



## Other Revenue Sources - Assorted

How can a commercial kitchen-based business not being utilized 24/7 make more money? By thinking outside the box, or kitchen, in this case. Some of the ideas on the following pages are suggestions and ideas that have been successful with others who operate from a commercial kitchen operation. Some of the other ideas are to spur thought about the possibilities of a commercial kitchen – unique, unusual, but which still incorporate a love and passion for excellent food.

These suggestions are designed to make the business owner think about their ethnic background, the neighborhood, potential clientele – what do they want, what can the business do that will spark an even greater interest in its commercial kitchen operation, make the business better known in the community and generate additional revenue? There are many activities the business can engage in, services it can offer and products it can create from a commercial kitchen operation.

### Home Meal Replacement

HMR is an industry buzzword and many vision-oriented companies are focusing much of their efforts on trying to be the flagship of this new wave of food preparation. The concept is simple; provide a freshly made complete meal to purchase, take home, and eat. Frozen TV dinners have been around for decades, but in no way, shape or form could they be considered equals with HMR offerings. HMR is easy, quick and affordable. Depending on the supplier, the consumer may have a great variety, or a limited selection. To sum it up in laymen's terms, if a customer wants a roasted chicken, it is easier to stop at the store and get one, still hot, than it is to go home and start from scratch. That's the general concept.

#### Perception

Home Meal Replacement options and the introduction of a professional Personal Chef Service both appeared on the horizon in the early 1990s. Since both seem to provide a meal source other than restaurant fare, fast food or instant meal/TV dinners, it is easy to see how the general public could intermix or confuse the two. To a certain degree, these two different options do overlap. Personal chefs can be a source for HMR, but generally, they provide far more service and customization than the HMR option. Individuals who use a HMR outlet are often just one step away from upgrading to a regular Personal Chef Service. They use HMR for convenience and to save time. If special dietary concerns or requests appear, the HMR ceases to be a viable option, and the custom prepared meals from a personal chef enter the picture.

#### Decide The Service Mix

A commercial kitchen offers a wide variety of options. While the initial motivation for including a commercial kitchen in the operation may be clearly defined, be alert to seize opportunities as they present themselves, and be mindful of potential alternatives lurking just under the surface. Personal Chef Service applications will be primarily guided by client requests, however getting into a regular routine will allow for a better workflow and scheduling of possible additional help.

Depending on particular strengths and desires, the business may offer highly customized meals for clients with restrictive diets. Restrictive diets mean less volume and more time on one client, whereas restriction-free (not-customized) meals can be made in larger quantity. Or go with the flow of current diet trends and specialize in creating a wonderful assortment of meals meeting the "in" diet (South Beach, Weight Watchers, heart-smart, low fat, etc). If the facility presents the opportunity for walk-in retail traffic, you may consider offering HMR options. Non-customized ready-to-heat and eat meals.



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If the kitchen isn't set-up for walk-in traffic, or that isn't an option for consideration, then explore and select key stores in the local area who would add HMR products and become the retail outlet for the meals. Many grocery stores are now equipped with kitchens for their deli, bakery and own HMR products. Obtaining freshly made roasted chicken, veggies, potatoes and an assortment of salads is pretty common at many stores today, however what they offer is pretty commonplace from store to store. What a store manager is always looking for is something unique in order to stand apart from the competition.

HMR products that go far beyond that of the huge chain supermarkets type stores may be of great interest to a grocery store. For a number of reasons, their own kitchen staff is probably unable to generate the variety and quality of meals your business offers, making the product much more attractive. Let the store deal with customers which allows the business to focus on the core mission of making excellent food. The store buys or consigns the product. Either way, be careful not to oversupply. Let demand drive production, and always slightly under estimate demand. The store that always sells out of your product will always want more.

### Pricing HMR Meals

The business is providing customers with alternatives to their "what's for dinner" problem. These alternatives provide customers with convenient, healthful and nutritious meals. It eliminates their need to shop for groceries and prepare meals. The food provided by the business assures that they will have more time to spend with their families or in pursuit of leisure activities of their choice.

What will the market bear? The services need to be set at a fair price. One way to accomplish this is to survey what the market will bear in the area in which the business plans to provide its services. Look at local supermarket and restaurant chains that offer home-meal replacement options. There is often a wide range of prices, products and quality available. Look at the cost, size, variety and quality of their offerings. Are their products prepared fresh every day? Are they using the "best" ingredients?

Are they offering their food hot, refrigerated or frozen? Is it packaged for sale or dished up on site? Look at what the competition is offering and at what price. Once the "homework" has been done to determine the average price for an entree that is similar to what will be produced, the business can start to price menus. Because the HMR business is about volume and price, it's important to find the price point that will move the product. The goal is to be competitive with similar markets while producing the product at a reasonable profit.

Because each product produced may have a different food cost, use a tier scheme for pricing. Items that are produced at a more economical level can be priced lower than products that contain more expensive ingredients like shrimp or crab. Having different prices for products maintains a stable food cost percentage for every item. If the business needs to maintain a food cost of 25% to operate efficiently, the price for each meal will vary based upon food costs. The business may want to sell more entrees to a customer by offering a selection of items in each tier for a special price or rate. If the business will be offering a delivery service for meals, then a delivery charge needs to be applied or worked into the cost of the meal. A reasonable delivery area should be laid out. Additional charges may apply for customers outside of the normal delivery area.

The pricing of services is critical. Because the key to the success of a HMR business is volume selling, the pricing is that much more critical. The keys to developing good repeat business are price and quality. Choosing a higher price range is only profitable if there are enough customers willing to pay the higher rate. The make-up of the customer base and their tastes will help determine the type of food offered and the price.



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### Menus

The menu for HMR products need not be fixed. If recipes are sure-fire sellers, then it's wise to make those standard fares. If supplying meals to a third-party vendor, the business needs to provide a list of what it can produce and work from product orders. If the facility has walk-up traffic, then the business can have an assortment of meals, which generally will be extra portions from other ordered services that day or the previous day. If the point comes where walk-in traffic represents a fair amount of business, it's time to advertise the HMR products and develop a core list of regularly available meals.

### Menu design

The selection of menu items is the key to success in HMR. Food must be appealing to customers and affordable.

### Packaging

The packaging is important for HMR products. It needs to be functional, stable and provide the look that inspires confidence to the consumer. Flimsy packaging with poor functionality only suggests "cheap" and could easily result in lost revenue. Locate affordable solutions that fill the need and present a quality factor. There are many materials on the market today. Find the solution that works the best for the business and customers. When selecting a container for food packaging look for sizes that fit the needs. The items that have been selected establish the limitations of the package itself. It's critical to purchase containers that will be practical, but also complement the food. They must be durable and strong, holding up to customer handling, transport, and storage.

### Packaging considerations

How are the containers heated? Can they be heated in the oven, microwave or both? In this day and age, offer versatility. It is better to have a container that handles all situations.

### What Material Makes Up The Container? Is It Disposable? Re-Usable? Recyclable?

Packaging can be made of paper, plastic, aluminum or glass. Each one of these has a different feel and look. The appeal of the packaging to the customer should be a big factor in selecting what holds the product. An up-scale feeling will require up-scale packaging.

### What Is The Cost Per Unit?

Container prices vary as the quality goes up. Find a container that can handle the business needs and project the image desired. It is important to know the cost of the container, the lid and any transportation costs associated with ordering the container. Make sure the total cost per container is added into the price of each meal.

### How Large Are The Servings?

How many servings are going to fit into the package? Make sure that there are sizes of containers available to accommodate the menu offered. Is the container sturdy? If the container holds a lot of product will it bend and spill? Is the material water resistant? Soups and sauces may not do well in some types of packaging.

### What Kinds Of Lids Are Available?

How well do they seal? Will they leak if the container has a liquid or sauce?

### Can The Containers Be Obtained Consistently?

Setting up the packaging around specific containers and later finding out they are no longer available can cause huge problems.



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### Heat Sealers & Film

If the business decides it is going to seal its entrees, a method of sealing needs to be chosen. Investigate the options and plan accordingly before purchasing a sealing system solution. Sealing systems are an up front (and large) expense and will add time to production. Make sure that any sealing system selected is easy to use and works properly with the packaging chosen.

### Labeling

Labels are part of the branding and image process. The business needs to have labels designed and produced for specific services such as home meal replacement. The labels should be designed to meet the present day and future needs of the business. These are some of the design aspects the business needs to consider.

### Product Name /Description

The name of the product should clearly appear on the product label. The customer should not struggle to figure out the item. If space allows, a short mouth-watering description of the product should also be included on the label. Customers will be drawn to the product if it sounds appealing and is packaged nicely.

### Ingredients

In some cases, local or state regulations may require a list of ingredients and/or nutritional information for the product included on the label. Ingredient information may be taken directly from the recipes. If that information is not required or provided on the packaging, the business will want to have the information available for customer requests. Some clients may have allergies or special diet requirements and may request the information.

### Heating & Handling Instructions

Heating instructions should be included on the label as well as safe handling instructions such as "Keep Refrigerated". If heating and handling instructions will not fit on the main label, a separate label containing these instructions can be produced and placed on the side of the packaging. These labels may be applicable for more than one product.

### Product Dates & Expiration

A space on the main label is required for the date of preparation or date of expiration. If a space is not available on the main label, the business needs to have a strategy for dating products. Dating the product is essential for proper rotation, sale and use by a customer.

### Logos

The business logo, product branding name or any applicable trademarks can be added to a product label, or stickers can be produced with branding information that can be applied to packaged food items.

### Pictures

A picture of an item on the label is not necessary but it is a great purchase enticement. It will give the product a more professional appearance. If label cost is an issue, the business can provide a picture and description of the meals on a display. Pictures of the food can also be used for other marketing materials.

### Informative or Catch Phrases

If packaging for retail sales, catch phrases can entice the consumer. Phrases like, "Microwavable", "Great taste made easy", or other highlighted selling points such as "Low-fat" or "Carb-friendly". Contact information: Include a phone number or website for customers to contact the business for information or re-orders.



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### Sales Keys & UPC Codes

In retail sales a UPC code for each product is needed to register and track items being sold at the store. This information can be separate from the product label.

The goal is to take all of the information the business wants to include on its packaging and design one or more labels that not only present the information, but also compliments the chosen packaging. Whoever selects and designs the labeling for the packaging needs to find the compromise between the information needed on the label, the cost of producing the label and the ability of the label to sell and promote the product. If supplying HMR products to a store for resale, the labeling issue should be discussed with the store management. They most likely will place their own label on the final package, and in most cases won't want competing information or advertising.

### Product Inventory & Rotation

After the products have been labeled and stored it is time to maintain inventory and rotate stock. Depending on the amount of business expected and the number of items on the menu, the business will need to create an inventory or stock of the available items. Different pars need to be determined for the refrigerated and frozen items. Frozen items can have a higher par because they are less perishable and last longer. Refrigerated items may only be available when the item is produced and a limited amount kept refrigerated for future sales. The remaining items in the prepared batch should be immediately frozen. Set pars for the amount of each item needed on hand. The decision to keep a certain par of items can be based on the amount produced. Say a recipe produces 60 entrees. The business could choose to sell 15 refrigerated entrees and keep 45 frozen entrees available for future sales. When the amount on hand gets to 10 frozen entrees it's time to replenish the stock. These numbers can be modified based on demand. The number of entrees produced at one time can be changed to adjust to current sales and inventory. When the inventory is replenished, the remaining stock must be rotated. That's why the date of production of all items is important. Always pull old items to the front of the stock so it can be sold first. Items that are not rotated properly may become old or damaged. This can result in the loss of product or the selling of an inferior product. Either way it will cost money or customers. Make sure all of the products are handled correctly and inspected for quality.

### Customer Interaction

Customers are an essential element of any business's success. Customers can also be a huge burden if they interrupt a productive cooking session. Separating potential income from non-essential walk-in traffic will require good "people skills" to quickly assess what the person really needs along with the ability to dismiss those unwanted individuals politely but effectively. If a commercial kitchen has the ability for a client or potential client to walk in, be prepared with a plan to quickly address their needs in a professional manner. Leaving a potential customer standing for minutes on end is not good for business. Allowing someone to disrupt the flow, or worse yet, ruin a meal in progress can be money straight out of your pocket. A commercial facility is likely to have non-client visitors. Health inspectors and fire marshals are to be expected but also anticipate interruptions from non-official and non-customer individuals, perhaps selling insurance or wanting a sponsorship for some type of youth event. If the business does not want any solicitors, post signs to this effect and make the building entrance non-inviting.

### Counter

With HMR there should be a counter to handle customers coming in and ordering food, picking up an order or buying an item off of the shelf. The counter should insure that customers do not make their way past it and into the back of the house. If the employees cannot see the entrance or the counter, there should be a bell on the door or at the counter.



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### Display Case

If the facility is accepting walk-in traffic and is offering HMR products, a display case should be considered. Whether maintaining these meals in a hot or chilled state (or a combination), the visual appeal is a huge part of the buying process for a client. There is a definite reason why the seafood area of a grocery store is in a glass walled display. Customers like and want to "approve" the item they are selecting. There are many other reasons as well, but the final decision-making process includes the visual sense. There are many different styles of display cases from customer self-serve to employee-only access. While neither has a commanding edge over the other, a counter set-up where an employee is accessing the finished product adds a huge level of control over the display.

### Pickup

Customer transportation of meals from the kitchen to the home is an important subject. Maintaining proper safe temperatures is key. If customers are picking up their purchases from the commercial kitchen, the business should provide a simple, straightforward recommendation sheet describing the importance and methods to keep the meals cold or hot. Providing them with information and suggestions ahead of the pick-up should negate awkward moments at the counter when they realize they have no cooler. As a side note, having a supply of inexpensive yet functional Styrofoam coolers available might save the day. Without advertising this service, make them available to a customer, at cost, so they can take their purchase home. This added touch reinforces the business' image.

### Delivery

For delivery, an employee needs to take the food to the customer. Arrange a time for delivery when the food is ordered. Try and keep all the delivery orders within a time window so delivery orders can be put together by the same time each day and then sent out. Create a reasonable delivery area that allows for timely delivery without excessive drive times. Deliveries outside the delivery area may be accepted if a minimum order amount is met or offered for an additional charge. Delivery orders should be properly packed in coolers with reusable ice packs to ensure the proper temperatures are maintained during delivery.

### On-line Ordering

Online orders should be taken from the shopping cart and processed every morning. A stock of items offered on the shopping cart should be pre-made and available for purchase. All of the ingredients for items offered online should be on-hand at the facility to handle fluctuations in ordering. If the business does a custom or "prepared to order" service then allow a set amount of time before the customer can schedule a pickup or delivery.

### Quality Control

For a great reputation and customer loyalty, always provide a quality product. To ensure quality inspect the products prepared from start to finish. Quality begins with the ingredients. Order raw materials and ingredients that meet the standards expected with the food produced and inspect those items when purchased or delivered to the facility. If the standards are not met, return or replace the items in question. During food preparation ensure all food cooked is prepared safely and to specification by monitoring or supervising the cooking process. The food should be tasted to insure the proper flavoring and texture. Food should be cooled properly and as quickly as possible. Packaging should be neatly portioned and garnished to look appetizing. Containers should have the lids put on properly and/or sealed. Labels should then be applied and dated for freshness. Making sure that all of the food is prepared with care and quality will ensure the integrity of the business.



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### **Sub-lease**

A sub-lease is a great way to supplement income. The commercial kitchen won't be used every single minute of each day so why not sub-lease it to another individual who has the need but not the facility. When the commercial kitchen operation is not open and by planning ahead, it can be sub-let to other individuals who cook for a living. An individual operating a classic personal chef business who is looking to expand and not sure if a commercial kitchen is the direction to head might be interested in sub-leasing a commercial kitchen operation. A catering service looking to expand or needing additional kitchen space would be another great candidate for sub-leasing. Negotiate a fair price and add to the bottom line by sub-leasing to others who have the need for a commercial kitchen operation.

Of course, the business then becomes a landlord and all the details need to be discussed and then written into an agreement including what is allowed, what equipment is available, the lease rate, the requirements for insurance, the method of payment and the penalties. The following sections cover some of these items. No matter if it is a long-term or short-term lease, a contract ensures the business is protected from any damage the lessee may cause. An attorney is recommended to ensure a solid agreement is reached and written.

### Securing Equipment & Pantry Items

When sub-leasing it's prudent to secure the small utensils, equipment, appliances and pantry items so they are not "borrowed" or misused. Nothing will throw off a day quicker than showing up to the kitchen and finding pantry items missing or equipment such as a food processor damaged or missing important parts. Make arrangements with the kitchen sub-lessee to have a cabinet, closet or an area that can be secured for their equipment and specifically outline what can be used in the commercial kitchen. Specify in writing any liability assumed by the sub-lessee.

### Cooking Classes

Cooking classes offer the chance to generate additional revenue with very little increase in overhead. The imagination is the only limit for cooking classes. A few ideas are listed below.

### Ethnic Specialties

The business can offer classes on how to prep, cook and serve ethnic specialties from around the world. The key is to select a familiar cuisine whether from heritage, experience, or country of origin. Create professional looking flyers offering a specific class with limited seating for a specific date and charge a per person price to attend. Offer this to civic organizations, working people, singles or whoever has a desire to learn how to make that certain dish or cuisine.

### Cooking Essentials Skills

This class could be one that is aimed at the individual who cooks, but doesn't have those tricks of the trade. Teach a class on how to do certain garnishing treatments or how to use and sharpen knives. Or, teach a class using various oils in cooking (one dish might be reds in truffle oil and cooked red potatoes garnished with the oil, another would be the use of oils in the making of hummus). This would again be a per person price with a specific date and limited seating.

### The "Newly Wed" Cooking Class

This would be a hands-on novice class with limited seating. The menu would be simple – how to make a great meatloaf, mashed potatoes, a vegetable and a dynamite dessert. The class could be promoted through stores that have bridal registries or "kitchen equipment" stores or through a church. The opportunities to promote this class are limitless. This could be a bridal shower gift from a bridesmaid, the Mother of the bride, or the groom. The pricing would be a per person price and offered on a specific date.



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### The Next Generation Class

This class involves 10-12 year old's who simply are not exposed to efficient kitchen skills at home. When busy households with hectic schedules are using HMR and Personal Chef Services, it is a pretty good guess that the children are not being exposed to any real teaching or talents, other than how long to set the microwave for popcorn! This class is really kitchen equipment and cooking 101. It's tough to build a house if no one knows how to swing a hammer. Cooking effectively is hard without being familiar with kitchen equipment and the proper usage of kitchen tools.

### The Team Building Class

Designed for corporate America and the office team. Cooking is only a portion of this exercise. Businesses large and small are always looking for methods where employees can learn to work better as a unit, or team. Every man as an island in an office only leads to poor communication and lost productivity throughout the office. Blending together and relying on one another creates trust and confidence. A cooking class can teach actual culinary arts and skills, plus if structured properly, develop teamwork by requiring each participant to be dependent on the others to succeed. The events can be educational and entertaining for all involved. Considering that some team building exercises involve travel, hotel stays and expensive professional trainers, this offer is a much simpler, local and affordable alternative within reach for many small business owners.

### New College Student Survival Class

Graduating high school and heading off to college can present a host of issues. Consider a class tailored to dorm or shared apartment living situations focused on quality meals with ease.

### Holiday Prep

This is for the regular clients who are busy doing their holiday shopping and don't have time for the detailed meal preparation – even though they've invited 20 for Christmas dinner, or Johnny's Dad who promised his son's soccer team that there would be a picnic for winning their division title and they won. What are they to do? Using its commercial kitchen, the business can promote a holiday or special occasion prep service. A couple of ideas are listed below but it's easy to expand the list.

### Christmas / Thanksgiving / Hanukkah, etc.

This is a great offer for customers. The business does the shopping and prepping of the entrée and the side dishes for special holidays. The customer can choose to have everything cooked and delivered with reheating instructions or have everything prepared so they can cook and serve the holiday meal. Pricing for this can be the cost of the food plus an hourly rate, a pre-set rate for the entire meal or a per dish price for those customers who only want side dishes prepped for their holiday feast. The options here are limitless.

### July 4 / Labor Day / Memorial Day, etc.

This would involve different foods and prepping but the principle is the same. The business would still do the shopping for the customer, but it can also offer a simple prep of ingredients for potato salad, baked beans or side dishes, or a full preparation of the complete meal so all that's required is to cook the entrée and reheat the side dishes. For these holidays, the clients may want a special theme such as Independence Day colors of red, white and blue, or a race car theme celebrating and supporting their favorite driver in the Indianapolis 500 Race. The price can be based on the cost of the groceries plus the prepping time or offer a flat fee per person price or a per entrée or side dish price.



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### General Picnic

For this service there are several options. The business can prep the entrée and sides with everything ready to assemble and/or cook or finish by the client, or do a complete "old fashioned picnic" theme with cold fried chicken, one or two side dishes, some kind of hand-held dessert, like brownies or chocolate chip cookies, and fresh made lemonade. All of these picnic items could be individually wrapped and put in brown bags with the lemonade in a large container with glasses. Or the pre-wrapped items could be bundled in red and white checked napkins tied at the top. Again, the lemonade would be in a large container with glasses. Pricing would be groceries plus the time to assemble, a per entrée and/or side price, or in the event the cloth napkins are used, a per person price.

### Meal Assembly

One of the newest trends is to offer an assembly line where individuals can build their own meals from a wide variety of prepared and portioned and sized raw ingredients. The commercial kitchen becomes a prep station for walk-through traffic. If the space is available and the business can afford a few more expenses (insurance, help and advertising primarily), then this may be an option for consideration.

Customers who would try this approach to solving their dinner solutions may be excellent candidates for a Personal Chef Service. They have identified themselves as having a dinner problem to solve and they are looking for alternatives. Anyone using this dinner assembly service that also has a time crunch will soon find that while the assembly process helps him or her create dinners, it still requires an investment of his or her precious time. Be prepared to advertise a Personal Chef Service to these customers. If this idea is of interest, the very first step is to visit an existing outlet to see exactly what is offered, and learn where to make improvements. Just like in a commercial kitchen operation, efficient flow is key to a meal assembly service. Ample space is required, and crystal-clear instructions or guidelines for the patrons will greatly reduce the "handholding" requiring additional paid staff be on hand.

### Private Label

Does the business have a great recipe for a salsa or a jam? Why not prepare, package and sell it to the public under a private label brand? It could be called ABC Culinary Kickin' Salsa or ABC Culinary Specialty Preserves. By purchasing the fresh ingredients, preparing and cooking then packaging in the commercial kitchen, the price would be very competitive. The product could even be offered to local stores to carry on their shelves – pre-booking orders before the cooking even begins!

Maybe a local organization or school group has a recipe for a product and they want the business to private label it for them. Their recipe, your facility, and even if your name isn't on the label, you still made money.

How can the business find these types of situations? Start at local farmers markets or growers' markets. Often individuals who are doing this on a very small scale are looking to grow. Make contact and see if they're interested in taking their business to a higher production level. State or county fairs always have pie contests, jelly contests, chili cook-offs, and other food related events where talented individuals show off their skills. Contact the first and second place finisher and see if your business can be of assistance by affording them a location to create their wonderful item in quantity. This may result in a partnership, subleased space or the business gaining the recipe and rights in return for royalties.



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### **Corporate Brown Bag Program**

Everybody eats and needs lunch. The business could offer a special brown bag program to local corporations for their employees. It is recommended to work with the Human Resources staff of the corporation so they place a single custom order for the office or group. This helps avoid you dealing with a dozen or more single orders. You deal with one contact, and allow the company to distribute the individual meals.

The service can offer a beverage, fresh meats and cheeses on a selection of breads with the appropriate condiments for each sandwich plus a pickle. Included in this brown bag would be chips, a salad du jour and, of course, the dessert of a cookie or brownie du jour. Bulk purchasing of ingredients would keep costs to a minimum allowing the business to offer this great lunch at a price that is competitive in the marketplace. Additionally, corporate employees can eat the lunch "on campus" or go to a local park. This can be offered on a rotating basis to one or to several corporations in the area.

Once a corporation learns that another corporation is doing this for their employees, the business will receive calls asking for this service. Depending on the corporation, location and management, there may be an opportunity to place a small sign or flyer in the building that morning stating that XYZ firm will be having lunch provided by ABC kitchen. A phone number or web site will be present with an invitation for other offices to participate. If the service is being provided in a large complex that has other potential offices, create an advertising piece and deliver to each office, using a testimonial from or reference to the existing office client.

### **Modified Food Service**

A modified food service allows the chance to approach areas not normally served by a standard food service where the business can offer freshly made lunches, snacks or other specialty services.

### Day Care or Nursery School

These are usually independently operated facilities, regulated by the state, but they are always looking for ways to improve their services while cutting their costs.

### Afternoon Cookies

Cookies and milk – a staple offered in the afternoons by many day care and nursery school facilities. They usually have a contract with a cookie supplier and a milk delivery service. Approach them about the ins and outs of securing the cookie supply contract. Here, again, they are looking for ways to cut costs and improve service. By guaranteeing a specific delivery day for cookies that are made fresh and contain no preservatives, the business could get a contract and generate additional revenue.

### Balanced Lunches

Approach a local day care facility or nursery school in the area that offers lunches to the full-time attendees. Offer to provide alternative lunches that are healthful and customized to the tastes of the younger generation. How many parents would be thrilled if their children opted for sliced carrots or celery with dip rather than greasy potato chips? Remember the smaller appetites of these youngsters, so a little bit goes a long way – the business saves the facility money by offering a more reasonable price. By controlling costs this strategy can turn a profit.



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### **Cakes and Pies**

Everyone has occasion to eat cake or pie. Some people need it to complete every meal. Others eat cake to commemorate an event.

### **Decorated Cakes**

If the business has an employee with a creative knack for baked goods, it may want to put their talents to good use in the commercial kitchen by offering a decorated cake service. Even if the business doesn't have the talent to decorate a cake, it can probably find and hire on a part-time basis an individual that enjoys and has the talent to decorate cakes.

### **Wedding**

A simple wedding cake costs a great deal even for the small event. An elaborate wedding cake can cost a fortune. With the ability to bake these wonderful masterpieces, the part-time cake decorator can add money to the bottom line through the creativity that builds a reputation while meeting the customer's needs.

### **Birthday**

It's baby's first birthday, a sweet sixteen party, a 50th birthday celebration – it can go on and on. If you have cake decorating abilities, draw a racetrack for a boy and purchase a car to place on the cake, or bake a cake in a Bundt pan, insert a doll in the center and use icing to decorate the cake so she looks like a Southern Belle. Purchase a simple dress and put it in a plastic bag around the body of the doll. The little girl has a gift as well as a pretty cake and it's all included in the price.

### **Anniversary**

If a couple is celebrating their 25th or 50th or even 75th anniversary, then a cake is one of those items that is always present at the celebration. Bake the cake and have the cake decorator put on the finishing touches.

### **Gourmet Pies**

Turtle Pie, Chocolate Pecan Pie, French Silk, or even a strawberry/rhubarb pie – these can all be considered gourmet – especially if customers don't have time to make them. The business could even develop the ABC Culinary Chocolate Pie Extraordinaire, a chocolate cheesecake pie in a standard crust that is topped with a semi-sweet chocolate sauce, nuts and whipped cream – it sounds decadent. The business could even offer low-sugar pies for diabetics. Pricing will be what the market and sweet tooth will allow. The pies could be a pre-ordered specialty so the business did not have to commit the commercial kitchen to baking unless it has orders to fill.

### **Afternoon Tea**

One of the specialties a commercial kitchen can offer is an old, but still great idea – Afternoon Tea. Ladies clubs, church groups and other ladies' groups still do this, but the members have to do the hard work. The business can do it for them.

### Mini Sandwiches, Scones and Tea

Offer a pick up or delivery service for mini sandwiches: cucumber, watercress, smoked salmon or some other type of mini crust-less sandwich that can be consumed in a few small bites. Offer a variety of scones and toppings to select from, and a variety of tea. Prepare everything but the tea. Include the tea in a "tea-ball" so all the client has to do is add boiling hot water to the teapot and follow the written instructions for a delightful afternoon tea with her friends. Take advance orders for a specific date and pre-payment with all pricing based on a per person charge with a certain minimum. If they don't have the minimum number of participants, the price will be the minimum charge.