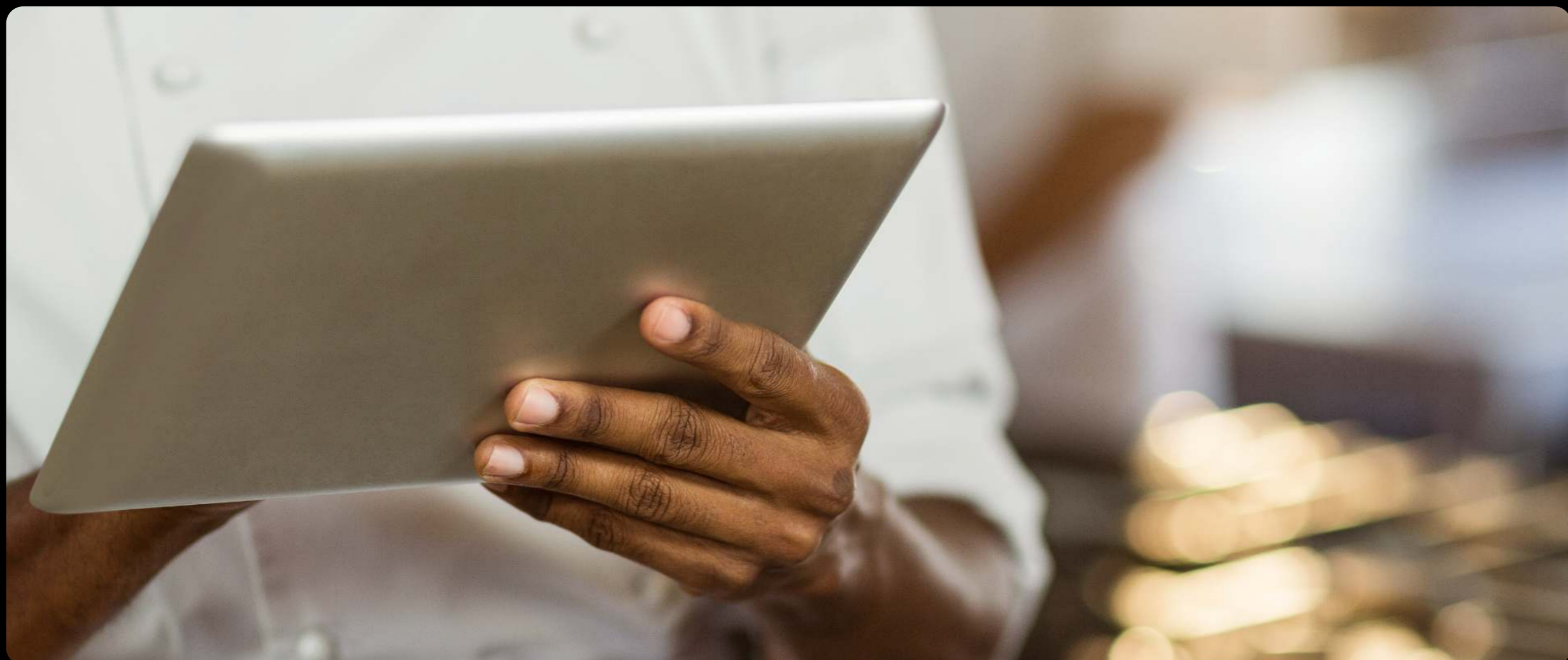

Chapter Three

Building Your Catering Organization to Scale



Selling Smart at Scale

Scaling in corporate catering isn't merely about increasing volume—it's about smart, sustainable growth. From adopting a sales-first approach to strategically assembling your team and fine-tuning your menu, every step counts. Let's explore how to build a solid foundation that allows you to take on the complexities of catering at an enterprise level.

Building Your Sales Team To Scale

In the catering business, sales and service are two sides of the same coin. While your culinary team ensures that your food is top-notch, your sales team guarantees that your food reaches as many corporate tables as possible.

Tip 1: Take cues from the software industry. Use a CRM system to manage customer interactions and to keep track of sales cycles, which can be longer and more complex in B2B catering.

Tip 2: Most catering orders are still placed by phone. Train your sales team to upsell and cross-sell effectively during these interactions. The goal is to convert every inquiry into a sale.

Implementing Smart Technology

Tech Solutions

- Leadership dashboards that provide a 360-degree view of operations.
- Customer Relationship Management software tailored for catering businesses.



The Sales Process

Building a repeatable sales strategy and process follows simple tactics that will easily scale with your organization, or can be outsourced to an external sales team or service.

The Three Tactics

Phone

Email

In Person

“Sales tactics are generally going to be similar regardless of trade zone, however you may favor certain tactics over others based on the specifics of the trade zone. I found the biggest difference between suburban and urban is security and how you approached canvassing. As all my sales people knew, they weren't doing their job until they had been kicked out of a building at least once a week.”



William Holleman

Off Premises Growth Academy

The Three Tactics Explained

Phone

- Cold calling
- Follow-up and feedback calls for active or lapsed/lost customers

Email

- Prospect campaigns
- Active campaigns
- Lapsed and lost guest campaigns
- Feedback/1st time customer outreach

In Person

- Trade Zone Canvassing & Cold Canvassing
- Active Visits: Visiting current clients to build relationships and ask for referrals
- Piggy Back Visits: Going with a delivery person to get into a building and canvass prospects
- Sales Visits: Schedule sales call with food to buyers

Pro Tip 1: Automate email campaigns and outreach for prospective, active, and lapsed customers through the Lunchbox built-in [Marketing CRM](#)

Pro Tip 2: Dropping off samples is a great way to get in the door at local businesses. Make sure to leave a call card and menu.

The Importance of a Dedicated Catering Menu

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the requirements for a corporate catering menu can be vastly different from your regular in-store and third-party delivery menus. A specialized catering menu is important for several reasons. In this section, we'll run through the different ways your menu needs to be optimized to meet unique client needs.

Catering Segments



Corporate
Offices



Schools
& Universities



Manufacturing
Plants



Weddings
& Events



Coworking
Spaces



Small Local
Businesses



Families
& Friends

Considerations When Building Your Catering Menu



Individual Packaging

In a post-pandemic world, individual packaging has become more important than ever. Corporate clients appreciate the safety and convenience that come with individually packed meals. Items that can be packaged simply, like sandwiches, bowls, and build your own style buffets are a win-win.



Accommodating Dietary Needs

It is paramount to consider the unique dietary needs of individuals within a large group. Offering a menu that can be modified based on various restrictions, lifestyles, and preferences including vegan, gluten free, and vegetarian options will win you more business and make customers comfortable to order from you.



Travel Friendly

Food items that travel well and still taste fresh upon delivery are another crucial consideration for your corporate catering menu.



Optimized for Speed

Catering orders are often large and require preparation at speed. Hence, your menu should be optimized for your catering production line, including items that can be prepared quickly and efficiently.



Personalized & Customizable

Customers want a catering experience that feels like it was tailored exactly to their needs. Being able to offer modifications, accommodate order notes, quantity size and utensil needs will go a long way in winning and retaining new business.

Maximizing Production to Meet Demand

Being able to meet the demand for high-quality food in varying volumes and within tight timeframes is a challenge that's not just about speed and space. It's also about process optimization, workforce planning, and intelligent use of technology. Let's delve into the strategies to scale your production capabilities effectively.



Driving Efficiency in Production

Batch Manufacturing for Volume

Traditional catering operations often work on a per-order basis, which can become an operational bottleneck when scaling. Batch manufacturing can be a game-changer here.



Economies of Scale

Bulk purchases of ingredients and batch cooking can dramatically reduce production costs, labor costs, and help allocate resources in an efficient way.

Pro Tip: Utilizing prep sheets can make batch production an ease. Supply teams with exactly what and how much they need to pack, so customers get exactly what they ordered.



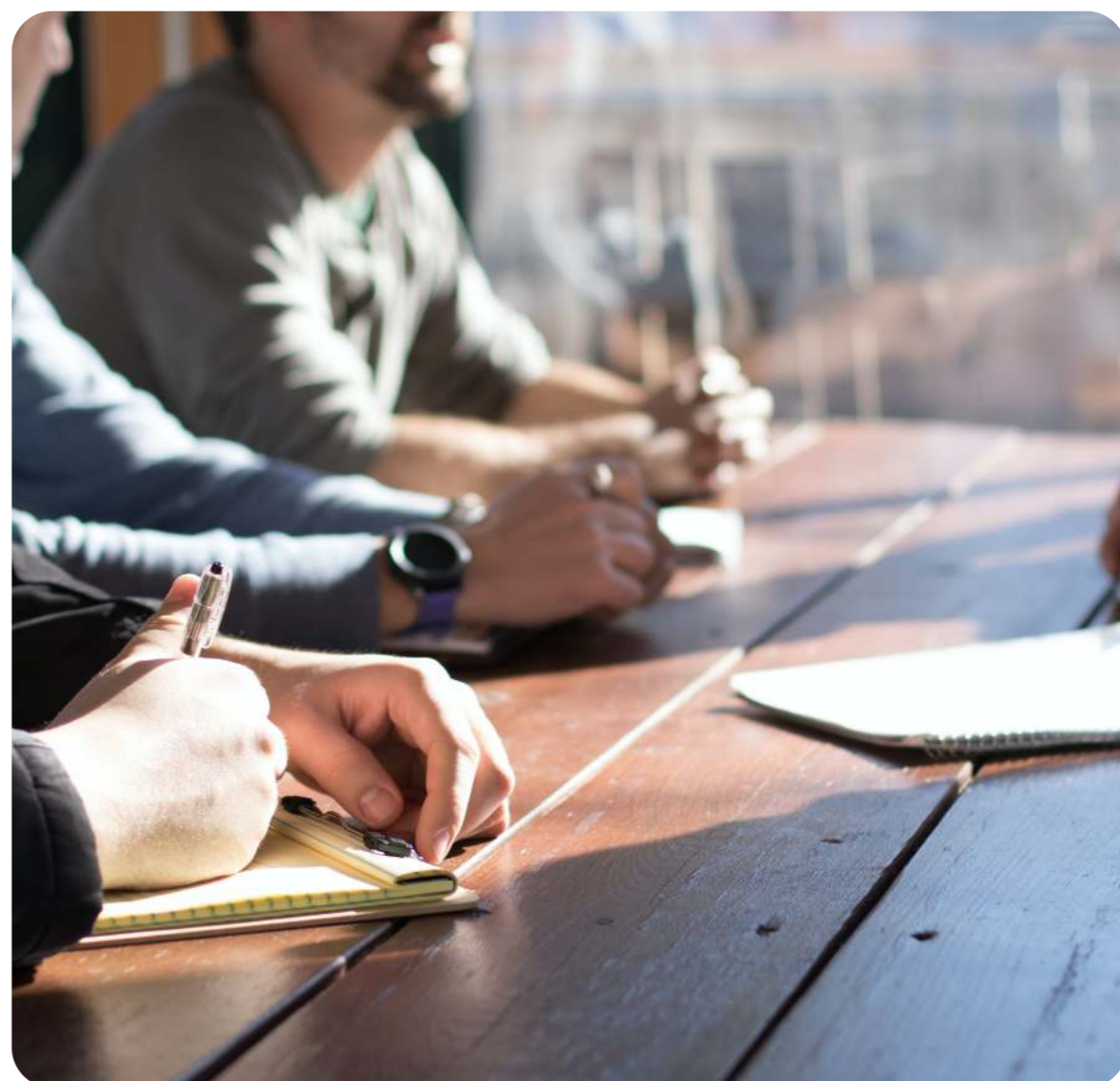
Quality Consistency

A uniform cooking process ensures that every dish meets the same quality criteria.



Time Efficiency

Working in batches allows you to streamline the production schedule and minimize downtime. Catering technology platforms like [Lunchbox](#) can assist with custom, automated prep sheets to drive efficiency and reduce waste and error, reducing admin time for catering managers.



Selecting and Optimizing Kitchens for Catering

Structuring Your Kitchen for Large-Scale Orders

The physical space where catering orders are prepared needs special attention as your business scales. In addition, strategically selecting restaurant locations for catering orders a key step in driving efficient order management and getting orders to the guests on time.



Space Optimization

Make sure every inch of the kitchen is utilized to its fullest potential. Employ the principles of Lean manufacturing to minimize waste in space and movement.



Equipment Upgrades

As demand grows, so should your cooking and storage capacities. This might require investment in larger ovens, more refrigeration, and possibly automation for certain repetitive tasks.

Pro Tip: Integrating with an order management solution like [Lunchbox Catering](#) can aid with throttling orders, managing orders in advance, transferring orders, delivery mapping, and more to ensure operations run smoothly from the kitchen all the way to the last mile of delivery.

Summarizing Production

Maximizing production to meet the dynamic and often unpredictable demand in corporate catering is a multi-faceted challenge. It's not just about doing more with less, but also about doing it smartly and efficiently. Each element plays a crucial role in your scalability journey, from employing batch manufacturing principles to investing in advanced catering order management technology and planning specifically to maximize off-peak ordering times.

As we look forward to exploring revenue growth strategies and marketing in the upcoming chapters, it's important to remember that none of those would be effective without a strong production backbone. Keep fine-tuning your processes and adopting new technologies to make sure your kitchen can handle whatever your sales team brings in.

Streamlining Order Management with Technology

As catering orders often involve customized menus, different delivery timelines, and high-stakes clients, catering-specific order management technology has become a critical investment. Such technology doesn't merely log orders but acts as an integrated command center that synchronizes menu updates, tracks order statuses, and provides real-time guest data insights.



Understanding Enterprise Catering Operational Challenges

Before we dive into technology, it's important to understand the most common pain points enterprise restaurants face when managing large, complex catering orders at scale. Enterprise restaurants are faced with a number of unique challenges:

Complexity of Orders

Catering orders often include intricate customization, from diet restrictions to bespoke dish requirements, making them harder to manage manually.

Delivery Logistics

Coordinating the transportation of large food quantities at specific times can be a logistical nightmare.

Customer Communication

Failure in real-time communication with the client can result in misunderstandings that could compromise the order's quality and timing.

Resource Management

With the inconsistency and unpredictability of catering orders it is tough to properly manage resources and supplies.

Multi-Channel Order Sources

Orders may come in from various platforms—online portals, apps, phone calls—which can be overwhelming to consolidate.

Inventory Management

Keeping an up-to-date track of inventory in real-time is crucial, especially when managing large orders.

Payment Discrepancies

Managing payment terms, especially for corporate clients who might not pay immediately, can be challenging.

Catering Order Management Enabled Through Technology

Equipping catering teams with the right technology can power your catering business to new levels. Not only will you see a reduction in labor, but businesses can also expect increased efficiency, decreased order errors, and increased guest satisfaction, ultimately leading to higher profits. Below are a few of the order management features Lunchbox Catering provides to enable enterprise catering managers:

Unified Dashboard

A single pane of glass where orders from all sources are visible and manageable. Track catering orders by location, unpaid account invoices, and more
Customization & Repeat Order Options: For customers to effortlessly tailor their orders and repeat previous orders, thereby reducing the back-and-forth communication.

Order Throttling & Order Aggregation

A feature that automatically adjusts order dispatching based on demand, time of day, or other predetermined factors. Easily aggregate orders from first-party and third-party channels directly into the POS.
Custom Prep Sheets: Ensure everything is accounted for and included in a customer's order

Custom Prep Sheets

Ensure everything is accounted for and included in a customer's order

Delivery Tracking

Delivery Dispatch and integration with delivery platforms like DeliverThat to solve delivery logistics and provide real-time updates on the delivery status to the guest.

House Accounts & Payment Automation

Automated invoicing and reminders, with multiple payment options to expedite the payment process.

Command Center

Connect directly with your guests through the command center

Food Items

Item	Count	Size	Package
6" Flour Tortilla	600	1.0 ea	Each
Cheese Cheddar Mild Shrd Fcy	375	1.0 oz	Oz
Cream Sour Pure GR A	500	0.5 oz	Oz
Chicken	750	1.0 oz	Oz
Chips Small Bag	500	1.0 ea	Each
Corn Tortilla - Taco	400	1.0 ea	Each
Guacamole	625	1.0 oz	Oz
Hot Sauce	500	2.0 oz	2.0 oz Portion Cups
Lettuce Shredded 3/16"	500	1.0 oz	Oz
Mexican Rice	2140	1.0 oz	Oz
Pico de Gallo	1000	1.0 oz	Oz
Refried Beans	1500	1.0 oz	Oz
Tomato Diced 3/8" with Cilantro	500	0.5 oz	Oz
Taco Meat	500	1.75 oz	Oz

Imported Free Modifiers

Item	Count	Size	Package
Black Bean	300	300 ea	Item
Cheese Blend	300	300 ea	Item
Cheese Blend	200	200 ea	Item
Original Red Salsa	300	300 ea	Item
Original Red Salsa	200	200 ea	Item
Refried Beans	200	200 ea	Item

Paper Products

Item	Count	Size	Package
10" Black Plates	300	300 ea	Item
Forks	300	300 ea	Item
Knives	200	200 ea	Item
Napkins	300	300 ea	Item

Side Items

Item	Count	Size	Package
Cilantro Lime Rice	300	300 ea	Item
Queso - Side	25	1.0 ea	16 oz. Black Bowl

The Business Impact of Effective Order Management

Enhanced Customer Experience

A streamlined order process minimizes errors and delays, leading to satisfied customers who are likely to return.

Scalability

A robust order management system allows for easy scaling of operations, enabling you to take on more clients and larger orders without proportionally increasing operational complexities.

Competitive Advantage

In a saturated market, smooth and error-free service delivery can differentiate a brand and create customer loyalty.

Operational Efficiency

Automation of various elements of order management frees up staff to focus on core activities, like food preparation and customer service.

Financial Health

With features like dynamic pricing and automated invoicing, businesses not only optimize revenue but also maintain better cash flow.

Data-Driven Insights

Over time, the data collected can be analyzed to identify bottlenecks, understand customer preferences, and make informed business decisions.

Summarizing Order Management

In summary, adopting specialized catering order management technology is not just an operational update; it's a strategic choice that directly impacts customer satisfaction and the bottom line. By addressing the common pain points and leveraging tech features that offer real solutions, businesses stand to gain a competitive edge in the increasingly demanding catering landscape.

Make Catering Work for You.

With Lunchbox Catering, order management is simple and efficient.

Access the Full Guide

Learn more at
<https://lunchbox.io/catering>