



## SYNERGY IN CATERING

PHILIP HOWARD, MD of Catering Design Group, weighs in on the importance of synergy

**Successful catering operations within garden centres display perfect synergy between their front and back of house facilities.**

What this means is that both are able to operate effectively, and with maximum efficiency at all times to deliver your menu and manage customer and staff flows. It's natural for garden centres to devote a large chunk of their restaurant or café budget to the front of house, because that's what's on show to customers. However, all too often, this is at the expense of the investment back of house. The kitchen is the engine room of every catering facility – irrespective of menu and service style. If your kitchen is unable to deliver your front of house requirements, the quality of your food and service will suffer and so, in turn, will the customer experience. Service style and menu will also impact on the size and design of your kitchen as well as the choice of equipment. A good example of this is storage; a menu featuring largely regenerated 'bought in' items will demand bulk storage close to the servery area, whilst a home-made offer will require storage of fresh ingredients close to the prep area. It's all about achieving the correct balance to ensure optimum efficiency between the two areas.

### STAFF & CUSTOMER FLOW

When planning the perfect synergy between front and back of house, consider the journey your food takes from the kitchen to the table and then how empty plates make the journey back. The most effective venues will have routes which avoid excessive queues and clashes between staff and customers around counter or till areas. Is there a quick, direct route from front of house to the dishwash area? Where possible plan the kitchen with separate entrance and exit routes to allow for the free flow of staff, food and 'dirties'. Intelligent design of the kitchen area will reduce the risk of cross-contamination and create the optimum flows within the space to deliver maximum efficiency with the appropriate staffing levels. If done correctly the front of house design will improve service and profitability by providing effective queue management and an abundance of retail and impulse opportunities around counters and till points. With good design, synergy has the power to ensure operational efficiency, whilst creating a catering facility that not only looks and feels great, but works irrespective of budget.

Catering Design Group (CDG), is an award winning restaurant and commercial kitchen design company for the hospitality industry. The business creates inspiring environments across front and back of house. Uniquely for a design company, CDG offers its clients a diverse range of in-house skills, which ensures they have a real understanding of how a restaurant or kitchen should look, feel and operate, to deliver on time, on budget and on brief.



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