

HOT TOPICS

A Newsletter for the Foodservice Industry from Hatco Corporation. 100% Employee Owned — Summer 2018, No. 59



Comments to: socialmedia@hatcocorp.com

Welcome to Hot Topics!



My favorite things . . . and some others

by Dave Rolston

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Forecast: Warm . . . and humid

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MY FAVORITE THINGS . . . and some others

by David Rolston
President and CEO

Moving is one of those things that for most of us gets worse with time. The main reason for this has to do with managing the number of possessions that we accumulate. When we're young and just out of school, it typically involves a few boxes and a minimal amount of furniture. Later, with marriage, we combine the possessions of two individuals along with the furniture and household goods that have been acquired. Adding children to the equation usually involves more furniture, their clothing and possessions, and the albums, report cards, science fair projects and related items that, as proud parents, we just cannot part with.

As years pass, legacy items, family heirlooms, and gifts from older relatives who are “downsizing” are added to the mix. At this point, we have progressed from a move that can be completed with the help of a couple of friends and a rented trailer to a caravan requiring one or more giant moving vans and endless hours of preparation, sorting, and packing.

For some of us, myself included, the reason that we end up with so much stuff is the fact that the things we own, beyond what is useful, are valuable to us for a whole variety of reasons. Even when they are packed away in boxes and we rarely see them, a part of us knows that they are there.

Some of the things we prize most are the ones that we grew up with, have lived with for years, or have a special meaning. Looking at them and especially using them is an ongoing reminder of the continuity of life. Family pieces can lead to a shared experience with those who came before—even if we never knew them while they were alive. The scars and scratches on a piece of furniture add character to the piece, and each one is a “signature” of the person (or pet) who made it.

Even the most mundane items, such as pie pans or cookie cutters, not only bring back vivid memories but, in some cases, can help us to recreate them and pass them on to another generation.

As we get older though, we realize that it's impossible to hang onto everything. Anything that is of lesser value, or like “old files” has expired, is fairly easy to dispose of. Depending on the situations of our children and family members, it might also be possible to, as museums say, “deaccession” some of the family pieces or higher quality items. Unfortunately, there will inevitably be some hard choices to make.

Some years ago, a research study examined the relationship of personal satisfaction to possessions among younger people. The researchers were seeking an answer to the oft-asked question, “Do ‘things’ make us happy?” They discovered that, where individuals owned things for purely utilitarian reasons or because they believed they were “in style” or for status, the level of satisfaction was minimal. Where there were personal experiences connected to the things, there was a great deal of fulfillment and a sense of relationship.

My family and I will shortly be in the process of moving into a new home. In our new neighborhood, we hope to meet many people and make new friends. Even so, we know that the house will be a wonderful place to share both past and new experiences with friends we've known for years—and some of them will be things.

David Rolston
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TAKE-OUT!

Off-premises dining is impacting every level of the foodservice industry

In an era of fast-paced communications and multi-tasking, it is not surprising that the perceived need for speed and convenience has impacted the dining experience. While “take-out,” or for that matter delivery, was once considered the province of quick-service restaurants and convenience stores, its effect is now being felt among higher level and fine dining establishments, which are having to define unique ways to satisfy customer demand or risk alienating their base.

Although widely different in terms of menu offerings, style of service, and price, there are a number of commonalities that are shared when it comes to the take-out business. Among these are: ordering, pick-up or delivery, packaging, and reheating.

Long experience in the take-out business and dealing with mobile customers has resulted in a fairly standardized procedure for quick-service restaurants. Customers in the drive-up lane have the opportunity to scan the menu, then, at an ordering kiosk, speak directly to a restaurant representative who confirms the order, estimates the total sale, and instructs the customer regarding payment and pick-up. While this has worked well in the past, the current proliferation of menu items, trend toward “all-day breakfast,” can literally cause traffic jams at busy times. Because speed is of the essence, where customers see long lines they will frequently seek out another food source.

While the ordering problem does not exist as such in convenience stores, due to the prevalence of customer self-service, busy times can present challenges, both in terms of crowded parking facilities, automobiles left at the gas pump while their owners shop inside, and the need to manually restock food merchandising areas.

Fast-casual and fine dining establishments that have traditionally relied on telephone ordering have discovered that, despite the expense, online ordering is by far more efficient for them and convenient for the customer. By enabling the diner to select from a displayed menu, the kind of mistakes that occur with telephone ordering can be reduced or eliminated. Also, the time lapse between order and pick-up allows kitchen staff to devote more time to the preparation of the food—an essential in fine dining.

Pick-up and payment is another area in which fast-casual and fine dining restaurants are having to develop new and individual solutions. Because they're typically designed for table dining, becoming involved in take-out requires the restaurants to establish a way in which those customers can be effectively satisfied without destroying the ambience or creating unnecessary confusion for traditional diners. Most often, this is done by delivering pick-up orders to the host or hostess stand near the entrance or, depending on the layout, defining an area near the bar to facilitate payment and retrieval. Special areas are gaining in popularity because they offer seating or other waiting sections to those whose orders are not yet complete. Further, they can present an opportunity to attract the customer's attention to specials, coupons, or other merchandising features.



The trend to sustainability is responsible for a revolution in the packaging of take-out orders. Starting with the wax paper sandwich wrapper or bag, the industry progressed to colorful cardboard shells, and then to plastic foam containers that provided better insulating properties. The current environmental push toward eliminating or minimizing the use of plastics in everything from grocery bags to coffee cups has prompted a return to paper-based products in many areas. The packaging industry continues to experiment with new and better ways of maintaining temperature and freshness of foods through the use of easily recyclable materials. From the standpoint of quality,

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continued from "Take-out!"

packaging presents less of a problem to restaurants whose products will be quickly consumed—often in the car—than to those featuring more elaborate meals that can be adversely affected by longer wait times that could degrade not only temperature but flavor.

One way in which upscale restaurants are handling this is by devising a separate take-out menu featuring offerings that will be less impacted by a reasonable waiting time than, say, a seafood vol-au-vent that, if not served and eaten quickly, can turn into soggy pastry and a less-than-subtle sauce. Such restaurants are also extremely careful with packaging used for their products, as it is critical to maintain not only temperature but presentation.

Another solution that has been used for many years by the pizza industry involves proprietary delivery vehicles equipped with some form of device to maintain optimum temperature.

Delivery is fast gaining in popularity, not only for the qualitative aspect but for convenience. From the restaurant's point of view, it offers both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the food for which it is known is at least delivered, if not served, in better condition. On the negative side, the maintenance of drivers and vehicles is an additional experience that may or may not be justified depending on the traffic on a particular night.

It goes without saying that reheated food is never as good as originally prepared. Loss of freshness degrades flavors, and when it comes to meat, additional heat—especially in a microwave—brings about further cooking than was originally intended. It is, however, a reality that many take-out customers, either from poor planning or unforeseen circumstances, will fail to enjoy their food immediately after its arrival at its destination. Also, food that is left over will likely be saved for another meal. With this in mind, a number of restaurants accompany their take-out dishes with printed instructions, either in the form of stickers or sheets, as to storage, reheating, and suggested "expiration date." Despite the trouble that this involves, those who are doing it cite two primary advantages: on the one hand, they are doing their best to preserve and safeguard the culinary offerings on which their reputation is built. Secondly, they note that customers sincerely appreciate the extra trouble and concern with their dining experience and develop a greater feeling of loyalty.



Archeologists in Pompeii have discovered more than 200 "thermopolia"—stone structures equipped with cooking wells designed to offer take-out service to diners in the ancient world. Similar facilities have also been found in Greece and other locales. That many centuries BC (before computers) people were enjoying the freedom associated with take-out food reflects that today's trend is not simply a fad. The fact that a market previously felt by many to encompass only sandwiches, burgers, and snack food now includes fine dining is demonstrative of a close to all-encompassing industry pattern. For those not yet involved, it's essential to get started or risk having a large chunk of business literally "walk away." ■

The Union House Restaurant

Fine dining in historic Genesee Depot, Wisconsin



Since 1861, The Union House has maintained a prominent position in the town of Genesee Depot, Wisconsin. An architectural gem, the building is located adjacent to southern Wisconsin's beautiful Lake Country and near Ten Chimneys, the former home of legendary actors, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontaine.

The Union House was restored by Curt and Patty Robinson prior to opening in December of 1989. Since that time, their reputation for superb food, attentive service, and historical ambiance have attracted visitors from far & wide.

Patty Robinson states, "We serve classic and original recipes in an atmosphere that's elegant without being too formal. The trains still go by as they have for over 150 years, an endearing reminder of the past to the current customers. Many of our guests make frequent visits, and for others it is destination dining.

For further information, visit www.TheUnionHouse.com or phone 262-968-4281. The Union House is open Tuesday through Saturday from 4:30 p.m. until closing. ■



Photos courtesy of The Union House Restaurant



Cranberry Pecan Bread Pudding

[Click here for recipe](#)



IHDCH-45

Forecast: **WARM AND HUMID**

Hatco's new Intelligent Heated Display Cabinet with Humidity creates the ideal climate for pizzas . . . and more

Designed to showcase food products while maintaining optimum temperature and humidity, Hatco's new Intelligent Heated Display Cabinets also provide 360° viewing, and LED lighting to create an attention-getting display.

Standard features include:

- Air flow pattern that maintains constant temperature without drying out food
- Air flow system for quick temperature recovery after unit doors are opened and closed
- User-friendly LCD touchscreen display on back that controls temperature, humidity, and up to 8 timers for each food location
- USB port for pre-programmed settings
- Adjustable arms on back supports move up and down (up to 6 pizza arms)
- Arms that can open up to 19.5" and can hold up to 8.5 lbs.
- Quality stainless steel construction and finish.

For improved performance, higher product visibility, and easy operation, contact your Hatco representative or visit our website at www.hatcocorp.com and discover the perfect climate for merchandising success. ■