

TRAINING TIP – Portion Control

Portion control has always been a hot issue in our industry. Most stores can attest to the adage “Live by the Scoop, Die by the Scoop” meaning that out of any daily activity that can potentially effect your bottom line, the simple task of scoop ice cream is one of the most common. Not only does it have a financial effect on your business, but your customers will not appreciate the inconsistency in your serving sizes. “Hey, I was in here last night and got double that size for that price” HHmmmmmmmm!!!!

Unfortunately in most ice cream stores, the emphasis on portion control training is only concentrated at your pre opening trainings.

Last month we talked about having a regular training routine set throughout the year (See Jan Training Tip). As part of your regular staff training, portion control needs to be looked at every 4 to 6 weeks.

Some ideas

- **You must have a scale.**

Portion control training is almost impossible without a scale. Now I’m not suggesting you weigh before each and every sale, but in order to start the process, you will need a way to measure the weight of your cone. The most common type of scale used is an analogue overrun scale as pictured



- **You must have a standard**

By now you will have selected what type of container (cup or cone) you are using for each individual menu item, and hopefully a suggested weight. The industry standard for a regular cone tends to be 5oz. So if your standard is a 5oz cone, then be sure that before the training commences, YOU can scoop a 5 oz cone consistently. Stay up at night, get up early in the morning, I don’t care which, but you should be able to demonstrate to your staff that consistently scooping a 5 oz cone is as easy as falling off a log.

You should also by now have a solid knowledge of what products make up your menu, the size of the container that it is in and how many oz or scoops it takes to create that item.

- **You must have a scoop**

Sounds like common sense right, but notice I didn't say "scoops". Having more than 1 size scoop in your store is tantamount to inviting your kids to over or under portion. You should strive to have one size scoop for any of your menu items. Having multiple scoops for multiple menu items is confusing and when the store is crazy busy and kids are scrambling for scoops, they will not care whether they are using the red scoop or the blue scoop.

- **You must have a process**

Roll the ice cream from the outside to the inside of the bucket. Remember that the outside of the bucket is the coldest as it is closer to the colder atmosphere in the dipping cabinet. Hence it will be the product in the bucket that freezes faster and harder. Do not dip "volcanoes" in the middle of the bucket as the product on the outside will become hard, crusty and unable to use.

Remember that the ribbing on a cake cone is there to grip the ice cream as it is scooped on the cone, so ensure that there is enough downward pressure on the cone so that the ribbing is filled with your ice cream. No one likes a ball of ice cream that sits precariously on the top of a cone so that one lick and its over and on the ground.

Now in the training process, each product needs to be weighed and weighed again. The goal is to have your staff know what a 5 oz cone looks and feels like. Introduce incentives. Have a scooping contest in your trainings. Those who scoop 5oz on the button gets a movie pass or a candy.

Portion control training need not be tedious, but it needs to be done regularly and consistently so the standard does not grow or shrink over time.

I would be pleased to hear of your success stories in relation to staff training. Those who let these meetings slip by for the year are really missing out on valuable time with their staff members.