

HOT TOPICS

A Newsletter for the Foodservice Industry from Hatco Corporation. 100% Employee Owned — Summer 2020, No. 65



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Welcome to Hot Topics!



The most important tool

by Dave Rolston

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A Question of TASTE

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THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL

by David Rolston
President and CEO

It's been said that with the right tool any job is possible and, for the most part, I believe that that's true. In the days before we became a "disposable society," most people possessed at least a rudimentary knowledge of how to fix things and a set of tools with which to do so. Coming from a family where self-reliance was highly regarded, I can recall any number of projects that I enjoyed doing and that played at least some part in my choice of engineering as a profession.

Recently, I was shocked to learn that at least 30% of the millennial generation owned no conventional hand tools at all. I was sorry to hear that because of the satisfaction that comes in being able to make an effective repair or build something on your own, an activity that not only confers a sense of independence but provides a greater understanding of how things work.

In industry, it's not uncommon to encounter a job that requires a tool that does not yet exist — in which case, you go ahead and make it. Having done so, you frequently find that your tool, or an adapted version of it, can fill other needs. And that brings us to the most important tool: the imagination.

In looking at the universe of tools, we sometimes take for granted how versatile even the most common tools are.

Under ordinary circumstances, we tend to regard the machinery and tools we work with on a daily basis in terms of the way we use them at present. Under extraordinary circumstances, however, a different picture can emerge as tools are repurposed for other uses.

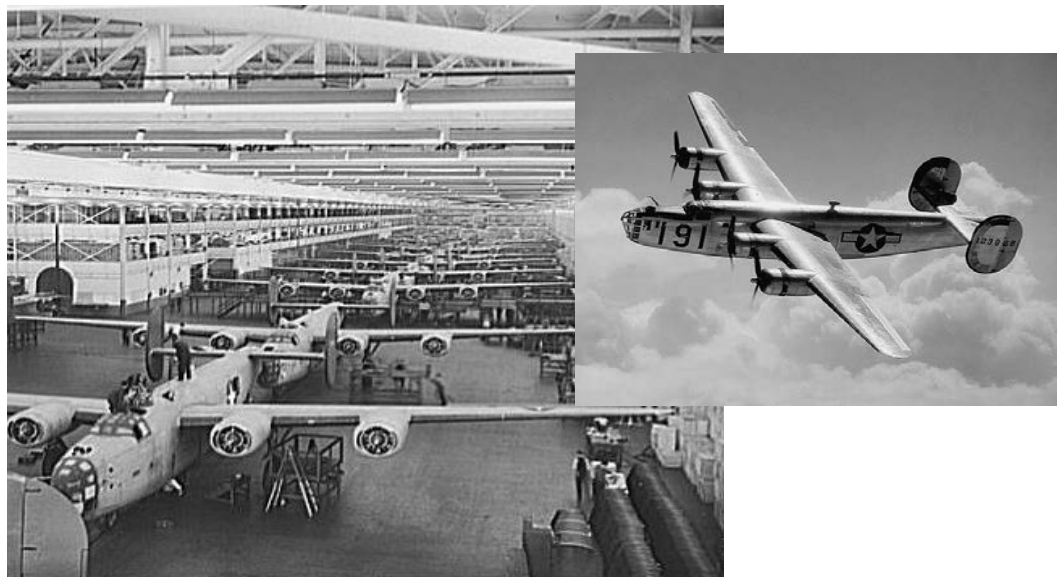
During World War II, the Army's greatest need was for heavy bombers. In assessing the capabilities of our manufacturers, the Federal Government approached the Ford Motor Company with regard to producing the B-24 Liberator bomber. The plane had been designed by both Douglas Aircraft and Consolidated Aircraft, but neither possessed the facilities to manufacture it.

Utilizing the assembly line concept that Ford used for cars, the giant Willow Run plant was constructed near Ypsilanti, Michigan. Men and machines once dedicated to the production of automobiles now undertook the greatest aircraft production challenge in history and, by 1944, bombers were coming off the line at a rate of one every 63 minutes, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week. In the course of the War, Willow Run produced 6,972 planes and kits for 1,893 more. By applying a combination of imagination and existing skills to the challenge, America became the "Arsenal of Democracy."

In the recent health crisis, many manufacturers, including Hatco, accepted a similar challenge in producing medical products. In this, and in other emergencies, America's factories, laboratories, processing plants, and others have been quick to analyze the problem, visualize the solution, and put their tools to work to solve it.

By appreciating the flexibility inherent in our tools and in our minds, we are capable of doing much more than we generally believe we can. With the right tools — both physical and intellectual — anything is truly possible.

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A Question of Taste

Artificially flavored foods are finding increasing popularity for a wide variety of reasons

Just as medieval alchemists sought ways of transmuting base metals into gold, flavor chemists in modern laboratories are devising ways of turning plant-based protein into gold by replicating the look, texture, and taste of meat.

Long considered the “Holy Grail” of flavor chemistry, synthesized meat products are only the latest in a long line of substances that imitate the taste of other foods or drinks.

There are any number of factors spurring the demand for artificial flavorings: economy, health, scarcity, and social concerns are just a few.



The Café Du Monde, located on Jackson Square in the heart of New Orleans French Quarter, is famous for its coffee and chicory combination. The custom of adding chicory (the root of the endive plant) to coffee originated in France during a time of scarcity, when chicory was used to extend body and flavor to coffee. The Acadians from Nova Scotia brought the custom to Louisiana. Roasted and ground, it is added to the coffee to soften the bitter edge and convey an almost chocolate flavor. The unique flavor of the coffee served at the Café Du Monde has proven extremely popular with regulars and tourists alike, and the Café has developed an extensive mail-order business.

Economy is the primary reason for the popularity of vanillin, a vanilla substitute. The best natural vanilla derives from an orchid that grows in Mexico and Madagascar. The cost of cultivation of vanilla demands extensive manual labor and, for this reason, pure vanilla extract is expensive. In 1874, two German scientists devised a vanilla substitute from pine bark. Since the 1930s, vanillin, which is now a byproduct of the papermaking process, has provided a low-cost replacement in both commercial and domestic uses.



pine bark

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In the modern era, health has been a primary motivating reason for the development of an ever-widening number of products. Milk substitutes derived from almonds and other products have proven a satisfactory choice for individuals who are glucose intolerant. The desire to shed pounds or to maintain a healthy weight is responsible for a growing number of new products or derivatives, including snacks and desserts made with artificial sweeteners. Since the introduction of saccharin, sweeteners have undergone an extensive evolution in the past 50 years. Further, certain foods originally developed in concert with specific diet plans are being adopted by mainstream foodservice corporations. For instance, cauliflower rice, long a staple of the Atkins and other low-carb diets, is currently being tested in a Cilantro-Lime version by Chipotle Mexican Grill outlets in Denver and Wisconsin.



The creation, development, testing, and marketing of new flavors is an on-going process at leading food manufacturers and is pursued with a high level of secrecy. According to a researcher (anonymous) at a leading and well-established firm, "Because public tastes are always changing, the ability to create new flavors and to adjust already established products is critical to our survival. We are constantly talking to consumers and exposing them to our latest ideas with samples. Their input tells us what they look for and what to avoid. While taste is ultimately the prime determinant, our customers are conscious of numerous other factors. For instance, natural flavorings are very important, especially those derived from plants. There are environmental concerns regarding the origin of the ingredients, as well as questions about the packaging and whether it can be recycled."



Large producers typically serve the foodservice industry as well as the retail market and, while taste dominates purchase decisions, other considerations are likewise involved. "The typical foodservice customer is extremely cost conscious. They also demand what we call a 'clean label' — a detailed description of what is in the product. A number of customers use our products in concert with other ingredients, and they need to know how well they perform in their individual recipes."

The development of consumer-acceptable meat substitutes, though relatively recent, has attracted a great deal of attention. For years, recipes have circulated for so-called "bean burgers" typically composed of pinto and kidney beans mixed together with traditional condiments and seasonings and formed into the shape of a burger and served on a bun. Although visually resembling

a conventional hamburger, the taste is entirely different and, while popular among those who seek to avoid meat, it makes no pretense of being an authentic substitute. The development of a more realistic meat replacement would take place not in the kitchen but in the laboratory.

Impossible™ Foods, a leader in the development of producing and marketing plant-based meat substitutes, was started in 2011 by Patrick O. Brown, a Stanford University School of Medicine biochemistry professor. Having studied the negative effects of intensive animal farming on the environment, Brown and his staff of scientists embarked on a study of the chemical nutrient at the core of meat products. They discovered that heme, a molecule found in animal muscle tissue and in virtually all living organisms, is the building block on which acceptable meat substitutes could be based. Using a fermentation process involving soy plants, as well as other proteins and fats originating in plants and combined with textured wheat and potato protein, Impossible Foods developed the initial Impossible Burger. Introduced in 2016 in select California restaurants noted for environmental awareness, the burgers were successfully received and ultimately adopted as an alternative choice to traditional hamburger by such widespread QSR restaurants as White Castle and Burger King.

IMPOSSIBLE™

Beginning in 2019, Impossible Burgers entered the retail market in stores including Wegman's, Jewel-Osco, and several Kroger-owned chains. Additional products, including sausage for pizza, have subsequently been introduced.

Impossible Foods positions itself as an environmentally conscious company dedicated to improving the environment and states that its products utilize 95% less land, 75% less water, and generates 89% lower GHG emissions than traditional meat producers. From

continued from "A Question of TASTE"

a nutritional standpoint, the Impossible Burger has fewer calories, less fat, no cholesterol, and more protein than a comparable hamburger, though it is higher in sodium and saturated fats. Depending on the vendor, the retail cost is roughly comparable.

The market potential for substitute meat products has attracted a number of other players. Under the name "MorningStar Farms®," Kellogg corporation has launched an extensive line of meat substitutes including burgers, sausage patties, chicken patties and nuggets, and novelty items including corn dogs, and "veggitizers™" snacks in a variety of flavors. Although meat substitute products initially sold at retail in such specialty sections as the organic products display, MorningStar Farms is intentionally positioned "in the freezer aisle." In terms of positioning, MorningStar Farms has opted for a more popular appeal, and the products are promoted through Kellogg's Family Rewards®, a loyalty program.

The market will continue to enlarge, both in terms of product offerings (Impossible Meats is currently working on a substitute for steak) and positioning strategies involving specialty and ethnic products, as well as price. As substitute meat products become more visible, their adoption by large QSRs and other restaurants ensures that in time a large segment of the population will have sampled them. Whether they will become a mainstream factor and a serious competitor to conventional meats and related products, or whether they will occupy a specialty niche much like organic foods, remains to be seen.

MorningStar FARMS®



The search for new and more exotic flavors on the part of celebrity chefs and the public's desire for novelty in the dining experience has brought about a market for food products that are uncommon, expensive, and, outside major metropolitan areas, unavailable except by online ordering. While many will be discussed as "fads," others will migrate into the mainstream, largely through their adoption by leading restaurants or restaurant chains. This in turn will drive the development of lower cost and more easily available substitutes. And what is clear from the experience of other successful food substitutes is that the right taste at the right price in the right market position can cause major food chain disruptions by offering the public greater selections at more competitive pricing. ■

Products that were in “LESS THAN GOOD” TASTE



Tuna fish hotdogs — introduced in the 1950s, the original tuna fish hotdogs tasted like neither tuna nor hotdogs.



Fizzies — Fizzies were tablets that, when dropped into a glass of cold water, were supposed to produce a delicious carbonated beverage. They were available in multiple flavors, none of which were anything more than awful.



Gablinger's Diet Beer — an early entry in the low-calorie beer market, one sip of this brew convinced many drinkers that the few extra pounds from regular beer were well worth it.



Lester's Fixins Bacon Soda — transferring a popular flavor to an inappropriate medium is a sure recipe for disaster. If you're curious, bacon soda remains available on Amazon.



Heinz® Colored Ketchups — in an effort to appeal to the children's market, Heinz introduced Ez Squirt colored ketchups in teal, green, and purple. There was no good reason to do this.



Coca-Cola Blāk — a combination of cola and coffee, Coca-Cola Blāk was high in caffeine and low on taste appeal.

Frito-Lay WOW Chips — another entry into the fat-free market, WOW Chips were initially popular. Unfortunately, it was later revealed that the chips contained a fat substitute called Olestra, which could cause abdominal cramping and act as a laxative. WOW indeed!.



The Ritz Crackers Mock Apple Pie

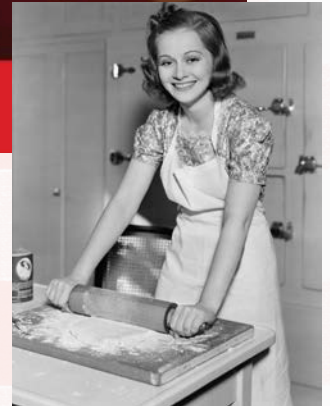
A legendary flavor substitute that you can make at home

An iconic “back-of-the-box” recipe, Nabisco introduced the Ritz Mock Apple Pie during the 1930s. Some subsequent commentators have suggested that it was inspired by a lack of apples during the Depression. This is clearly not true, as one of the most vivid images of that period depicts former business executives selling apples on street corners.

The recipe is so unique in its concept that it has endured for years and garnered many positive reviews. That even a less-experienced food aficionado can create an authentic food substitute without a background in flavor chemistry or molecular gastronomy has made it a popular favorite, as well as an excellent after-dinner conversation starter. ■



Try it!!!



Ritz Mock Apple Pie

Nabisco Foods Group

[Click here for recipe](#)

Fast — Secure — SAFE

Flav-R 2-Go® Locker System

for pickup and third-party delivery without waiting in lines or disturbing regular business



**F2G-24-A
Locker System – Floor Mount**
shown on customer's side, in standard *Designer Warm Red*



**F2GB-22-A
Locker System – Built-In**
Customer side shown, in standard *Designer Warm Red*



**F2GB-22-A
Locker System – Built-In**
Operator side shown, in optional *Designer Black*

Available as countertop, floor mount, or built-in, and in 13 configurations, Hatco's new Flav-R 2-Go® Locker System holds hot or ambient food in a fast, secure, non-contact manner.

Features include:

- Pass-through or one-sided access (countertop or floor models only).
- Holds prepared packaged food with a 45-minute timer.
- Lockers come preset to 150°F (66°C) with a range of up to 200°F (93°C) or can have heat turned off for ambient storage.
- Large 10" (254 mm) touchscreen for easy viewing (front and back).
- Manual (standard) or POS integration capabilities (outside vendor required).
- On pass-through units, customer side stays locked. When access code is activated, the door unlocks and LED lights flash in the appropriate locker.
- Two locker-depth sizes.
- Optional *Designer* colors (standard in powdercoated *Designer Warm Red*) and custom logo on customer-side glass doors are available.



**F2G-3-A
Locker System – Countertop**
showing customer side, in standard *Designer Warm Red*

Show your customers that you care with this safe, attractive, and efficient take-out order system without disrupting your regular business flow. Contact your Hatco representative or visit our website at www.hatcocorp.com for more details. ■