

Restaurant Supply Chain Management

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Quality Supply Chain Equals Quality Food

Restaurant owners face many challenges in their business. One key to success for restaurants is having an efficient supply chain management strategy that meets a standard level of quality and service and reduces waste. Restaurant managers must determine what their restaurant’s standards are, but ultimately it is the customer that decides the minimum standard that is required. Reducing waste is important to lower costs but it should not be done at the expense of quality at levels that are below the standard you set for your restaurant.

Stand Out From the Crowd

The restaurant industry is highly competitive. Each restaurant must differentiate and effectively market a series of unique value propositions to attract new customers and establish customer loyalty. One technique is to set standards for providing a higher quality product and service than all of your competitors. Restaurant owners must continue to reduce waste by replacing capital investments with lower return with those that add more value and increase profitability. Restaurants that master the art of this technique will have a competitive advantage and will experience prosperous longevity.

Develop a Process

Restaurants must establish processes that can be monitored and controlled. This is the only way that it can be successful in meeting the standards it has set for itself and ensure that waste is being minimized.

One of the best methods to ensure high quality and minimize waste is to source from a local supplier. The latest buzzword in today’s restaurant industry is the phrase “farm-to-table”. Local farmers who grow organic produce can typically harvest fruits and vegetables and supply a restaurant’s kitchen just outside of 24 hours. Transportation costs are minimal and the restaurant has lower holding costs due to deterioration of product that sits in the cooler. Quality of the food for the restaurant is greatly increased and when marketed can be a driving force to attract new customers and create brand loyalty.

Inventory Management

No matter what type of inventory a restaurant needs to order, the challenge is to balance the cost of ordering with the cost of holding to minimize waste and maximize profitability. The more frequently a restaurant orders, the smaller lot size of the inventory becomes more expense. Bulk orders offer quantity discounts and require less time and labor costs to order. However, bulk orders require more space for storage, which leads to constraints on capacity and increases the chance of pilferage and deterioration.

Other factors that restaurants must consider when choosing the proper lot size for inventory are the demand for the goods during the lead time it takes to receive orders, and the safety stock that is required to cover any potential risk that the pipeline inventory is lost or damaged on arrival. And finally, restaurants must account for any inventory that was scrapped in the process of making the finished goods.

Bistro™ take out containers are of the highest quality and allow your restaurant to effectively differentiate and increase the value of your food. They are made from thermoformed fiber and have thin dense walls with a smooth white finish that works well with ink printing and customization. Bistro™ has the capability to enhance these benefits by custom printing our logo and marketing messaging on top of our sustainable take out containers. Bistro™ take out containers are a vehicle that will lead your restaurant to higher sales, new customers, and loyal brand advocating patrons that you will always be engaged with to ensure your quality standards are met. They offer the perfect canvas to co-brand any of your other local supply chain relationships.

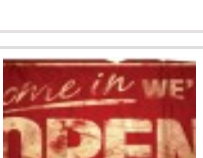
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Choosing the Right Takeout Container

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Selecting the Right Takeout Container for Your Restaurant

Restaurant owners and managers have many options to choose from when ordering takeout containers. As with any purchase of a good or service, a customer must decide what they will buy, how they will buy it, and whom they will buy it from.

What to buy

Restaurants must determine the best shape, size, and material of the takeout container. The deciding factors for selecting the best option are based on the following criteria:

1. Rules and regulations of the foodservice industry
2. The menu items of the restaurant
3. Market competition
4. Consumer demand
5. The restaurant’s marketing strategy
6. Financial management and budget constraints

Shape & Size

Take out containers must match the shape and size of the restaurant’s menu items. Patrons may require a take out container for an entire meal or just a small portion or individual item.

- Bistro™ offers clamshells, plates, bowls, and trays in a variety of shapes, compartments, sizes, and materials to match any of your restaurant’s current and future needs.

All restaurants strive to decrease their service time to improve the customer experience and maximize profits.

Material

Restaurants must choose takeout containers that are made from materials that are readily available and are not at risk of being banned by regulatory groups. The material must be safe for the food item and safe for reheating in the microwave. It must insulate the food and reduce condensation to prevent the food from getting soggy. The properties of the material must ensure sturdiness to hold heavier food items and have resistance to leaking sauces and oils.

Takeout containers are made from a variety of materials that include aluminum, petroleum by-products (plastics & foams), and renewable resources such as sugarcane bagasse. They can also be made of recycled paper products. Governments regulate the availability of materials used in takeout containers and establish how they are sourced and whether or not they are permitted for use. Currently, over 100 cities have either an ordinance in place or are currently working on getting an ordinance to ban the use of polystyrene products.

Restaurants must differentiate themselves from competitors. Improved service times, quality of service, new menu items, pricing and promotion are just a handful of tools used by restaurants to be successful. Restaurants rely on feedback from their customers to improve their processes that impact the value of the products and service that they provide. The material of your takeout container will directly impact all of the tools your restaurant may use to remain competitive.

Ultimately feedback from your customers help you decide everything from what you serve, how you serve it, and where you serve it. If your choice of takeout container material is not desired by your customers it does not add differentiation to your product, and also doesn’t align with your marketing strategy. At this point it is critical to evaluate your return on investment and consider other options. Choosing a material based merely on today’s market price can be detrimental to your business as it can lead to lost revenue opportunities; damage to brand equity, and create sunken cost once your business is left no choice to change.

Bistro™ containers are made of thermoformed fiber. The material meets the demand for more earth friendly packaging but also provides a smooth textured finish that is optimal for printing your branded logo and other marketing messages. This unique attribute allows your restaurant to increase awareness of your brand and use your packaging as a tool to receive feedback from your customers. Because it is green and eco-friendly, your brand will benefit from increased exposure and you will limit your risk of being forced to change the material of your packaging in the future.

HOW TO BUY? WHOM TO BUY FROM?

Bistro™ makes ordering takeout containers easy for restaurants. We offer a product catalog that is organized by container type and provide high-quality photos that offer a zoom-in viewing feature. We accept all forms of credit card payment methods through both our secure e-commerce site and also take orders by phone. We have no order minimums, we offer quantity discounts, and we provide the option to reorder manually or automatically based on the preferences you select.

When you buy from Bistro™ you will receive excellent customer service and sales support. We offer customized solutions to help your grow your business. We offer free shipping and guaranteed satisfaction. We provide your business with high-quality sustainable products that will help you grow your business and create jobs in America.

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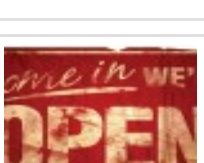
CHOOSING THE RIGHT TAKEOUT CONTAINER



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Thermoformed Fiber & Molded Pulp

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Bistro’s products are manufactured with a process known as Thermoformed Fiber.

Thermoformed fiber is made from a process that is similar to the process of making transfer molding. In the process of making transfer molding, the product is “transferred” from the mold where it is then left to dry. Thermoformed fiber products are also made in a mold, but the difference is that these molds are heated and apply pressure to the product, no drying necessary. The pulped fibers bond together through the thermoforming process and the result is a packaging product with thin and dense walls and a smooth finish. The smooth finish and thin and dense walls of the thermoformed packaging product allow for mechanical denesting and a reduction in weight. It is also has a great appearance that works well with ink printing and customization.

Thermoformed pulp products are not only smooth but they are sturdy. The improved sturdiness of the product increases its utility and allow it to be used in many different commercial and industrial uses. Thermoformed pulp is superior to petroleum-based product alternatives. Bistro’s parent company, American Fiber Packaging, develops and manufactures high-quality thermoformed fiber pulp and has invested in the latest equipment technology to meet the growing demand for products derived from this material. We are proud to deliver environmentally responsible products to our customers.

Thermoformed Fiber is an improvement upon the process known as Molded Pulp.

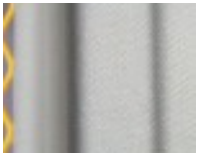
Paperboard and newsprint can be recycled and reused to manufacture molded pulp packaging. Once broken down, the recycled products are converted into a fibrous slurry that can be poured into a mold. The mold is lined with a thin wire mesh to contain the fibers as vacuums draw the water out. The product is stamped out of the mold and sent to an oven for baking to dry the fiber and complete the process.

Demand for molded pulp packaging comes from fruit farmers who need trays for berries, poultry farmers for packaging eggs, manufacturers of fragile materials for secondary packaging inserts, and restaurants and cafes for providing cup carrying trays for their customers. The molded pulp products are less expensive to manufacture than petroleum based foam products like expanded polystyrene (EPS). Most importantly, molded pulp is recyclable and sustainable and petroleum based foam products are not. However, in order for the molded pulp product to resist breaking down when in contact with liquid, it must be dipped in wax, and wax is petroleum based.

Some may ask why anyone would choose a product like EPS as opposed to molded pulp given that molded pulp is less expensive and better for the environment. The answer is twofold; appearance and durability. Marketers are concerned with how their product appears on the shelf to their target market. A packaging material like EPS can provide a smooth finish that is more aesthetic and has high definition to improve ink printing for design and branding. Its superior durability is visually apparent to the consumer and may persuade them to purchase the item that has better packaging that will protect their investment. However, more consumers are becoming educated about the negative environmental impact that materials like EPS have on the environment. The packaging you choose for your brand sends a message to the consumer.

Fortunately, now there is a solution to the trade-off dilemma between molded pulp and petroleum based foam materials. Thermoformed fiber is very similar to molded pulp as it reuses the same recycled paperboard and newsprint. Thermoforming is the process of applying heat and pressure in a mold. Thermoformed fiber product molds use vacuums to draw the water from the fibrous slurry but apply intense pressure and heat. When the product is stamped out of the mold, no drying or baking is required, the product is complete. The final product has a smooth surface that looks like plastic with thin and durable walls much different than molded pulp products. The thermoformed fiber product provides the consumer with the durability they are looking for in a petroleum based foam product with the environmental benefits they would receive from a molded pulp product. Marketers love the opportunity to create branding messages that stand out to the consumer and send a message that is in line with the goal of the product that they are selling. Thermoformed fiber products are a win-win solution.

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WHY YOUR PLATE SELECTION IS IMPORTANT



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Why Your Plate Selection is Important

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What Your Plates Say to Your Customers

Choosing the proper plate for your restaurant is too important of a task to overlook. All restaurants compete for customers by using a differentiation strategy to create a compelling value proposition. The value proposition is marketed to attract new customers and increase customer loyalty.

Differentiation can be achieved by offering unique menu items, an aesthetically appealing décor, and savvy marketing based on accurate market research and customer feedback. It is crucial for a restaurant to choose plates that are appropriate for the portion size, match the décor, and are aligned with the menu price.

The plate is the foundation from which your restaurant presents its food to the customer. This minor detail can be leveraged as a competitive advantage and is a key attribute that defines the fine dining restaurant category. However, even quick serve and fast-casual restaurants can benefit from proper plate selection to differentiate and increase value in the increasingly competitive restaurant market.

The Psychology of a Plate

Plates come in a variety of shapes, styles, colors, and material. Synesthesia is a neurological condition in which stimulation of one sensory modality leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second sensory modality. Gustatory modality is a person’s ability to distinguish sweet, sour, bitter, and salty properties in the mouth. Restaurants can use the plate to trigger synesthesia to gain a competitive advantage.

A psychology research study conducted by Peter C. Stewart at Memorial University of Newfoundland found that factors external to the food source could influence consumers’ perceptions of food. The study found that synesthesia is triggered by the visual perception of the shape and color of the plate. Round plates are associated with sweet food and angular plates are associated with salty. White plates are best because they allow food to stand out while designs draw attention away. Alternatively, white is clean and pure and when combined with food that is presented with a flat appearance, has a priming mind-blowing effect on the customer when they are not prepared for the bold flavor.

Plate Size, It’s Important

Plate size is also very important. Current restaurant trends point to an increasing popularity in a casual approach to dining where consumers share many different types of small dishes and mini-course meals. This has long been the tradition with Mediterranean cuisines like Spanish style tapas, Italian antipasto, and Turkish mezze.

The idea of grazing is especially popular with the millennial generation as they are more health conscious and also more willing to try new types of cuisine. Smaller portions decrease the risk of trying a new item and provide more opportunity for the restaurant to offer a unique individual experience for the customer. Millennial generation consumers are important because they are more likely to share their experiences through digital media that has greater word of mouth impact.

Combine this trend with the growing sophistication of the “foodie culture” and the increasing popularity of fine wine and craft beer and you have a recipe for profitability, customer loyalty, and brand equity. These three accomplishments can be leveraged even further when restaurants become established as part of the lifestyle for a particular demographic segment. Successful restaurants have learned how to maximize this leverage beyond a single restaurant by expanding into new locations as well as incorporating a catering business. However, it is crucial that plate selection is consistent across any efforts to expand.

Plate size also plays an important role in how the consumer perceives the value of the food in comparison to the price. In 2006, research was conducted at the Cornell University Food and Brand Lab by professors Brian Wansink and Koert van Ittersum to explore the Delboeuf illusion and how it relates to how consumers perceive serving sizes on a dinner plate. Results show that consumers find a 3:4 fill level to be the most aesthetically pleasing and that overfilling beyond this point does not increase perceptions of value. On the contrary, the more space on the plate that surrounds the serving portion, the smaller it appears causing consumers to perceive less value.

Bistro™ Plates

Bistro™ plates come in a variety of shapes and sizes, are aesthetically pleasing, and provide higher perceived value to the food on it. Bistro™ offers high-quality eco-friendly plates that are made from sugarcane bagasse that is renewable and 100% natural. These sustainable unbleached white plates are non-toxic, tree-free, and compostable. The customer perceived value of bagasse plates is higher than styrofoam plates because they are the socially responsible choice and have a higher quality. Consumers prefer bagasse plates opposed to paper plates because they are excellent for hot and cold food items, are sturdy, withstand oil, and are microwave safe. Bistro’s™ bagasse plates also don’t absorb water over time and become flimsy and tear. Bistro™ plates are the perfect option for quick serve and fast-casual restaurants and enable casual and fine dining restaurants to expand their image into catering and take out in way that is aligned with their differentiation strategy. [Shop all plates.](#)

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