

Expanding Grab-and-Go for Greater Profitability and Brand Extension



In today's fast-paced society, a growing number of fast-casual foodservice concepts continue to add or expand their grab-and-go offerings to capture a greater share of time-starved customers' business.

"When looking at grab-and-go as part of an overall strategy, owners and operators must be certain that this offering has a specific intention and is not just an afterthought," says Arlene Spiegel, FCSI, founder and president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates, Inc., in New York City. "Grab-and-go can offer a good return on investment as a profit center. You must consider how much square footage to give to this offering and consider queuing, traffic flow and packaging. One size does not fit all."

Everyone interviewed for this article about grab-and-go emphasizes the importance of presenting only as many products as the operation can continually replenish so the menu items always look fresh. "You don't want any holes in the cases," Spiegel adds.

"Cases must always be fully stocked and products frontally faced and priced."

Packaging contributes significantly to customers' impressions of grab-and-go offerings. "The packaging or a sign nearby can include information about local ingredients if they're used," Spiegel adds.

Every product in a grab-and-go case must have a name and branded signage, Spiegel says. "If grab-and-go menu items are made in-house, make sure the signage is distinctive so customers know they can only get these products at this branded concept," she says. "This contributes to building a loyal fan base."

Airscreen merchandisers, though attractive for displaying food, may not always hold products properly. "Whatever you use must keep food at proper temperatures," Spiegel says. "So someone must be monitoring the temperature and rotating products as needed." ■