

A Partial List to Control Expenses

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There is no doubt that these are challenging times for all of us in the food service business and for almost all businesses in general. And as I write this article about ways to control expenses, I hope as you review this list, you also make a list of how to increase revenue. My philosophy is that you can reduce/control expenses and put yourself out of business, but if you work to generate more revenue and control (or even reduce) expenses, then you have the best of both worlds and will enjoy a longer business life.

As noted in the title, what follows is only a partial list of ways to control your expenses. I am providing this list to get you started on your own list which should be a lot longer and in more detail. Just remember that you do not want to make any expense changes that will impact *Customer Service and/or Quality of Products*.

So here is the partial list by category:

MEATS:

- Use meat logs, production sheets and thermometers
- Do not over order
- Weight in meats and check against order sheet
- Have your ovens calibrated
- Use portion scales and portion properly
- Pre-portion all sliced meats
- Make gravies from stock, not bases
- Do not roast a day ahead

STOREROOM AND FREEZER:

- Put frozen items away immediately
- Do not accept partially thawed frozen products
- Keep storeroom door(s) locked
- Lock walk-ins and freezers at night
- FIFO at all times
- Use frozen eggs when possible
- Keep inventories to a minimum

BEVERAGES:

- Do not over produce coffee
- Check the brix on soda and juice machines daily
- Lock up coffee in secure storage area
- Value price soft drinks and other beverages
- Lock juice and soda machines at night

PRODUCE:

- Use fresh fruits in season
- Serve cut fruit rather than whole
- Do not use pre-packaged salads
- Utilize leftover fruits and vegetables in salads
- Use ripest tomatoes and fruits first
- Merchandise lower cost salads
- Use outer leaves of lettuce as underliners
- Order partial cases when smaller quantities are needed

BAKERY:

- Do not over order
- Learn bakery codes and monitor freshness of bread and bun deliveries
- Properly rotate stock daily
- Prepare own pies when possible
- Substitute homemade biscuits and cornbread for more costly rolls
- Cut cakes as needed and not in advance

LABOR:

- Use job routine and flow chart to improve efficiencies
- Schedule only those hours needed
- Eliminate overtime
- Use part-time staff whenever possible
- Keep your employees informed-regular meetings
- Schedule frequent In-service training for all areas
- Clean as you go
- Encourage and reward employee suggestions

REDUCE SUPPLY EXPENSES:

KITCHEN:

- Have a preventive maintenance program
- Control knives
- Keep knives sharpened
- Turn off equipment not being used
- Set an example by turning off lights in areas not in use, i.e.-walk-ins

PHONE:

- Look for alternative sources for phone service
- Check your monthly phone bill
- Use only 800 numbers whenever possible

LAUNDRY:

- Secure all laundry supplies and requisition out
- Spot check bundles when delivered
- Purchase and use rag remnants when possible
- Don't pay for loss linen
- Don't use aprons for towels
- Provide lockers with locks for each employee
- Consider owning and washing your own laundry
- Issue out disposable cloths, don't just leave an entire box out

JANITORIAL:

- Take advantage of quantity and drop shipped purchases
- Regularly monitor all dispensing equipment
- Use vendor representative to train staff on proper techniques of use and cleaning the dish machine
- Use the proper product for each cleaning job
- Use clear garbage bags
- Don't use aerosol cans when non-aerosol is available
- Follow directions for pre-mixing any concentrated chemicals
- Chart soap and jet spay usage and monitor regularly

PAPER:

- Keep all paper supplies up off the floor and in a secure area
- Check napkin dispensers-are they dispensing one at a time
- Are you using the right size napkin
- Put paper towels in a dispenser, not left on top of it
- Keep paper supplies to a minimum
- Limit sizes of cups, lids, etc
- Make sure the proper can liners are used
- Lock up trash can liners

CHINA:

- Check trash cans regularly for china and silverware
- Put up a chart in the kitchen to advise staff on how much broken china costs
- Use rubber mats on floors in areas where china is used to prevent breaking if dropped
- Inventory tableware at least annually
- Buy smart, do not overstock on china, silverware

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You may think this list is too long to use, but I can tell you it is less than half of what my entire checklist encompasses. Actually, you may want to add to this list categories and/or items that are essential to your business and need to be regularly checked for costs. Share this list with your staff (communications) and explain the reason and value of having such a list and why all of these items need constant monitoring. Monitoring this list of items can save you money and for your staff, jobs-so it should not be too difficult to get them involved. If properly trained, your staff should be monitoring all of these items as part of their work routine.

Keeping cost down will help you keep the doors open. As business picks up again and assuming you keep this list and controls in place, you will discover addition profit!