



## Personal Chef Certificate Study Guide

This study guide is intended to provide references to areas that you should be familiar with prior to taking the exams.

You will notice that there are no questions which come directly from your Resource Pantry. All materials are provided as a complete educational picture, however since our focus is on the administration and operation of a Personal Chef Service, this is where our examination focus will be.

We suggest you go through the exam, and answer everything you are sure about. Ideally you won't have more than a few questions with a question mark – and that is when you might research a bit providing time is still available. Use the opportunity as intended and you'll help yourself in many ways plus truly benefit from this entire experience.

While taking an exam you may navigate forward and backward to check or change an answer. All questions must be answered, with the exception of running out of time. If 60 minutes elapses without all questions being answered, those unanswered questions are marked as incorrect. If you are about to run out of time and are not finished, you are advised to simply give each question your best guess, otherwise that question will be marked as incorrect.

These examinations are presented in English only. There are no graphics, motion or sound associated, so even a slower dial-up Internet connection should have no issues or negative impact. There are multiple exams for each section. If an exam was failed, it is unlikely the same exam will appear again.

If your Internet connection is lost during the exam, promptly re-connect and return to the website exam page. Select the SAME EXAM as the one you were taking when your connection was lost. You will be returned to that exam and can resume where you were. If you have started an exam and experience a power outage which does not allow you to return to your exam within the 60 minute time period, please contact the Culinary Business Institute.



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### Planning & Administration

You should understand your own strengths and abilities. Knowing and applying the Five Steps To Success will be a true advantage to you as you develop your business. One huge factor in success is having and understanding a well assembled Business Plan. This one document should be able to provide all answers to the vital questions concerning your business. Take time to build this document, and return to it often (every 6 months is recommended) to refresh and adjust your path, or to update the plan because you have solved issues in a different fashion. Knowing the Business Plan section will be in your best interest.

Understand how a Personal Chef Service can be structured, and why certain structures work better than others. You should also understand the licensing, tax and insurance basics for this industry. Luckily, they are not complicated, but they are important just the same.

Keeping your books is also simple for a Personal Chef, but if not kept up to date, this will become your worst enemy. Know accounting terms. You probably will not require the services of an accountant, but you should still be able to speak the language when/if the situation arises.

Since this business is expected to make money, you should have a good handle on your Financial Plan. 80% of small business start-ups fail within the first two years. Personal Chef Service businesses are the opposite, with only 20% failing in the first two year period. But any business needs to have enough capital to stay afloat. Just because you say you are open for business; does it mean you will have paying clients. You have the luxury of not maintaining a physical store front. If you feel a little shaky, think about the guy who leases a building, has overhead galore, opens his doors, and nobody walks in. Both you and this poor guy need enough capital to keep swinging in the lean period of start-up.



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### Organization & Operations

Fully understand business image and public perception. Your image is everywhere – from you personally to your printed materials to your website. You and your Personal Chef Service should be one neat, tidy bundle with a common flavor, brand and feel.

Using a checklist may sound a bit second-grade, but there is a reason why airline pilots are required to use a checklist before take-off and before landing each and every time. The information quickly becomes redundant and a little boring – right up until the simplest of things slips by, causing you heartburn on your cook day. No surprises is a proper way to operate!

You may appear to be all things to all people, when in reality you, will be working from a standardized menu format. Know how to appear to be all things, and how to funnel each request into your basic format. This doesn't mean you cannot be flexible, but more often than not, clients will slide into your format and your comfort zone, without knowing it. Menu planning is the same way – understand how to be effective in this area, and you'll save yourself a lot of time – and time is money.

Know how to set-up and operate your home office and your mobile office. Organization is key. Spending valuable time hunting through a stack of papers is not a good time management method. Set up a system and stay with it.

Do not let the Internet and websites intimidate you. Don't look at 4 and believe you must be just as flashy to complete. Nobody buys a product off the Internet because the logo is cute. The WORDS on the site are what motivates a person. Besides the words, the way your site is laid out is also important. Have you ever visited a website, knowing that they probably had what you were looking for, but you just got more and more frustrated because you didn't know where to click, or how to get back to a place? This just makes that visitor feel stupid, and that becomes a great excuse for them to shop elsewhere.

Business cards and brochures are important, and part of your overall presentation. Know how to be effective with these elements. Also understand how to get your message(s) out efficiently and with little or no cost. You are a Personal Chef, and you are an expert at what you do – the guy who fixes the brakes on your car is a trained expert, even if it's his first day on the job. Until you have reason to suspect he is NOT an expert, the business image has already made you believe he is an expert. You are no different to your clients. Be proud that you are an expert. Because this is a personal service, make sure to be "personal" with your clients.

Organization extends to the kitchen you are cooking in also. Be efficient with your equipment and set-up. Be efficient with how you leave all your wonderful meals for your client. Conduct your paperwork exchanges in a simple, effective manner. Clear and concise. Your client does not want surprises either. Know what you need to leave after a cook day for the client. Balance their menus out – don't make it so they need to eat all the meals in the following 3 days. Your menu planning around their likes and dislikes will allow you to make an excellent assortment of meals, which you can also actually MAKE in one day without killing yourself.



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### Marketing & Selling & Packaging

This may be the most important part of the puzzle. Even if you are great at what you do, and have your business organized to the hilt - if there is nobody asking for your service, the rest is moot.

Understand who your potential clients are. Where they live. How much they earn. What their needs are (some need you more for convenience, some because of their restrictive diet).

You are a professional, and you need to know how to spread the word about your service. Rarely will people hunt you, but if they know about you, when that time comes they are much more likely to turn to you for assistance.

Be sincere. Know what makes a person "want" your service. Know the difference between a benefit and a feature.

Master your telephone sales presentation, plus your in-home presentation. And don't just use one marketing approach. How do you really know what works and what doesn't until you've given several options a try? Once you find the right approach, focus on it and stop giving effort to approaches that provide little if any return.

Understand time management. Everyone on earth has the same 24 hour day. Some people seem to get mountains moved, while others can't even find time for breakfast. Time is money – use your time wisely.

Not everyone is open with their ideas and thoughts. Sometimes you'll need to gently nudge people so that they actually tell you what they want, and what you need to know in order to satisfy them. Being on the same page all the way through is key. Communicate with your client – again – nobody likes surprises, unless it is an unexpected gift you've left for your client.

Pricing a Personal Chef Service can be confusing for some people. They don't know what to charge for their efforts. Understand this and you'll be much happier. It's not hard – don't over think this area, but do know how to protect your bottom line.

Make your business policies, so that you have a system in place to deal with situations if/when they arise. Trying to wing-it each time will most certainly burn you at some point. Conduct your interviews in a professional manner, and make sure to accomplish everything you need to in a timely fashion. When you walk out of your in-home interview/presentation, the next step should be to have a service date so that you can make a profit from this client.

Cooling and freezing techniques. Food danger zones and how to minimize time spent in the danger zone.

Understand bacteria.