



## The Unsung Hero in Deli Foodservice

Assuring Success From the “Loading Dock” to the “Parking Lot”



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Today’s retail foodservice chefs have helped to establish the retail supermarket as a top-of-mind meal planning destination by successfully melding great tasting food, menu diversification, and convenience.

Make no mistake about it, whether working behind the deli counter or hidden back in the kitchen, this professional chef makes foods taste like they have come right out of the oven and on to your plate. It’s as if you’re sitting right there having just ordered from the menu. The difference is their bill of fare is already prepared, waiting for your eyes to make the purchase and for your taste buds to recognize the food tastes so good you’re coming back again for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

From their back of the house kitchen and/or their commissary the retail deli chef is preparing a variety of foods and must know from planning to presentation what recipes, products, and combinations work best. In a retail environment, different from the foodservice restaurant this chef knows that no matter what the dish, the equipment that displays it, cooks it, and keeps it at the right temperature must all work in harmony or the planning and preparation are for naught.

And yes, that was just Monday’s hot buffet menu. With the same preparation intensity and execution precision will be the cold buffets and food kiosks... there are no “shortcuts” for the retail chef... and their behind the scenes expertise is always “front and center” everyday - 7 days a week.



Tuck that away with five catering orders and a hand full of special orders and you can see why these talented chefs, although, for the most part, are behind the scenes, are respected by the department and appreciated by the consumers they serve each day.

Their roles vary from store group to store group. Some chefs speak directly with suppliers, distributors, and brokers those in the purchasing

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### The Unsung Hero in Deli Foodservice (continued)



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pathway, others with possibly different roles speak with equipment purchasing and others again, depending on their role are in control of the P & L and also involved with critical menu planning decisions.

From back-of-the-house equipment decisions to front-of-the-house presentations and menu rotations, the decisions these unsung heroes make are the reason this Retail Foodservice consumer segment continues to grow and the “super deli” is a “super deli”. Retail executives should not overlook what their chef hirings will be asked to do and their commitment to “on the job” training and applying those learned skills to the “day to day” demands of product inventory, logistics management, equipment selection, through to display applications. The need to understand the holistic meal experience not only makes food taste great, but also its pathway to

presentation, and the consumers return visit, with expectations even higher.

Today the retail chefs work with vendors ensuring that the supply chain process goes beyond food safety and sanitation standards through to having a sense of what compels the shoppers’ food choices, to continue to drive the super deli to new heights of success.

Now imagine this...

No a la carte thinking from these chefs. They must have complete knowledge of their competitive role of themselves and their room from the boardroom to the presentations and from the loading dock to the parking lot. This “full course” knowledge they must bring “day in and day out”, to have their “consumers” coming back time and time again.

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