



Dwayne Marshall checks for proper food temperature.

Deliver the **FOOD** and the **BRAND**

Operators share tips for delivering fresh food, a great atmosphere and exceptional service.

THE PERFECT CHICK-FIL-A ANYWHERE experience is one that feels just like a Chick-fil-A Restaurant experience, says Operator Scott Malone of Memphis, Tennessee. Customers receive great-tasting food in a clean environment, as attentive and courteous employees smile and deliver top-notch service. "Just as each customer enjoys a unique experience through our products and services in the Restaurant, we try to produce this outside the Restaurant, as well," he says.

The Chick-fil-A Anywhere program is Chick-fil-A's fastest-growing sales segment. Outside sales are expected to triple during the next seven years, and Operational Excellence is a critical part of achieving that success. In talking with Operators, OE has identified common challenges Operators encounter in outside sales, as well as strategies and techniques they use to ensure Operational Excellence standards are met to deliver excellent food—and the brand—anywhere.

Challenge 1: **Serving High-Quality Food, Above All Else**

Malone understands the importance of maintaining Operational Excellence both inside his Poplar Avenue FSU and out. He attributes approximately 15 percent of his annual sales to

Chick-fil-A Anywhere, creating approximately 250 outside sales experiences every month. "It's being operationally excellent to make sure that the product is fresh and on time, and that we are friendly and polite to each client," Malone says. "We want to take the worry away from customers so they can concentrate on their event."

Operator Dwayne Marshall of Lynchburg, Virginia, says quality is the key ingredient to delivering the brand. Since he became an Operator in October 2004, he's learned a lot about outside sales. Marshall regularly delivers to local concerts and high school athletic games. But selling at high school football games didn't come so easily, he says. Marshall had been trying to sell his catering services to a local high school for two years. Chick-fil-A® Chicken Sandwiches would make the perfect pre-game snack at football games, he insisted. Unfortunately, the school disagreed. "They just weren't interested," Marshall says. "They didn't think the chicken would sell."



Marshall knew that it would, however. As a test, he offered to provide 100 sandwiches free-of-charge to the school, to be sold at concessions during the night of the school's next big matchup. If the sandwiches didn't sell, he said he'd leave the school alone once and for all. "The game started at 7:30 p.m., and the gates opened at 6 p.m.," Marshall recalls. "Our sandwiches were sold out before the game even started."

Marshall delivered 300 more sandwiches that night via his delivery van, every last one of which he sold to hungry high school football fans. The school invited us back as a permanent part of every football event.

"Now when we show up at an event, people say, 'We're glad you're here; you're our favorite [concession stand],'" says Marshall, adding that this enthusiasm is partly because the food sells itself. For Marshall, making a worthwhile sale is only part of the story—he knows that good food doesn't just arrive on-site. To him, delivering the food means serving approved menu items for outside sales, paying careful attention to preparation procedures at the Restaurant and guarding the taste and texture outside the Restaurant by monitoring holding times. This requires careful planning and flawless preparation. When serving food off-site, small changes to critical variables such as time, temperature and equipment can have a big effect on food taste, texture and food safety.

For that reason, Marshall leaves nothing to chance when he's engaged in a Chick-fil-A Anywhere sale. After preparing the food at his Restaurant, he then delivers fresh food in batches, within required holding

times. He keeps hot food hot and cold food cold with Chick-fil-A Anywhere-approved equipment, such as coolers, insul-ice sheets, insulated transport bags and lava packs, and assembles meals on-site to



keep sandwiches from getting soggy in packaged meal boxes. Finally, he takes only orders that he can handle, turning down any that can't be executed with perfection.

"Bigger is not always better," Marshall says. "If you go into an office with 15 people, it's easy to wow those people. But if you go into an office that has 100 people, and you

started making your sandwiches too early and they're not hot and they're sloppy, it can be difficult. I like to grow the business in bite sizes at a time."



A team member prepares an insulated transport bag.



Challenge 2: Creating an Appealing Atmosphere

Operator Jonathan Hollis says taste is 50 percent of every meal. The other 50 percent, he insists, is presentation. "Your food can taste great, but if it doesn't look like something that I want to eat, it's going to be a hard sell," he says.

Hollis' Restaurant is located inside the busy atrium of the CNN Center in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, and is at the center of a thriving commercial district with three major stadiums, a university, the fourth-largest convention center in the United States and a smattering of urban skyscrapers. "The building we're in doesn't say Chick-fil-A; it says CNN," he says. "People don't know we're there, so making a good impression in outside sales helps us get new customers inside our Restaurant."

Customers choose Chick-fil-A not only for its great-tasting food but also for its excellence in the dining room. But in an outside sales situation, without tables to wipe and windows to wash, Hollis says, Operators engaged in Chick-fil-A Anywhere

"We limit the number of deliveries we make so that I can spend time setting up the display, talking to the first few people who come in and just wowing them..." —Dwayne Marshall

sales must find other aesthetic ways, such as attractive "tablescapes" built with items like balloons, promotional calendars and, of course, Cows, to impress their customers.

Presentation isn't just about good-looking food. It's also a branding opportunity. "I call it differentiation," says Hollis, a graduate of the College of Culinary Arts at Johnson & Wales University. "Anybody can deliver a box of food. That's easy. What we do is not easy. When we show up, it's not, 'Let me put your food on the table and walk out.' It's, 'Let me put a tablecloth down and decorate this for you.'"



Presenting food in an attractive and appealing way doesn't need to be elaborate, Hollis says. But it does provide an opportunity to create an Emotional Connection with the customer in an unexpected way.

Hollis suggests using nice tablecloths and table tents, arranging meal boxes in either a pyramid or stair-step structure, and fanning out napkins in the shape of a pinwheel. "It's kind of like when you stay at a hotel and there's a mint on your pillow," he says. "It's not an expensive gift—it's a small ges-

ture—but it gives you an instant feeling that this place is different." Ultimately to Hollis, creating an appealing environment both inside and outside of the Restaurant is crucial to the success of his business's growth.



Challenge 3: Going Above and Beyond

In addition to creating a memorable atmosphere for his customers, Marshall wants to put them at ease and make a personal connection, which is why he goes to great lengths to actually meet the folks he serves. "I don't like to just drop a bag off in an office and say, 'Here's your food,'" he says. "We limit the number of deliveries we make so that I can spend time setting up the display, talking to the first few people who come in and just wowing them with 2nd Mile Service and extra amenities." Marshall's passion is that it's as much about the relationship as the food itself.



Because customer service is so important, Malone trains his team members on his Chick-fil-A Anywhere service standards and pairs them with more experienced mentors who can show them the ropes. Hollis goes a step further and has an entire team of five employees working under the supervision of his Unit Marketing Director to make and execute outside sales. Marshall, meanwhile, often takes along his best greeters and most extroverted employees to the delivery. “You’ve got to have the right people meeting and greeting,” Marshall says.

That goes for both your Restaurant and your off-site opportunity. His advice is to make sure you’re not sacrificing service at one in order to give service at the other. “With outside sales, you’re making a name for yourself,” Marshall continues. “First and foremost, though, you’re making a name for yourself at your front counter.”

Operational Excellence is just as important at Chick-fil-A Anywhere events as it is within the Restaurant. “If you choose to

pursue outside sales as a means to increase your business, you can’t go after it half-heartedly,” Malone cautions. “You have to commit to it with great leaders, systems and an attitude of continuous improvement. The success from our outside sales is a byproduct of us doing a great job of representing the brand.

We do this by showing up on time, well-dressed, fully prepared and excited to serve with 2nd Mile Service wherever we go.” **OE**



Quality Counts

Chick-fil-A Anywhere has been Chick-fil-A's fastest-growing line of business for each of the past 10 years. And with sales expected to reach \$300 million by 2015—tripling within the next seven years—it promises to continue its growth well into the next decade.

That’s a good thing, according to Randy Smith, senior management consultant at Chick-fil-A, who oversees the program. Along with such impressive growth comes significant challenges. “We have tremendous opportunity to improve Operational Excellence in this area of our business,” Smith says, pointing to Chick-fil-A's spring 2008 State of Quality & Customer Experience report. “We’ve got to run our outside business just as well as our inside business.” To help Chick-fil-A Anywhere prosper, consider these strategies for executing outside sales:

1. Serve only approved products.	To ensure you serve the highest-quality food, deliver only approved menu products that promise to maintain their flavor and texture outside the Restaurant.
2. Closely monitor food temperature.	For flavor and food safety alike, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Hot foods should be served at 140°F or higher, and cold foods should be served at 40°F, or lower.
3. Invest in approved equipment.	With the right tools, serving great-tasting food at the right temperature is easy—no matter where you are. Purchase only equipment that's designed for use in the Chick-fil-A Anywhere program.
4. Ensure holding times for Chick-fil-A Anywhere products.	This is foundational to delivering great taste within the safe temperature zones. For more information, go to @Chick-fil-A, keyword: <i>cfa anywhere; Products & Procedures; Approved Product Listing</i> .
5. Brand your outside business.	Keep the spirit of your Dining Room alive wherever your food is served by offering 2nd Mile Service and create Emotional Connections through attractive presentations of the food, complete with Cows, balloons and tablecloths. In other words, don't just deliver a sandwich—deliver the brand.

Case Study

Special Delivery

Here’s how one Operator wowed office workers with free Chick-fil-A lunches and got more than just gratitude and smiles in return.



Operator: Jonathan Hollis
Location: CNN Center, Atlanta, Georgia
Event: A free food event for local businesses.
Challenge: To open up new business opportunities with a Chick-fil-A Anywhere offer while keeping quality product top-of-mind.
Solution: Creating Emotional Connections by using real food. Hollis offered entire free meals and focusing on display and service.
Result: Three new contracts amounting to approximately \$30,000 in outside sales.

Last summer, Chick-fil-A offered to help Operators market their Restaurants by paying for promotional sandwiches that they could give away free to customers. Operator Jonathan Hollis decided that he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity and use it to build relationships with Atlanta-area businesses, which he regularly taps for outside sales opportunities. In fact, he wanted to find some folks who had never tried Chick-fil-A—and then blow them away. “I decided that, for office workers, giving away entire meals would be more effective than just giving away sandwiches,” Hollis says. “So I took the free sandwiches from Chick-fil-A, and I paid about 95 cents extra per person for chips, brownies and beverages.”

To ensure that he really wowed customers, Hollis kept to the philosophy that free products have to be delivered fresh, on time and at the peak of quality and perfection when they’re served. “If you’re going to give away free food, you have to make sure it’s fantastic, because if it’s not the best, it does the opposite of what you’re looking to do—cost you the business.”

The lucky recipients of Hollis’ free meals included more than 500 people who work at 817 W. Peachtree St., home to Atlanta’s Biltmore hotel. Once a famous destination for wealthy Southern aristocrats, the hotel now houses office and event space owned by Novare Group, an Atlanta-based developer that owns and manages valuable urban real estate in downtown Atlanta and across the country. “I went to them and said, ‘I’d like to buy lunch for everyone in the building,’” Hollis says.

Pleasantly surprised, the company agreed and opened the Biltmore’s two lavish ballrooms, the only rooms original to the hotel, for a catered chicken

“If you’re going to give away free food, you have to make sure it’s fantastic, because if it’s not the best, it does the opposite of what you’re looking to do ...”

— Jonathan Hollis

Hollis staffed a beverage and condiment bar with employees to serve and engage the diners. “I spent maybe \$500 on that lunch,” Hollis says. “But my return on that investment has been much greater because we ended up getting three contracts out of this company, which to date have amounted to about \$30,000 in outside sales.”

lunch. On the day of the lunch, Hollis adorned the elegant ballrooms with tablecloths and centerpieces. His team then assembled 500 boxed lunches off-site, which they delivered to the Biltmore in batches.

Connecting at Every Opportunity

Customer recovery begins with the L.A.S.T. (Listen, Apologize, Solve and Thank) model.

OPERATOR STEVE WILLIAMS OF Alpharetta, Georgia, is especially mindful of customer recovery. “It’s much easier to recover a customer than it is to go out and find a new customer,” he says.

Because word-of-mouth is so powerful, customer recovery is an essential strategy for building brand loyalty. In fact, customers who contact us with their issues eat at Chick-fil-A an average of 80 percent of the time they eat at a quick-

service restaurant, according to TARP Worldwide, a customer experience consulting firm. With these being some of our most loyal customers, there is plenty of incentive to focus on recovering them.

When Operator Neil Young sees a dissatisfied customer at his sales counter in Mary Esther, Florida, he doesn’t get anxious or worried. He doesn’t get flustered or frustrated, either. He gets excited.

“I don’t like making mistakes, but when we do, it is a huge opportunity—and I mean a huge opportunity—to make an impact on a customer,” Young says. “You have the chance to make something up to somebody and make him or her a Raving Fan for life.”



No matter the issue, Young is ready, willing and able to address it. What’s more, he’s committed to doing so with sincerity and gusto. It’s not enough to please his customers; he wants to impress them, too. “When customers have a bad experience, you can bet they’re going to tell their mother, sister, brother, girlfriend or boyfriend,” Young says. “I go above and beyond to not only fix the problem, but to make it up to them in a way that will have them saying, ‘Wow, that was amazing; I’m going to tell somebody about this.’”

Young’s enthusiasm comes from an experience he had before he first moved to Mary Esther, when he worked at a Chick-fil-A Restaurant in Atlanta, Georgia. There, he encountered a woman who called to complain about her drive-thru order, as the strips were left off of her Chick-fil-A



Neil Young uses the contact log.

Chick-n-Strips Salad. “She worked near us, and I actually ended up driving over to her with her salad,” Young says. “She really appreciated that, and every time she came through the drive-thru from that point on it was, ‘Hey Neil,’ or ‘Where’s Neil today?’” With one gesture, Young turned the woman from a customer into a friend. “I can’t tell you how many relationships we’ve built with customers by showing them that, even when we make a mistake, they’re important to us.”

Customers can quickly and easily comment on their Chick-fil-A experience by using Chick-fil-A CARESSM. In fact, nearly 5,500 customers do exactly that every month by phone or e-mail, says Barry Vaughan, senior manager of quality and

customer experience at Chick-fil-A.

Still, most customers don’t use CARES. Ninety-three percent of the time, customers attempt to solve their problems at the Restaurant level first, according to TARP research. For Operators, that translates into an enormous opportunity not only to recover customers but also to create Emotional Connections with them, face to face. Turn the page to find out how Young and three other Operators use the L.A.S.T. (Listen, Apologize, Solve and Thank) model for customer recovery, and how they use those lessons to respond to customer feedback and drive Operational Excellence.

Unit Workshop

Leadership Meeting: **Customer Recovery**

Use this DVD at your next leadership meeting to discuss your approach to customer recovery. This brief self-paced, Unit workshop will be a helpful tool for your entire team.

Chapter 1: True Story— California

Chapter 2: Customer Recovery At Chick-fil-A

Tim Tassopoulos provides an overview and offers a challenge around this important strategy.

Chapter 3: The Customer Speaks Out

Hear from everyday people on how they define customer service and what they expect if something goes wrong.

Chapter 4: True Story—Georgia

Chapter 5: True Story—Virginia

Chapter 6: Customer Recovery Challenge

Dan Cathy shares his perspective on customer recovery and its importance for the future.



2

Apologize

It's a good idea to include an apology with any response to the customer, and showing sincerity is key. "Customers have to feel like they've connected with you and that you're not just going through the motions," Spice says.

The way he describes it, apologizing doesn't have to mean taking blame or admitting guilt, but rather expressing your understanding for the customer's feelings and working toward a resolution and a better experience. "Sincerity is important," says Spice, who recommends apologizing at every opportunity. "When you apologize, apologize right away—I'm so sorry that this happened"—and then again at the end of the conversation. Say it more than once. That first apology might not get acknowledged, but toward the end of the conversation, customers hear better because they're generally calmer."

1 Listen

It's become instinctive for Operator Jeff Bucy of Jacksonville, Florida, to put the L.A.S.T. model into practice whenever he receives a customer comment. Bucy always asks his team members to put an emphasis on listening to customers, the first step in gathering feedback for improvement, particularly if a customer is upset and if they have the opportunity to address him or her in person. For example, when Bucy learned that a customer who'd ordered a Milkshake did not receive the flavor he ordered, he simply leant his ear. "The customer caught me in the parking lot when I was leaving, and we stood there for 30 minutes, just talking out his frustration," Bucy recalls. "I listened to him, and I've seen him come back numerous times since then. He just wanted to be heard."

Of course, listening isn't always as easy as it sounds, says Operator Don Spice of San Antonio, Texas. Although he might not always be in agreement with his customers, he has learned to coach his team to listen without becoming defensive. "Make sure you're listening in a very open and trusting way," he says. "Assume the customer is correct. Get his or her side of the story, and don't put up any walls."

Attentive listening means not interrupting, making eye contact and showing understanding and empathy with the customer. "If you properly listen, you're going to be able to analyze what kind of response your guests want to get from you," Bucy says.

Solve

3

Upon apologizing, Operators who excel at customer recovery work not only to solve the customer's problems, but also to have the systems and processes in place to ensure the problem won't happen again. That means getting team members onboard with the customer recovery process.

Young empowers his team to solve problems directly. "I don't want my team members running to tell me that a customer is upset," he says. To make sure team members understand the customer recovery process, Young trains his front counter team to be prepared to respond to a situation in which a customer might be experiencing a problem. "We talk about specific interactions team members are going to have with customers, and I make sure they understand how best to handle a customer."

Young says a key to ensuring customer feedback drives real improvements in Operational Excellence is recording incidents in a customer contact log to keep track of lessons learned and then sharing these lessons with team members and managers. "I share customer comments with my team, the good and the bad," Young says. "I want to show them that what we're doing is affecting people and that, when we give our customers a good experience, it's making a lasting impact on our business."



Thank

4

The final piece of the L.A.S.T. model is to thank customers for their feedback whether it's in person or in a hand-written letter. "If you take a frustrated customer, and you flip that around and actually thank him or her for letting you know about their problem, that cools them off," Young says.

Thanking a customer doesn't just calm the customer; it elicits valuable feedback that can help improve Operational Excellence. Ramsey Walker, GM of the Stockbridge Dwarf House in Stockbridge, Georgia, says compliments and criticism help him serve better tasting food, train more courteous and attentive employees, deliver faster service and maintain a cleaner Restaurant. "Take criticism to heart," Walker says. "Customer input can help you run a better operation."

"If a customer is letting you know that they've had an issue, what a great opportunity to reach out to that customer and connect with them," Vaughan says. "Find out what happened, empathize and discover what you need to do to remedy that issue. Then respond through a heart of generosity. Turn that bad experience into a good one." **OE**

Williams has a standing policy of generosity, enhanced with a personal touch. When problems do arise, he does all he can to get the customer back in the Store. For all issues concerning taste of food or an incorrect order, he offers to replace the items and he provides a coupon toward a future meal. "Instead of just sending a coupon and saying we're sorry, we also call and say, 'I want you to come in and see us personally,'" Williams says. "Then when they come in, we'll buy them a meal and give them a coupon for another visit."

Williams' process gets customers into his Restaurant two more times: once to get the coupon and once to redeem it. It gives him two additional chances to recover the business and solve problems in person. "If you can get them in the store face to face, you're going to win them back," he says.