purchase all-natural, pesticide-free, hormone-free, preservative-free and *idée d'jour*-free fruits and vegetables on a consistent or semi-consistent basis are now willing to spend more for those same attributes in the deli. And their numbers are increasing.

"Organic right now is this umbrella term," says Phil Meldrum, president of FoodMatch, Inc., New York, NY. FoodMatch has nourished a line of organic olives under the Divina brand since 1999. "We got into organic products by working directly with small farmers, believing in a philosophy of sustainability and better tasting products. It brings up different ideas in peoples' heads — things like small family farms, sustainability and more healthful food. People also want to know where their food comes from, so they are buying into a certain production type and healthful lifestyle.

"A big part of this movement is cultural drivers like Michael Pollan's new book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, consumer education organizations such as Oldways [Preservation Trust, Boston, MA] and all the press focused on local agriculture, but sometimes organic does not mean all those things," Meldrum continues. "The dilemma with organic right now is, good as it may be, it doesn't always mean it's going to taste good or come from a small farm."

While most consumers associate the organic concept with produce and grains, beef, chicken and pork ranchers are seeing increased demand for organic products. For Roy Moore, founder and CEO of Maverick Ranch Natural Meats, Denver, CO, there is also a larger moral imperative. *Our Stolen Future*, Theo Colburn's book about environmentally caused endocrine imbalances, drove Maverick into the organic fold. According to Moore, this inspired "our passion, not to make a profit, but to make an impact on the world, a contribution to mankind — and that is where the organic movement comes from."



PHOTO COURTESY OF HORIZON ORGANIC DAIRY

According to Julie Jeremy, president of San Francisco, CA-based Native Kjalii Foods, pronounced native cali — as in California — the company started in 1995 at the San Francisco Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market. "Our connection to organics came with our tortilla chips as we were purchasing local organic corn. Ten percent of our brand is organic, but in sales about 25 percent. The number has been pretty steady. As we grow, the organic is growing at the same speed."

The Transition To Organic

Annie's Homegrown, Wakefield, MA, also attributes an early organic ethic to its success. Annie's markets four naturals brands. "About 50 percent of all the Homegrown Naturals brand products are organic or made with organic ingredients," says John Foraker, CEO. "If you look at only Annie's Homegrown, all but one of our products, the gluten-free rice and pasta cheddar, are made with organic ingredients. The success has really been with mac and cheese. Since founding in 1998 we began establishing relationships with farmers in the organic movement — organic wheat farmers and organic dairy farms now supply our biggest and fastest growing ingredients."

However, he does not see a shift to 100 percent organic ingredients for all products any time soon, "not because we wouldn't want to, but because organic sources, especially dairy, are scarce as surplus. We'll stay

committed to the organic spirit, doing the right thing for sustainability and making products as healthful as they can be, but the reality is the transition will take some time."

Foraker believes the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) working procedures are a "testament to the values held by people committed to the movement. USDA organic standards are checked by outside certification for various quality levels, but further than that, we have our own sourcing group that works closely with farmers to ensure internal standards. One of the trends is definitely that there are more and more farmers willing to make the investment of time to make the transition to organic."

This transition is even more challenging for the meat industry. Maverick's Moore describes the lengthy process: "The rancher has to contact a USDA certifier, and there is an audit of processing and production. It is extremely difficult and includes things such as no genetically modified feed, raising organic livestock on organic feed and a mother has to be on organic feed for three months prior to a calf's birth. That transition can take ranchers three years. The organic label encompasses everything — humane treatment, humane slaughter and organic feed. This is one of the biggest problems for beef since the slaughter standards for [processing] plants have to be organic, or humane.

Moore notes specific problems for raising organic pork, saying, "Pork is the slowest to

come in the organic movement because most hogs are raised in large confinements.”

Liz Woerth, a spokesperson for Horizon Organic Dairy, Boulder, CO, says, “With more than 240 family farmers in transition to organic, we anticipate our milk supply to grow significantly next year, which should allow us to meet the fast-growing consumer demand. Between those shipping milk to us today and those in transition, we partner with 580 family farmers. Through our HOPE (Horizon Organic Producer Education) program, Horizon currently partners with 340 family farmers nationwide and is helping another 240 transition to organic.

“These farmers supply 80 percent of our milk, the other 20 percent comes from two farms we own,” she continues. “The HOPE program provides farmers with hands-on support as they navigate the organic certification process and provides significant financial assistance through the three-year transition and will be contributing \$15-\$20 million over the next five years.”

FoodMatch’s Meldrum believes some farmers will not make the transition. “The NOP — the National Organics Program of the USDA — drove out some of the U.S. business, because higher costs limited some growers who didn’t want to deal with it.” Others are “hesitant because they know they’ve been growing naturally for years — without the paperwork. We actually sponsored a few growers to cover the cost of certification, and it was an investment worth making. By pursuing groups of growers with an investment, the whole village got together to go organic, sharing the organizational cost and marketing the product collectively. This allows us to offer a consistency in supply.”

Rising Demand

Consumers are making their voices heard and the message is clear: They want more organic products. According to Annie’s Foraker, “We receive many, many contacts from consumers to do more with organic. There are also the big retailers whose consumers are telling them to carry more organic products. Overall, indications are high and come as direct feedback, sales figures, growth rates and media clippings — organic is really at the center of more and more consumers’ interests and values.

“The difficult thing in very high demand for cheese or wheat is that the demand can’t turn on and off overnight, because there is a substantial time frame for conversion to organic methods,” he continues. “High demand and big markets will bring more and more people to business, and we will do our best to grow along. We could have compromised in some ways to meet that growing

The Buzz On Quality

We have all seen packaging with statements like diet, lite, low carb, carb controlled and gourmet,” says Jeremy, president, Native Kjalii Foods, San Francisco, CA. “These buzz words have been plastered all over our packaging to increase sales with promises of more healthful diets, weight loss and sales. As soon as the larger manufacturers and retailers saw that these words worked, they jumped on the bulldozer and flattened the little manufacturers who really believed in what they were selling until these words did not mean anything anymore.”

Phil Meldrum, president, FoodMatch, Inc., New York, NY, sees a link between the organic ethic and the Mediterranean lifestyle. “The actual Mediterranean diet, which puts on an extra few years of life sitting around the table with a glass of wine, has essentially been practiced for hundreds of years. More than anywhere in the world, the Mediterranean region represents the lifestyle people are looking for, how to spend their time and health. It is the essence of a lifestyle where you take the time to gather with friends and family enjoying seasonal food that’s regional, instead of grabbing highly processed meals while driving in the car.”

DB

demand for organic, but we chose to grow the business slowly, to ensure it was done right. The point came where retailers wanted to go more aggressively, and we had to curb that demand.”

Meldrum notes a personal connection, saying, “Some of the biggest indicators for me have been anecdotal and that my 6-year-old and 10-year-old children know what organic means. You overhear small kids in supermarkets saying, ‘Mom lets get something healthy tonight,’ and this generation of parents is making more careful product selections. They are consciously feeding their kids more healthful foods, without chemicals and industrial processing, and through this process they are educating kids.

“Then take a look at the real trade data behind it, with conventional chains making crossovers to natural food sections,” he adds. “Most stores had little or no organic and now it’s a focus, a destination that chains are devoting more real estate to. Still, the more powerful indicators are driven by the awareness kids have about health and nutrition. It’s unquestionable that there is a lot of momentum behind organics.

Taste is still paramount but, he adds, “There is the extra paradigm of sustainability and small local farms. People are also driven to organic because their food is traceable to the source and so they feel more comfortable, having had scares with things like mad cow disease.”

While retailers may be pushing for more organics, Maverick’s Moore notes, “The demand is from all directions. Consumers and suppliers are putting pressure on the retailers also. Meat is the newest demand in organic because it is hardest to make the transition in, but that demand is developing. We placed organic ground beef in one store, which already carried several organic meats such as chicken. We started out at one case a week

and now we’re at eight cases, with no promotion, nothing but word of mouth and education. This was in Boulder, CO, probably the best place to test because if it doesn’t work there, it doesn’t work anywhere.

“So far, nationally the most readily available organic meat is organic chicken; some chains carry organic beef, but it has been rare and is just now coming into play. At Maverick Ranch, we intend to have over 400 certified items in the next five years, with just 50 or 60 today. I personally believe the world has got to go that way because it is essential to our health. All the links of chemicals in our environment point to cancer — a lot of consumers are recognizing that,” he continues.

Horizon’s Woerth agrees, noting, “More and more consumers are taking a look at how their food choices impact their overall health and well-being. In addition, consumers are becoming more conscious and curious about where their food comes from and how it’s produced.”

What’s In A Name?

As the organic label gains strength with consumers, Jeremy of Native Kjalii foresees a deeper connection. “I truly believe the word organic is going to become a weaker selling point and the words local farming will become more important. It will follow the wine industry with certain farming areas. We may even see the word artisanal, as in the cheese industry. But as soon as we start to see Wal-Mart and other retailers known for mass appeal, we have to question how the quality and taste will possibly be supplied to the masses, especially if it cannot be done with the conventional foods right now.

“We have always used the word organic to imply local farming, small business, controlled crop and clean manufacturing practices. Organic has always meant the farmers

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who are holding on to their farm and keeping the larger companies from mass-producing to undercut the market. Organic has meant great deep flavors, colorful produce, which has not been stored or frozen for four seasons or more," she stresses.

Consumer desire for organic has raised the bar and transcended conventional expectations. "We see and feel this all the time," Jeremy explains. "Our products are made with quality and are fresh using only produce grown naturally. When our products are a little watery or do not have enough heat, consumers who don't understand fresh products question why we don't put a heat additive to ensure heat."

Annie's Foraker sees this as "a learning curve and people's perception will grow over time. There is a lot of consumer confusion about organics, and part of the transition is to realize the meaningfulness behind the movement. At the same time, there is a lot of press talk about local agriculture and sustainability, and all these movements come out of that broad debate."

Consumers need to be able to trust labels, FoodMatch's Meldrum points out. "With NOP regulations, organic is, at the point of merchandising, a bit like kosher. Things such as displaying organic olives next to regular olives become a challenge, as the chance of a serving spoon at an olive bar commingling the two has to be prevented.

"In the rush to satisfy demand, the emphasis cannot be solely on certification; other factors of quality have to be kept up. There is more to the success of organic than just devoting the real estate. That is the phase it's in right now. The second phase is the educational curve as people get up to speed quickly and they start asking tougher questions," he continues.

"With this, as plenty of products get certified, my concern would be that certification does not always live up to higher quality. Consumers have a heightened awareness now, and it's an incredible time to be in the food business because of it. A simple news piece or a book changes the way a person can buy things overnight and creates a driving force in new markets. The challenge of the industry is to approach opportunity with accountability, as it can really be a minefield for the consumer," Meldrum concludes.

This reflects the return to quality that Maverick's Moore sees. "It is more of a return to an older form of ranching and the livestock industry. The drug companies over-promote and over-sell all of their drugs to the point that the ranching community is dependent on them in order to have the best economics possible. There is validity to all those chemicals in some ways, but the other side

of the coin is they are harmful. We have to get to the point where we realize our health is the main thing. Pressure is still put on by the pharmaceutical companies all the time.

"Then government spends billions on CRP [Conservation Reserve Program] programs, but it would be cheaper to just not buy the chemicals that cause overproduction," he adds. "Now you also have larger operations pushing to have USDA lower standards, but you can't compromise quality for quantity."

The Impact of Demand

Organic certification standards are a broad area, and generalization should be avoided. According to Meldrum, "It really depends on the product. Each item has its own set of challenges and circumstances. For instance the olives produced around the

"There is more to the success of organic than just devoting the real estate. The second phase is the educational curve as people get up to speed quickly and they start asking tougher questions."

***— Phil Meldrum
FoodMatch, Inc.***

world are different depending on country. Olives grown in Greece come from primarily small operations, unlike Spain where big co-ops control the supply or in the United States in California where a few large canners and processors control the market from supply of smaller farms. Generally if the product can only be competitive in a large-scale operation, smaller producers will have a tough time. This may, over time, put more items at a specialty value."

Foraker has an optimistic view: "The success of the market may bring in people who don't live by those values at first, but the values are strong and the bigger it gets, the better it gets. As business continues to grow, the benefit of more organic acreage and cows has ripple effects. It raises a sea of opportunity for the small family farmers and boosts the standards of large-scale opera-

tions. There's a place for both."

Demands for organic goods may push for higher standards with factory farms, but the compromise of quality is worrisome for advocates like Jeremy. "Large-scale farming on any level has destroyed quality controls and food appeal. Quality has always been synonymous with boutique items. To make anything less expensive, the production has to be huge, fast, and with speed, quality is sacrificed," she warns.

Horizon's Woerth offers another perspective: "The organic standards are scale neutral, and regardless of the scale of the farm, the standards remain the same. Horizon believes every acre we transition to organic is better for the land, water and animals — as well as our overall health. As a company, we believe it's critical that the regulations be strengthened and that we grow the organic milk supply responsibly."

Several of Annie's products offer affordability, dispelling the perception that organic is exclusively premium priced. "Pricing and affordability to a broad market have been a strategy since the beginning for us," Foraker says. "The company is very particular about how we source ingredients, where the cheese and wheat come from and this is all through relationships with more than 75 small family farms."

Will the organic standards that encourage small-scale co-ops be able to maintain the high demand curve? Moore says, "In the United States, the answer is no. The worldwide market will get it taken care of, as there is more organic beef being imported than exported. What you're starting to see around the world are green political parties. The main platform is the environment, saving the planet and protecting our health — and that is filtering down.

"The natural market is becoming a commodity; all major packers are getting involved. Organic will be a specialty for a long time and eventually become the mainstream. I think the average American family farmer can do this, running small feedlots at every farm, which you hardly see anymore. Now they just sell to the big feedlots, but there is a return to this. It is a way of environmental sustainability, but it is also sustaining the family on the farm. Some farmers have even begun to push for another label that embraces this, perhaps another specialty market on the horizon," Moore explains.

Meldrum muses that ultimately people are looking to "feel a connection to nature since it helps us stay calibrated. The orientation towards health is a multi-generational aspect, and it's a shift in what people are eating, a shift in how Americans approach their food choices."

DB

Discover Serrano Ham

Spain's extraordinary dry-cured ham is starting to appear in U.S. deli departments.

By Jacqueline Ross Lieberman

Spain's dry-cured Serrano ham is well positioned to sell as a high-end product with a reasonable price.

Serrano ham has long been one of Spain's best-loved foods, eaten at meals throughout the day and as snacks, or tapas. First imported to the United States about six years ago, this dry-cured, non-smoked ham may be less well known to Americans than its Italian cousin, Prosciutto di Parma, but that is slowly changing.

"It's just a matter of time," says John O'Brien, director of business management, Philadelphia, PA-based Smithfield Global Products, which partially owns Campofrio, Spain's most popular producer of Serrano ham. "It is a product that is consumed significantly in the home country. If you go into a supermarket in Spain, you'll see a huge section with Serrano."

"Serrano is the No. 1 pork product used in Spain," says Joe Moskowitz, general manager, Redondo Iglesias USA, a Long Island City, NY, company that produces and exports many Spanish products, including Serrano ham.

Although Serrano, available in bulk or pre-sliced, is already a hit with upscale supermarkets in the United States, O'Brien says he hopes to see the popularity of Serrano trickle down to mainstream grocery stores. Meanwhile, in addition to placement in fancy food shops and catalogs, many high-price restaurants are serving thinly sliced Serrano as an upscale appetizer, while (rightly or wrongly) eschewing prosciutto as something more "common."

"The Spanish will tell you Serrano is a different product than prosciutto, and they're absolutely right," says O'Brien. However, because Americans are more familiar with prosciutto and because the hams are similar in many ways, the two are often compared to each other, as they will be here. But first, to understand the difference between Serrano and other dry-cured hams, it is important to understand how Serrano is made.

The Serrano Story

"Serrano comes from the word sierra, Spanish for mountain," explains Mercedes Lamamié, associate marketing director, Foods From Spain, New York, NY. "These hams were traditionally produced in upland

regions of Spain where the weather is dry in the summer and cold in the winter, which enhanced the curing process. Spain is the second-most mountainous European country after Switzerland."

"When fresh pork is slaughtered, the air must be cold," adds Moskowitz. "When it's at its final stage, it's at room temperature."

"Today, Serrano ham is produced all over the country," says Lamamié. "Serrano ham uses Duroc, Pietrain, Landrace and Large White varieties of pig, which are fed a diet of grains. The curing process of Serrano ham starts with hams being buried between layers of coarse sea salt. Once salted, they are washed and brushed and moved on to post-salting rooms where the drying process begins. It ends with the maturation taking place in the bodegas, or cellars."

Serrano ham has been made this way since the time of the Roman Empire, first out of necessity (because ham could only be kept cold during the winter months) and now because of demand. "We call it 'tradi-

tional methodology through modern technology," notes Moskowitz.

"The cut surface of a Serrano ham is pink to purplish-red in color, and its meat is slightly fibrous and lean. The fat is usually yellowish white, glossy and aromatic," describes Lamamié.

"Prosciutto is more moist. That is the key difference. A 32-pound leg in Italy will become a 16-pound prosciutto," explains Moskowitz. "A 32-pound leg in Spain will become a 12-pound Serrano ham."

According to David Biltchik, chairman of Consultants International Group, Washington, D.C., Designation of Protected Origin (D.O.P.) Prosciutto di Parma loses 27 to 30 percent during the curing process, not half of its weight. "We get down to 7 or 8 kilos. It starts around 12 to 13 kilos."

This "shrink" explains some of the difference in pricing between the two products. According to O'Brien, Serrano generally sells for about two dollars more than prosciutto at the retail level. Biltchik notes this



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONSORCIO DEL JAMON SERRANO ESPAÑOL

is true for generic prosciutto, but not for Prosciutto di Parma

Another difference between Serrano and prosciutto is the shape of the leg. "The prosciutto ham is put into a press. The Serrano is not," explains Moskowitz. "Prosciutto is deboned from the side. Serrano ham is deboned from the flat front."

Once again, Biltchik disagrees with



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOOD FROM SPAIN

Moskowitz, saying not all prosciutto is put into a press. He also says it is difficult to say prosciutto is be-boned from the side since the ham is round.

"Serrano's got superior fat infiltration. It's more marbled," adds Smithfield's O'Brien, "and you also have a more pungent, earthy flavor, while prosciutto is on the sweet side."

There is also less Serrano made each year than prosciutto, and the Serrano that is produced is subject to strict standards that are imposed by the Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español. "Quality of prosciutto can change from piece to piece and brand to brand," explains Global Products' O'Brien. "With Spanish Serrano, you have a very consistent product."

Biltchik counters that using the generic term prosciutto — which is Italian for dry-cured ham — is misleading. Since Serrano ham is a specific ham, the comparison should be to Prosciutto di Parma, which is subjected to stringent standards that are overseen by the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma.

"Serrano ham is protected by the European Community as a Traditional Specialty Guaranteed (TSG), which specifies traditional curing methods," says Food from Spain's Lamamié. Buyers can know they are

The Buzz About Iberico

In case you have not heard, Spain's famous dry-cured Iberico ham may be coming to the United States. Now, here is the bad news — it will not be very soon, and it will not be cheap.

Although some Iberico products, such as sausage, are now available to Americans, companies like Redondo Iglesias USA, Long Island City, NY, are still in the process of getting Iberico ham approved for importation. Because of the time needed to cure this specialty product (24 to 36 months), it may be at least two years before we see any on the market here.

Only a limited quantity of Spanish Iberico ham is available each year, and only a small amount of that will ever make it to the United States, which means prices here could exceed those of caviar. Enthusiasts — such as high-end restaurant chefs who will be able to serve a few slices of the stuff for \$25 to \$35 a plate — will not be deterred. Some are even plunking down hefty amounts of cash in advance to assure they will be the first to have the rich, uniquely flavored treat.

Iberico ham can be made only from Iberian pigs, whose breeding and exploitation is limited to southwestern Spain and southeastern Portugal. Each fall, just before they are slaughtered, these free-range animals grow fat on the acorns that are naturally available to them, which accounts for their unique flavor.

"It gives the most unbelievable taste to the ham — it's glorious," says Joe Moskowitz, general manager, Redondo Iglesias USA. "It's everything it's cracked up to be. I have great hopes for this product."

"Iberico is a phenomenally flavored product, but it is brutally expensive. I've heard of one leg going wholesale for \$1,200," reports John O'Brien, director of business management, Smithfield Global Products, Philadelphia, PA. The price may seem ridiculous to some, but, he says, "It is an exceptional product. It's worth the money, if you have it." **DB**

getting authentic Serrano ham by requesting Jamón Serrano with the Consorcio seal. "The Consorcio del Jamón Serrano Español is an association of Spanish Jamón Serrano producers that focuses on quality control and promotion in international markets. The hams that pass the Consorcio's quality controls are branded with the ham-shaped letter 'S' and carry a numbered label. They must be cured a minimum of nine months."

Both Campofrio and Redondo Iglesias, currently the only exporters of Serrano ham to the United States, go beyond that, with Campofrio aging its hams at least 15 months and Redondo Iglesias aging its from 12 to 18 months.

"From the first salting, the moisture begins leaving the product. The longer a product is aged, the more dry it is and the more the salt will dissipate," says Redondo Iglesias' Moskowitz. "So the longer a ham is aged, the more intense the flavor and the less evidence of salt."

The old-fashioned process that allows Serrano to remain delectable without artificial preservatives makes it perfect for customers looking for a "natural" ham. Although it is not available in organic form yet, that soon may change. "Redondo Iglesias is developing organic Serrano that should be available in a year," Moskowitz confides. "It's probably going to be two to 2½

times the price of regular."

Serving Serrano

In Spain, small plates of sliced Serrano ham are one of the requisite tapas (aka appetizers or snacks) at restaurants. "At lunch, always, automatically, the plate of Serrano ham is brought out," says Moskowitz. While it is often paired with Spanish manchego, a sheep's milk cheese that ranges from mild to sharp, depending on age, Moskowitz recommends serving Serrano with a sweet — not salty — cheese, such as cream cheese or fresh mozzarella, to complement the saltiness of the ham. For interesting canapés, he suggests rolling up cream cheese in slices of Serrano ham.

He also recommends serving Serrano in a sandwich, sautéing the ham in olive oil ("to make it crispy") and stirring it into short-grain rice with peas for a quick meal or mixing shreds of Serrano into scrambled eggs. "The 18-month ham lends itself better to shaving because it's drier," Moskowitz adds.

"Serrano ham makes for a great ingredient. You can use it for everything you use prosciutto for, but it has a more profound flavor. It's good for saltimbocca," says O'Brien, referring to the Italian classic usually made with sautéed chicken or veal, fresh sage and prosciutto. "It also makes a very interesting lasagna." **DB**



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The Secrets To The Hispanic-Friendly Deli

As stores see their demographics shift, they explore new ways to attract and keep customers.

By Duane Craig

When customer demographics warrant, more and more supermarkets are diving into the colorful waters of attracting and keeping Hispanic customers. Central to that effort is the deli department.

As part of the market research undertaken to reveal how to invest in its stores, Carnival Food Stores, a 24-store chain under the Minyard banner in the Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX, metropolitan area, found the Hispanic population in north Texas was expected to grow 40 percent during the next five years. Many of its stores were already in neighborhoods with Hispanic populations ranging as high as 70 percent.

Some of the investments in its stores included diversifying the food mix and upgrading the fresh produce offerings. Carnival also paid special attention to the *salchichería* — the Spanish word for deli. Nearby the deli in the flagship store that opened Aug. 30, Carnival serves authentic Mexican meals prepared under a chef's direction. People can dine at oak picnic tables under festive lighting with a village square motif.

Liborio Markets, a 7-store Hispanic-focused chain with headquarters in Pasadena, CA, opened a new store called Rancho Liborio in Denver, CO, also on Aug. 30. Liborio's delis serve take-home or eat-in meals designed to make its customers feel right at home — wherever home may have been. The focus is on offering a variety of popular ethnic dishes from Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

Current popular items include an authentic Cuban sandwich and *conгри* — a quintessential Cuban dish of rice and black beans blended with spices. Liborio makes its own *lechón* (pork roast) and has its own dressing recipe for the Cuban sandwiches.



Delis in areas with large and increasing Hispanic populations would do well to make these customers feel comfortable in their stores.

For its South American patrons, Liborio makes a Peruvian ceviche. Ceviche is a fish dish in which a marinade that includes highly acidic fruit juice “cooks” raw fish. It has many variations across the Hispanic world. Liborio is melding its customers’ food memories with their present-day food shopping experiences.

These retailers have identified traits necessary to cater to the Hispanic market at the deli and then incorporated them into their stores’ operations. According to *Hispanic American Influence on the U.S. Food Industry*, a publication of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the term Hispanic Americans typically refers to “Spanish-speaking people of Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and other Spanish-speaking countries.” Mexicans make up more than 60 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population with Puerto Ricans and Cubans being counted as the next highest percentage.

Hispanics have particular importance to supermarkets because they spend 46 percent more on groceries than the general U.S. population, and they shop 6.5 times a week compared with the general population’s 2.2 times per week.

It is imperative to know the cultural demographics of the Hispanic customers in the area of a particular store because different Hispanic cultures favor different flavors and staple products. When it comes to beans, for example, people from Cuba, southern Mexico, Central America and Venezuela prefer black beans, while people from northern Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico use pinto, or pinta, beans. As these various cultures settle in the United States, they bring their individual taste preferences with them.

“Hispanic cuisine varies greatly based upon the region,” confirms Cindy Jensen, sales and marketing director for Denver, CO-based Queso Campesino, a Mexican

PHOTO COURTESY OF CARNIVAL FOOD STORES

cheese company. "The popularity is different throughout the United States because there are different people from Mexico in different parts of the country, and they tend to favor whatever they grew up with in the different parts of Mexico."

The Shopping Experience

Central to Hispanics' love of food is their love of fresh foods. "You need to put out a lot of fresh," advises Armando Villagomez, deputy trade commissioner for the Mexico Trade Commission in Los Angeles, CA. "A lot of people from Mexico come from the countryside, and they're used to eating the cow that was in the field yesterday. Everything is fresh, no more than one day old. Most of the people from Mexico like to buy by the pound, so you have sour cream by the pound and cheese by the pound because that signifies fresh."

"One of the things Hispanics look for is fresh," echoes Jensen. "They will go to the grocery store more often, so they're looking for fresh items. One of the reasons our company is a little bit different than a lot of the other Mexican cheese companies is that we do random weights. They need to be weighed and labeled, but it gives the perception of a fresher product."

The social aspects of shopping are important to help these customers feel welcome. "When you go to a Mexican supermarket in Los Angeles, you find two things — somebody who will speak Spanish and music that is popular in Mexico," explains Villagomez.

He describes how Hispanics like to build relationships with those who wait on them. "The service is important. If the clerk is very friendly, the customer will be back and go to the same person. Then they'll start knowing the person by name, and then you begin to create the loyalty with the store."

Many times language becomes a barrier to sales because non-English-speaking customers may not feel confident enough to ask for what they want. Hispanics are fascinated with food quality and portions. They may want cheese sliced a certain thickness yet be uncomfortable trying to express themselves in other than their native tongue.

"The issue you have in many markets is that Hispanic shoppers are very hesitant to come up to order if there's not a Spanish-speaking person behind the deli counter," explains Queso Campesino's Jensen. "So putting our cheeses in a case where they don't have a Spanish-speaking deli person sometimes won't go as well as we would like it to because they don't want to go up and try to order something. One thing we do is put a little sheet out that gives the most common expressions so the clerk will be able

Pay Attention To Cultural Expectations

Variety is important when stocking the deli. When it comes to Mexican cheese, for example, certain kinds seem to work best. "We have about 15 different kinds of Mexican cheese," says Cindy Jensen, sales and marketing director for Denver, CO-based Queso Campesino. "Here in Colorado, it's typical to carry seven items. The top three varieties are Asadero, Cotija and Menonita. It's also good to have a selection of the different kinds of cremas — sour cream-types of cheese — like Crema Mexicana and Crema Menonita. Hispanics use cheese in lots of different recipes so you need to have a good assortment of items."

Armand Villagomez, deputy trade commissioner for the Mexico Trade Commission in Los Angeles, CA, paints a broad picture of things to focus on when building customer loyalty. "The Hispanic shopper looks for something that is related to Spanish, something that is in their native language. The most important things are language, the ambiance, the freshness and products that they know. Have someone in the deli who speaks Spanish and you'll create a lot of loyalty for sure, because we like to talk. We like to be friendly. We are very social."

Perhaps as important as any other aspect is the "feeling" that is a part of the store's marketing efforts. As the Website for Carnival Food Stores, a 24-store chain under the Minyard banner in the Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX, metropolitan area, sums it up, "Imagine a place that traces back to the aromas of your grandmother's kitchen and sounds like your family gathering for a meal. Imagine a place that feels like home."

DB

to converse with them. It helps a little bit with a few words they might need, like libra for pounds and uno, dos, tres for how many pounds they might want."

"Some of the feedback we've gotten is that people like it when you speak their language," says Brian Jacobs, vice president of Tumaro's Gourmet Tortillas of Los Angeles, CA, "and so we've developed some point-of-sale materials that are in Spanish. I think if you can communicate something using their language and their ingredients, they appreciate that."

A study done online by the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication at Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL, found the American marketplace to be very diverse with all cultures "retaining their own qualities while taking on some of the attributes of the other parts."

As the assimilation of cultures continues, second- and third-generation Hispanics are blending American foods with their traditional foods. Some retailers see this as an opportunity to explore selling new flavors that cross both lines. It can also be a way to include healthful foods in new recipes that appeal to a wide range of customers.

"It comes down to pairing Hispanic items with new items, especially when the new items can benefit a person," says Jacobs. "Our products are cholesterol free, trans-fat free and we have the American Heart Association approval. I think those attributes mean something to consumers and will make them want to try the products. When it comes to introducing new flavors, you have to do a blending of what's familiar with

what isn't familiar. It's more convincing to do it that way than just telling somebody to try it. You have to be careful though because if it's too different, I don't think your results will be as positive."

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Reader Service No. 569

Deli Turf Wars

Are low-price meats still big-sales items?

By Bob Johnson

Today's deli is a hybrid of the old and the new. Alongside tried-and-true commodity deli meats stand specialty cheeses, olives and gourmet meats like prosciutto di Parma. Some experts believe the heart and soul of tomorrow's deli will be defined by the relatively new gourmet foods.

"Premium deli meats are the bulk of the business and fully cooked continues to grow," says John Pashea, vice president — deli sales, John Morrell, St. Louis, MO. "There are still customers who buy boiled ham, chopped ham and loaves religiously, but I see that business diminishing as the deli directors bring in and try new products."

Other experts caution that displaying new deli products can mean ignoring high-volume products that have always worked. "High-volume items like chicken, beef and pork are getting crammed into too small of a space," notes Dan Emery, vice president for marketing, Pilgrim's Pride, Dallas, TX. "You can lose volume due to out-of-stocks as a result. [Chicken, beef and pork] are booming." Pilgrim's Pride has branched out from its roots in chicken and turkey to offer a variety of convenience-oriented deli foods.

It is not obvious how the old and the new should be brought together in the deli section. The best answer will vary store-by-store and neighborhood-by-neighborhood. One part of the answer to the question of how much space to devote to the ever-increasing number of deli items is to keep an eye on what is moving.

Let The Customer Decide

Most deli managers know with considerable precision where the bulk of their sales come from. "Deli managers can tell you in an instant what percentage of turkey, beef or ham they are selling. Then there is information through Fresh Look [The Fresh Look Marketing Group, Hoffman Estates, IL] furnished to them to help determine how much space should be allocated to a specific protein based on consumer buying trends," Pashea says.



Sales and profit of a specific item should determine how much space to devote to lower cost traditional items, he continues.

"This is just plain old category management," agrees James Schloss, corporate vice president for sales and marketing, Smithfield Foods, Smithfield, VA. "What sells and makes margin obtains the case space. What does not sell and does not meet margin does not deserve case space."

Volume alone will not reveal how the section should be arranged, because deli item margins can have dramatic differences. "In some cases, cold cuts and lesser quality products drive good volume but smaller margins and, more importantly, the consumer in a great number of cases, shies away from just price, especially in the deli," Schloss says.

He believes that, in general, growth in the deli section is not going to be in the traditional meats. "All this information is in the 2006 issue of *What's In Store* from the IDDBA [International Dairy, Deli, Bakery Association, Madison, WI]. Traditional deli meats are not growing at all except for deli chicken, according to Fresh Look," he notes.

Who Do You Serve?

What applies in general may or may not apply to the tastes of the customers coming to a particular store. Different locales and demographics experience tremendous differ-

ences in what customers are hoping to find at the deli. These differences go a long way toward determining the right mix to offer.

"The right mix depends on the region you're in and the clientele you serve," says Guy Giordano, president and CEO, Vincent Giordano Corp., Philadelphia, PA. "If you are in an affluent area, you might want to have more of the higher-end items."

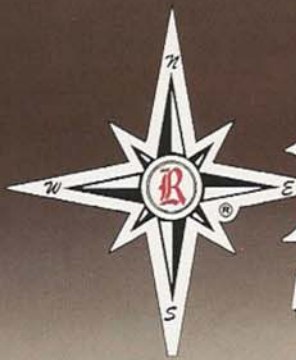
"Every store is unique," Emery agrees. "The mix of deli items and the way they are displayed should depend on the neighborhood, the clientele. Try something and see if it works. Experiment."

Demographic trends figure to change the priorities of tomorrow's meal preparers. "Families will be smaller in the future — some of this is bound to happen," says Jeff Weber, national sales manager, Homewood, IL-based Carl Buddig.

One Store, Many Delis

One method of showcasing the extraordinary variety of deli items is to display them throughout the store. This can, however, lead to department turf wars. Store politics sometimes complicate setting up the deli.

"There is a war going on between meats sold in deli and pre-packaged lunch meats in the meat department," says Weber. "This is not new, but the tub phenomenon has hit deli hard. Packaged tubs have increased vol-



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What Time Is It?

Even within a single store, there is not just one clientele, but rather a number that changes substantially with the day part. The deli manager is in charge of three departments, depending on time of day.

"You have three different groups coming to the deli section at different times of the day," explains Dan Emery, vice president for marketing, Pilgrim's Pride, Dallas, TX. "In the morning you have Joe Lunchbox, later you have the lunch crowd and around 4:00 you have the meal preparers. What you have hot might depend on the time of day."

Part of the trick of deli merchandising is being prepared to offer all three groups what they want. But many of the the 4:00 crowd do not know what they want at the deli section until they see it. "Seventy percent of the

meal preparers in the United States don't know what's for dinner at 4 PM," he adds.

One important way to entice these meal preparers is to give them many options.

"The section should give consumers the opportunity to build their meals, offer quality levels of all kinds and ethnic meal solutions to satisfy all customers," says Jon Amidei, corporate vice president sales and marketing, Okami, Inc., Sun Valley CA. "Focus on satisfying their needs not just by giving them the foods they require that day, but also by stimulating their desire to come back and try other items at another time. Show them how they can build a variety of meals from your offerings; offer ideas for how to build a complete meal from the products you merchandise. Help them with the total solution. The

more variety in the components you offer, the more creative consumers can be in how they compose their meal."

Frequently the same customer is looking for numerous different types of items during a single trip to the deli section. One way to increase sales to this important group is to have items of different types and prices ranges available.

"Busy moms are buying food for several meals at a time," says Tara Downing, product manager, Robbie Manufacturing, Lenexa, KS. "They may be in the store to pick up lunch but at the same time trying to consider what healthful meal they can provide their families for dinner. Merchandising items together for meal solutions throughout the day will enhance impulse sales." **DB**

ume at the expense of the deli. Category management has blurred lines instead of defining them in perishable departments. This leads to some of the battles."

The proliferation of areas where deli foods are displayed may play a role in using upscale items to carve out a special niche. "Does this drive deli guys to upscale?" Weber asks. "Good question, but I have no answer."

This attempt to stake out some deli turf

may actually benefit the store as a whole.

"This is only a function of deli departments attempting to make points of difference and make their respective deli departments a point of destination for their consumers," says Smithfield's Schloss. "As for giving old standards back to the meat department, I don't think any department in any store can afford to stick to old standards when the consumer is screaming for taste, convenience and nutritional benefits."

Complications arise from higher consumer expectations. "Today's deli consumer is looking for service, fresh quality products and unique items," says Morrell's Pashea. "Look at the meat departments today — you see precooked bacon, deli sliced meats in tubs. Packaging has changed to meet the consumers' needs as well as the products in the package." **DB**

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The World Of French Cheese

By Karen Silverston

A good selection of French cheeses, like a good selection of wines, invites a mix of types and regions. France produces more than 1,000 cow, sheep and goat milk cheeses, exporting hundreds to the United States.

Katia Boulay, marketing manager, Lactalis USA, New York, NY, has a definite view of which French cheeses are essential for retailers to carry: "Brie, Roquefort, Comté and goat cheese are first."

According to Emmanuelle Hofer Louis, marketing director for Anco Fine Cheese, Moonachie, NJ, French cheeses are "a market that keeps innovating. This is a major industry for France, where people are raised with specialty cheese all around. Many traditional French cheeses are new to the United States." She advises classifying them by family of production.

Cheeses from the same family need similar care, offer similar shelf life and provide a vocabulary for substitutions. Which specific cheeses to carry depends on store concept, consumer demographics and selling season.

Bloomy, Washed Rind Soft Cheese

The leader of the soft-ripened family, Brie has a buttery taste, creamy texture and white bloomy coat that satisfy consumers. French Camembert has essentially the same flavor and style. Retailers would do well to offer several sizes at consumer-friendly prices.

At the upper end, some smaller production, shorter shelf life cheeses — such as Rouzaire Brie de Nangis and Fromage de

Meaux — are successful if sold quickly once they are cut. Their flavor profiles are similar to Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC)

France continues to hold a premiere position among cheese lovers.

Brie. Be sure to differentiate each soft-ripened cheese with signage.

Chaource AOC from Champagne, a buttery, soft cylinder, balances pleasant acidity, saltiness and sourness.

Fromager d'Affinois in 2-kilo wheels with 60 percent fat in dry matter (FIDM) is Guilloteau's top seller in the United States. Pavé d'Affinois, the smaller format square, 45 percent FIDM, has a slightly shorter shelf life and is Guilloteau's top seller in France.

Triple crèmes are popular for their creamy mildness and slight tang, such as Explorateur, buttery, slightly salty, flavorful; and Saint André. Artisan examples are: Pierre Robert (Rouzaire) and Brillat Savarin.

Rustic choices include square Brin d'Amour (Fleur de Maquis) from Corsica, made of sheep milk, soft and sweet, covered with herbs and bird's-eye chiles.

Mild, slightly tangy Saint Marcellin from Rhône-Alpes can go right into the oven in its shallow crock, to be served warm.

L'Edel de Cléron (Perrin) from Franche-Comté, encircled with spruce bark, is sometimes runny as is its inspiration Mont d'Or AOC, a seasonal cheese not imported.

The washed rinds such as Livarot AOC and square Pont l'Evêque AOC from Normandy, or moist Époisses AOC from Burgundy, washed with Marc de Bourgogne, are famous for aromas more pungent than the silky, flavorful interior.

"A smaller volume is available of traditional cheese made by cheesemakers, and more cheeses are made by industry," says Los Angeles, CA-based David Hauss, national sales manager for Couturier North America. "The cheese is changing as cheese-

making tries to reduce the moisture levels or change the pasteurization times. We are consuming the same Comté and Roquefort, but the shorter shelf life, more perishable French cheeses we eat are different from what the French consume."

Brie accounts for a large part of French cheese sales, yet it is still misunderstood by buyers and consumers.

Often it is sold past its prime. To insure quality, select plump, slightly yielding Brie. A wedge at its prime should bulge, not run.

"In the past, Brie became ammoniated or very brown if it was past its prime," says Fred Chesman, vice president of cheese for Atalanta Corporation, Elizabeth, NJ. "Today most are highly pasteurized and stabilized. The new Bries don't get ammoniated or brown — they get hard. Many stores keep them too long."

"Brie dehydrates by 1 or 2 percent per week," notes Couturier's Hauss. "Look for Brie that doesn't have a hard outer edge and is not concave. Also look for a white, flowery rind that is uniform. This will indicate the cheese wasn't wrapped for a long time before you see it. If you can smell it, it should have very little ammonia to its bouquet."

Pressed Harder Cheese

Pressed and then aged firm cheeses have a harder rind and dense, aromatic interior. Originating in isolated regions and monasteries, they have a longer shelf life if protected from excessive cold and from drying out.

The pressed uncooked family includes flavorful Morbier AOC, with its ash centerline, and firm, buttery Cantal AOC. Port Salut is a smooth, consistent, large-production cheese formerly made by monks.

Interest is growing in sheep milk and traditional cheeses, and Ossau-Iraty AOC from the Pyrénées is both. Made from pure sheep milk in 10-pound wheels, it is smooth, sweet and nutty. A 10-month Ossau-Iraty (Fromagerie Agour) was named World Champion at the 2006 World Cheese Awards (WCA) in London, England.

From the same region are sheep milk Petit Basque and Petit Ardi Gasna and mixed milk (sheep and cow) Chistou named for the Basque wooden flute.

Verdannot Tomme de Savoie, a creamy, well-balanced semi-hard, raw-milk cheese



French cheeses connote quality.

aged over 60 days, won a gold medal at the 2006 Concours General de Paris, as did Verdannet Raclette de Savoie, a fruity, full-flavored raw milk cheese aged five months.

Pressed cooked cheeses revered for quality and flavor complexity include Comté AOC from Franche-Comté and the Jura mountains. Aromas, flavors, and colors vary seasonally, but nuttiness, fruitiness, dried apricot and caramel are typical.

From Savoie, meaty Beaufort AOC has fruity aromas, creamy paste and nutty flavors; Abondance AOC is supple and creamy with a hint of hazelnut.

Blue Veined

"Right now, in a better store, we'll see 10 to 15 different blues. Blue has become much more popular," says Susan Van Engel, New York, NY-based cheese specialist for Cheezwhse.com.

Smooth, sleek and buttery Roquefort AOC exemplifies French cheese. The melt-in-the-mouth sweetness, complexity and powerful finish come from unpasteurized sheep milk of the Midi-Pyrénées, which is then perfectly handled and aged. Spicy blue-green veins cross the entire surface, including the edges.

"It takes the milk of 12 Lacaune sheep to

make one 6-pound wheel of Roquefort," says Lactalis' Boulay.

Bleu d'Auvergne AOC, a wheel made from cow milk, is zesty and balanced, with earthy, tart and buttery flavors, in unpasteurized and pasteurized versions.

Fourme d'Ambert AOC, a tall cylinder made from cow milk from Auvergne, is full flavored, slightly creamier and lightly piquant, in unpasteurized and pasteurized versions.

"Rochebaron is an artisan soft ripened blue cheese (50 percent FIDM) that is covered with vegetable ash. It is made in Auvergne by Fromagerie du Val de l'Ance. Its paste shows irregular, green-blue molds, very creamy with an assertive, balanced taste profile," says Anco's Hofer Louis.

Saint Agur, from the same dairy, is a 2006 WCA gold medalist. It is made from cow milk and is less assertive and creamier than Roquefort.

From Rhône-Alpes, Bresse Bleu is a creamy, soft-ripened cheese with blue veins.

La Roche (Guilloteau), a 2006 WCA gold medalist, is blue-veined with a bloomy white thin rind, subtle flavor and balanced taste.

Pavé d'Affinois Bleu is a new blue-veined, bloomy white rinded 175-gram cube.

From the Pyrénées, Bleu des Basques is

made from pasteurized sheep milk.

Goat

This family is based upon the type of milk. Diverse styles are produced in Poitou, Berry, the Perigord, Burgundy, Provence and the Pyrénées.

"The amount of goat cheese we sell has quadrupled. Every spectrum of retail from the smallest grocer — of every ethnicity — to an upscale specialty store. There is no retail store not selling goat cheese," says Van Engel.

The best fresh chèvre is made from fresh, not frozen, milk. Fresh and ripened versions are presented plain, flavored, leaf-wrapped and ash-covered.

"Before plastic, cheesemakers covered cheese with ash for eye appeal because the cheeses were all white and to keep cheese pristine from debris," says Couturier's Hauss. "Molds developing on the ash are beneficial, not harmful, and give a lot of visual interest, too. Now, cheese doesn't need that protection, but it comes out of a tradition and doesn't impact the taste."

"Soignon's best-seller in the United States is bûchette logs of fresh goat cheese in every size," says Hauss. Fresh Sainte Maure logs are soft and white with a melting texture of the same consistency from outside to center.

Soignon Selection Sainte Maure log, winner of a 2006 WCA gold medal, is made from fresh, pasteurized goat milk. During its 9-day ripening, it develops an ivory-colored, bloomy, vermiculated (wrinkled) rind and rich flavor.

Chabichou du Poitou AOC, a 2½-inch cylinder, is delicate, faintly acidic and fruity when young, and dense, creamy on the palate and savory when aged. Charolais is a ripened 3-inch cylinder from Burgundy, semi-dry, salty, tangy and sweet.

Goat Tomme made from 100 percent goat milk is firm and creamy.

Chaubier, a pressed uncooked mixed milk tomme (50 percent cow, 50 percent goat), ripened six weeks, has a pure, slightly piquant flavor and long shelf life.

Goat Brie has the luscious quality of Brie, plus adventurous flavor and the benefits of goat milk. New Ile de France Le Brie de Chèvre combines the creaminess of Brie and the tanginess of goat cheese. It has a downy white rind and satiny white paste.

Specialties, Processed And Flavored

Holidays bring specialties such as Fin Brie with Grand Marnier or truffles. Processed and flavored cheeses include Rambol, Gourmandise and Green Pepper-corn Pyrénées.

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Beef Blamed For Tainted U.S. Spinach

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United States: FDA traces the contaminated spinach, which sickened nearly 200 people, to a beef cattle ranch in California.

Last month, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) alerted consumers about fresh spinach that may have been contaminated with *E. coli*. The FDA later determined that the contaminating bacteria was *E. coli* O157:H7 – the same deadly strain that often contaminates ground beef.

To date, 199 people in 26 states became ill after eating the fresh spinach – 103 required hospitalization and three people died. The FDA eventually traced the contaminated spinach to farms in California.

Last week, the FDA concluded that the water the farms used to irrigate the spinach was contaminated with *E. coli*. The FDA traced the source of the *E. coli* to a neighboring beef cattle ranch.

A FDA news release said: "Test results from the field investigation of the outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 in spinach are positive for *E. coli* O157:H7. Samples of cattle feces on one of the implicated ranches tested positive based on matching genetic fingerprints for the same strain of *E. coli* that sickened 199 people.

The trace back investigation has narrowed to four implicated fields on four ranches. The outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7 from cattle feces was identified on one of these four ranches. At this time, testing of other environmental samples from all four ranches that supplied the implicated lot of contaminated spinach are in progress. The positive test result is a significant finding, but is just one aspect of this investigation. More information may come forward as the investigation continues."

The four fields suspected of producing the contaminated spinach are not currently being used to grow any fresh produce.

"While the focus of this outbreak has narrowed to these four fields, the history of *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreaks linked to leafy greens indicates an ongoing problem," the FDA news release stated.

There have been previous cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 contamination of leafy green vegetables from farms in central California. FDA and the state of California have encouraged the fresh vegetable industry to develop a comprehensive plan designed to minimize the risk of another outbreak due to *E. coli*

O157:H7 in vegetables grown in central California. While this plan is under development, FDA and the state of California reiterated previous concerns and advised firms to review their current operations in light of the Agency's assistance and recommendations for minimizing microbial food-safety hazard.

Review Of Previous Studies Indicates Health Benefits From Eating Fish Outweigh Risks

17.oct.06

JAMA and Archives Journals

Despite the risks of possible contaminants, the health benefits of consuming fish, including a lower rate of death from heart disease, exceed the potential risks, according to a review of previous studies, published in the Oct. 18 issue of JAMA.

Fish has been considered a healthful food since the publication of studies demonstrating its various health benefits. Several studies have identified two long-chain n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (n-3 PUFAs), eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), as likely playing a role in the associated lower rates of coronary heart disease with fish consumption. Conversely, concern has arisen over potential harm from mercury, dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) present in some fish species. The public is faced with conflicting reports on the risks and benefits of eating fish, resulting in controversy over the role of fish consumption in a healthy diet.

Dariusz Mozaffarian, M.D., Dr.P.H., and Eric B. Rimm, Sc.D., of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, reviewed the scientific evidence for adverse and beneficial health effects of fish consumption (in this article defined as finfish or shellfish). They searched MEDLINE, governmental reports and meta-analyses to identify reports published through April 2006 evaluating (1) intake of fish or fish oil and cardiovascular risk, (2) effects of methylmercury and fish oil on early neurodevelopment, (3) risks of methylmercury for cardiovascular and neurologic outcomes in adults, and (4) health risks of dioxins and PCBs in fish. When possible, meta-analyses were performed to characterize benefits and risks most precisely.

The researchers found that modest consumption of fish (e.g., 1-2 servings/wk), especially species higher in n-3 fatty acids (EPA, DHA), reduces risk of coronary death by 36 percent and the rate of death by 17 percent, and may favorably affect other clinical outcomes. Intake of 250 mg/d of EPA and DHA appears sufficient for primary prevention. This corresponds to one 6-oz. serving/wk of

Martin Mitchell, technical director of the Refrigerated Foods Association (RFA) and managing director of Certified Laboratories compiles TechNews.



The information has been compiled from press releases, news articles and government announcements and policy clarifications. Additional information may be obtained by contacting RFA by phone at 770-452-0660 or online at www.refrigeratedfoods.org.

wild salmon or similar oily fish, or more frequent intake of smaller or less n-3 PUFA-rich servings.

DHA appears beneficial for, and low-level methylmercury may adversely affect, early neurodevelopment. Women who are or may become pregnant and nursing mothers should avoid selected species (shark, swordfish, golden bass and king mackerel; locally caught fish per local advisories) and limit intake of albacore tuna (6 oz./wk) to minimize methylmercury exposure. "However, emphasis must also be placed on adequate consumption – 12 oz./wk – of other fish and shellfish to provide reasonable amounts of DHA and avoid further decreases in already low seafood intake among women (74 percent of women of childbearing age and 85 percent of pregnant women consume less than 6 oz./wk)," the researchers write.

Health effects of low-level methylmercury in adults are not clearly established; methylmercury may modestly decrease the cardiovascular benefits of fish intake.

"A variety of seafood should be consumed; individuals with very high consumption (5 servings or more per week) should limit intake of species highest in mercury levels. Levels of dioxins and PCBs in fish are low, and potential carcinogenic and other effects are outweighed by potential benefits of fish intake and should have little impact on choices or consumption of seafood."

"Avoidance of modest fish consumption due to confusion regarding risks and benefits could result in thousands of excess coronary heart disease deaths annually and suboptimal neurodevelopment in children," the authors conclude.

DB

It Boils Down To Caring



By
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I am constantly on the lookout for new ideas at the deli counter. In order to fully appreciate what's new, I spend lots of time in supermarkets, specialty stores and other service-oriented retail operations all over the country. I get a feel for the status quo — what's been tried and universally accepted. I can also see what's different, stands out as truly unique and could very well be received as the next great thing.

What astounds me is the shortage of

true innovation. Whether I'm in California or Kentucky, Salem or St. Louis, deli counters seem to be cut from the same mold. There's the ubiquitous refrigerator case packed with meats and cheeses, the cutting and packing machines and store posters lining the back wall, and a handful of uniformed serving staff busily engaged in important deli work. Can anyone tell me why retailing has become so standardized? What happened to the notion of brand leadership and destination shopping?

Fortunately, there are numerous, and as yet untapped, opportunities that can be exploited to position your deli department, and your store, far ahead of its nearest rival.

The first step is to identify what the deli leaders have done to earn their front-running position. Whether it's natural woods and earth-toned colors applied to flooring and fixtures, lighting that is easier on the eyes, on-premise dining facilities, a large variety of prepared foods, unending free samples and tasting bars, etc. — you need to know what's already been successful. The key is doing more. You have to innovate and make your offers even more exciting, interesting, attractive and compelling. To boldly go where no deli manager has gone before.

Lately, the Safeway stores in my area have been getting a facelift. It's my guess that competitive pressures (probably from Wegmans, Whole Foods and a growing number of stores catering to more informed buyers) forced them into action. What I find surprising is that while the improvements are nice, there is nothing I haven't already seen in many other retail environments. In effect, Safeway's improvements could very well be out of date before they're even finished.

While not a deli, Starbucks has revolutionized the idea of over-the-counter food retailing. Its secret? High-quality products in a warm, friendly and comfortable environment. Customers can relax, meet with friends, use their laptops, conduct casual business meetings and enjoy their purchases for as long as they like without question.

Wegmans is a food retailer that did its homework — and recognized that people do not have time to cook but enjoy a good meal prepared at home. The solution, an enormous

selection of high-quality prepared and semi-prepared foods, from marinated and spiced poultry and exotic salamis to imported cheeses and mouth-watering baked goods. It's easy for buyers to find an interesting and satisfying meal. And if they'd like, they can get some of these items prepared for on-premise consumption.

Let's apply these attributes to the deli. While many departments already have take-out and on-premise sand-

wich operations, they tend to be matter-of-fact order fulfillment operations. Instead of just making and bagging sandwiches, go one step further by educating and entertaining the buyer. I recommend the show-and-tell approach. Let the food preparer explain the unique qualities of the meats, cheeses, condiments and breads that have been selected and engage in a discussion of food options. Preparer:

"Your salami choice is excellent. Have you ever tried this brand? Have a taste while I finish your order. Did you know these meats pair well with the (Brand) of Australian Shiraz in our wine department? In fact, we have a few bottles over here. Care to take one home?"

The server can also demonstrate timesaving cooking tips and techniques, especially while he or she is artfully slicing, chopping or assembling the sandwich. Think Emeril at the deli counter.

Let's not overlook tangible qualities. For me, the most enjoyable delis are the moody, jam-packed Italian variety (i.e., DiBruno in Philadelphia's Italian Market and Molinari Delicatessen in San Francisco's North Beach). These delightful and fragrant shops have you drooling as soon as you walk in the door. It's nearly impossible to leave without armloads of small goods, a considerably lighter wallet and a smile on your face. I can't say the same for most supermarket delis.

Take reference from the places your customers say are their favorites (Do you ask?). Install a large-scale cross-merchandising display as a decorative element that fills the back wall and the displays adjacent to the deli department, so instead of just buying a sandwich, buyers are given lots of visual stimulation and better incentives to buy. This puts more products in their basket and gives you a higher ring at checkout.

Let's just say there are lots of opportunities out there. To start, you have to understand why customers are voting with their wallets at places like Starbucks, AJ's, Wegmans and Whole Foods. Then go one step further and offer even more.

It really boils down to caring — providing genuine and meaningful expressions of hospitality in an environment that your most important customers will find comfortable and engaging. Make 'em drool. Make 'em buy. Make 'em loyal brand advocates.

DB

Can anyone tell me why retailing
has become so standardized?

Blast From The Past

I

n 1932, Karl Ehmer opened his first butcher shop on 46th Street and Second Avenue in New York, NY.

He is pictured standing in front of the store (far right). Due to the Depression, he made product at night and worked a full-time day job while his wife worked the store. By 1970, there were over 30 Karl Ehmer Quality Meat Stores.

In 1993, his two grandsons took over the business, providing quality products to retail chains as well as over 30 independently owned Karl Ehmer Quality Meat Stores, from the processing facility pictured right.



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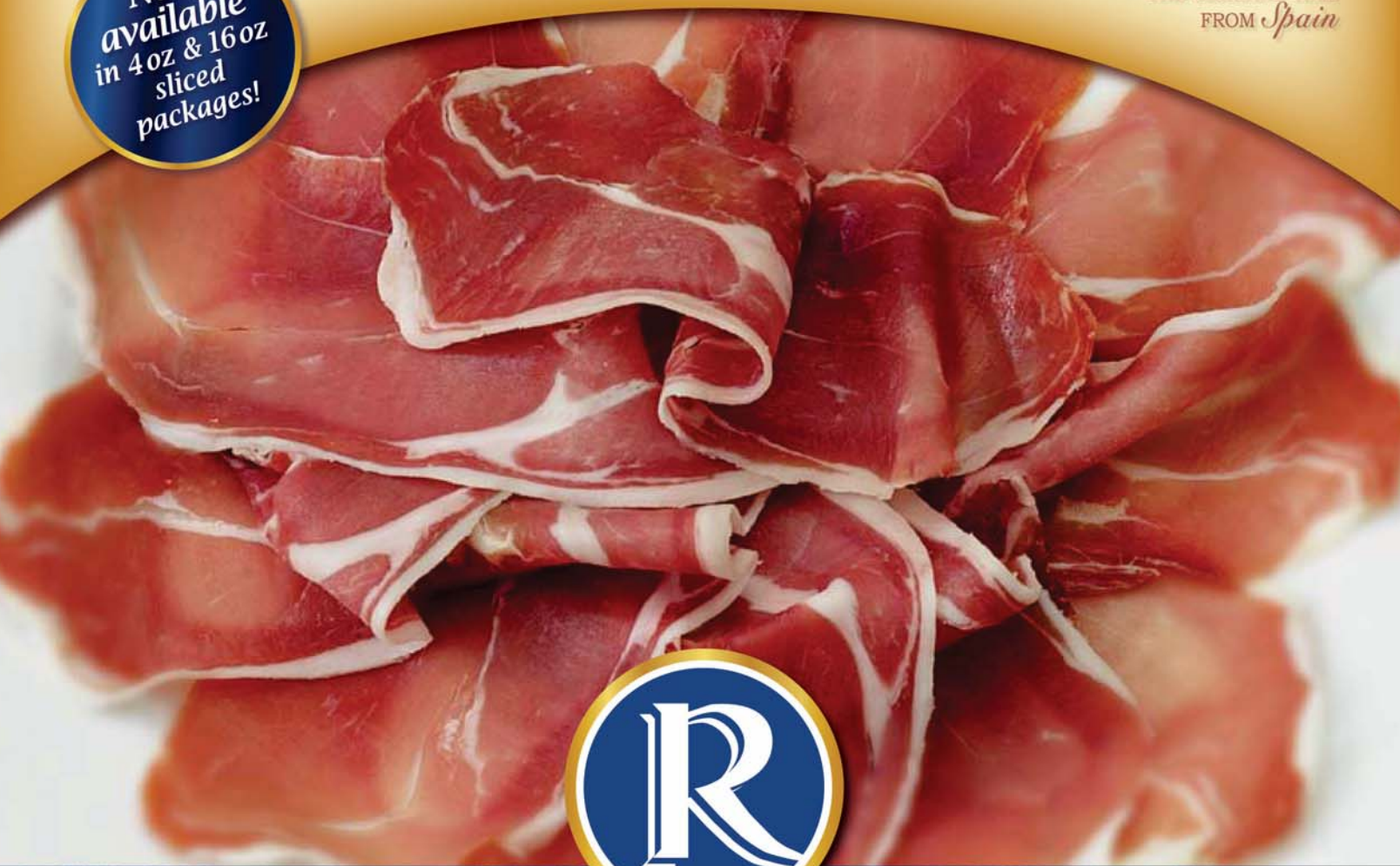
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