



# MIX

FOOD | FLAVORS | IDEAS | WINTER 2013



Work Smart, Win Big

# Bright Ideas for Efficient Operations

Now as never before, productivity and efficiency mean profitability, no matter what kind of operation you are running.

Rising costs, stiffer competition, an economy that's still lagging. Can you say "challenging times"?

According to a recent article in *U.S. News & World Report*, restaurants are redoubling their efforts to drive out inefficiencies and increase productivity in an effort to keep

**TIP**

**MINOR'S® Beef and Chicken Bases are the start of many great soups.**

recession-weary customers coming in the door. Raising prices is the last possible option, and that means working harder to hold the line on costs.

Fortunately, there are lots of smart ways to do this.

## Look to the Menu

Your menu is one of the first places you should look for operational efficiencies.

- Make sure everything you sell is meeting minimum volume requirements

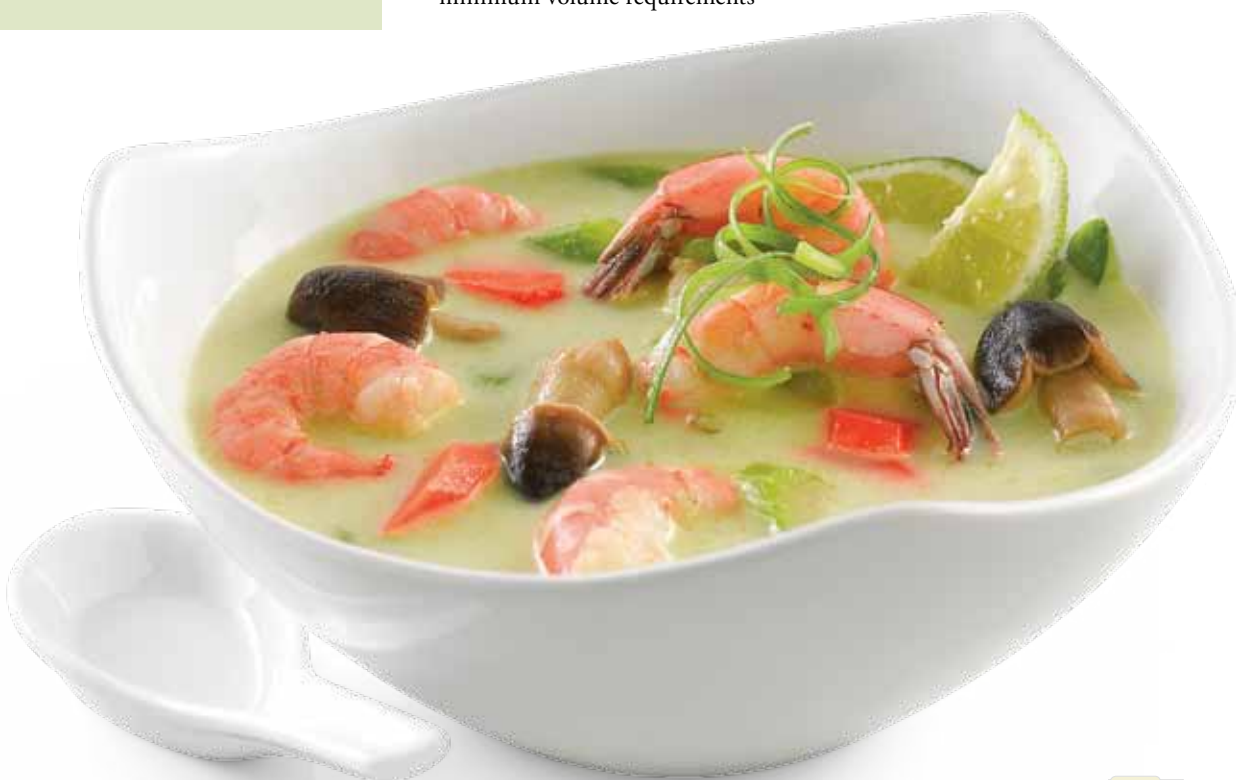
- Take a look at the way your menu or menu board is laid out and look for ways to better merchandise your most profitable items and get your customers ordering more of what you want them to order:

- ♦ Menu "sweet spots" are often the first and last items customers see. Place the items you want to sell there
- ♦ Box out or use a special typeface for other selections you want to promote



**TRIO** 

Popcorn Chicken featuring  
TRIO® Southern Country Gravy



Thai Coconut Soup with Shrimp featuring  
MINOR'S® Natural Gluten Free Chicken Base

- Cost out every single item on your menu and analyze the sales mix frequently—not only for popularity, but also for spending thresholds and gross profit contribution—so you can react quickly to any changes
- Consider more descriptive menu labeling to enhance the perception of uniqueness and value
- Add specials—even if they're existing menu items with a slightly reduced price—to increase volume of target selections or ingredients

Make your existing menu items and specialties work harder for you with better cross-utilization. Do away with orphan SKUs unless they are very high-volume ingredients, or find additional uses for them. Can you repurpose ground beef for a burger into a meatball appetizer, for instance, or use red onions instead of yellow in a sauté? It may be worth developing a new menu item that takes advantage of existing ingredients, in particular specialty products such as portobello mushrooms or seafood.

## DID YOU KNOW?

With the appropriate planning and the right ingredients, it's easy to prep one time for multiple menu items and recipe components.



Stuffed Chicken Roulade featuring STOUTER'S® Parmesan Risotto



get recipe



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This is also important with prepared and value-added ingredients, which tend to carry a higher initial cost. Blends of specialty lettuce can be used for several different salads, and as a side on appealing small plates. Ready-to-use sauces can be modified for use in additional menu items by adding a different flavor profile or ingredient—add sautéed shallots and wine to the gravy you use for a hot sandwich to create a sauce for an upscale new steak dish.

The same is true for your own in-house production. Use your fresh pizza dough for wrap-sandwich bread and focaccia, and consider using any overproduction in an Italian-style *panzanella* bread salad. If you make honey-mustard mayo or other condiment for sandwiches, thin it with oil, wine or buttermilk for a salad dressing, marinade or dip. Bloody Mary mix can be used to start chicken Creole or another tomato-based item.

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## How To... Chicken Roulade



**STEP 1** Pound halved chicken breasts, skin side down, between sheets of plastic wrap or waxed paper until uniformly thin.



**STEP 2** Spread cooled risotto mixture evenly over surface of chicken meat, leaving a border around the edges.



**STEP 3** Roll chicken breasts around filling, jellyroll-fashion, tuck in ends and tie snugly with kitchen twine.



**STEP 4** Brown roulades evenly in a sauté pan before transferring to a baking sheet to finish cooking in the oven.

Above left: Extra prepared risotto makes a luxurious filling for chicken breasts.

Consolidate prep too, to save on labor as well as food costs. Roast off all your chicken at one time, for the roast chicken dinner as well as chicken sandwiches. Have the prep cook do vegetables for salads as well as side dishes at the same time, adjusting the cut as necessary for the item in question. A uniform, tightly specified prep list can do wonders, eliminating duplicated effort and food waste.

## Tackle Food Costs, Hard

Attack food costs on two fronts: Reduce and repurpose. Within those boundaries, there's a lot of room for improvement. For example:

- Instead of throwing away trim and ends from cheeses, add them to a sauce for vegetables or potatoes au gratin



**Chef-mate**

get recipe

Queso & Vegetable Kebabs featuring CHEF-MATE® Sharp Cheddar Cheese Sauce



## Bright Ideas: Look at the True Cost

Price can be deceptive. For example, while the case price for MINOR'S® Chicken Base (No Added MSG) may be several dollars higher than that of the typical distributor brand, serving a soup with exceptional flavor that customers can taste—and will order again and again—can mean more to your bottom line. If you can increase your soup sales by just one cup per day you could impact your bottom line significantly.

### Example:

- Soup Price \$5.38 (-) Food Cost \$0.37 = Profit \$5.01
- Increased soup sales by 1 cup per day: \$5.01 x 350 days = \$1,753.50 annual profit



**Starting with any CHEF-MATE® Cheese Sauce makes it easier to create a customized cheese-based topping.**

- Serve dressings, condiments and sides in portion cups on the side to prevent over-portioning and waste
- Replace parsley and other nonedible garnishes such as radishes or an orange slice with other splashes of color, like the lettuce-and-tomato set for a sandwich, or dipping toasts you would otherwise put in a side basket
- Put a stock pot in the prep room and have cooks add usable vegetable trim like outside celery ribs and onion skins; by the end of the day, you'll have enough to freshen and enrich stock for your next soup
- Turn small portions of unused food into a small-plate special. For instance, two leftover halibut steaks can be turned into eight appetizer portions of fish bites served with an interesting dip
- Always use measures and weights to ensure portion control, instead of "eyeballing" it
- Remember that produce, grains and other non-protein ingredients are less expensive to serve than beef or chicken
- Buy seasonally to take advantage of lower prices





Italian Beef Hoagie featuring  
TRIO® Low Sodium Brown Gravy



A good point-of-sale system or internet-based food-management application can help track spillage, overproduction, overportioning and other sources of waste.

In many foodservice settings, portion sizes are skewing smaller, a reflection of both rising costs and the realization that big servings may be contributing to the obesity problem.

So it bears repeating: Check your garbage. A lot of production trim and unfinished food means something is wrong.

If the kitchen staff is throwing a lot of product out, think about ways these items can be cross-utilized. Mushroom stems can be cleaned, chopped and used for sauces or to flavor meatloaf mix. Unused bread that's been staged for sandwiches during the lunch rush can be cut into wedges, deep fried and dusted with Parmesan for an appetizer with seasoned olive oil or marinara sauce for dipping.

More people are being thrifty and taking home a “doggie” bag, but too much uneaten food means that you may be able to decrease portion sizes or offer the option of a smaller portion of a favorite menu item for a scaled-down price.

## Get the Staff on Board

With proper training and input, your employees can also be more involved in your efforts. You'll also achieve lower turnover, better service and even greater job safety—all of which can save money.

**Get Help:** Vendors, distributors, equipment manufacturers, and other suppliers may offer training help. Avail yourself. Associations, like your state's restaurant association, may also offer free or low-cost training that's better and more comprehensive than what many foodservice organizations can be able to produce themselves. Pay for an assistant manager to train in HVAC repair through a local technical college. You might even consider teaming up with another department or that “competitor” down the street on a class or online program.

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**TIP** NESTLÉ PROFESSIONAL® provides a number of different ready-made saucing options, including MINOR'S® Beef Demi Glace and TRIO® Brown Gravy.



Beef Tips featuring TRIO®  
Low Sodium Brown Gravy



Vegetable Casserole featuring  
MINOR'S® Hollandaise Sauce

**Use Pre-shifts Wisely:** Paying staff to come in half an hour early once a week will quickly pay for itself in better teamwork and job performance. Cover a different training objective each week. Sampling menu items is an easy and low-cost way to make sure everyone knows how to explain and sell the menu.

**Communicate Better:** Share goals and long-range plans during pre-shift meetings, which will help empower your staff to help you achieve them. Add memos about new policies and opportunities to payroll envelopes. Hang a dry-erase board in a central place and use it to communicate specials, 86s and out-of-stocks, sales targets

## Bright Ideas: Buying Convenience

Ready-to-use prepared foods can represent a real cost savings in many kitchens. Make sure you look at the big picture: What you save in labor and yield, in particular, can more than offset higher price tags.

- Buying a fully prepared item like STOUFFER'S® Macaroni and Cheese or Lasagna can save on inventory space and cataloguing of multiple SKUs, in both refrigerated and dry storage
- Consider replacing specialty flavor ingredients that are seasonal, highly inconsistent or generate a lot of waste (such as fresh herbs) with prepared products that deliver the same impact. For instance, using a product

like MINOR'S® Thai-Style Red Curry RTU means you don't have to source chiles or Asian ingredients separately

- Risotto commands a 50% price premium over all pasta and rice dishes, providing a higher margin that cost-justifies using STOUFFER'S® Parmesan Risotto
- Branded ingredients bring value to the customer and an added incentive to order menu items that showcase the brand. Adding ingredients like BUTTERFINGER®, NESTLÉ® CRUNCH®, and WONKA® NERDS® Candy Pieces to ice cream and other desserts is not only an easy way to pull off a flavor punch, but it also creates signature menu items that can support premium pricing and drive higher sales volume



Pound Cake Parfait featuring BUTTERFINGER® Candy Pieces

("Sell more grilled cheese sandwiches!"), schedule information, VIP reservations, and more—such as staff birthdays. Solicit their ideas on how to fix something.

**Give Great Feedback:** Let employees know what they're doing wrong, but also what they're doing right. Be constructive, rather than critical, and offer clear ways to correct problems. Give both formal and informal evaluations, especially for key employees. Consider incentives like sales contests and valued-employee programs.

**Cross-train:** When staff members can do several jobs, the potential for expensive overtime is reduced. You can also give part-timers more hours or jobs at a higher pay rate. For instance, if you offer off-premise catering, kitchen crew may be able to work parties and other service tasks. This even gives your employees promotion pathways and is an incentive to stay in a job longer.

**TIP** Extra STOUFFER'S® Spinach Artichoke Dip makes a great topping for a burger.



Mushroom Ravioli featuring STOUFFER'S® Alfredo Parmigiana

## Thai Coconut Soup with Shrimp

Yield: 1 gal  
Prep Time: 15 min

Servings: 16  
Cook Time: 15 min

INGREDIENTS	WEIGHT	MEASURE
Vegetable oil		1 Tbsp
Shrimp	16 oz	
Green curry paste		2 Tbsp
Ginger root, fresh, minced		¼ cup
Scallions or green onions, sliced thin	1 oz	
Kaffir lime leaves		2 ea
Water, hot	3 qt	
MINOR'S® Natural Gluten Free Chicken Base		3 Tbsp
Coconut milk	27 oz	
Lime juice, fresh	4 oz	½ cup
Straw mushrooms, canned, drained	6 oz	
Cilantro, chopped	1 oz	
Chili pepper, red, thin sliced	4 gr	To taste

### PROCEDURE

1. In a soup pot, heat vegetable oil. Add shrimp and sauté for 2–3 minutes.
2. Add green curry paste, ginger, scallions and Kaffir lime leaves. Sweat 2–3 minutes.
3. Add water, Chicken Base, coconut milk, mushrooms and lime juice. Bring to a simmer.

OPTIONAL: Finish with fresh chopped cilantro and red chili pepper.



Thai Coconut Soup with Shrimp featuring MINOR'S® Natural Gluten Free Chicken Base

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## FREE Exclusive Recipes and Smart Ideas



get recipes

Download the entire free collection of Work Smart, Win Big recipes at: [www.NestleProfessional.com/WorkSmart](http://www.NestleProfessional.com/WorkSmart)



All of these recipes demonstrate how you can use NESTLÉ PROFESSIONAL® products as smart ideas in multiple profit-building applications.

#### SMART IDEA: Thai Chicken Broth with MINOR'S® Natural Gluten Free Chicken Base

- Thai Coconut Soup with Shrimp
- Braised Chicken in Thai Broth

#### SMART IDEA: Hollandaise Variations with MINOR'S® Hollandaise Sauce

- Vegetable Casserole
- Salmon Filet with Bearnaise Sauce

#### SMART IDEA: Mushroom Alfredo Sauce with STOUFFER'S® Alfredo Parmigiana

- Mushroom Ravioli
- Mushroom Chicken

#### SMART IDEA: Herbed Risotto with STOUFFER'S® Parmesan Risotto

- Stuffed Tomatoes
- Stuffed Chicken Roulade

#### SMART IDEA: Tomato-Chile Queso with CHEF-MATE® Sharp Cheddar Cheese Sauce

- Tomato-Queso & Veggie Kebabs
- Spinach Quesadillas

#### SMART IDEA: Mustard Brown Gravy with TRIO® Low Sodium Brown Gravy

- Beef Tips
- Italian Beef Hoagie

#### SMART IDEA: Sour Cream Gravy with TRIO® Southern Country Gravy

- Deconstructed Chicken Pot Pie
- Popcorn Chicken

#### SMART IDEA: Pound Cake with BUTTERFINGER® Candy Pieces

- Pound Cake Bread Pudding
- Pound Cake Parfait





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