Holiday Success Starts Now

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Dear Valued Sysco Customer,

When it comes to the fall and winter holidays, it makes sense for those of us in the foodservice industry to adopt the Boy Scout motto: Be Prepared. Planning well in advance can make the difference between a successful holiday season and one that falls flat.

In this special Holiday Planning Issue, we’ve interviewed experts for tips on how to avoid profit pitfalls during this key time of year (page 27). We also show you how to put together a motivated seasonal staff (page 26) and address every aspect of holiday planning, from event marketing to menu development (page 32).

When planning your holiday menus this year, think “traditions with a twist.” You could start with a charcuterie board for an easy and on-trend appetizer (page 8). Then, elevate the classics by adding creative new spins to seasonings and sides (page 16). Finish the meal with decadent scratch-made desserts or premade sweets from Sysco’s European Imports line.

Whether you host grand holiday events or just tweak your menu with a few special items, we want to help you make the most of the season.

We are grateful for the chance to earn your business every day. Is there something you’d like to see in Foodie? Email your questions and comments to us at marketing@corp.sysco.ca.

We love to hear from our customers.

Enjoy the issue,

Dominic Iezzi
Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing

For more information on becoming a Sysco customer, please email us at marketing@corp.sysco.ca.

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True Holiday Indulgence

The holidays are the perfect time for decadent dishes and delicious buffet spreads. It’s the time to treat customers to the freshest products and offer indulgences like top-quality steak and lobster from our specialty companies. “Our specialty meat companies expand our breadth of premium fresh products and provide centre-of-the-plate customization to customers,” says Paul Nasir, President, Sysco Specialty Meat Companies.

Our specialty meat companies provide freshness and flavour by relying on the largest Quality Assurance team in the industry and implementing numerous checks. They measure steaks to ensure specifications are met, monitor plant temperature and complete a packaging and labelling check on steaks, which are individually vacuum packed. Additionally, all of our meat-handling facilities have SQF (Safe Quality Food) Level 3 Certifications from the SQF Program, which checks that the process and products meet the highest safety and quality codes.

In order to deliver fresh lobster, Sysco buys directly from supplier partners, and stores the catch in the correct environment before quickly bringing it to market. “We make sure the lobsters are appropriately handled in tanks with the correct pH balance and chemicals,” says Norlyn Tipton, Sysco’s Director of FSQA Specialty Meat & Seafood Companies.

Through these comprehensive practices, Sysco ensures customers receive the freshest products for the holidays—and all year long. “We don’t cut any corners,” Tipton says. “Quality is maintained every day, every step of the way.”

SUPPLIER PROFILE

Butterball LLC

Since Butterball turkeys were introduced more than 60 years ago, they’ve become synonymous with the holidays. The name conjures up images of meals shared with family. In 2006, after Carolina Turkeys acquired the Butterball division from ConAgra Foods Inc., Butterball LLC was established in its current form. Today, the North Carolina–based company is the largest producer of turkey products in the U.S., processing more than 1 billion pounds of turkey annually.

Sysco’s partnership with Butterball LLC has evolved over the past decade. “It’s been an increasingly strong relationship,” says Richie Jenkins, Senior Director of National Accounts and Marketing for Butterball Foodservice. “We’re approaching the business differently. Ten years ago, it was more transactional; now it’s more relational.”

Core Values

A main focus of Butterball is ensuring high safety standards across all areas of the company. “Food safety, animal safety and associate safety are pillars of Butterball,” says Jenkins, noting that Butterball is part of the Global Food Safety Initiative and the largest American Humane Certified turkey producer. “We are always researching new technologies, ingredients and processes, and we’re very involved and on top of animal care and well-being.”

The company focuses on reducing its environmental footprint by measuring everything from gas use to refrigeration. In the past, that monitoring has led Butterball to install LED lighting, which reduces electricity use and increase the amount of recycled water at company facilities.

Giving back to the community is another key component of Butterball’s mission. The company donates millions of pounds of food each year, and supports many nonprofit organizations. “It’s great to be a good corporate citizen,” Jenkins says. “When someone sees the Butterball logo, there’s a connection between the brand and the holidays. Giving back is an extension of that—the holidays are about family, community and good feelings.”

An Enduring Partnership

Although Sysco’s relationship with Butterball continues throughout the year, there is a spike as the holidays draw near. It’s a jump that’s also seen on the retail side—unsurprisingly, since one in three turkeys at Thanksgiving are Butterball birds. “That’s our Super Bowl,” says Jenkins. “It’s our biggest time of the year.”

Butterball provides Sysco with everything from ground turkey and turkey burgers to dark-meat items, like ham and pastrami. It also supplies a variety of Butterball- and Carolina Turkeys-labelled products. “Pretty much anything there is to do with turkey, we’re doing with Sysco,” Jenkins says. “We’ve grown stronger together ever since, and we’ll continue to deliver the products consumers crave.”

Ask your Sysco Representative about Butterball items that are right for your holiday menu.
An Earth-Friendly Approach
Earth Plus packaging keeps the spotlight on The Four Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Renew. Sysco’s planet-friendly line of to-go containers and other non-food items focuses on reducing plastic use, producing items made from post-consumer plastic, creating recyclable foodservice packaging and using polylactic acid, a natural plastic material made from 100 per cent annually renewable corn. All of the items are in the same way representative of The Four Rs, says Evan Nave, Sysco’s Senior Manager of Brand Development.

Earth Plus products also meet a growing consumer demand for eco-oriented packaging. Seventy-one per cent of consumers believe it is important for restaurants to use environmentally friendly packaging, according to Technomic.

Planet-Friendly Packaging
Whether you’re moving toward using paper straws or less plastic, Sysco’s Earth Plus brand makes it easy to find eco-friendly products and packaging solutions that are as good for the environment as they are for your business.

Real Packaging solutions
Earth Plus consistently seeks out ways to create earth-friendly products that enhance the dining experience. As off-premise dining continues to increase, the Earth Plus Soup Containers are good for grab-and-go favorites like oatmeal or grain bowls. Use them at lunch and dinner to hold the right temperatures for takeout soups, stews and pastas.

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Earth Plus Fiber Hinge Containers provide a convenient option for to-go packaging. In addition to being eco-friendly, they feature compartments that allow you to separate chicken from veggies, or sandwiches from chips. And when it comes to breakfast, the Earth Plus Soup Containers are good for grab-and-go favorites like oatmeal or grain bowls. Use them at lunch and dinner to hold the right temperatures for takeout soups, stews and pastas.

Help for the Holidays
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Sysco Brand QA Promise
Our Sysco Brand products meet the most exacting standards for safety, reliability and quality. All Sysco brands are backed by the largest Quality Assurance team in the industry.

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Masrawy Egyptian Kitchen is bringing a taste of Cairo to the people of Mississauga, Ontario. Owner Mohamed Saleh talked to Foodie about sharing his native culture with the community and providing patrons with a traditional experience that goes beyond food.

**How would you describe Masrawy Egyptian Kitchen?**

Our restaurant is very welcoming and authentic. At Masrawy, we try to nourish your body and feed your soul. You're not here to just have a meal, you're here to have an experience, from how the place looks, to the servers who treat you like family. We cook traditional Egyptian soul food.

**What's the story behind Masrawy?**

We started off in 2014 as a catering company. At first, we cooked at my house, and then we started catering out of the back of restaurant kitchens. Eventually we grew so much that I needed to build my own commercial kitchen. We were doing private parties and corporate events of all kinds. But people kept asking us to open a restaurant, and in 2018 I finally decided to take the risk.

**How did you transition from managing a catering company to running a full-service restaurant?**

In my 30 years of living in Canada, I had never seen anyone open an Egyptian restaurant, and now I know why—making this kind of home-cooked food is labour-intensive. Thankfully, with the help of Sysco, we've been able to manage our food costs and get all the supplies we need at a reasonable price. I was also blessed with the best team. A renowned chef joined us first, quickly followed by an all-around perfect staff. My wife works in the restaurant with me when she’s not teaching as a professor.

**What are some of your signature dishes?**

You've got to try the staple dish of Egypt, which is called koshari. It’s rice, lentils, pasta, chickpeas, caramelized onions, tomato-garlic sauce and a garlic vinaigrette. It’s vegan- and vegetarian-friendly. After that, I would suggest the hawashi, which is like a street burger. It’s a mix of ground beef and ground lamb that has been seasoned and stuffed into flatbread. I would also recommend our chicken tikka. It is marinated for two days and then cooked to perfection in a tangy sauce.

**How has Sysco been integral to your growth and success?**

I would not have been able to open this restaurant without Wassem Khassib, my Sysco representative. He came in and was able to get me everything I needed to start the restaurant. Sysco trusted me and saw my potential, and they offered me amazing payment arrangements. Wassem is always available and never leaves us hanging. We can call or text him at any time, and he’s very hands-on with our chef, too.

**What are your plans for the future?**

In the future, I'd love to open more locations in different parts of the city so more people can have access to our food. However, for now I'm focusing on perfecting the current location and continuing to introduce our customers to items that aren't offered anywhere else.
Small Bites, Big Flavours

Eye-catching platters of charcuterie, or cheese and salumi, are all the rage right now, both as restaurant starters and on catered buffets.

Serving a board of charcuterie, or cheeses and salumi, is a simple yet sophisticated way to start a meal or fill out a holiday buffet. Made up of assorted cured meats, such as salami and prosciutto, a range of fresh and aged cheeses, and a variety of nuts and fruits—the appetizer is as elegant as it is mouthwatering.

Salumi boards have a long tradition, but that doesn’t mean you can’t have fun and get creative. Wrap salty Italian prosciutto around figs and goat cheese and top with hot honey for a sweet-and-spicy flavour blast. Match peppery pecorino cheese with red fig jam or pair aged Cheddar cheese with apricot jam or mustard, a sweet condiment spiked with mustard seed. You can also move from land to sea while still staying on-trend by making a Spanish Octopus Bruschetta With Bottarga (shown here). Recently, more diners have been embracing the octopus, especially when it is cooked in inventive ways. We’ve simmered it and then tossed it with cherry tomatoes, chiles and bottarga—a delicacy made from cured mullet roe. Served as a salad on top of sliced bread, it makes a beautiful passed appetizer for catered holiday events or, with two or three to a plate, it would also be a perfect seafood starter. You can also bring in popular Middle Eastern flavours by placing a grilled lamb kefta atop a caramelized onion naan. And instead of making ceviche from scratch, go plant-based by chopping jarred hearts of palm with onions and peppers and serve it in a lettuce cup.

Find recipes for these appetizers on page 28. Find charcuterie pairings on SyscoFoodie.com.

Delicacies for your platter: 1 Apricot Jam 2 Italian Prosciutto 3 Date and Walnut Crackers 4 Multigrain Flax Crackers 5 Pecorino Pepato 6 Smoked Cheddar 7 Pickled Lotus Root 8 Italian-Style Domestic Salami 9 California Goat Cheese 10 Hot Honey
The Best of Speed Scratch

We asked six Sysco chefs across Canada and the United States for their favourite time- and labour-saving products for the holidays.

The holiday season is always a hectic time, when your team is pushed to the limit in the front and back of house. The nationwide labour shortage makes saving time and work in the kitchen even more critical to having a successful and profitable season. Luckily, Sysco products are always here to help ease the pressure during this time of year. If you are running breakfast service or a hotel breakfast buffet, instead of making pancakes from scratch, you can use Sysco Classic Buttermilk Pancake Mix. Fry up some Sysco Classic Cold-Smoked Bacon with Sysco Imperial Potato Tot Bites. Fry a few eggs at the same time. Lighten it up with some fresh fruit or juice, and breakfast is a done deal.

The holidays are an intensely busy time in the food industry. Luckily, Sysco products are always here to help ease the pressure during this time of year. If you are running breakfast service or a hotel breakfast buffet, instead of making pancakes from scratch, you can use Sysco Classic Buttermilk Pancake Mix. Fry up some Sysco Classic Cold-Smoked Bacon with Sysco Imperial Potato Tot Bites. Fry a few eggs at the same time. Lighten it up with some fresh fruit or juice, and breakfast is a done deal.

For operators who are looking for ways to minimize food and labour costs, speed scratch is the way to go. By using speed-scratch products, you can offer diners upgraded dishes with higher price points and still take pressure off kitchen staff doing daily prep work, which is especially important during the busy holiday season. It’s truly a win-win situation. One of my favourite products is Arrezzio Imperial Basil Pesto Sauce, which can be easily incorporated into roasts, sauces, relishes, stuffing and more. If I’m in a hurry, I can just grab a bag of Sysco Classic Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes and ready to be heated, sauced and served is a lifesaver in the kitchen. It’s a money saver and a time saver, and it works well in all areas of the menu: as a meat pie topper or in spring rolls, fritters, croquettes, tempura, gnocchi—and even cheesecake. You read that right: mashed-potato cheesecake. Book a session with your local Sysco culinary team to find out how to make one.
In the foodservice industry, the fall and winter holidays are game time, when operators can capitalize on large, high-margin events both on- and off-premise. But in order to have a winning season, you have to be prepared.

Start thinking now about your holiday menus: What labour-saving products and ingredients will rescue you when you are short a team member or two? Speaking of teams, have you locked down staffing for key dates and times (see article on page 26)? What will be the signature dessert that goes viral on Instagram? Will you serve traditional classics or put a modern spin on things?

Holiday Menus That Work
“Think about the dishes that worked last year and the ones that fell flat,” says Chef Neil Doherty, Sysco’s Senior Director of Culinary Development. “Keep in mind that diners are often looking for comfort during the holidays,” Doherty says. It’s a great time to offer braised meats and scratch baking on your menu. Yet, as an operator, you also want dishes you can make ahead of time—that are easy to prepare and that hold well. A grilled or broiled steak works great at this time of year, too. “A top sirloin can be just as flavourful as a ribeye and costs much less,” says Doherty.

You don’t need to change your entire menu for the holidays, either. Instead, you may want to create a few special dishes and make sure to market them to your customers. And don’t neglect your beverage selection, Doherty says. “Use on-trend ingredients like acai berries or turmeric to spruce up cocktails and mocktails.” Ask your Sysco Representative for information about Sysco’s Menu and Marketing Services, which can be a lifesaver this time of year.

Tips & Trends
Update holiday standards by incorporating some of the top food trends for 2019—chosen by the National Restaurant Association—into your menus. Diners today are hungry for more grass-fed beef, heritage pork and responsibly raised seafood. When you use these ingredients, note it on your menu and add a small upcharge! Adding plant-based dishes (another trend) to your menu is a great way to attract an ever-growing vegetarian, vegan and flexitarian customer base. We’ve put together recipes that use these concepts as inspiration.

Holiday Planning
START PREPARING NOW FOR A PROFITABLE HOLIDAY SEASON

Whether it’s bourbon or beer, cooking with boozé is big this year. To loosen up a traditional turkey roulade made with Sysco Imperial Boneless Turkey Breast, spike it with a flavourful bourbon gravy, as we’ve done here (photo, facing page). A simple steak, such as a sirloin, New York Strip or rib-eye from Butcher’s Block is so good that all it requires to be the anchor for a celebratory meal is a touch of flame from the grill and perhaps a simple accent like a compound butter made with chimichurri, slowly melting on top. If, instead, you’re on the lookout for a holiday main dish...
that makes a grand statement, deep-fry an entire Butcher’s Block Pork Rack (facing page) and give it the star treatment when you present it at the table. Or add breadth and a lighter option to your menu by roasting a harissa mound, spiced with Persian flavours. And to add more plant-based dishes to the mix, try adding cauliflower to potatoes for a more up-to-date mash, and top it with a savoury vegan gravy.

**Marketing 101**

One of the most important things you can do to prepare for the holidays is to start marketing your events and LTO specials well in advance. Begin implementing your marketing plan at least two months ahead of the holidays, says Bruce Barnes, Sysco Menu Consultant. Make sure to stay on top of it, or have someone on your staff assigned to do it. Use everything in your arsenal, from Instagram updates to a bullhorn, to get the word out. You may have the best turkey special or finest New Year’s Eve prix fixe menu in the world, but it won’t matter if no one knows about it. Here are some holiday marketing tactics from Barnes. And in addition, ask your Sysco Representative about the full range of Marketing and Design Services available from Sysco.

**Holiday Marketing Tactics:**

- Create “sluggers,” or menu inserts.
- Print attractive flyers; share in to-go orders and pass out to diners.
- Place posters in bathrooms and coatrooms.
- Give away incentive rewards.
- Use all relevant channels of social media, especially Facebook.
- Promote your events prominently on your restaurant’s website.
- Send out email blasts and newsletters to your loyal customer list.
- Talk to your customers about upcoming events and specials.
- Introduce VIP customers to your events coordinator.
- Target local businesses and let them know about your event space and catering capabilities.

**Your Source for Supplies**

You will also want to start thinking about supplies and equipment well ahead of time. When the dining room is full, the last thing you need to be thinking about is a broken walk-in or a shortage of dishware. Before the season starts, remember to check on:

- Soup warmers and kettles
- Holding cabinets
- Beverage urns and carafes
- Chafers and serving pieces
- Heating fuel
- Ice machine
- Disposables
- Apparel
- Flatware
- Dishware
- Glassware

You’ve gotten the word out. You’ve checked your equipment and ordered supplies. You’ve planned your menus. When all the pieces are in place and your team is assembled, you can look forward to the holidays with a sense of calm and excitement instead of anxiety. You’re ready to tackle any challenge.
When diners choose to eat their holiday meal at a restaurant instead of at home, they arrive with a complicated set of expectations. They crave the comfort and familiarity of timeless dishes, eaten year after year with friends and family alike, and would be disappointed if those items were completely absent. And yet, they are also seeking more: elevated, chef-driven plates made with fresh, on-trend ingredients, using sophisticated techniques. By layering flavours and adding your own creative spin, you can give diners the best of both worlds. This is true for stalwarts like turkey and ham, but it’s even easier to implement with sauces, seasonings and especially sides.

Bring new zest to a whole turkey, for example, by marinating it in a tangy citrus and cranberry brine before roasting it (pictured on next page). And instead of serving the turkey with the usual cranberry sauce, try a relish made from tomatoes, apples and raisins (pictured on next page). It is incredibly simple to make, and the addition of apple cider vinegar gives the sweet combination a little acidic punch. As a side, consider a butternut squash gratin. In the gratin shown on the next page, butternut squash is matched with its natural flavour partners, sage and brown butter, and then finished with a sweet and sophisticated maple gastrique.

Sysco’s Reliance Cooked Bone-In Ham requires little in the way of seasoning. You could just slice it and serve as is. But for extra depth, season it with a sweet and spicy rub redolent of clove, ginger and nutmeg, and slice thin for a stunning presentation (see above).

As a surprising twist on the usual mashed sweet potatoes, cook up sweet potato spaetzle instead, and pair it with a sauce made with pecans and maple syrup. Your guests won’t miss the mashed potatoes. Roasted Brussels sprouts tossed with smoked hazelnuts and bacon marmalade round out the meal.

During the holidays, diners are looking for something like comfort food crossed with haute cuisine. They want something familiar yet new and different at the same time. To create a successful and profitable holiday menu, stay seasonal, but try out some fresh flavours and ingredients. Try out a new technique that elevates a classic dish to new heights. Most importantly, use your imagination to put new twists on classic fall and winter holiday fare, and you won’t go wrong.
BRIGHT SIDES
Centre-of-the-plate proteins tend to stay fairly traditional for the holidays, but chefs have a little more leeway—and room to work in new favourite trends and ingredients—with side dishes. Here are a few recommendations for ways to mix things up.

Mixed-Up Mash
Instead of making your standard mashed potatoes, layer in extra flavour by adding in other vegetables, such as parsnips, cauliflower or celery root. Also, rather than adding butter and cream, consider other dairy products like crème fraîche or mascarpone. And make sure to highlight the updates on your menu.

Winter’s Versatile Greens
Sautéed spinach makes a great side, but don’t forget the other wonderful winter greens. Alternatives such as beet greens, mustard greens and collard greens are all waiting to be sautéed, tossed in hearty salads or baked into gratins.

Waves of Grain
Looking to serve an inexpensive side dish with your protein that won’t go soggy or lose its shape? Rices, grains and many kinds of pilafs all work great at this busy time of year. Try a 5-grain blend for a mix of grains that’s as versatile as it is delicious.

A Word on Asparagus
Everyone loves asparagus in spring at the height of its season. But during the holidays, asparagus costs more than other greens (because it’s shipped from afar) and doesn’t hold up well in a buffet or catering situation, or sitting under lights. You might want to choose Brussels sprouts or winter greens instead.

5 TIPS FOR USING MENU SLUGGERS
Make these inserts part of your marketing toolkit.

1. Sell Your LTOs
Publicizing limited-time offers is probably the most popular use for sluggers. Make sure to include images and an end date to create a sense of urgency.

2. Test New Items
Sluggers offer the perfect opportunity to try out new dishes without having to add them to your permanent menu.

3. Promote Profitmakers
Items featured on sluggers show 25 to 30 per cent higher sales than regular menu items do. Feature your biggest moneymakers such as specialty cocktails.

4. Dish Desserts
Diners pay more attention to dessert items when they are on a separate menu such as a slugger, table tent or separate list brought to the table by a server.

5. Use Sysco’s Services
Ask your Sysco Representative about how Sysco’s Marketing and Design Services can help you create custom sluggers—a proven and inexpensive way to increase sales and awareness.

Find recipes for these dishes on pages 30–31
A Fresh Take on Takeout
Expert tips for breaking into this growing market.

An increasing number of restaurants are turning to takeout and delivery, whether it’s to create a new revenue stream or to keep up with consumers’ changing habits. In fact, according to Technomic, 44 per cent of sales for all restaurants now come from off-premise dining. Many third-party delivery services take a significant bite out of your profit margins, however, and there are risks to inconveniencing on-premise diners with a rush of takeout customers.

Texas Honey Ham Company is a bustling counter-service operation in West Lake Hills, Texas, outside Austin. Co-owner Trent Hunt compares the controlled chaos inside to a Wall Street trading floor: “We like that frenetic feel, but it’s quick and organized.” Here’s how experts like Hunt bring order to a successful takeout business, while still taking care of diners in-house.

ONLINE ORDERING IS KEY
Make sure patrons can consult a menu and order through your restaurant’s website. List your number for call-in orders prominently on your homepage. Texas Honey Ham Company used a trusted third-party service to set up their online ordering service.

DON’T NEGLECT ON-PREMISE DINERS
Texas Honey Ham Company has figured out the right balance for on- and off-premise dining. Separate lines form for either placing or picking up to-go orders, while tables are filled with diners enjoying breakfast tacos and sandwiches. “You have to train your people to explain the system to diners when they come in,” Hunt says. Think ahead about how on-premise diners will be affected by the flow of people lining up for takeout orders. “It takes quite a bit of logistical planning.”

KEEP THE MENU SIMPLE
In general, a limited menu can make managing takeout and delivery easier, and combo plates ensure customers on the go don’t miss out on sides and appetizers.

OUTSOURCE DELIVERY
“We’ve looked into doing delivery ourselves, but the cost is pretty prohibitive,” Hunt says. Yet third-party delivery services can charge up to 30 per cent in fees. “That’s why we only accept orders through services that don’t take a cut from restaurants,” he says.

FIND PACKAGING THAT WORKS
Use packaging that will preserve a food’s temperature and freshness and that will travel well. “We used to wrap our sandwiches in butcher paper, but we switched a few years ago to stackable containers,” Hunt says. It’s going to constantly evolve,” Hunt says. “Anytime we’ve got a problem, whether it’s about finding better packaging or reviewing inventory, our Sysco Representative is all over it. They always find a solution.”

Ask about how Sysco’s Business Resources can help you set up a successful takeout and delivery program.

Plan Ahead for Party Pack Profits
Today, many people don’t have time to cook holiday meals from scratch. Complete “party meal packs”—whether a turkey dinner with all the trimmings for 10 or ham and sides for 100—have become very popular with consumers, and they also appeal to operators looking for additional revenue. We spoke with Rachaneen Toepen, Culinary Consultant at Sysco Indianapolis, to get tips for party pack success.

Be True to Your Food
“Make sure to include whatever you’re known for on the menu,” says Teipen. Don’t suddenly go outside your comfort zone. Not everyone wants turkey or ham for the holidays. If you’re known for fajitas, make that your meal pack. If you’re known for Mediterranean food, feature it.

Put Your Marketing Plan in Place
“Figure out your marketing plan and staffing needs about 90 days out,” Teipen says. “Use social media and brochures, and keep flyers by the host stand. And the more people you have involved in getting the word out, the better.”

FIND PACKAGING THAT WORKS
Use packaging that will preserve a food’s temperature and freshness and that will travel well. “We used to wrap our sandwiches in butcher paper, but we switched a few years ago to stackable containers,” Hunt says. “It’s going to constantly evolve,” Hunt says. “Anytime we’ve got a problem, whether it’s about finding better packaging or reviewing inventory, our Sysco Representative is all over it. They always find a solution.”

Ask about how Sysco’s Business Resources can help you set up a successful takeout and delivery program.
Decadent Holiday Desserts

Add seasonal cheer to your winter menu with confections ranging from simple to sensational.

You may not want to revamp your entire menu for the holidays, but adding a decadent, scratch-made holiday dessert is a stunning and memorable way to bring in the seasonal flavours diners crave (think eggnog, gingerbread, cinnamon and peppermint). For those without a dedicated pastry chef, who need to conserve labour but still want to present something special after the meal, Sysco offers a wide variety of delicious, ready-made thaw-and-serve dessert treats that have great plate presentation.

Bring the Spirit

It’s not just the yule log—many desserts have strong associations with the holiday season, such as Britain’s sticky toffee pudding. Here we’ve improved on a classic by making a Sticky Toffee Pudding Cake paired with a delicious caramel sauce that you can pour at the table. In Italy, winter means store shelves stocked with tall boxes of panettone—a sweet, brioche-like confection with dried fruit. We’ve used it to make a rich and festive Panettone Bread Pudding. Mix the time and the staff to do it, make this rich Gingerbread Chocolate Layer Cake. One of the most popular tastes of the season is eggnog. Use it to make a luxurious-yet-simple Eggnog Cheesecake With Ginger Snap Crust.

Or Have It Shipped to You

Not only is eggnog a favourite dairy-based holiday drink, it is also a versatile kitchen item. Chef Neil Doherty, Sysco Senior Director, Culinary Development recommends mixing it into crème anglaise to add Christmas spirit to any dessert. And if you don’t have time to make your own desserts from scratch, you can order individual thaw-and-serve treats, such as those pictured below.

Market Your Offerings

“People are more willing to indulge during the holidays,” says Bruce Barnes, Sysco Menu Consultant. “The power of suggestion works well.” Barnes suggests using a separate dessert menu, dessert card or a slugger on the table. Detailed descriptions and beautiful photos entice customers.

Whether serving a delicate thaw-and-serve treat or a deluxe scratch-made delicacy, this is the time to layer seasonal flavours and pull out all the stops.

After-Dinner Drinks

Get an Update

Seasonal garnishes, crumbled cookies, Wholesome Farms whipped cream and toasted marshmallows add pizzazz and personalization to Citavo coffee and cocoa drinks during the holidays. Sysco also offers a variety of flavours of syrup to customize your after-dinner drinks this season, including peppermint, lavender, salted caramel and pumpkin pie.
Discover our range of reduced water content vegetables

Exclusive to Bonduelle, the new InFlavor vacuum dehydration process reduces the amount of water contained in vegetables, giving them a firmer texture and a bolder taste. High water content vegetables are no longer an obstacle when frozen, but rather a major culinary advantage. Vegetables at their very best.

Bonduelle InFlavor 8 x 1 kg (8 x 2.2 lb.)

- Breakfast Mix
- Pizza Mix
- Fajita Mix
- Diced Yellow Onion
- Red Onion Strips
- Green Pepper Strips
- Red Pepper Strips

Tastier and so much more.

InFlavor process awarded

Upgrade the Dining Experience

Self-analysis and a comprehensive road map are the first steps to connecting with consumers.

When dining out, today’s consumers are always on the hunt for fantastic fare. But what they’re also looking for is more than just good food—it’s the experience. Millennials and younger generations have bought into the experience economy, where it’s not just about making a purchase—it’s about looking for value and connection beyond a simple transaction.

"From technology to the environment, everything’s changing," says Jay Ashton, the Business Resources Lead for Sysco Canada. "This new generation is changing the model we’ve had for the past 30 or 40 years."

Meals as Experiences

Along with being more in tune with diverse flavors, today’s diners are placing a higher value on sustainability at restaurants and are relying on social media to guide decisions and showcase meals as experiences. (A 2015 Eventbrite survey found that 75 percent of diners believe it’s worth paying more for a unique dining experience.)

Trying to improve customer experience can be overwhelming, but Sysco can guide you through the process. Most importantly, Sysco can help you take the first step evaluation. "You need to look at everything and map out your diners’ experience from the time they walk into your restaurant to the time they leave," Ashton says. This full map can reveal opportunities for improvement and close gaps between where you are and where you want to be.

Strategic Mindset

From there, Ashton says, create a strategy for building your consumer base and improving their experience. Begin by examining why certain items are on the menu, why you follow certain trends and who your customer base is. Sysco can help there, too, with everything from menu development and training to looking at how technology and marketing can improve business.

Studying the industry and staying on top of industry, technology and food trends are also essential to improving customer experience. This can be especially important during fall and winter months, when holiday menus introduce new ingredients. Along with encouraging social media sharing, Ashton also underlines the importance of engaging with people. "New generations want operators to talk to them about food and the experience they’re having."

Back to Basics

But at the end of the day, Ashton says, restaurants don’t need to reinvent the wheel or create an over-the-top dining experience. "At the heart of it all, it’s about making customers feel valued, and that can start with something as simple as shaking their hand."
5 Tips for a Strong Holiday Team

1. Be clear about your needs and expectations
   If you are hiring temporary employees, be clear about the seasonal nature of the gig to ensure it's a mutually beneficial relationship. Look for the kind of person who can jump right in for four or six weeks and keep a positive attitude throughout the season.

2. Work the staff's needs into the schedule
   Before you set the schedule in stone, get a good idea of each worker's preferences for the holidays. Being accommodating comes with a lot of positives. It helps create a pleasant workplace, makes scheduling fair and gives you a good idea of who prefers to pick up extra shifts and who needs time off.

3. Treat current and seasonal staff equally
   While some of your staff may be temporary, it's important not to treat them as second-class citizens. Everyone should feel like an equal part of the team—because at the end of the day, everyone is working toward the same goal: a successful holiday season.

4. Plan for the holiday season early—and thoroughly
   Careful, deliberate advance planning helps keep your holiday team invested and motivated. Focus on these three areas:
   - Training: Based on the number of positions you need to fill and the level of experience of new hires, you can determine the exact amount of time you need to train new seasonal staff.
   - Scheduling: Once you've built the schedule, send it out early. This helps the team plan their holiday schedule around it.
   - Planning: Prepare for the worst by planning for when an employee doesn't show up on a busy day, so it has little detrimental effect if it actually happens.

5. Show your appreciation
   The holiday season comes with a lot of headaches, as anyone in foodservice knows. Show your team you appreciate their efforts by offering lots of positive feedback, giving small gifts, throwing a party (after the rush is over) or even giving them a day off.

Profit Pitfalls to Avoid During the Holidays

The celebratory season can be fraught with missteps that impact the bottom line. Here are some dos and don'ts gleaned from hard-earned experience.

DON'T
Ignore the value of online marketing
A creative digital profile helps boost visibility. You're foolish to avoid social media. A creative digital profile helps boost visibility. You're foolish to avoid social media.

- Damian DeAngelos, Owner, Bagatelle Restaurant and others, Key West, Florida

Offer dishes you can't serve properly
If you are a caterer, or a restaurant that does takeout and delivery, be mindful of things that don't travel well. You could end up with a soggy mess.

- Deborah Lowery, Owner, Ladyfingers Catering, Louisville, Kentucky

Price things too high
Diners tend to be trying to save money around this time. If items are too expensive, they may not sell.

- DeAngelos

Make changes while you have the time
Whether you're revamping the dessert menu or training new staff members. It's important to use your off-season to your advantage instead of taking time off or having limited hours. Don't let your menu go stale.

- Lowery

Create fixed holiday menus
Whether the menu is traditional or modern, creating a fixed-price menu is an efficient way to please guests and save them money.

- Lowery

DO
Get started early
Game planning is critical. We use Thanksgiving as almost a target date for menus. And we'll have our wine tastings for the season done in September or October.

- Lowery

Stay on top of trends
Especially international fare; it keeps things interesting and unique. These days we get lots of requests for Indian, Latin and Italian dishes.

- DeAngelos

Try out new dishes beforehand
At The Signature Room, we will run new holiday dishes as specials well beforehand to get guest feedback and train the staff in preparation and serving.

- Cardel Reid

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- Cardel Reid

Get lax with reservations
Confirm large parties, retain credit card information with cancellation penalties and make confirmation calls to guests.

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**RECIPES**

**Goat-Stuffed Figs in Prosciutto**

**CHEF SHEA ZAPPIA**

**SYSCO SYRACUSE**

MAKES 24 PIECES

1 oz. Block & Bare Imperial goat cheese
1 oz. figs, halved
2 thick slices Arrozal Imperial prosciutto, cut into ½-inch strips
Arrozal Imperial extra-virgin olive oil, as needed
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh rosemary, chopped
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh thyme
1 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh oregano
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp. Sysco Imperial fresh red onion, minced
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial fresh celery, chopped
½ cup finely chopped celery
1 cup finely chopped onion
3 cups finely chopped tomato
3 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial extra-virgin olive oil
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
Salt, pepper

**TO PREPARE THE DISH**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Cut fig halves in half lengthwise. Place a figure, cut side up, on a baking sheet. Stuff each half with the goat cheese mixture.
3. In a small bowl, mix the prosciutto, rosemary, thyme, oregano, garlic, onion, oil, and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. Split open the figs and fill each half with the goat cheese mixture. Wrap the stuffed figs with prosciutto and bake at 375°F until the prosciutto is browned, about 20-25 minutes.

**Lamb Kebab With Naan and Harissa Yogurt**

**SHEA ZAPPIA**

**SYSCO SYRACUSE**

MAKES 12 KEBABS

1½ oz. lamb, trimmed of fat
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh lemon juice
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh red onion, chopped
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh garlic, minced
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh yellow onion, chopped
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial Chinese five-spice powder
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial fresh ground cumin
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial ground coriander
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial ground cumin
1 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh cilantro, chopped
3 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh parsley
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh mint
2 Tbsp.Sysco Imperial fresh cilantro
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2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh mint
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial fresh ground cumin
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial fresh ground coriander
Salt, pepper

**TO PREPARE THE DISH**

1. Preheat the grill to medium-high heat.
2. Thread the lamb on the skewers. Season with salt and pepper. Grill the kebabs until cooked through, about 5-6 minutes per side.
3. In a small bowl, mix the yogurt, harissa, lemon juice, and salt. Serve the kebabs with the yogurt sauce and naan bread.

**Vegetarian Gravy With Bourbon**

**CHEF NEIL DOHERTY**

**SYSCO SYRACUSE CORPORATE SERIES**

1½ cups uncooked wild mushrooms
1 medium sweet onion, diced
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
1 celery stalk, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbsp. fresh thyme
1 Tbsp. fresh rosemary
1 Tbsp. fresh sage
1 Tbsp. fresh parsley
1 Tbsp. fresh cilantro
2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 cup dry white wine
1 cup chicken broth
2 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
2 Tbsp. bourbon
Salt, pepper

**TO PREPARE THE DISH**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a large oven-safe Dutch oven, sauté the vegetables with the wine, broth, and maple syrup over medium-high heat until the vegetables are tender and the liquid has reduced by half.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the flour and water. Slowly add the flour mixture to the vegetable mixture, stirring constantly until the gravy thickens. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

**Vegan Gravy**

**CHEF BRENT DUREC**

**SYSCO KELLOGG MAKES ABOUT 1 GALLON**

1 small onion, skinned
3 small shallots, skinned
2 medium carrots, skin on, ends removed
2 small yellow beets, skin on, ends removed
2 Tbsp. miso paste
1 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
Salt, black pepper

**TO PREPARE THE DISH**

1. In a large stockpot, sauté the vegetables with the wine, broth, and maple syrup over medium-high heat until the vegetables are tender and the liquid has reduced by half.
2. In a small bowl, mix the flour and water. Slowly add the flour mixture to the vegetable mixture, stirring constantly until the gravy thickens. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

**Cauliflower Mash**

**SYSCO CORPORATE SERIES**

1 head cauliflower, cored and cut into florets
½ lb. sliced potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
1 clove garlic, chopped
2 cups Wholesome Farms whole milk
1 tsp. Sysco Imperial fresh thyme, minced (optional)

**TO PREPARE THE DISH**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a large pot, cook the potatoes, cauliflower, and garlic in the milk until tender, about 20 minutes.
3. Drain the pot, mash the potatoes and cauliflower with a masher until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

**Turkey Roulade With Bourbon Gravy**

**CHEF NEIL DOHERTY**

**SYSCO SYRACUSE CORPORATE SERIES**

12 slices thin-sliced turkey breast
2 Tbsp. cornstarch dissolved in ¼ cup water, or all-purpose flour (optional)
2 Tbsp. bourbon
Salt, pepper

**TO PREPARE THE DISH**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a large bowl, mix the turkey breast with the bourbon and cornstarch. Spread the mixture evenly over the turkey slices. Roll up the turkey slices and secure with cooking twine.
3. In a large oven-safe Dutch oven, sauté the vegetables with the wine, broth, and maple syrup over medium-high heat until the vegetables are tender and the liquid has reduced by half.
4. In a small bowl, mix the flour and water. Slowly add the flour mixture to the vegetable mixture, stirring constantly until the gravy thickens. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

**Wild Mushroom Stuffing**

**CHEF NEIL DOHERTY**

**SYSCO SYRACUSE CORPORATE SERIES**

1 lb. fresh mushrooms (such as chanterelle), crust removed
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh thyme
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh sage
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh rosemary
2 Tbsp. Sysco Imperial fresh garlic, minced
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper

**TO PREPARE THE DISH**

1. In a large oven-safe Dutch oven, sauté the mushrooms with the thyme, sage, rosemary, garlic, salt, and pepper over medium-high heat until the mushrooms are tender and the liquid has reduced by half.
2. In a small bowl, mix the flour and water. Slowly add the flour mixture to the vegetable mixture, stirring constantly until the gravy thickens. Adjust the seasonings to taste.
Turkey Roulade

In a small bowl, wash the bread cubes in the milk. Meanwhile, in a sauté pan, cook the bacon over medium-high heat until it is crisp and all the fat is rendered. Add the onion, celery and garlic and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue to cook until the mushrooms have released their liquid and are soft, about 4 minutes. Deglaze the pan with the Marsala and cook for 1 to 2 minutes longer. Remove from the heat and allow to cool completely.

Squeeze excess milk from the bread cubes and place it in a mixing bowl. Add the eggs and milk, then carefully remove the foil and pound slices of turkey all the way to an even thickness with additional plastic wrap. Then, place the slices of turkey, “Tootsie Roll” fashion, inside the parchment. Twist the roulade, “Tootsie Roll” fashion, making sure the roulade is tight and all the fat is rendered. Add a sauté pan, cook the bacon over medium heat until it is crisp and all the fat is rendered. Add the onion, celery and garlic and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue to cook until the mushrooms have released their liquid and are soft, about 4 minutes. Deglaze the pan with the Marsala and cook for 1 to 2 minutes longer. Remove from the heat and allow to cool completely.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the rest of the ingredients, making sure the mixture is not too thick. Add 5 tablespoons olive oil and toss well to distribute the oil evenly. Move the pan from the smoker and let the nuts cool completely.

Brush with the bacon marmalade and sprinkle with the smoked hazelnuts.

For the Maple-PECAN Sauce

In a mixing bowl, combine the sage, cream, melted butter, salt and sweet potato pulp. Mix in the flour to form a dough (you may need a little more or less flour depending on the moisture content of the sweet potato). Bring a saucepan of salted water to a boil. Use a saucepan maker or a rubber spatula to push the dough through the holes of a colander into the simmering water; cook for 2 minutes. Once the spartale begins to float, use a slotted spoon to transfer them to a bowl of ice water. Once chilled, drain the spartale. Spread out the spartale on a sheet pan and toss with the vegetable oil. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or up to 2 days.

When ready to serve, heat the bacon in a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add the diced sweet potato to the pan and sauté until soft, to 2 minutes. Add the parsley, salad and salt to the pan and heat through.

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Chef Brent Durec feels fortunate to be based at Sysco Kelowna in British Columbia. This area of western Canada, which is sometimes called the “Napa of the North” for its world-class wine, food and scenery, is nothing if not inspiring for Durec and the customers who visit him and his colleagues for business reviews and menu consultations.

“We work with customers one-on-one,” says Durec. “We discuss product innovation and do testing and training, but my number one thing is helping them succeed. We try to make their business more profitable.”

**Passionate About Food**
Introducing customers to new tastes is a pleasure for Durec, who credits his Ukrainian grandmother’s cooking with first piquing his interest in the culinary arts. “Cooking came naturally,” he says. One of his grandmother’s signature dishes, stuffed cabbage rolls, is still a favourite.

Before coming to Sysco, Durec held a variety of jobs in foodservice, including working in hotels and at a golf course. But it wasn’t until his early 20s (he’s now 48) that he decided to attend cooking school. “And I never looked back,” he says. “Cooking allows you to express your creativity.”

**Creativity and Innovation**

My number one thing is helping [customers] succeed. We try to make their business more profitable.

**Customer-Focused**
Durec has been with Sysco for 15 years, with just over six of those in his current role as Culinary Consultant. He previously worked in purchasing and sales and even as a protein specialist. “We’re pretty lucky,” he says. “We’re small here compared with some Sysco operating companies, and we’re a super-tight group.”

His favourite parts of the job is interacting with customers, exploring new products and seeking out what will be the next big thing in foodservice. “You get to do something different every day,” he explains. “I’m constantly on the hunt for food trends, such as plant-based foods, sustainable products and healthier choices.”

**Locally Grown**
Durec is happy to have so many family farms in the Kelowna area offering a direct pipeline of fresh produce—and even local cheese. “We try to use as much local product as we can.” And while Kelowna is a 4½-hour drive from Vancouver and all of its varied seafood offerings, Durec says daily deliveries keep them well-stocked with fresh fish and shellfish. Not surprisingly, in this part of the world, salmon is king.

When not working, Durec is often involved with food in some way. He is on the board of several local organizations, including the British Columbia Restaurant & Food Service Association, and he and his colleagues do charitable work in the community. Last year, Sysco Kelowna donated nearly 100,000 pounds of fresh and frozen produce to local food banks. “If we can’t sell it, we can help feed local families,” says Durec. “That’s a win-win.”
we’ve got you COVERED

Trust Heinz for the high-quality ketchup you need to make your french fry offerings stand out.

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Get details about our full lines of products at krafheinzfoodservice.ca/fries. For more information, please contact your Marketing Associate.