



NCASS
NATIONWIDE
CATERERS
ASSOCIATION

The Mobile & Outside

Caterer

Issue 14 2011

When the going gets tough -

The tough get going! As the song says, well times are tough and every indication is that they are going to get tougher, so what are you going to do? Are you going to fight and come through it stronger than ever or just wait and watch your business slip away?

The plain truth is that most of us in this industry have survived and prospered despite ourselves, we haven't really had to look at our business as a business person in another industry might.

We know that as long as there is cash in the till at the end of the week and we have paid for all our stock that we have made a profit and as long as the profits were enough to live on and put a bit by we were doing OK.

But that was in the days of lower VAT, cheap food and when the customers weren't too bothered about the prices, but times have changed.

So do you really understand your business? Just what would happen if you put up your prices? Would you really lose all your customers?

What does that bacon sandwich really cost you? How much profit does that cup of coffee really make?

As a business person - which any caterer should be first and foremost - we should know the answers to all these questions, and a whole lot more.

As I said previously most of us have survived and prospered on gut instinct and experience, but to survive in these times it takes a whole lot more.

In tough times we need to know our business inside out, because unless we are very fortunate we are going to feel the effects of the economic downturn that is sweeping the world.

Do you realise....

Just an extra 5p profit made on a cup of tea or coffee based on selling 50 cups a day would pay for a really nice holiday abroad for 2 people or decent one for a family of four.

10p on a sandwich based on selling 50 a day would give you a month or two's mortgage payments on a nice house in suburbia.

Sounds interesting doesn't it? But how do we achieve this? The most obvious way is to buy better, but buying better isn't going to be very achievable when food prices are increasing at a higher rate than inflation. The reality is that our buying power is likely to be getting smaller rather than greater.

Is buying cheaper really going to help?

For example, what happens if you change from a well known brand of coffee or tea to a cash and carry own brand, or change from the market leader brown sauce to a cheaper alternative? What would that do to your sales? Would they go up or down? Would you lose customers? Would they even notice?

That's the question to ask yourself, can you tell the difference between HP and own brand brown sauce on your bacon butty? Can you tell the difference between a top brand instant coffee and an own brand?

Business Development Special Edition



Would it change where you go for your breakfast?

The reality is, if there is another trader close by it may just be the catalyst to give the other guy a try and you may lose a customer forever.

And that is the last thing you want.

The fact is that you don't know and you haven't got the tools to find out.

What if you just put your prices up? 'Can't do that' I hear you say 'I will lose all my customers', but will you?

So what if you do lose a few customers, if you can increase your profit with less work and stress that should be a good thing.

Driving up your sales

There are methods that can be applied to any business that can help drive up sales.

Here are just a few

- 1) Get more customers
- 2) Sell more to the customers you already have
- 3) Stop losing customers that you already have

Looking at those in turn:

Famous Quotes:

The winners in life think constantly in terms of I can, I will, and I am. Losers, on the other hand, concentrate their waking thoughts on what they should have or would have done, or what they can't do.

Dennis Waitley:

1) **'There just aren't anymore customers I can sell to'**, the answer to that is nonsense! there are always more customers, you either haven't found them yet or you haven't got a product that they want to buy. While we're here let's just dispel the biggest myth of all time 'word of mouth is the best form of advertising', there are many, many better ways of advertising a food business than word of mouth, if you rely on word of mouth you will be bust within three months.

2) **You can always sell more to your existing customers, even in times when peoples overall spend is going down.** There are many ways of doing it, and whether you realise it or not, it's being done to you every time you go into a shop to buy something. The big retailers are masters of what is known as up-selling, top to bottom selling and cross selling.

When you realise what is happening you will ask yourself why you haven't done it before, it's easy and most importantly, it works.

3) **There are many reasons why you might lose a customer in a catering business:**

- a) Competition
- b) Menu fatigue
- c) Poor quality food



d) Poor service

e) Customer perception of the business / operator

All of the above can be overcome and more than that can actually be turned around to your advantage and a reason for them to stay, and others to come to you, rather than leave you.

So how do you win your competitors customers without starting a price war where there are never any winners?

Well again there are many ways some of which you will be thought of already but there are many more and technology has multiplied the options many fold.

At NCASS we talk to many new start ups each week and just as many giving up the business because they can't make a living.

Lets get one thing clear, other than bad health or the inability to work there is no reason why any catering business cannot survive and prosper if they treat it as a business and apply the rules of business.

Most catering businesses don't fail because they are a bad business, they fail because the owners are **bad at business.**

This article has probably raised more questions than answers, and there is far too much to cover in a magazine piece, we are producing a course at the moment which will answer all your questions and give you the tools to make sure that you come out of the recession a winner not a loser.

Watch this space!

Continues on page 4



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If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

Business Plans give you a better focus and understanding of what makes you money and what doesn't! NCASS tells you how to make the most of it.

You can't turn on the TV or radio these days without someone talking about the recession, bankers' bonuses, spending cuts, job losses and home repossessions. I'm hardly sticking my neck out by saying that the general mood in the country is pretty bleak.

We also have a government who are pretty adamant that it's small and medium enterprises who they are hoping will drag the country out of its mire. Yet they can't get the banks to lend money even to creditworthy businesses. So how do you keep your business afloat when your customers haven't got as much money to spend and you can't rely on support from government or financial institutions.

The truth is that some good caterers will 'go to the wall' during this recession because they made decisions based on gut feelings and poor information rather than carefully planned and analysed decisions based on thought-out projections and hard facts.

(We will be following up this introduction to business plans with an online business development course designed to help you become more profitable during these difficult times. The course will be available to members in the next few months).

What are you hoping to achieve? How are you going to get to that point? If you don't have a plan, now is the time to sit down and develop one. Only you know where you want to take your business, but without a clear plan of how to achieve it, how do you know how to go about it or even measure your success?

A business plan is an opportunity for you to think constructively about your business, what you can achieve and how to achieve it. Looking at each part of your business, identify what is profitable, what isn't, what works, what will help you achieve your goals, or even get finance. Without a plan you are relying on instinct, which can work to a degree, but it's high risk, and if you have no way of measuring that success, how do you know if it was as successful as you thought?

An example:
NCASS used to offer a 'linked supplier' service for £50 and managed to sell several of these products to



customers, however, customers were expecting great results for their money and would phone us regularly with requests. When we took the time to look at each product individually, we realised that this one was costing us both time and money while not really achieving what the people that bought it had wanted either. We repackaged the product offering more services and increasing the price to £200. The idea being that we would save money if people stopped using the product and would make a profit if they continued to use it.

*There were several lessons we learned from this. No product should be considered 'gold plated', prices should be a fair reflection of the services offered rather than cheap because you think that is what the customer wants. Don't spend time on unprofitable practices. People **will** pay more for the right product. Finally, by cutting out unprofitable work, we freed up more time for other more rewarding work. Remember the old adage:*

"If you don't learn from your mistakes you are doomed to repeat them."

So what does a business plan include:

An executive summary - This is an overview of the business. It's vital. Many lenders and investors make judgments about your business based on this section of the plan alone.

A short description of the business - Who you are, what you plan to sell, to whom and why they want what you're selling. Identifying your customer base will help you to tailor your product to your prospective customers' needs and desires. By identifying the benefits of your product and your target customers it will make it considerably easier to plan your marketing.

Your marketing and sales strategy - why you think people will buy what you want to sell and how you plan to sell to them. Marketing is a critical part of any business. Failure to do so effectively can be both expensive and terminal to a business. It doesn't matter how good your food or customer service is. if you can't get customers through the door in the first place. Are you trying to be all things to all people? Has it worked for you? The most effective marketing is targeted to a specific audience, the people you

identified earlier in your plan.

Team Skills – What are you good at? Where do your strengths lie? By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of yourself and your team will help you focus on whether everyone's strengths are being utilized, help you to plan contingencies and any future recruitment or training needs.

Operations – There are various factors to consider for this.

Location: what are the strengths and weaknesses of your location? this is particularly important for fixed site caterers such as restaurants. What are your long term commitments or contractual arrangements?



Production - Now you have identified what products to sell and how best to sell them, you should now look at how you produce the food, where you source your materials etc. Do you buy things in ready-made or produce it yourself, can you improve your final product by changing your production methods, can you increase margins by producing more efficiently or cutting serving size?

A famous example:

Bob Crandall, former head of American Airlines, managed to save his company \$40,000 per annum by removing 1 olive from every salad the airline served. The theory was that a small garnish would not be missed but could save the company money.

Management information systems – do you have procedures in place for stock control, quality control and management accounts? Standardised procedures help you to manage your business properly and help staff by setting the standards that you expect. Better stock control helps cut down on waste and boosts profits while quality control helps you to establish a customer base and enables you to promote the business with confidence.

Information Technology – what are your strengths and weaknesses with computers? Could you use IT better, what improvements could you make, do you use IT effectively? Do you have the resources, skills and know how to make the most of your equipment

and opportunities. What improvements could be made in future.

Financial Forecasts – This is where you back up all of your ideas from the rest of the business plan with figures. These should run for 3-5 years into the future, but with most detail for the next 12 months. This will help you focus on achieving your long term goals and give you benchmarks of achievement. Include the assumptions behind your goals in terms of costs and revenues. If you planned to make a million pounds in a year but eventually made £700,000 this may be because the cost of wages or tax or fuel may have increased. It may be that your sales expectations did not materialise, however, it is only by quantifying your costs and income that you will be able to identify where your successes and failures occurred.

Sales Forecasts – How much money you are expecting to make from sales.

Cashflow statements - your cash balance and monthly cash flow patterns for at least the first 12 to 18 months. "The aim is to show that your business will have enough working capital to survive so make sure you have considered the key factors such as the timing of sales and salaries." (Business link website).

Profit and loss forecast - The expected profit your business should make taking into account your projected sales and the cost of providing the services and your overheads. Be aware, new businesses often over estimate their sales for their first year. Also forecast profit and loss based on sales 20% below your predicted level. Are you still making money?

Risk Analysis – what could go wrong? what will that cost you? how will that affect the business? By identifying the risks and planning contingencies beforehand makes it easier to react. Businesses that have identified the risks will be better prepared and have a more cost-effective way of dealing with them. This could be anything from increased competition to acts of god (fire or flood), identifying potential future problems and planning contingencies enables you to react in a prompt and effective manner if things don't go to plan.

So what are you waiting for? If your business was profitable before you followed a business plan, think how well you could do with one. Rest assured your successful competitors have one. Whether you are looking to get more finance, get a clearer vision of your business' future or improve on existing practices, a day of good old planning could save you a fortune and get your business where you want it to be.

"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."
-Thomas Edison



Scores on the Doors: Your chance to shine

Scores on the Doors: Your chance to shine. Local Authorities have been inspecting and rating catering businesses for many years based on their standards of hygiene; these schemes are often called 'scores on the doors'.

The ratings provided by the EHO's are then converted into rankings which are published as 'scores on the doors.' This information has been available for years to any member of the public through the freedom of information act, however, recent moves to standardise the way businesses are rated by the EHO's across the country have led to an online national database, where any member of the public or press just needs to type in the name of your business to see how you rated. This could have a huge effect on catering in the UK over the coming years, not least because catering businesses in England and Wales can now be reviewed by the public or press on the scores on the doors web site.

This was further confirmed by Lord Young's report on health & safety published on 15 October 2010 and includes recommendations in relation to food safety in England.

The Welsh, Northern Ireland and Scottish Assemblies are all either considering or have committed to the scheme

The system's proper name is Food Hygiene Rating Scheme or FHRS for short was formally launched on 30 November and is now being rolled out across the country.

The launch on 30 November centered on an event at Bluewater Shopping Centre organised jointly by Dartford Borough Council and the FSA.

Bluewater is the second largest shopping centre in the UK and many of the national food chains are represented and are visited by consumers from far and wide.

This emphasises extremely well why a national scheme is the best way forward for consumers and for businesses so the Centre provided a very apt venue for the launch.

The Lord Young report called Common Sense Common Safety, endorsed the introduction of the FHRS and makes a number of recommendations about the scheme.

The recommendations now represent Government policy so a clear direction of travel has been set.

Why is this important to you?

Once the you become accustomed to using this

facility, checking your local favourite restaurant, takeaway or mobile to see how they rate when they were last inspected by their environmental health department will become the norm.

For instance, when I was writing this article I decided to check the takeaway where we bought our customary sausage sandwich on a Friday mornings. I was surprised to see that they only achieved one star, which meant:

Compliance with hygiene - poor

Where poor means - Some major non-compliance with statutory obligations – more effort required to prevent fall in standards.

Structural compliance - poor

Where poor means - Some major non-compliance with statutory obligations – more effort required to prevent fall in standards

Confidence in management - some

Where some means - Satisfactory record of compliance. Access to and use of technical advice either in-house or from trade associations. May have satisfactory documented food safety

management system.

If nothing else it makes you stop and think doesn't it?

If that was my business I would be concerned that this information was available to the public and how it might affect my customer base.

One way of improving your scores on the doors is to make sure that you and your staff are all trained and that your Due Diligence system is kept up to date.

If you really want to impress the EHO when they assess you for your scores on the doors, do the new HACCP course, that cannot fail to impress.

If you want to check out your local food suppliers go to www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk.

Not all authorities are on this site yet but the way this is being driven it wont be long before they are.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can upload your 'Scores on The Doors' certificate to the NCASS website in your control panel?



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New First Aid Course



The long awaited NCASS Essential First Aid course was launched on February 1st after a lot of negotiations and re-writing.

The first thing we have to say is this is NOT a replacement for the statutory HSE approved courses of which there are three variations:

First aid at work course (3 days) typically £200

Requalification (2 days)

Emergency first aid at work (1 day) typically £80

We also have to point out that this course does not remove the obligations on an employer for first aid training in line with the guidelines below:

Less than 5 employees - 1 appointed person which means someone nominated to look after the first aid box and phone emergency services in the case of an incident.

5 to 50 employees - 1 first aider trained in Emergency first aid at work or First aid at work depending on the type of injuries that may occur

More than 50 employees - 1 first aider trained in First aid at work for every 50 employed (or part thereof)

Our course is designed for those that feel they need to be able to react to minor accidents that may happen in the workplace and that have less than 5 employees, or for those that want to get all the basics in their head before attending an HSE approved course.

Having said that, the syllabus is identical to that of the Emergency First Aid at work course with the a couple of exceptions which are Defibrillation and Resuscitation which are best carried out in a classroom environment .

So if you are intending to go on an HSE approved course you will find this a very useful way of boning up.

The course is presented in a very interesting way with several movies, voice-overs and course notes.

The following topics are covered:

- Roles and responsibilities of the first aider
- First aid kits
- Primary survey
- Secondary survey
- Recovery position
- Choking
- Shock
- Burns
- Bleeding
- Seizures
- Heart Attacks
- Asthma
- Strains and Sprains

**And what's more,
its FREE to members.
Just one of the new membership
benefits in 2011**

A man's hand is shown with five circular sensors on his fingers. Lines connect these sensors to icons of various vehicles: a forklift, a car with emergency lights, a bus, a van, and a train. The background is a blue-tinted image of a man's face and a van.

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FREE HACCP Training

One thing you can never accuse NCASS of is not providing the tools for the job and this is the latest launched in mid January.

Who should do the course?

It is a legal requirement for those responsible for the development and maintenance of HACCP in a food business to be trained in HACCP principles.

That means you, the owner of the food business, need to do it.....

What you will learn:

This course will explain how to:

- Carry out an analysis of potential hazards in a food business to identify the hazards and specify appropriate control measures.
- Identify the Critical Control Points (CCPs) in the business
- Set CCP's
- Set up procedures to monitor CCPs
- Establish corrective actions to be taken when monitoring indicates that control has been lost at a CCP
- Establish review procedures to check that the HACCP system is being followed and that it is working
- Set up a record-keeping / documentation system

The Course includes:

- Course Introduction
- Glossary
- What is Food Safety Management?
- What is HACCP?
- Benefits & Limitations of HACCP
- Legal Requirements for HACCP
- Training Requirements
- What are Pre-Requisite Programmes?
- How to Conduct a HACCP Study
- Assemble the HACCP Team
- Describe the Products of Processes
- Identify the Intended End User
- Construct a Process Flow Diagram
- Onsite confirmation of the Process Flow Diagram
- Conduct a Hazard Analysis
- Determine the Critical Control Points (CCPs)
- Establish Critical Limits for each CCP (Establish Monitoring Procedures)
- Establish Corrective Action
- Establish Verification Procedures Establish Documentation & Record Keeping
- Everybody's Role in HACCP

Sounds very complicated but its not, and it will really impress your EHO when he comes to call . It will also help towards your Scores on the Doors.

Watch this space!

Calor to launch mobile catering awards



Calor, the UK's leading supplier of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), will soon be announcing the launch of its mobile catering awards. The campaign will be a national search for the best street traders and mobile caterers, as voted for by the public.

The campaign launches to the public in the spring, and mobile caterers will be able to register in advance via the campaign website, where they will need to enter their contact details and plot their position on a national map. On completion, all registrants will receive a pack of promotional goodies to help generate awareness and votes.

Once the competition is open, customers will be able to go online and find the mobile caterer they wish to vote for, so long as they have been registered. They will then award points against categories of Food, Drink, Service, Value and Overall Experience.

Regional finalists will be announced in September, and a panel will visit all finalists and announce the national winner in October – with the lucky winner taking home a year's worth of gas!

Look out for more information soon...



EVENT CATERERS - DO YOU WANT MORE WORK?

Marketing is an essential part of any business and is one part of your budget that should not be trimmed back in a recession.

All the evidence suggests that cutting back on marketing makes the business lose even more money rather than saving it.

In marketing terms this would be called 'losing market share' and it is something to be avoided.

Rather than reducing the marketing budget, look to see if you are spending your money in the right ways.

Our business development course coming in the next few months will go into detail on this and a whole lot more to make you business more profitable whether you are new caterer or a seasoned veteran.

But there is something that you can do today, that's going to cost you a few minutes of your time but will definitely make a difference if you are looking to increase your business and profitability.

You see, many of you are not making the most of what is already available to you.

Over half of our members have not filled in their free web page on the NCASS website.

Lets explain that further, this is what you get as part of your membership:

- Half a page of free text space to write about how great your business is!
- Four slots to add photos and a logo.
- The ability to manage your listing in the Industry Guide.

If you don't make the most of the resources available to you, you are limiting your opportunities for work.

You can't buy that level of targeted advertising – and it's all included in your membership fee!

So if you're not using it already, get onto it, and if you feel that you can't do it because you just don't do computers - call the office and we will help you through it 01216032524.

The NCASS website gets 20,000 hits per month! It is visited regularly by event organisers.



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VAT is a complicated subject for caterers, are you paying too much?

In times when every penny count and the recent increase in the rate of VAT from 17.5% to 20% it is important to understand how and where you should be paying VAT

This is an extract from HMRC Reference: Notice 709/1 (February 2007)

Need to pay VAT (VAT Threshold)

If your business turns over more than £70,000 (2011) you are legally required to register for and Pay VAT

Catering

What is the ordinary meaning of catering?
Catering in its ordinary meaning includes the supply of prepared food and drink. It is characterised by a supply involving a significant element of service.

Obvious examples of supplies in the course of catering include:

Supplies made in restaurants, cafes, canteens and similar establishments (except supplies of cold take-away food).

Third party supplies of catering for events and functions, such as wedding receptions, parties or conferences.

A supply of cooking and/or preparation of food provided to a customer at the customer's home, for example for a dinner party.

Delivery of cooked ready-to-eat food or meals (with or without crockery or cutlery).

Examples of supplies that are NOT in the course of catering:

Retail supplies of cold take-away food.

Retail supplies of groceries.

Supplies of food that require significant further preparation by the customer (see 2.2.1).

Catering contracts

Any supply of food and/or drink as part of a contract for catering is standard-rated.

Food for customer preparation

If you supply food that your customers must prepare themselves before it can be consumed, this is not a supply in the course of catering. This will apply whether the food is delivered to, or collected by, your customers.

Packed lunches

Where you provide packed meals as an incidental to an event or a function, such as for coach parties or race meetings, the meals are supplied in the course of catering and should be standard-rated.

If you run a hotel or similar establishment and you supply bed and board (including packed meals) at an inclusive price, you should treat the whole supply as standard-rated. Where however, you supply a packed meal over and above your supply of accommodation and a separate charge is made, then provided it is for consumption off your premises, it can be zero-rated (apart from any items that are always standard-rated - see Notice 701/14 Food).

Service charges

If you make a service charge, it is standard-rated. But if the customer freely gives a tip above your total charge, no VAT is due on the tip.

Vending machines

Vending machine supplies follow the same general principles as food and drink supplied from catering outlets.

Premises

Why is the concept of 'premises' important?

You must always charge VAT at the standard rate if you make a supply of food and drink for consumption on the premises on which it is supplied - see also section 1. Also, you must charge VAT at the standard rate if you supply hot take-away food (that is, food for consumption away from the premises where it is sold).

Examples of premises:

A restaurant (or similar café, canteen type business). The whole restaurant area, plus any chairs/tables on the pavement, concourse or similar area adjacent to the main premises.

A retail outlet in a shopping centre. The outlet itself and any chairs and tables in designated areas belonging to that outlet or provided for the exclusive use of that outlet.

A retail outlet in the high street. The outlet itself plus any areas containing chairs and tables outside the establishment provided for use of customers.

A retailer in a shopping centre with a food court. The premises are the retail outlet, plus the chairs and

tables within the food court, if either the retailer contributes to the upkeep, provision and cleaning of those facilities or if those facilities are in a clearly delineated area for the use of customers to consume their food purchases.

A supermarket. Any seating areas within the shop, plus any areas of chairs and tables outside the shop for use of customers.

A stall in a sports stadium, amusement park, exhibition, gallery or similar pay-entry venue. The premises are the stall itself, plus any facilities provided adjacent to the stall for the use of customers.

A retail outlet within an office building. The premises are the outlet, plus any area for consumption around or next to the outlet, that is, a seating area or dining room.

'Premises' will also include any areas of chairs and tables contained in delineated areas which are not immediately adjacent to the retailers outlet but are still situated within the vicinity of the outlet and are designated for the use of the retailers' customers. It does not include genuine areas of chairs and tables for general communal use which are not the responsibility of the caterer/retailer.

Evidence and apportionment

Where you make sales of cold food to be taken away from your premises, but also have on-site facilities where food can be consumed, you will need to apportion your sales of cold food between those consumed on the premises (standard-rated) and those taken-away (zero-rated).

If you are unable to ascertain the correct liability at the point of sale (see 5.6), you must retain satisfactory evidence to support a fair and reasonable apportionment. Records, and the retention of records, are explained in VAT Notice 700 and Notice 700/21 Keeping records and accounts.

Hot take-away food and drink

What is the liability of take-away food and drink? Hot take-away food and drink is always standard-rated. Cold take-away food and drink is zero-rated, provided it is not of a type that is always standard-rated (such as crisps, sweets, beverages and bottled water). Further information can be found in Notice 701/14 Food.

What is take-away food and drink?

Take-away food is food sold for consumption off premises. Section 3 explains what we mean by 'premises'.

What does 'hot' mean?

Hot in this context means above the surrounding air temperature.

Examples of standard-rated sales when sold hot are: fish and chips, chicken and chips, chips, Chinese, Indian, Greek, Italian and any similar take-away meals and dishes, baked potatoes with a hot or cold filling, hot dogs and hamburgers, pies, rolls, sausage

rolls, pasties and similar items (if sold 'freshly cooked'), toasted sandwiches, cups of tea, coffee, chocolate and other hot drinks, cups of soup; and roasted chestnuts.

What about freshly cooked products?

If you sell freshly cooked products for consumption while they are still hot they are standard-rated, 4.5.

Some of these products are, however, bought to eat later, either cold or after re-heating. Examples include pies, pasties, sausage rolls and similar savoury products, cooked chickens or joints of meat, bread products and croissants. The liability will depend, therefore, on how you sell them.

If they are sold specifically for consumption whilst still hot (as a result of being freshly baked, cooked or reheated) will be standard-rated.

If they are sold warm simply because they happen to be freshly baked and are not intended to be eaten while hot; or cold or chilled at the time of purchase they can be zero-rated

What do we mean by 'specifically sold for consumption whilst still hot'?

You sell food specifically for consumption whilst still hot if you either:

have an established hot take-away trade and are selling the food as a part of that trade advertise it as either hot take-away food or in any other way which indicates that it is meant to be eaten while still hot or sell it accompanied by napkins, forks, etc. to enable it to be eaten before it cools. It does not matter where you sell the food - if it is for consumption while still hot, it will be standard-rated. This means that hot take-away food sold in supermarkets, kiosks at airports or stalls at train stations, etc, are all subject to the same rules.

What about hot and cold ingredients supplied as a single item of food?

If you sell hot food with an ingredient that is cold as a single item, the whole supply is standard-rated. This includes anything in a bun, bap, baguette or other speciality bread with any hot filling such a sausage, reheated cheese and ham, pastrami, etc. Some examples are:

hot dogs, hamburgers, bacon sandwiches, chip butties etc, baked potatoes with a cold filling, hot steak sandwiches or kebabs.

What happens with hot and cold food sold at the same time?

If you sell a mixture of standard-rated and zero-rated items for an inclusive price for consumption off the premises, you will have to work out the tax value of each item in order to calculate how much VAT is due on the standard rated item. You can do this on the basis of cost or market values as explained in Notice 700 The VAT Guide.

VAT and the Caterer cont'd

Examples of mixed supplies of take-away food include:

burger, chips and a milkshake
a cup of tea with a non-chocolate coated biscuit or a meal consisting of hot and cold items or dishes supplied in separate containers.
You are normally considered to be making mixed supplies if each of the items in the inclusively priced package can be purchased separately from your menu. This is not the same as the single item of food that happens to have a cold ingredient for which one charge is made as explained in paragraph 4.7.

Condiments

Ignore any minor items for which you make no charge such as salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard etc. This applies whether or not the customer uses the condiments on the food.

Accounting for VAT

Catering provided by the owner of the catering facilities

If you run your own catering outlet you are acting as principal. This means that you must account for VAT on any supplies of catering or hot take-away food. You can reclaim any VAT charged to you as input tax, subject to the normal rules.

Catering provided by a catering contractor acting as principal

If you are a catering contractor running catering facilities on someone else's premises as a principal, you must account for VAT on:

any supplies of catering or hot take-away food. You can reclaim any VAT charged to you under the normal rules

sales of other standard rated items of food your fee to the owner of the catering facility and any subsidy you receive from the owner of the catering facilities. This subsidy is standard-rated and should include payments you receive to balance a profit and loss account.

You must account for VAT on your supplies even if the owner of the facilities makes exempt supplies (see paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7).

Catering provided by a catering contractor acting as agent

Although you run the canteen etc, the food and drink is supplied by the owner of the catering facilities - your principal. The owner must therefore account for VAT on the supplies of catering or hot take-away food (unless they make exempt supplies as in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7).

Meals supplied free of charge

If you give your customers or friends free meals or drinks, this is regarded as business entertainment and you will not be entitled to deduct any input tax incurred in the provision of the meal or on the purchase of the drinks.

However, where you provide free sweets or drinks as part of a meal your customer pays for, such as mints or liqueurs with the bill, you may treat this input tax as attributable to the taxable supply of the meal.

If you give meals or drinks in exchange for an identifiable benefit to your business, for example to coach drivers or to group/party organisers in return for bringing their party to your establishment, you can deduct any VAT incurred but you must account for output tax on the cost to you of these supplies.

Catering for family or employees

If you are the proprietor of a restaurant, café or other catering establishment and you supply yourself or your family with meals, this is not regarded as catering and you need not account for VAT on those meals. However, you must account for tax on the full cost to you of any standard rated items (such as ice cream, sweets and chocolates, crisps, soft and alcoholic drinks - see Notice 701/14 Food) that you take out of your business stock for your own or your families use.

If you provide catering to your employees and they are not required to make any payment, either in cash or by deduction from their wages, no VAT is due. The same applies if deductions are made from gross wages where this is provided for in a contract of employment.

Similarly, if you install vending machines for your employees to use free of charge and you give them tokens to operate the machine or it is operated without tokens or coins, no VAT is due on the supplies from the machine. But if you give your employees money, or they have to pay for tokens to operate the machines, the supplies are standard rated and you must account for VAT on them.

If you have any questions or queries regarding VAT you should seek professional advice.

This document in its entirety can be found on the HM Customs and Revenue website
<http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/>



The Events Guide 2011 is bigger and better than ever...

If you haven't seen our brand spanning new events guide website now is the time.

The old website was, by our own admission, a bit of a stop-gap. But now we have a purpose built website that allows you to search by date, event type or event location, making it easier for you to search for work.

The new guide is brimming with 440 pages of 1782 outdoor events, 650 outdoor markets, an updated supplier section and several more to come on the web site in 2011, making it the most extensive guide we have ever produced.

- **Date**
- **Venues**
- **Event type**
- **Expected footfall**
- **Catering/market contacts**

This really is an essential marketing tool for all event caterers.

The Guide with online access is available for £49. Online access on its own is £45.

Why not help us to do our bit for the environment by buying online access instead of the book!

440 pages is a lot of tree and unlike the online version, we can't update it through the year.



Goodbye Gremlins

We have spent the last six months re-writing and re-programming every course we offer. Our new courses include:

- Food Safety Level's 1, 2 and 3
- Health & Safety
- HACCP
- Essential First Aid

Making More Profit Course

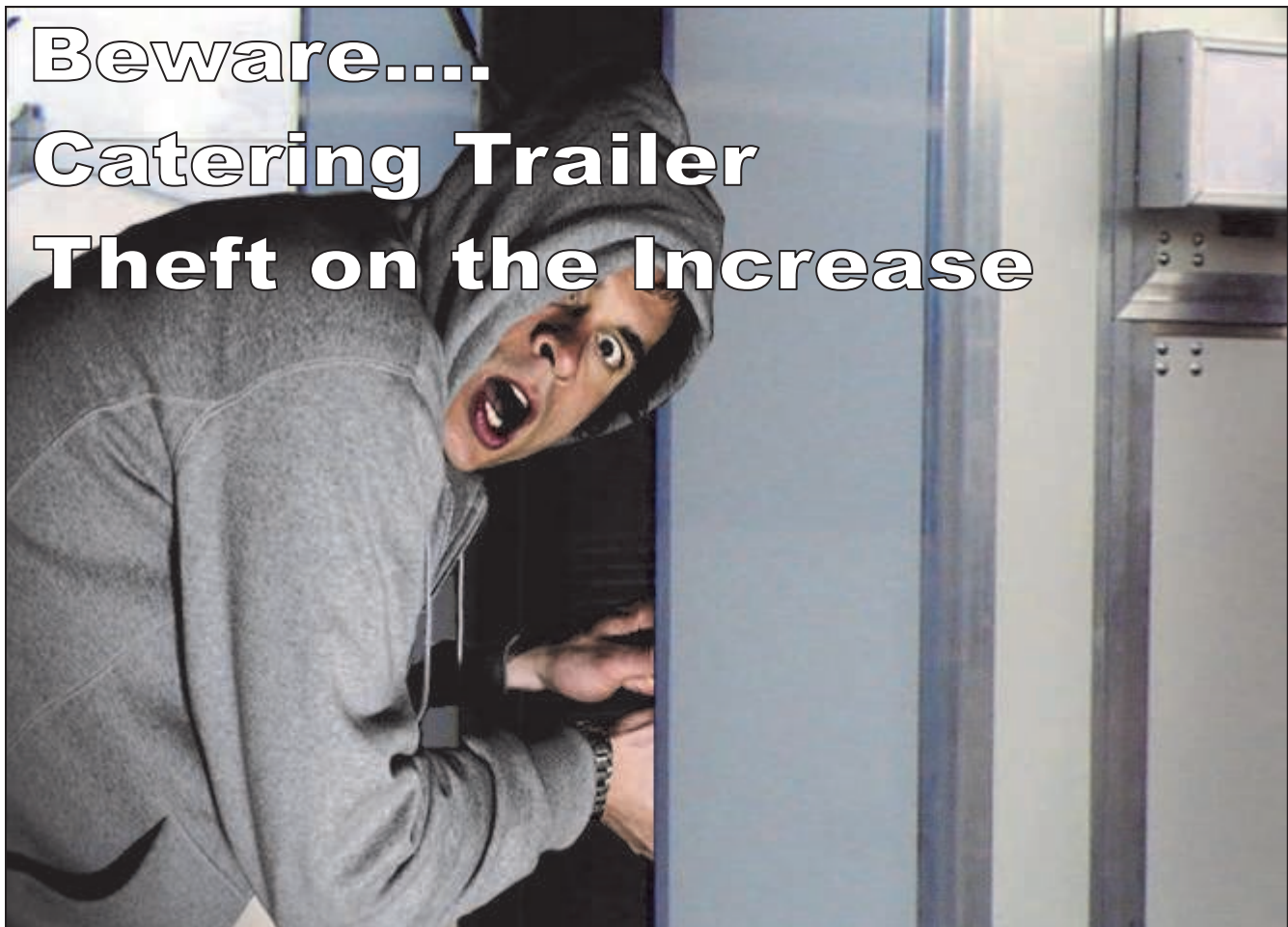
Coming soon is our brand new business development course which won't be free like the

others, but we are so confident that it will improve your business if you follow the principles taught, that we will give you your money back if it doesn't.

It isn't just a sit and learn course, it has loads of interactive tools for you to set up, measure and control your catering business.

It doesn't matter if you're an event caterer, run a restaurant, cafe or sell butties on an 'A' road.

This course is guaranteed to make you more profit!



Over recent months the number of catering trailers stolen has risen at an alarming rate. Taking extra measures to prevent the theft of your trailer will provide you with that added peace of mind.

It would seem thefts are on the increase particular those that are kept away at night in unsecured compounds.

When considering where to keep your trailer when not in use we recommend that you store it at home on the driveway, ideally behind closed gates or with vehicles parked in front of it.

If this is not possible then look for approved storage compound.

CaSSOA are an organisation that has approved storage sites throughout the UK. Rated Bronze, Silver and Gold dependent on the level of security you require they offer reassurance that your trailer is protected. You may also benefit with an additional discount off your insurance if the trailer is kept in a CaSSOA gold storage compound. More information can be found at www.cassoa.co.uk.

Protecting you as members

Whilst we're sure you are taking every measure to prevent the theft of your trailer here's a timely reminder that:

1. Remember to **ALWAYS** fit a wheel clamp and hitchlock when the trailer is not in use, by not doing so you are increasing the chance of an opportunist theft but you could also invalidate your insurance cover.
2. Security on your trailer is **vital**. Marking systems such as Datatag and Theifbeaters have proven to reduce the number of trailer thefts.

Tracking devices are also an excellent idea to safeguard your business, best suited for catering trailers not only do they alert you when the trailer is stolen but can be tracked by the police and tracker to find the up to date location of the trailer.
3. Comprehensive Insurance cover is also a must, after all this is your business. What would you do for if your trailer was stolen and you could no longer trade?

For further advice on keeping your trailer safe, security systems and insurance call NCASS today on:

0845 094 0420 or 0121 603 2524.

Energy Contracts... tricks of the trade

Several NCASS customers have been caught out recently by 'roll-over' contracts for their gas and electric supplies, also, we discovered that one of our customers has been paying for a 'deemed contract' for seven years, costing them literally tens of thousands of pounds!

I have summarized what these different contracts mean, and how to identify and avoid the pitfalls.

What is a roll-over contract? Most energy contracts for SME businesses (small & medium enterprises) are for set periods of one, two, three or five years.

You agree the price and standing charge with the supplier and pay that rate for the remainder of the contract. Towards the end of the contract, the energy company sends out a renewal letter offering you a new price for the next twelve months, if you do not cancel this renewal, it is considered to have 'rolled-over' at the new price offered and you are stuck in a contract you did not realise you'd agreed to, on a price the supplier decided.

Included in the initial contract terms and conditions is a clause that states that if you do not cancel the roll-over within the designated timescale, you will be contractually obliged to remain with that supplier until the next contract expiry – when you may well be rolled over again! **At the prices they have, once again, chosen.**

The problem with these contracts is that energy companies know that only around one in ten SME companies ever re-negotiate their contracts, and with this in mind, they will often significantly increase the renewal price knowing that by the time you realise – it's too late!

Unfortunately, it's pretty safe to say that 80-90% of small businesses in the UK are paying significantly more than the market rate (sometimes up to 40% more), and as they agreed to the contract in the first place, they have no comeback other than to sell/close the business or move property.



Isn't this just scaremongering?

Quite simply, No. This is such a prevalent issue that OFGEM the government funded regulator, changed the rules in January 2010 governing this practice but only provided protection for micro-businesses* that started their contract after January 2010. So any companies under contract before that period, get no protection. OFGEM recognised that small business owners do not necessarily have access to the level of expertise required to make informed decisions about contractual arrangements for energy

So how do I avoid being rolled over?

Contact your energy suppliers and ask the following:

- **Am I under contract, if so is it a fixed length contract**
- **When does my contract end**
- **When does the termination period start and end**

Once you know the dates that you are allowed to terminate the contract either email the supplier or send a letter by recorded delivery telling them you do not want them to renew the contract. It's that simple! We even have termination letter templates at NCASS which you can request from Mark at the NCASS office.

What is a deemed contract?

A deemed contract is when you either never had a contract, or your contract has been cancelled. You get put onto the default 'out of contract' rate. The out of contract rates can be up to double. One NCASS customer, a charitable organisation, came to me to ask why their bills were so high? It turned out they had been billed by N Power on the out of contract rates for seven years! The price I found for them was around 8.5p per unit (kWh), the price they were being charged was just under 22p. Almost three times the market rate!

Continued on back cover

Supplier Directory

Approved Trailer

Manufacturers

4 SURE TRAILERS

6 Flemming Rd, Earlstree Ind Este, Corby, Northants
NN17 4SW

Tel: 01536 202944 Fax: fax 05601 166993

Web: www.4suretrailers.co.uk

Email : enquiries@4suretrailers.co.uk

Contact: Mr. Gary Wagstaff

AJC TRAILERS

Unit 10 Cosgrove Way, Luton, Beds, LU1 1XL

Tel: 01582 486663 Fax: fax 01582 487077

Web: www.ajc-trailers.co.uk

Email : sales@ajc-trailers.co.uk

Contact: Mr. Jav Samsa

BINGHAM TRAILERS LTD

Unit 4 Coach Gap Lane, Langar, Nottingham, NG13 9HP

Tel: 01949 861924 Fax: 01949861865

Web: www.binghamtrailers.net

Email : sales@binghamtrailers.net

Contact: Mr. Jason Wall

EXCEL TRAILERS LTD

25 - 26 Burnt Mill, Elizabeth Way, Harlow, Essex, CM20
2GU

Tel: 01279 422227

Email : info@exceltrailers.co.uk

Web : www.exceltrailers.co.uk

Contact : Jacqui McDonald

EDMUND EVANS LTD

Pool Meadow Garage, Westend Parade , Gloucester, GL1
2RY

Tel: 01452 527388

Email : omar.alim@edmundevans.co.uk

Web : www.edmundevans.com

Contact :Omar Alim

JIFFY TRUCKS LTD

26 Jubilee Way, Shipley, Bradford, BD18 1QG

Tel: 01274 596000 Fax: 01274 596444

Email: jiffy@jiffytrucks.co.uk

Web: www.jiffytrucks.co.uk

Contact: Mr. Barry Doyle

NORTH EAST CATERING TRAILERS & VAN

CONVERSIONS LTD

1 Parker Court, St. Omers Road, Dunston, Gateshead
NE11 9EW

Tel: 0191 460 3056 Fax: 0191 460 3232

Email: lesray@nectrailers.com

Web: www.nectrailers.com

Contact: Mr. Les Reay

ROKA LTD

New Brook, Titchmarsh, Thrapston, Northampton, NN14
3DG

Tel: 01832 732111 Fax: 01832 732737

Email: sales@roka.co.uk

Web: www.roka.co.uk

Contact: Ms. Simon Pauffley

TIME LEISURE LTD (TOWABILITY)

Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, NN8 1LD
Northampton

Tel: 01933 229025 Fax: 01933 227049

Email: marcel@towability.com

Web: www.towability.com

Contact: Mr. Marcel Binley

TUDOR CATERING TRAILERS LTD

Unit B3, Oldmixon Crescent, Weston Super Mare, BS24
9AY

Tel: 01934 420033 Fax: 01934 417337

Email: sales@tudortrailers.co.uk

Web: www.tudortrailers.co.uk

Contact: Mr. Graham Tudor

WILKINSON MOBILE CATERING SYSTEMS LTD

Unit 1, Global Way, Lower Eccleshill Road. Darwen.
Lancs, BB3 0RP

Tel: 01254 706 348

Fax::01254 701 335

Web: www.wilkinsoncatering.co.uk

Email : sales@wilkinsoncatering.co.uk

Contact: Mr. Mike Wilkinson

Catering Equipment

Manufacturers

AJC TRAILERS

Unit 10 Cosgrove Way, Luton, Beds, LU1 1XL

Tel: 01582 486663 Fax: fax 01582 487077

Web: www.ajc-trailers.co.uk

Email : sales@ajc-trailers.co.uk

Contact: Mr. Jav Samsa

TRIMFORD LTD

Unit S4, Mendip Business Park, Rooksbridge
Somerset, BS26 2UG

Tel: 01934 750367 Mob: 07715 055175

Email: westcatering@hotmail.com

Web : www.westoncateringsupplies.com

Contact: Mr. Bob Wright

This Directory is for NCASS strategic partners and supplier members only.

If you are interested in becoming a member then please call or email the NCASS office on the number below.

If you are already a member and would like to enhance your listing by adding a logo or description please call or email the NCASS office on the number below.

0121 603 2524
alan@ncass.org.uk

Supplier Directory

Gas Engineers

HYNES GAS LTD

Hynes Gas Services provides Installation, service, repairs and annual certification for your mobile catering units.

01858 466617 - 07977 576727 - 07966 068 634

KAITAKARE Ltd

We operate in a 30 mile radius at a standard call out of Stafford and will give you a fast response to your breakdown

01785 716532. - 07973 913434.

Franchises

OBLANCA GROUP LTD

54 Clarendon Rd, Watford, Herts, WD17 1DU

Tel:

Email

Web:

CAFE2U

4100 Park Approach, Thorpe Park Business Park, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS158GB

Tel: 0845 6444 708

Email: events@cafe2u.co.uk

Web: www.cafe2u.co.uk

Contact: Ms Rebecca Tate

Cafe van franchise

JUICE FIX LTD

29 Clos Cadno, Maes-y-ffynnon, Morryston, Swansea, SA6 6TT

Tel: 0845 6860555

Email: mark@juicefix.co.uk

Web: www.juicebarfranchise.co.uk

Contact: Mark Hullin

Smoothie and Fruit Juice Bar Franchisor

HOGROAST SERVICES LTD

2 Derby Street, Colne, Lancashire, BB8 9AA.

Tel: 01282 870301

Email: stephen@spittingpig.co.uk

Contact: Stephen Marsden

Suppliers of Hog Roast Machines

DINKY DONUTS

Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough, NN8 1LD Northampton

Tel: 01933 229025 Fax: 01933 227049

Email: marcel@towability.com

Web: www.towability.com

Contact: Mr. Marcel Binley

Hot & Cold Food Boxes

EBERSPACHER (UK) LTD

10 Headlands Business Park, Salisbury Rd, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 3PB

Tel: 01425 480151

Email: tina@eberspacher.com

Contact :Ms Tina Carter

Manufacturer of hot and cold food transit boxes for vans

Insurance

NCASS INSURANCE

For all your catering insurance requirements, we have special rates for NCASS members

Tel: 0121 603 2524 0845 0940420

www.ncassinsurance.co.uk

LP Gas and Equipment Supplies

CALOR GAS

Athena House, Athena Drive, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV34 6RL

Tel: 01926 330 088

Email: gwillmot@calor.co.uk

Contact: Gaynor Wilmot

Suppliers of LPG

Portable Kitchen Hire

PKL Group (UK) LTD

Stella Way, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 7DQ

Tel: 01242 663 012

Email : schristie@pkl.co.uk

Web : www.pkl.co.uk

Contact : Sam Christie

Health & Safety Equipment & Systems

CMC DAYMARK Ltd

Wharton Park House, Nat Lane, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 3BS

Tel: 01606 597000 - 0777 551 5133

Email: gfitchett@daymarksafety.com

Web: www.daymarksafety.com

Contact: Gregory Fitchett

Temporary staff

RECRUITMENT4U

26 The Burgess, Coventry, West Mids, CV1 1HL

Tel: 02476 559614

Email: Chris@recruitment-4u.co.uk

Web: www.recruitment-4U.co.uk

Contact: Mr Chris Kane

Web Site & IT Services

FOXONLINE LTD

6 Gresham Rd, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0HZ

Tel : 0121777 7663

Email: bhanu@foxonline.co.uk

Contact: Bhanu Kalagara

www.foxonline.co.uk

As businesses, you are considered to be fully responsible for your contractual arrangements; therefore there is no comeback for the customer, the best you can do is agree a contract and ask for it to be backdated, however, most suppliers won't backdate further than three months and some, such as EDF, don't back date at all.

We raised the issue with the energy ombudsman (an independent adjudicator that you can go to if the energy company fails to deal with a complaint). In a sense we were lucky in that N Power miss-informed me regarding the contract and I'd recorded the conversation when they did so. The Ombudsman found in our favour and instructed N Power to pay £400 compensation and backdate the contract offer by six months.

If you are concerned that you may be paying too much for your energy, then you probably are.

NCASS offer a free energy review to all members using piped gas (not LPG) and metered electric. We can instruct you on how best to deal with your supplier, provide honest & impartial advice from our in office energy expert and even find you the best prices.

Just call the office and ask for Mark. 0121 603 2524
* a business with an annual energy bill of less than £5,000 would qualify as a micro-business.

Cut the SPAM



IMPORTANT CHANGES TO YOUR NCASS ACCOUNT

After requests from a number of caterers who had received speculative telesales calls, **we have now removed all of the phone numbers and email addresses** from the 'find a caterer' section of the web site. Event organisers are now able to contact you via email on your NCASS home page, so you will need to check this regularly to see if you have been contacted for work. If you want your number to remain available to the public via the search facility you need to confirm this via your NCASS control panel on the 'contact details' section. We will not display your phone number or email unless you request it.

Specialist Catering Insurance from NCASS...

At the Nationwide Caterers Association we offer comprehensive and competitive priced insurance policies tailored specifically for the Catering Industry.

- Up to 20% discount for NCASS Members
- Instant Quotes & Cover with immediate documentation



Caterers Liability		Specialist Caterers Liability Insurance 3 FREE hygiene courses with every policy sold
Catering Trailer		Catering Trailer Insurance For mobile and permanently sited units
Ice Cream Van		Ice Cream Van Insurance 95% no-claim No Claims Bonus
Hot Food Van		Hot Food Van Insurance Fire cover automatically included
Catering Fleet		Fleet Insurance for up to 12 Vehicles Compare quotes from our panel of leading insurers

UP TO 20% DISCOUNT FOR NCASS MEMBERS

0845 094 0420

Monday – Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

or for membership call 0121 603 2524 or visit www.ncassinsurance.co.uk

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