



# Optimizing Food Service Operations

3M Kitchen Manager eBook





A photograph of a commercial kitchen. In the foreground, a wooden countertop holds a metal bowl with a whisk and a clipboard with papers. In the background, a male chef with long hair and a female staff member, both in white chef coats, are looking down at a document held by the chef. The kitchen has stainless steel shelves with various items like strainers and containers hanging from them.

## Meeting a range of common commercial kitchen challenges head-on

You might have the most talented chef in the city. You might offer the highest-quality food. Your atmosphere might be consistently warm and welcoming. What leads to success is being able to carefully balance all three. In a commercial restaurant environment where food and labor costs are constantly rising and profit margins are uniformly thin, that means providing the best possible customer experience.

While talent, quality fare and ambience matter, it's mastering the underlying issues that can help you truly delight your customers. This ebook is all about excelling at the things customers don't see: having the cleanest possible commercial kitchen, improving operations at several levels, finding (and keeping) the best people, and utilizing technology.

As you read through it, you'll note that you can access the full articles these brief chapters are based on at 3M Food Service Resources.

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# Getting Grease Out of Your Way

Some of the ingredients that make the food you serve so delicious can also be among the most damaging to your commercial kitchen. Butters, oils and other fats can make their way from fryers, griddles and ovens to virtually everywhere in the kitchen. The result is grease buildup in places both expected and unexpected, including floors, inside oven hoods, on ceilings, in ductwork, and more. Grease is a constant challenge in commercial kitchens, putting employees, customers, and equipment at risk. Here are some keys to proper grease management:

## Create a Commercial Kitchen Cleaning Plan.

Various aspects of commercial kitchen grease removal need to happen at different times. Daily efforts will minimize grease buildup over time. However, certain [commercial kitchen deep-cleaning activities](#) need to be scheduled at other times, as well.

## Use the Right Commercial Kitchen Deep-Cleaning Tools.

Just as you choose the right stainless steel scouring pads to make washing pots and pans easier, the right tools can make grease control easier. For example, [Scotch-Brite™ Kitchen Cleaner and Degreaser with Scotchgard™ Protector Wipes](#) is a heavy-duty commercial kitchen degreaser combination cleans baked-on grease easily. Because it leaves a clean, protective Scotchgard™ layer on the surface, it can cut future cleaning time by 45 percent after just one use.

## Plan Ahead.

To help your team maintain your kitchen in the best way possible, create a commercial kitchen deep-cleaning checklist that includes daily items, but also lists when deep cleaning needs to be scheduled.

Whether it's hiring a heating, ventilation, and cooling company to clean out grease in ductwork, or having an all-hands-on-deck cleaning day where you move equipment to clean grease drips and spills in places you can't see, cleaning your commercial kitchen is everyone's job and should be taken seriously.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# Countering Kitchen Challenges to Improve Restaurant Performance

**Waste. Aging equipment. Safety concerns. Water quality.** All restaurants face a variety of potentially problematic food service challenges that can impact everything from equipment longevity to the overall success of the business. Restaurant owners and managers have a variety of business assets to protect. Whether it's equipment that breaks from improper care or accidents that threaten worker or customer safety, taking good care upfront can minimize losses from events, such as:



## Equipment Cleaning

Proper restaurant cleanliness and maintenance can help extend equipment life. Using the right tools on the right surface can [save time and money](#) and prevents scratches that can mar the surface of pots, pans, or griddles.

## Floor Care.

Slipping is a big concern in restaurants, both in the front and back of the house, as it can lead to [injuries and even legal risks](#). Products like disposable and soap-dispensing mops help make cleanup easier and keep grease from making floors slick.

## Regulations and Compliance

Of course, adhering to federal, state and local laws and regulations that apply to your business is essential. Such rules and regulations keep customers and employees safe. And failure to adhere to them may result in expensive fines or penalties.

## Water Quality.

Hard water can cause build-up on equipment over time, causing it to break down or be less energy efficient, increasing down time and costs. Enhanced water filtration and water treatments can improve food and beverage quality and help your restaurant conserve energy and experience less down time.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# Pro Tips for a Deeper Kitchen Cleaning Dive

From figuring out how to clean a greasy kitchen floor to cleaning the flat griddle to choosing the best dish sponge, restaurant owners and kitchen staff are faced with myriad tasks and challenges every day. Commercial kitchen cleaning is a never-ending job, but if done right, it's just another key to optimizing your operation. Consider these steps to ensure that your kitchen equipment is consistently clean and properly maintained:

## Create a Kitchen Cleaning Plan That Includes the “Dailies.”

Develop a proactive cleaning plan that includes a calendar for once-a-month kitchen deep cleaning as well as equipment maintenance, which often occurs quarterly. Don't forget the “day-to-day”: removing food residue and grease, cleaning griddle tops and greasy kitchen floors, and scrubbing pots and pans.

## Battle Hard Water Buildup.

Sediment particles and [other dissolved particles in your water, also called “hard water,”](#) can cause scale to build up in your equipment and contribute to corrosion, shortening the lifespan of your equipment and making it less effective.

## Bring in Commercial Kitchen Cleaning Reinforcements.

In some cases, a do-it-yourself approach to cleaning is a good idea. In others, it's a good idea to outsource. For example, bring in a heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) contractor to clean condensers, lines to espresso machines, and the like.

## Use the Right Tools.

Closely monitor the areas where staff members are spending the most time on cleaning tasks and look for tools and products that can help them [get the job done more efficiently](#).

Restaurant cleaning is essential for hygiene and safety. However, taking the time to surface and deep clean, handle proper maintenance, and invest in the right tools also protects your investment in critical equipment.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# Does Your Brand Need Cleaning Up?



From improving menu items to choosing the best dish sponge to keeping your commercial kitchen sparkling clean, you are a master of restaurant operations. But when was the last time you looked at your brand? Customers and prospective diners judge your restaurant from the inside and outside based on a variety of factors. And sending the wrong messages could hurt business. Consider these elements when “cleaning up” your brand:

## Define Your Brand Promise.

The first step to doing a brand clean-up is to define what you want your brand to represent to customers, Erich Joachimsthaler, CEO and founder of Vivaldi Partners Group, a New York City global brand strategy consulting firm [told 3M Brand You](#), an online destination for branding information. “A brand promise is the set of functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits that a brand delivers to the customer or consumer,” he says.

## Soak in Feedback Like a Sponge.

Ask customers, vendors and contacts about what your restaurant’s brand represents to them. Consider whether their feedback matches your brand promise. If not, it’s time to take a scrub pad to your brand and clean it up.

## Be Consistent.

Branding is more than just a logo. The core elements of your [brand](#) include competitive analysis, brand differentiation, and unique traits. These must be reinforced throughout your business, such as on the menu and in communications, visuals, promotions.

## Focus on Clear Communication.

Make sure your brand “look” and messaging are consistent in your promotion and outreach. People should be able to recognize your business whether they see the exterior or they land on your restaurant’s Instagram page. Moore says it’s important to promote your brand across various platforms as your restaurant’s resources allow.

Establishing a brand takes time and may be subject to challenges. Smaller brands don’t necessarily have those, and larger brands get stuck with bureaucracy, so the important factor is to be out there and be consistent and communicate regularly.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# Extreme Commercial Kitchen Makeover with Less Downtime and Expense

Remodeling a restaurant is not only a big expense but can also lead to downtime when you can least afford it. But experienced contractors know that there are tips, tricks and products that can keep your restaurant up and running quicker while reducing expenses and waste. Here are refresh and remodel ideas that can save time and money:

## Cover Your Countertops

While marble or slate might be pricey, 3M™ DI-NOC™ Architectural Finish film comes in [multiple stone looks](#). Paired with a protective overlamine, you can get the same look as expensive marble or granite with durability that will last. And installation may be done in a day or two.

## Transform Tiled Areas

The cost of a single tile can range from \$2.00 to \$100. 3M Architectural Finishes film can be applied directly over tile and grout in just hours. It's easy to switch from a tile wall to the warm look of wood, glamorous metallic accents, or a pop of color that reinforces your brand.

## “Wow” with Wall Coverings

Various finishes like those 3M produces can deliver a wide range of looks, but be applied in days versus weeks with paint and with minimal waste, which also saves money.

## New Cabinets without Carpentry

Remodeling often includes replacing cabinetry. The carpentry costs, sawdust, and time required for such a transformation may be prohibitive for many restaurants, but [3M DI-NOC Architectural Finish films](#) let you change the wood finish or transform cabinets to solid colors, stone, or abstract finishes.

Virtually every area of your restaurant can be refinished with films instead of costly alternatives.

Fitting out a 1,000-square-foot bar and commercial kitchen, including equipment like burners and espresso machines, carries an average cost of about \$75,000 (\$80 per square foot), which can vary by market.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# 5 Steps to Optimizing Restaurant Operations

Down time is dead time. The wrong equipment, a lack of on-hand supplies, inefficient systems, poorly trained staff and bad communication ... all or any one of these can dramatically slow your operation down, costing you customers and revenue. These five kitchen manager tips can help you optimize your restaurant's operations and get more done:

## 1. Use the Right Tools.

Using the wrong equipment or worn-out tools can cause big issues for your restaurant. If equipment like cooking tools or headsets breaks or is difficult to use, employees may waste time and become frustrated. Using the wrong tool may unintentionally cause injury and possibly leave the restaurant open to legal risk.



## 2. Take Stock of Your Commercial Kitchen.

Sometimes, simply being out of stock of a product or supply can derail efficiency and lose customers. Also, consider investing in durable products that last longer, like [scouring pads](#) that can be reused more frequently.



## 3. Create Systems for Restocking Kitchen Products.

Ensure that the ingredients, supplies and other goods you need to run your restaurant are always on hand. Establish clear re-order levels based on the time it takes suppliers to replenish what you need.



## 4. Thoroughly Train Restaurant Employees.

In many restaurants, training is done in a casual manner. This is where a training manual or, at least, a checklist is useful. By documenting the areas in which a server needs to be trained, the restaurant can ensure that the new person is made aware of all existing practices and policies that make up the brand experience.



## 5. Keep Communication Open.

If you make changes, choose new equipment or supplies, discontinue menu items or change policies, communication with your staff is essential. Making changes without alerting employees can make them feel less engaged and affect their interactions with customers.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)





# Raising Your Customer Experience Game

There is no more competitive business than running a restaurant. For the consumer, choices abound. One bad meal and you risk not only losing them but suffering negative reviews online and by word-of-mouth. Your best tool to combat the competition? Consistently satisfied customers and staying on top of restaurant industry trends. Putting five essential elements into play can help you deliver a great customer experience:

## Workplace Hospitality.

It's hard to overstate how important having the right staff can be. Your people will provide the human interaction your customers have. The service must meet their expectations. It's critical to constantly be on the lookout for the right people who understand restaurant service trends.

## Reliability

Customers want to know that your establishment will meet or exceed their expectations routinely. You need to understand why customers are coming to your restaurant and then deliver the experience they. It's important to put processes in place to ensure that the experience is the same or similar each time.



## Quality

People go to restaurants to eat, drink and celebrate, so the food and beverage quality is very important. Equipment should be well-maintained and operational to provide the best possible meal preparation. Routinely review food and beverage quality yourself to ensure that the taste and presentation is appropriate for your establishment.

## Décor and ambience

Before customers even enter your restaurant, they form opinions based on the way the exterior looks. As they enter the establishment, the décor, layout and other aspects of its appearance also contribute to their opinion. Restaurant cleanliness matters and floors should be well-maintained to prevent slips and trips.

## Trust

When diners enter your establishment, they're trusting that you're keeping your establishment clean and taking proper care to prevent food-borne illnesses. They want the establishment to appear clean—especially in popular open-kitchen formats.

What does it take to meet high customer expectations? [Recent research](#) reveals that it's about delighting them (43 percent) with touches that exceed their expectations and engaging them (46 percent) by interacting in friendly and authentic ways.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# How Restaurant Employee Scheduling Leads to Success

Timing matters. In your restaurant, good scheduling is among the best ways to create order and maintain a smooth operational flow. While scheduling is often seen as a routine but necessary task, the right approach can help you build relationships with staff, increase retention and minimize overtime. Here are five tips for getting it right:

## Know Your Restaurant Staffing Needs Day-by-Day, Hour-by-Hour.

Every commercial kitchen has slow and busy times. Cascade your workers' arrival times according to your business' traffic, Hampton says.

### Use Tech.

Invest in commercial restaurant scheduling technology to help you track employee availability, allow them to access their schedules from their phones and save time in your busy restaurant.

## Shift Your Commercial Kitchen's Work Week Start.

Control overtime by starting the work week on Friday. Workers may rack up extra hours over the weekend, especially around busy holiday times. Then, their schedules can be adjusted during the remainder of the week, when customer volume is likely to be lower.

## Develop Restaurant Cleaning and Other Checklists

Develop [commercial kitchen](#) cleaning checklists or systems for every other area of the business. This will help workers maximize their time and get things done in a more uniform way.

## Use Free Time to Develop Workers.

When your team members maximize their time, that efficiency allows you to find opportunities to train them in other parts of the business.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# Train to Retain: The Right Program Reduces Employee Turnover

The restaurant industry has a clear turnover problem, but the answer to keeping your best people might be encompassed in two simple words: Employee training. From service expectations to commercial kitchen cleaning standards, the right training program can boost retention and serve your bottom line. Some keys include:

## Systematize Each Job.

Craft a complete job description for each position in your restaurant, including the standards and metrics that you expect. In addition to cooking and prep, kitchen staff may need to learn everything from how to clean a greasy floor to how to clean an electric griddle. When you map out the specifics of each job, you understand each area your staff members need to learn.

## Document It.

Create a training manual that includes the areas in which employees need to be trained, including other parts of the restaurant. The front of the house and back of the house should be able to understand the demands placed on each other, she says.

## Choose the Right Trainers.

Everyone needs to be trained, but not everyone is a good trainer. Identify detail-oriented people who are patient and familiar with your expectations.

## Give Constructive Feedback.

Feedback is essential for new employees to grow and learn. Trainers should be attentive to details like how quickly the new employee does what's expected. Be sure to reinforce what they're doing right, too, so they don't get overwhelmed with negative feedback.

## Test and Retest.

A new hire can do the most damage in those first days working independently from the trainer. So, testing and checking in on your new hires periodically and retraining when necessary are also important steps.

## Foster a “Retention Environment.”

By creating an environment where employees know that you care about helping them and where they feel free to ask questions, communicate, and get better at their jobs, you help retain the best talent.

Employee departure rates have topped 70 percent annually in recent years and the cost of staff turnover could be as high as \$5,864 per employee.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)

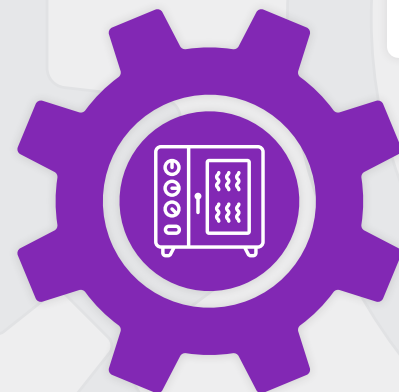


# Robots and Automation: Leading Commercial Kitchen Transformation

Technology is changing the way commercial kitchens operate, improving food quality and improving outcomes in commercial restaurants. For example, CaliBurger, which has 50 locations in California, recently debuted [Flippy](#), a burger-flipping robot, at its Pasadena restaurant. Excited crowds immediately filled the establishment. Industry leaders are investing in robotics to streamline operations in a range of areas, including:

## Automation

Cooking equipment automation is helping restaurants improve cooking outcomes and efficiency. Combination ovens can cook with dry heat or steam and rapid-cook ovens use a combination of hot air and microwave technology.



## Tech-Enabled Commercial Griddles

Automated, double-sided commercial griddles have plates that cover food and cook from the top and bottom at the same time, which can give you twice the through-put from a cooking standpoint. Advanced thermostats automatically regulate griddle temperature.



## Grease Removal

Automated controls and cooking processes, built-in oil filtration, temperature sensors, and oil quality monitors are among the connected technology that helps restaurant owners better manage food outcomes and oil quality.



## Reducing Illness and Waste

Sensors in refrigerators and freezers can sense whether food is being kept at appropriate temperatures to prevent food-borne illness and reduce food waste.

Despite these futuristic advances in robots and automation, most restaurants are going to continue to need good human talent for the foreseeable future. For example, even after Flippy cooks all those burgers, you'll still likely need a person to [clean your flat-top griddle](#).

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)



# Build Your Business with Breakthrough Commercial Kitchen Technology

In a market more competitive than most, you look to leverage every advantage in providing the best possible restaurant experience. From streamlining operations and keeping food safe and delicious to staffing appropriately, advances in commercial kitchen technology—including robotics, artificial intelligence, tracking systems and more—can help. Here's how technology is changing the way restaurants do business:

## Kitchen Cleaning, Scheduling and Inventory Made Easier

Employee scheduling platforms and software free up time spent poring over schedules, and they can automate schedule changes and time-off requests. Automated inventory management tracks items received and sales analytics over time. By applying data solutions to your restaurant's trends, these commercial kitchen technology solutions help you determine when it's time to reorder various ingredients and supplies and prompt you to do so.



## Food Safety Made Smarter

“Smart equipment” is increasingly important in commercial kitchen technology and can vastly improve food quality and safety while reducing waste. Cooktop, refrigeration and other sensors can ensure that food is being stored and cooked at proper temperatures.

## Maximizing Communication

Exceptional guest experiences require good communication, especially between the front and back of the house. The top three must-haves in a POS system include CRM and loyalty program management, loss prevention and mobile payment options.

## Putting the Power of Ordering in Customers' Hands

Customers are increasingly comfortable with self-serve stations, tabletop devices and apps when ordering and paying for food. On-site orders may be placed through a kiosk or table tablet that also acts as a payment terminal. Order accuracy is improved, and the need to print menus is eliminated.

32 percent of restaurants use workforce and labor management software.

To learn more, visit [3M Foodservice Content Hub](#)





## Meeting Your Food Service Challenges

At 3M, we're committed to delivering innovative solutions to help you solve your toughest food service challenges—efficiently, cost-effectively and safely. From eye-catching outdoor signage and interior design solutions, cutting-edge water filtration and griddle cleaning solutions, to durable sponges and eco-friendly floor cleaners, and more, we're here to help you take the guest experience—and your restaurant's reputation—above and beyond.

To learn more about solving your key food service challenges, visit [3M Food Service Resources](#).