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Online Ordering A Game Changer When Done Right

Online ordering is quickly becoming the norm, not just for retail stores, but also within the restaurant industry. Many restaurants and retailers initially saw the customer service benefits – it allows staff to focus on in-store customers while consumers love its convenience, alacrity, and simplicity.

What restaurants have discovered and are cheering for are the sales numbers: Sales statistics show ticket averages are 15 to 27 percent higher than averages from in-store sales. Being able to appeal to the younger crowd, who is constantly connected to the internet, has helped businesses thrive.

There are a few reasons why online ordering has aided in the increase of overall sales, especially when compared to phone orders. Often, takeout menus do not have the space to show pictures or detailed descriptions of every single item available. Online menus have limitless space available for the pictures of dishes that help to stimulate customer taste buds.



There is also no rush or pressure to decide what you want when ordering food online. When people order over the phone, they can easily feel pressured to give their order quickly and therefore, forget to add in appetizer, desserts or drinks. This especially rings true if the employee that takes their order is hurried by other phone orders or customers in the store. When staff members are busy and feeling hurried, this can transmit to the customer on the phone.

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Implementing a strong website ordering system is not difficult, costly, nor is it time consuming. There are some factors to consider when creating a successful site:

- **Use plenty of pictures** of delicious, mouthwatering dishes to showcase items on the menu. Your website is like a storefront, drawing customers in through a visual insight into what they could potentially eat.
- **Create an aesthetically appealing and efficient website.** A well-designed online ordering site not only looks good, but also works well. Make the ordering process simple and obvious to those who may not have used your site before.
- **Product placement is vital.** It is important to place similar items together, as well as items that complement each other.
- **Ask a customer about other options** during the checkout process. A customer will often purchase something they have not tried before if it is appealing and pops up during check out, especially if a deal is attached for making such a quick decision.

Any business has the power to excel with online ordering and be able to utilize it in an effective manner. Since the demand for online ordering is only increasing, every company that is able to do so should step on board.

Member Profile



Rolling a Perfect Game!

The photo on the Pinstripes Special Events website page says everything you need to know about this unique entertainment and dining venue: A beautiful woman in a long white gown stretched out and peering adoringly at her tuxedoed beau. It is the type of shot that might appear in Vanity Fair or Bride's Magazine except for one glaring, funny and decidedly off-beat thing: *She is cradling a shiny bowling ball and wearing bowling shoes.*

Pinstripes may be one of the most unique dining and entertainment venues in the country. It is a rare, almost oxymoronic, blend of down-to-earth bowling and exquisite dining. As an extra touch, fun-seekers can also play Bocce Ball, the Italian lawn bowling game.



Dale Schwartz, who founded Pinstripes, quotes Walt Disney when explaining his offbeat concept: "While there is very little adult in a child, there is a lot of child in every adult."

The name, Pinstripes, relates to both bowling and formal dining. Therefore, at each Pinstripes location customers can enjoy the family fun of a bowling alley and the opportunity to enjoy fine Italian and American meals, wines, gelato and desserts in its bistro.

Much like any bowling alley, a big part of Pinstripes success stems from its ability to cater to large groups such as weddings, birthday parties and corporate affairs. However, the menu goes way beyond pizza, soda and birthday cake. How about tomato and mozzarella bruschetta or a jumbo lump crab cake for starters? There is pizza, flatbreads, an array of luscious sandwiches and pastas. In addition, patrons can step up to baby back ribs, filet mignon or chicken marsala as an entrée. Now that is our kind of bowling alley.



With locations in seven (7) cities, Pinstripes executives need to manage a broad-based menu that retains quality without sacrificing dollars.

"As one of the most unique dining and entertainment experiences in the country, we offer a high quality menu that requires highly efficient purchasing criteria," says Cesar Gutierrez, Director of Culinary Operations. "Working with Axis Purchasing has allowed us to lean on their expertise and knowledge along with access to better pricing on products where we don't have volume to source efficiently."

Nicole Isabelli, who heads up the Pinstripes culinary team, added, "Axis has the unique ability to analyze our needs, provide us with specs and samples and negotiate lower pricing. It's an interactive relationship that is always focused on a win for Pinstripes. The overall effect has been dramatic as we have been able to reduce our costs without sacrificing quality."

Although they may have changed the rules a bit, when it comes to dining and entertainment, Pinstripes assuredly is rolling a perfect game.

Featured Manufacturer



An Industry leader in Single Use Disposable Products

Dart Solo sets the industry standard of excellence by efficiently providing high quality foodservice packaging solutions and exceptionally reliable service. Since the late 1950's, Dart has been producing a full line of foam and plastic take out containers, cups and lids, plates, platters, bowls, and disposable flatware of impeccable quality and consistency. Since the merger with Solo in 2012, Dart Solo has continued this standard of excellence.

Dart Solo Cup Company is an industry leading manufacturer of single use, disposable plastic, paper, and foam products. Dart Solo's focus on exceptional customer service, excellent product quality, and constant innovation contributes to their always evolving line of disposable flatware, dinnerware, and beverage ware, as well as new advancements in post-consumer recycled content products and the use of annually renewable and sustainable resources to help better protect the environment.

As a strong national brand with wide distribution, Dart offers availability as well as substantial savings. Average savings include: Foam – 23%, Bulk Cutlery – 45% and Paper – 27%.

Control Your Costs in 2016 and Save

The United States Government recently released its report on inflation. According to Washington, D.C., the latest inflation rate for the United States is 0.7% through the 12 months ended December 2015. The benchmark determines the increase in Social Security checks and other government payments. As such, the budget minders have an incentive to report a low number in order to manage the deficit.

The rate of inflation represents a wide market basket of goods including housing, healthcare and technology. Often the number reported excludes food and energy because these categories are considered too "volatile". For those of us in the wholesale food business, we know exactly how volatile food prices have been the past few years. We also know that a rate of inflation of less than 1% does not reflect the reality that we have to manage through.

It is true that beef, pork, turkey, and dairy have come off their highs from last year. Lower oil prices have also kept the freight component in check. In the last two years, protein prices were higher, due to serious supply issues. The pork supply suffered through the loss of millions of piglets from Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDV). Beef ranchers culled cattle in record numbers rather than feed them high priced corn. Both of these events shot prices higher. Now that these supply shocks have subsided, prices may seem lower but in reality, are higher than they were five years ago.

Although rain has returned to the West, serious drought conditions remain, especially in California. Multi-year dryness has raised the price of dairy, produce and nuts. Buying smart and managing your food cost is still an important tool to protect your profitability.

"Control Your Costs" continued from Page 3

Here are some sound tactics to save:

1. **Re-design your menus.** Have your menus incorporate seasonal products such as produce. When produce is abundant, generally the quality is good and the cost lower. Becoming an Axis Purchasing member would give you great benefits such as access to a Weekly Produce Report to keep you abreast of the markets.
2. **Review specs and purchase lower** on the "beauty" chain. Smaller and less aesthetically perfect produce is less expensive and helps farmers sell less than perfect looking products.
3. **Use the service of a group purchasing organizations (GPO)** to leverage purchasing volume.

According to Technomic, GPO's have grown in popularity because they truly work to lower food cost.

4. **Review your purchase order and delivery processes.** Reduce the vendor pool and negotiate savings by increasing your drop size and getting fewer deliveries. This saves your distributor money, which they will pass on to you.

Commodity prices have temporarily fallen and taken some pressure off food cost. Now is the time for strategic buyers to align with manufacturers, distributors and a GPO to lock in contracts at lower prices. *Please contact Axis Purchasing at 703-310-7607 for more information and ideas.*

New to the Program: American Hotel Register

Since 1865, American Hotel has helped create memorable guest experiences worldwide. American Hotel does more than supply hospitality products, they offer standout solutions that help you respond to challenges, create new opportunities, and drive business success.



Axis has partnered with American Hotel Register, to bring you an expanded portfolio of 50,000+ hospitality-focused products with programs tailored to meet your needs.

American Hotel Register offers the following items under the program:

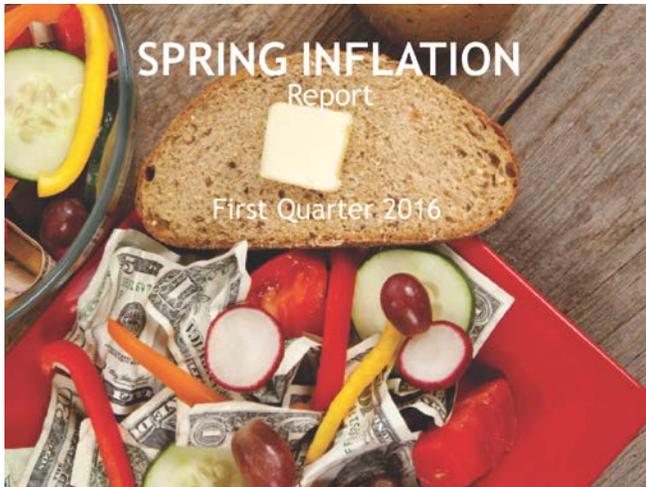
- Guest room amenities
- Textiles & Electronics
- Bed and bath linens
- Housekeeping and janitorial supplies
- Signs and print solutions
- Fixtures, furniture and equipment



What does that look like for you? Some of the benefits are:

- There are eleven fully-stocked regional distribution centers across the United States to expedite delivery.
- Their web-based system combines industry expertise with advanced technology for easy ordering.
- The breadth of available products allows brand consistency across geographic markets.

American Hotel Register has been helping their customers deliver the best in hospitality for almost 150 years and now along with Axis Purchasing that relationship has been extended to you.



Food Inflation at 2%, Stays Near 20 Year average

A barrage of changes were made to the January and February 2016 outlooks by USDA economists. Their current and relatively calm update signals that food price inflation will remain at 2%, which is near the 20-year average. Most of the risk on food prices remains low given the strength in the U. S. dollar, ample supplies and low transportation costs. The shift from El Nino to neutral or La Nina conditions looms over the commodity sector. Any impacts will unfold until later this year.

At the other extreme, any enjoyment of lower ingredient costs in food manufacturing needs to be tempered by realizing the effect this price weakness has on the ultimate ingredient suppliers — crop growers. Farmers producing wheat, corn and soybeans have experienced drastic reductions in incomes that, according to most calculations, have fallen below the cost of production. Just how these financial difficulties will determine what crops are grown and how much is planted is still to play out. Concern exists about supply adequacy and also about choices that might make the present situation appear favorable.

Benign agricultural commodity price inflation will keep a lid on food inflation. Consumers remain cautious spenders and vigilant about “value” grocery shopping.

Non-perishable goods are seeing below-average inflation because commodities and the factors that go into producing them haven't been increasing the same way as previous years. A big drop in energy prices in the past two years and a strong dollar have combined to keep inflation low.

These factors suggest recent food inflation springs from special factors that constrain supplies in a few areas. This, as opposed to broad increases in demand, might propel the kind of across-the-board consumer price increases that the Fed tries to stem.

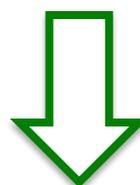
The Fed's official statement of objectives targets 2% inflation over the medium term as measured by a broad index of inflation called the personal consumption expenditure price index (which includes measures of food and energy). A sharper fall for the market has been caused by suppliers, being forced to be more aggressive on price in order to drive volume.

Different food categories are expected to rise and fall at different rates. The largest price movements this year were seen in fish (up 5.9%) and dairy (down 4.7%) with notable movements downward in meat, oils and fats. The outlook for food inflation in the second half of the year ahead is likely to be relatively benevolent.

Consumer trends also influence prices. The three major consumer trends we expect throughout 2016 are supply chain transparency and animal welfare, consumer health and vegetable proteins. All these trends have the potential to increase prices over the long term.

To complete this article or read the rest of the Inflation Report, [click here](#).

The largest price movements this year were seen in fish and dairy.



Dairy decreased
4.7%



Fish increased
5.9%

The J.M. Smucker Company



Axis is proud to announce a new program with The J.M. Smucker Company to offer complete branded coffee program with coverage on 300+ items.

Our contract features quality brands guest will enjoy walking up to each day. Branded programs are available across both liquid coffee and roast and ground formats. Our comprehensive contract includes these category leaders and iconic brands:

- Folgers
- Café Bustelo
- Douwe Egberts
- Good Origins
- Java Coast



Please note that while customers will see significant savings on all liquid coffees and Folgers' roast and ground products, there will be a price increase on Douwe Egberts' roast.

Island Oasis and Kerry Foods



Members have even more ways to enhance their beverage programs with new offerings from Island Oasis and Kerry Foods. Shake up your drink menu with Island Oasis' **full line of frozen and shelf-stable drink mixes, perfect for cocktails or smoothies.**



Equipment is included as part of the program as long as volume minimums are met.

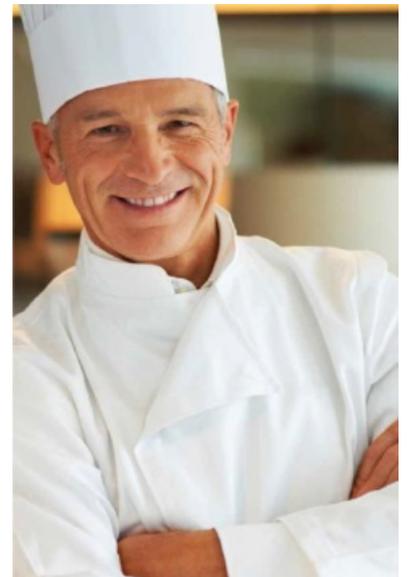
Kerry Foods offers a variety of syrups to provide flavor enhancement to hot and cold beverages. **Over 150 syrups are covered** under the new Kerry Food Program.

About Us

Axis Purchasing was founded in 2006 on a simple premise. Busy food-service operators don't have the time and resources to efficiently procure food and supplies, manage supplier relationships, costs an rebates, and stay abreast of continuous changes in markets and products. Axis found a way to handle those details for them while saving them money. **A lot of money.**

In fact, today our group purchasing power exceeds \$18 billion. That leverage combined with distribution and operational expertise has enabled us to provide unmatched support—maximizing manufacturer rebates, reducing invoice costs, and providing up-to-date market and product insight. Put simply, we guarantee maximum value: the most efficient delivery of all the right products at the lowest cost, year after year.

Find us at www.AxisPurchasing.com or call TODAY to learn what you have been missing.



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"There's only one thing more rewarding than serving the best food..."

Serving it at a lower cost!"