

Commercial kitchen

ADVERTISING FEATURE

"In the past there would have been people out the back frantically washing dishes. The trend these days with kitchen equipment is to replace manual processes wherever possible with equipment that eliminates the need for labour."

Cut costs by investing in quality equipment

Efficient, easy to operate commercial kitchen equipment is not only able to make the vital difference between profit and loss, it is also one of the secrets of attracting and retaining good staff.

"Obviously good cooking equipment is an absolute necessity", says Australian restaurant business guru Ken Burgin, chief executive officer of www.profitablehospitality.com, who agreed to run through a checklist of the most important commercial kitchen items for *The Age*.

"You need efficient easy-to-operate stoves and ovens," Ken says.

"For example you may need a combi oven, which is a big tall multi-purpose oven that can bake, steam and roast and it even cleans itself. You can pay up to \$10,000 for one of those, but it would be absolutely your workhorse.



Washtec AL pass-through dishwasher. Features: 40, 60 and 90 second cycle.

"The new chum doesn't know the benefit of things like combi ovens, they might be throwing all their money at a \$6000 espresso machine and that's all very nice, but a second-hand one for \$2000 could probably do the job.

"Refrigeration is also a key, and that will be under a bench or a separate cool room. Another reason why people often fail is that they just don't have enough cold storage to buy in bulk. If you don't have big fridges with sufficient space, you have to buy tomatoes for instance by the kilo rather than by the box.

"Blast chillers and blast freezers are fantastic for cost reduction. Normal refrigerators can take a couple of hours to freeze something and can create large crystals that destroy the quality of the food. The food doesn't go off, but it can become soggy.

"A blast freezer can completely freeze something within a minute. There's virtually no decomposition in the food's texture or quality, so things like meat or fish or vegetables are perfectly preserved. It's expensive equipment but it can save a lot of money.

"If a shoal of fish comes in and suddenly the cost of trevally goes through the floor, you can buy 100 kilos and work through the night to process the whole lot. Those labour costs are out of the way for the next two months, and the food costs \$2 a kilo instead of \$12 a kilo."

When it comes to dish washing, Ken says there's a huge difference between domestic and commercial equipment.

"The dishwasher we have under the bench at home might cost say between \$400 and \$700, and it will take half an hour or 45 minutes for the cycle," he says.

"A commercial dishwasher might cost up to \$8000, but it will take only two or three minutes for a cycle. In Australia with our very high wage rates there's a financial trade off in terms of time, so you need very fast equipment.

"In the past there would have been people out the back frantically washing dishes. That hasn't happened for a long time, and the trend these days with kitchen equipment is to replace manual processes wherever possible with equipment that eliminates the need for labour — especially skilled labour.

"The other necessary equipment is benching, and it should always be chosen for hygiene, it should be easy to keep tidy and easy to clean and sterilise."



Skope three-door counter fridge PEGASUS PG800. Stainless steel doors with 2 adjustable shelves. Suits 2/1 & 1/1 GN pans. Volume: 750 litres. Power: 10 amps. Warranty: Skope 3 years parts and labour.



Skope two-door commercial fridge PEGASUS PG1300. Stainless steel doors with 5 adjustable shelves. Suits 2/1 & 1/1 GN pans. Volume: 1298 litres. Power: 10 amps. Warranty: 3 years.

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