Expand Your Business with Restaurant Catering
The Opportunity

- 53,000 caterers listed in the U.S. yellow pages. These are off-premise and banquet facilities, not including hotels.
- Annual sales of these 53,000 caterers, is estimated to be between $6-8 billion
- Catering is the second fastest growing industry in foodservice
- 6-8% growth in off-premise catering
The Opportunity

• Business catering by restaurant chains is on the rise. Technomic has observed double-digit same-store sales increases by several chains that have focused on this opportunity.

• Among the most lucrative targets: office and business meetings, training sessions, hospitals and medical offices, and business promotional events.

"As the economy began to sour, I saw more and more restaurants launch catering services to increase their sales and market share," said Robert Welcher, President and CEO Restaurant Consultants Inc.
Today’s Consumer

- Consumers have less time to cook/prepare for parties
- With busy lifestyle comes less time to enjoy their own function – call in the caterer!
- Busier work environment calls for “lunch-in” versus “lunch-out”
What’s the bottom line?

- Increase sales without adding more to your building space.
  - Catering accounts for 18% of operator’s total sales volume (non-commercial caterers)

"It's incremental sales," said Rocky Top co-owner Summers. "If you're able to do sales from your restaurants without adding management expenses or facility expenses, it goes to your profit center. By sheer numbers, it became something we ought to be doing."
Why You Should be in Catering

• Increase customer loyalty
• Attract new customers
• Allow your customers to enjoy your food with family, friends, and co-workers reaching a new network of customers

"It's almost 25 percent of our total business," says Joe Leli, Owner of Baby Moon Cafe. "Some days we do almost a day's sales before we open the doors at 11 o'clock."

“It’s all about selling lunch at 9:00am”
Hot Trends in Catering

- Small plate/small portions
- Menu’s less in items, higher in quality
- Packaging that shows quality of food
- Healthy food
- Freshness
- Presentation
  - Dinner vs. wedding/office lunch/grad party
- Fondue
- BBQ
Getting Started – The Menu

• Create menus that highlight your most popular items that travel well and are easy to prepare in large quantities

• Allow your menu to reflect not only your specialties, but also hot food trends
  – Ex. ‘fondue’

• Be sure to allow customers the opportunity to request items not on the menu
  – *More than half of all operators offer customized menus

• Do something different. Set yourself apart from the restaurant down the street.

*Michael Roman, CaterSource Magazine
Getting Started - Portions & Pricing

- Decide how to portion/price your menus
  - A) Total Price
    - All Costs including menu, staffing, delivery, are given to the buyer in one number
  - B) Break-Down
    - Each cost of the sale is given in separate numbers
      - Menu: $14.95/per person
      - Staff: $60.00/per person
      - Delivery: $10.00 fee (try and avoid delivery charges this should be included in cost per/person.)
  - C) Itemized
    - Order by the tray “feeds 10-12 people”
Getting Started – Price Ranges

• Allow for choices within your menu. Offer a range of packages i.e. Catered Lunch:
  - Value - $9.95/pp
    - Ham, turkey, roast beef, tuna, & veggie sandwiches
    - Choice of pasta, potato, tossed or fruit salad
    - Chips
    - Drink
  - Traditional - $12.95/pp
    - Combination of signature wraps, turkey, chicken salad, ham and veggie sandwiches
    - Choice of 2: pasta, potato, tossed, or fruit salad
    - Chips
    - Drink
    - Dessert
  - Premium - $15.95/pp
    - Combination of signature wraps, and gourmet sandwiches on fresh baked foccacia
    - Choice of 3: pasta, potato, tossed, or salad
    - Chips
    - Fruit Basket
    - Drink
    - Premium Dessert Tray
Getting Started – Get Organized!

• Prepare an event checklist/order sheet to keep you and your staff organized
  – Ensures all food delivers on time and complete to each customer
  – Include date of order, delivery time, contact person, address, and food specifications
Getting Started – Get the Word Out

• Let your customers know you want to cater their next event
• Have menus attractively designed, printed and displayed to grab your customers’ attention
• Post signs and include catering menus in each take-out order
  – Chances are, your take-out customers are your future catering customers
• Advertise in local mailers, magazines, and newspapers around holidays/graduations
Getting Started – Out the Door

- Be sure your staff is trained to properly to take, deliver and set-up orders
- Use disposable packaging as often as you can to avoid the loss of expensive permanent ware items
- Don’t forget to include extra menus/business cards to display at event to generate new business (if customer permits)

“I can’t tell you how many ceramic platters, baskets, bowls and coffee pots I’ve lost from leaving it at a customer and never picking back up. I’ve converted more and more business to disposable.”

~Jim Merringer, Carver’s Café
Getting Started – The Right Packaging

• Presentation matters!
  - If a customers’ guests/clients are impressed, they are happy and will return

• Have the right packaging
  - One chance to make an impression

• Earn repeat business
  - Use upscale disposable packaging
The Right Package

• Gordon Food Service offers a wide range of catering products
  – Platters
  – Lids
  – Bowls
  – Serving utensils

• Sizes for all your catering needs
Don’t Forget Serving Utensils

• Makes it easy for your customer to serve your food
  – Forks
  – Spoons
  – Ladles
  – Tongs
  – Spreaders
The Right Size

• Order the right platter for the right presentation
• Portion suggestions to save you time and money
  – Avoid over/under estimating how much food enough
Portions & Pounds

- Use the “5” Rule for Trays and Platters
  - 5 lbs. = serves 12”
  - 10 lbs = serves 16”
  - 15 lbs. = serves 18”

- The 4 oz. portion rule: 4 oz. portions will fill the average eater
  - 4 oz. Lunch meat
  - 4 oz. Potato/pasta salad
  - 4 oz. Green salad or vegetable
  - 4 oz. Dessert!
Common Servings Per Tray

12” tray
4-5 sandwiches

13.5” tray
6-7 sandwiches

16” Tray
8-10 sandwiches

18” Tray
10-12 sandwiches
Individual Portions

4 oz. portions will fill the average person
Adding a Personal Touch

• Each tray, each bowl you send out to a customer should have your name on it
  – Stickers
  – Business cards
  – Include extra business cards in each order with a note to pass along to friends and colleagues

• “We hope you enjoyed the food we prepared for you today. If you were satisfied, kindly pass along our card to friends and colleagues so that they may also enjoy our food.”

• Do some extra promotion by including name, phone number, on a coupon
For More Information

- Ask your Gordon Food Service Customer Development Specialist about resources to help you build your restaurant catering program
  - *The Guide to Restaurant Catering: Bringing Opportunity to the Table*
    - This how to guide includes information on how to get started, put together a menu, set pricing, and marketing the new service
  - *Restaurant Catering Products & Recipes*
    - This piece includes products and recipes that can be served in a variety of catering setting from large pans to individual servings