

**Volume**

**1**

LEADERSHIP IN UNDERSTANDING BASICS

PAUL GERHARDT TRAINING AND COMMUNICATIONS

# Effective Meat Counter Product Replenishment

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EFFECTIVE MEAT COUNTER PRODUCT REPLENISHMENT – BY PAUL GERHARDT

# Training Manual and Guide

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## Abstract/Introduction

This manual was developed to improve the effectiveness of time usage for meat department employees and to streamline morning activities. One goal of this manual is to bring uniformity to meat department operations--company-wide. The third goal is to standardize a broader understanding of quality, safety, best practices, health and legal policies that deal with effective meat counter product replenishment.




Quizzes and areas for note taking conclude each section for the purpose of maximizing the effectiveness of training and learning processes. The overall expectation for the use of this manual is to bring increased customer satisfaction and amplified employee effectiveness and contentment through greater awareness of improved meat department systems.



## Building An Image of Consumer Satisfaction

*Creating an image of consumer satisfaction means giving the customers variety and selection in the quickest time, while delivering company expectations and meeting company deadlines.*

**T** Here are a few basics that need to be understood in building an image of customer satisfaction. Meat counters must meet these basic needs. Customers must perceive that consistencies in these basics are fulfilled on a daily basis.

<b>ICON KEY</b>
 Valuable information
 Test your knowledge
 Notes
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<b>Training &amp; Development</b>
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**Freshness.** It may seem obvious, but it is not always practiced. Giving customers products they perceive to be fresh is the first guideline of consumer satisfaction. Meat counters that are filled with products that are dark and possibly filled with meats of less-wholesome quality will give customers reasons to shop with the competition. Building a reputation of consistent freshness will build business and create greater volume and profit over a long period of time. The guidelines associated with freshness can be accomplished through asking and answering the following questions:

1. Would I sell this product to my own loved family members?
2. Is this product wholesome enough to sell to the elderly or people who are ill?
3. Is this product taking away from the overall appearance of freshness and of the perception of quality for my meat counter? (Darker shaded meat may need to be moved or removed—completely.)
4. Could this product be processed into a product that does not detract from the overall appearance of my meat counter and be more profitable elsewhere?

## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

(This means roasts may be cut in half, turned into steaks, stew meat, stir fry, cube steaks or steaks cut thinner or processed similarly.)

Overall perception of freshness means touching each and EVERY product by hand first thing each morning and evaluating whether the product adds or detracts from the reputation you want to build and maintain.



### **Know your customers**

Knowing your customers is the single most important aspect in giving customers a meat counter that is not only acceptable, but also perceived as fresh and appealing. Know that each market has unique customer demographics that define specific needs and acceptability of perceived freshness. Your clientele will purchase products based on experience and upbringing, taste, quality, health and nutrition. Take the time to observe what your customers perceive as fresh. Giving selling suggestions accompanied by observation will be your greatest indication of whether your customers perceive meats as wholesome and fresh.

Remember, you may sell a product once to a customer that is of less than fresh and wholesome quality once. However, it is almost guaranteed that they will think twice about purchasing a product from you again and may even tell friends and family about their negative experience. Negative publicity from friends and family of customers holds much more weight than selling suggestions given by a market manager with a reputation of selling products with less than perceived wholesomeness and freshness.

The bottom line—Freshness means giving every customer products that are appealing to the eye and of wholesome quality that you can take pride in.

**Variety.** Customers need to have a large enough selection that makes them feel they have the power of choice. Perhaps a customer comes to the store specifically because they are dreaming of making chicken fried steak, just like his or her parent used to make. If they come to the store after the last meat cutter has gone home, they will walk away disappointed if they do not find what they came in for. Even worse, they may find out that a competing store has what they want and a larger variety of products. This may make them become loyal to a store that carries what they are looking for.

Having variety often involves getting to know the demographics of your customer's needs. Listen to what your customer asks for and try carrying it—consistently. Have a wide variety of boneless and bone-in cuts from beef, pork and lamb. Explore widening-up on displays of products you find sell well and have just enough assortment and packages of differing quantities to satisfy shoppers who are looking for meals for themselves only, for a couple or for a large family. An excellent guideline to follow is to make sure that by the next morning there is a minimum of two packages of each product left on display from the previous day. By doing this you are ensuring that customers have had enough selection to choose from and they got what they were

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looking for. Remember, most customers want a choice. If they come to the store looking for a particular cut and you have only one left, perhaps they did not feel they had any other choice but to buy what was left or go someplace else looking for alternatives.

**Quality.** Giving a customer quality means that meats are both wholesome and cut to professionally crafted specifications. Most cuts should never have more than a quarter inch of fat on the outside. Trimming fat should be consistent around the whole perimeter of each product. Don't cut part of the fat to ¼ inch standards and leave one side at an inch. Large deposits of fat should be removed and never concealed by stickers, soaker pads or loose ends of the product. Leaner meats should be cut to leaner specifications. Glands and cartridge should always be removed. Loose or jagged bones should be trimmed up. Remember, you can sell a product once to a customer, but selling them a poorly crafted cut may mean that they will not return and also tell others about their unpleasant experience. Giving customers quality every time invites customers to return and shows customers that you and your team are dedicated to giving the best every day.

**Uniformity.** Cutting according to standards of uniformity involves being consistent with professional cutting and trimming practices. A well-trimmed product that is easily identifiable and cut to industry standards gives customers confidence they can trust the professionals cutting and packaging the meats they are purchasing. All steaks should look similar, varying only in thicknesses and quantities. When being displayed in the counter, rows and columns should be aligned neatly and according to specific cuts. Each package should sit neatly—directly parallel to the one beneath it.

**Exciting.** Make the department fun and easy to shop. Maintain neat and attractive displays that are well signed. Let customers clearly see what is on sale and of extra value. Signs should be near or above the products they are representing. Each sign should show clearly the price of the product and how much the customer is saving. Put a nice selection of added value products such as thin cut or quick-to-fix meats next to the product being highlighted by a sign. Remember, packages that are bloody, torn or otherwise unattractive may detract from the overall appearance of your meat counter and slow down product sales movement.

**Personal Appearance.** Employees should be neat and well-groomed at all times. This is a part of being a professional. The perception of your employees is the perception the customers will have of the department. The manager must lead by example, by dressing professionally and acting professionally toward fellow employees and customers—alike.

When it comes to putting in the best and the freshest meat counter each day, understanding these basics and keeping the customer's interests in mind is the key and essential. Further explorations into the basics of fresh meat counter product replenishment are investigated throughout this manual. Questions or comments about

## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

the contents of this manual should be directed toward your supervisor or meat merchandiser.

### What Have You Learned?

1. How can you ensure customers are getting a well-maintained fresh meat counter?
2. Why is variety Important?
3. What guidelines should you follow in assuring quality?

### Notes:

## Guiding Principles of Meat Counter Replenishment

The following is a summary of meat and seafood policies and procedures, which are discussed more in detail further in this manual. Employees may be in violation of company policies and/or local laws if they are not followed. Any questions pertaining to this information or any meat department or company policy should be directed toward your supervisor or meat merchandiser.

**Following Company Policy For Safety** is also another way of taking care of customers and company.

### Valuable Knowledge

- Never sell anything past the original code date, “use or freeze by date,” “best before” or “sell by date,” or other equivalent language (here after referred to as “code date”).
- Never alter/extend/change or cover up the code date with another scale or pressure sensitive label. The original code must always be visible.
- When re-wrapping, always use the original code date on the price label.
- Never grind any trimmings from reworked beef or any beef cuts previously wrapped for display (except if requested by a customer and the grinder is thoroughly cleaned afterward). Under no circumstances can you grind outdated, distressed, re-wrapped, previously wrapped, discolored, or reduced retail cuts of meat.
- Never regrind ground beef. Old or spoiled ground beef mixed with fresh ground beef does not make fresh ground beef. Larger quantities of bacteria reside in older ground meats and may make someone ill.
- Only grind beef in your grinder. Never grind different species together or in the same grinder. The only exception to this rule is for stores with two grinders. Pork, veal and lamb can be ground through the dedicated service grinder. The service grinder must be thoroughly cleaned and disassembled after each customer request to grind.



## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

 Notes:

## Managing Case Freshness

Code dates are an excellent guide to help keep your meat counter fresh, bright and appealing. The color of the meat and seafood, condition of the package and overall appearance can require markdown or distress action to be taken on a package, even though it is still within the expiration date. Achieving superior meat displays through proper reducing and distressing techniques is the best way to provide your customers the highest level of service. Doing so will also yield greater sales and higher profits for your department.



FIGURE 1.1 Taking care of customers around the world with global education in leadership.

### Rules for Distressing Packages

1. **Check each package everyday**, for proper date, color and condition. If the package is out of code, it must be removed from the counter, thrown away and discarded. It cannot be marked down. Out dated product cannot be sold or given to employees or even donated. The company and you may be held responsible if anyone were to become ill after eating such product.
2. Use the code date as a “tool.” It will tell you before discoloration begins. The code date will indicate that a particular cut of meat is becoming a candidate for price reduction.
3. Color is an excellent gauge for knowing when to mark products down and for eye appeal. Reduce meats while they still have a fresh appearance. Always give

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customers a quality product. When color contrast begins or a meat package becomes slightly discolored, reduce it. The key is to reduce early. Take price action the day before a package becomes outdated. Price action is often required when you replenish your displays, because of color contrast between the new and older cuts.

4. Take quick reduction action on packages that reveal poor workmanship, trimming, poor marbling, gristle, etc., even if there is good color. Customers recognize poor workmanship and these packages generally do not sell. Reduce quickly while the color is good. Reviewing cutting methods with fellow workers to prevent future poor workmanship and share ideas of what quality and customer's expectations look like.
5. Remember some cuts discolor faster than others. Beef top sirloin, top round, and cube steak are examples of these. Reduce these and other products that change color rapidly. Color contrast deters counter presentation and appearance.
6. Use the Daily Sales and Production report (S&P) to produce your daily cutting list. Cut/process what you will sell today. Be careful not to over produce. Over production leads to darker meat counters, inferior presentation and lower eye appeal. Further discussion on S&P usage can be reviewed later in this manual.
7. Make your morning procedures an "every day learning experience." When you reduce a package, ask yourself "Why?" You must first determine the reason for marking down (distressing) a product, so that corrections can be made to keep your counter fresh, appealing and well merchandised. Ask yourself, "Has the product been over ordered or over produced?" "Was it poorly packaged?" "Was the workmanship professional?" "What can I do differently so that it will sell next time?"
8. Make the morning procedures a training exercise. Communicate answers to why products have been distressed with your crew. This training exercise should be done regularly--defining expectations in a positive way. Encourage your team to consistently strive to give customers absolute quality with every package and personal encounter.
9. Reducing products in your counter should be done throughout the day. Meat appearance is continually changing under display lights, handling and air. When newer cuts are produced, coloration variance occurs. Keep it fresh and keep it moving.

Managing case freshness is the best way to put your best foot forward, while representing our company in a professional manner. An overall full, bright, fresh

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and appealing meat counter invites customers to come back with a message of quality assurance and pride.

**Reducing and Distress.** There are two methods used for marking down products. One method is by using “markdown labels.” The second is by lowering the product’s price per pound, while using “Special Today Stickers” to identify the uniqueness of the product. Any questions pertaining to this information or any meat department company policy/practice should be directed toward your supervisor or meat merchandiser. These guidelines help guarantee that your customers are getting fair prices for products and an overall fresh and appealing well-maintained meat counter.

**Best Practices**  
How to reduce and distress packages for managing a fresh meat counter with pride.

**Markdown labels** are used to take price action with cents or dollar off on individual packages. Marking products down should be done continually—throughout the day. Use the lowest amount of reduction possible. Make it a goal not to reduce any product by more than 25%. Mark the product down progressively as the shelf life grows shorter.

- Never cover the scanning UPC on a price label.
- Place the markdown dollar off sticker near the UPC.
- Place further markdown stickers directly on top of the previous one(s) to lessen possibilities of fraud or confusion. Completely cover and hide the older sticker.
- Review S&P reports daily to see trends in product distress and markdown. Make production cutting list adjustments accordingly.

**Reducing prices using Special Today stickers.** Products may only be reduced when allocated by warehouse and cost has been reduced or approved by your field merchandiser.

- Scale the product using the minimum price per pound reduction needed to move the product.
- Make it a goal not to reduce the product more than 25%.
- Never change the original “sell by date” on the product.
- Place Special Today stickers near the price label and do not cover dates, pricing information or the UPC.
- Create a sign at the point of sale if substantial product must be moved.

## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

**Code dates.** All meat products must have a code date. Code dates may be in one of several forms: Sell by, Use/Freeze by or Best before, to name a few. Code dates tell the retailer and customer the last day a product may be sold to assure optimum freshness and wholesomeness. No product is to be sold or left on display past the code date. Outdated products must be discarded.

- Always use the packer's original code date. This includes variable weight items such as poultry, sausages and hams. Fixed weight items such as franks, bacon and luncheon meats also have code dates.
- Take price action to reduce products before they expire.
- Never sell a product past the original code date.
- Products with an expired code date must be thrown away and discarded.
- Never cover a code date with a price reduction sticker.

**Handling Rewraps.** When re-wrapping and re-scaling products that have been previously displayed in the counter use the original code date found on the older/original label.


- Never sell re-wrapped packages past their original code date.
- Retain each original scale label and place them on each product to be re-wrapped. This will give the person wrapping a reference to use in maintaining date integrity. The original label should be thrown away after each package is finally re-wrapped.
- Re-wrapped products should always be fresh and wholesome. Your customers expect and deserve quality in every package. Remember, a customer may buy a product once that may not be the freshest. However, they may not return to do it again. Worse yet, they may tell others that meat from your department is "not good" or "the competition offers better quality."

**Reducing Ground Beef.** Fresh ground beef must be sold no later than 2:00 PM of the day after it was ground. Fresh ground beef from the previous day's production should be marked down according to need in order to sell it by the deadline.

- Any marked down ground beef packages on display after 2:00 PM must be pulled from the display counter, thrown away and discarded. This insures that our customers are always getting the freshest ground meats.



## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

 Notes:

## Chapter

## 4

## Ordering Intelligently

When it's time to order there are many important things to consider. Having just enough products in supply to get through to the next delivery is the best practice. By doing so, you are allowing the warehouse to keep you stocked with the freshest products that your customers expect. Storing the freshest products from delivery-to-delivery reduces opportunities of creating shrink caused by meats aging in their bags and purge to occur in the form of blood. Meats do become tenderer as they age in their bags. However, profits decrease because when aged meat turns darker more quickly after they are cut. Purge (bloody discharge) forms during the aging process and cannot generally be sold.

**Purge** can be defined as “The bloody juices inside the vacuum packed bag, partially caused by the vacuum atmosphere.” Purge can be greatly increased by improper handling and temperature changes. Ordering products only when needed without excessive back stock can decrease purge.

**The Sales and Production report (S&P)** is a valuable tool for ordering if properly used. This report is generated eight times throughout the week. Your store's “CC computer” generates the Daily S&P report each morning. It showing sales movement for each and every item from your department. The daily S&P report reflects sales and package quantity totals from the previous day and is a very useful tool for ordering and creating the perfect cutting list. A **Weekly S&P report** is generated every Wednesday morning showing totals that reflect product sale volume of each item in your department. The weekly S&P report should be stored and utilized as a tool for ordering. It is not to be thrown out until it is 53 weeks old.



### Tips For Using S&P Reports for Ordering

- Circle quantities of items that are advertised, higher movement items and frequently sold staple items—directly on the S&P report movement column.
- Look at your display counters and identify products that need to be cut and/or filled according to quantity level.



**Tips For Using S&P Reports for Ordering (continued)**

- Record how many packages will be required to fill your display and needed to be produced and/or ordered next to the name of each product description on the daily S&P report. Identify which products will need to be removed for resale or discard from your counter.
- With the S&P report in hand, evaluate quantities of actual back stock in storage coolers and freezers.
- Survey a copy of the current week's ad to evaluate department supply needs.
- Double-check historical movements of similar advertised items with Weekly S&P reports kept on file to decide needed quantities. Price, time of the year, competitor's ads, time of the month, season, nearby holidays, and other advertised items will affect product movement and need. Use these as "evaluators" in your decision making process for ordering.
- Determine how much product will be produced and filled today and how much product you will need to last until the next delivery period. Keep in mind advertised promotional items will have a greater movement and need careful consideration for ordering, so as not to run out of the product or have more product than can be sold for the period of the ad. Keep the products as fresh as possible and always circulating out fresh.
- Record quantities required for production on your cutting list.
- Record quantities required for ordering on your S&P report to use as a reference when ordering.
- Check invoices with actual product on hand. You may not have received the products and therefore, may miss out on sales opportunities without having products you assumed you had.
- Know what days have higher sales volume.

## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

- **Order only what you can cut and sell between delivery periods.**

After utilizing these techniques, take the time to write quantities needed in your order book. Place the date you are writing the order in the box at the top of the first column in your order book of EACH page. Take care to make sure every column from page-to-page are all on the same order line number. Read each product description, line-by-line. Record quantities needed as you go. Assess product mark-up (gross profit) and case quantities to determine needs to maintain gross profit margins, quality and peak freshness. While writing each order, re-survey coolers and display units to assess actual quantity ordering needs.

After recording quantities in your order book, it is a good idea to take another look at the current advertisement pages, your S&P reports and your display units. Scan your orders and send according to methodology and consistent practices of your store.

It is a good practice to double check order sending deadlines on a daily basis—they may change with only subtle announcement. Also, double check with whomever is sending the orders to the warehouse that they actually got sent and where on time. Nobody is perfect. However, customers may not understand why you ran out of a product if the order was not sent. It is also a good idea to train every member of your team on how to order using these practices and ordering systems.

### **What Did You Learn:**

1. How much product should ideally be on hand at all times?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How can S&P reports be best utilized for ordering? What practices should be followed?

## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

3. Why is it a good idea to double check quantities on hand and also ordering deadlines?

 Notes:

**STEP-BY-STEP  
GUIDELINES TO  
MAKE IT ALL  
HAPPEN****Morning Procedures**

Developing a consistent system for you and your team to follow is essential for daily morning procedures. The system should include processes that include quality control, morning cull (pulling the counter), cleaning, throwing the load, receiving, ordering, writing a cutting list, assessing needs and finally--cutting and filling the priority needs of your meat counter. Use the information in this section as a guideline to make it happen--effectively and efficiently.

**Beginning your day:**

- Check mailbox and email. Grab any paperwork and evaluate when best to follow any instructions or needs reflected in company memos and messages.
- Check the previous day's sales. Evaluate your labor situation and ordering needs.
- Get daily product invoices and S&P reports.

**Putting equipment together:**

It is a good practice to put the equipment together first thing as you enter your work area in order to be ready to satisfy the needs of any special orders or needs of early morning customers. Sending customers away without what they came for may deter them from coming back and may be creating opportunities for competition in other markets. Make sure all equipment has been properly cleaned and sanitized before putting the equipment together. Bacteria caused by poorly cleaned equipment causes meat to grow dark quicker and wholesomeness issues.

- Oil and put the saw(s) together, wipe up excess oil for safety.
- Put the grinder together. Use and wipe up all excess oil.

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- Put the slicer(s) together. Use caution and proper safety equipment when handling sharp objects.
- Wipe up any excess water for safety and sanitation.
- Put the tenderizer together.
- Place all floor mats in their proper place in front of each machine and production areas--where needed.
- Set up butcher blocks, with trays, knives, wipers, scrapers, soaker pads, string, and a trim tray, (which has a sheet of peach paper on the bottom, to reduce darkness). Have what you are going to need for the day close at hand. This will make it easy access and save time in the long run.



### **Prioritizing production:**

- Write a cutting list and prioritize necessity with numbers reflecting order of need. The greatest priority should be numbered one and then so on.
- Keep in mind the priorities of your counter are the largest holes. They may be eyesores to you, your customers and boss.
- The holes should be assessed and prioritized according to size and need.
- Empty front page advertised items should be your first priority. Never turn a customer away because they came to the store for an advertised item that you are out of.
- Secondary advertised items and grind should be next on your cutting list.
- Cut only what you need to fill each hole until greater quantities can be produced from a secondary cutting list--later in the day.
- Package higher profit items with longer shelf life such as: frozen items, poultry, cooked and smoked products.
- Cut each section individually (beef, pork, lamb, or poultry) until full. Section-by-section. In other words if the beef section usually has greater sales in the morning cut what you need to fill it before moving on to cutting another section (perhaps pork or lamb).
- Cut the consecutive sections until each become full.
- Walk the meat counter on a regular basis--throughout the day to re-assess your cutting needs as products get filled-up and sell. Cut only what you need, as you need it.
- Write a secondary cutting list to fill remaining quantity needs that will last the remaining portion of your sales day. This list should be prioritized with numbers according to need, just as the first cutting list was.
- Evaluate the needs of your counter and be careful not to run out of advertised, high volume or staple items (such as ground beef, pork chops and best moving steaks).
- Discount products throughout the day as discussed in this manual.

## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

- Fill and straighten out your counter throughout the day as needed. If your displays are consistently bright, full and fresh, they will also create greater sales and a better reputation for you, your team and your store. Customers expect quality and selection. Give it to them.
- Clean as you go. Every time you are out attending to the needs of your meat counter, take a clean damp rag to bloody grates and shelves. Wipe up bloody areas and remove any clutter. Keep the counter looking new, clean and fresh.
- Follow receiving and inspecting procedures as described in chapter 7 of this manual as needed.

### **Throwing the load:**

- Before you throw the load, make sure you retrieve a minimum of three six wheeled carts. Each cart will be useful for separating, distributing and identifying: (1) Deli meats, (2) poultry, and (3) items needing to be scaled.
- Start breaking down the meat load. **ROTATE** everything. **NEVER** put the new items on top of older ones. Not rotating will increase purge and increase shrink. Always face box labels outward and stacked neatly according to date and product variety.
- Arrange boxes by order of species and primal variety. Avoid cross contamination problems, by separating products according to species.
- Remove items from cases containing broken quantities in order to clearly show indication of need for replenishment.
- Safety reasons, heavier items should be stacked on carts, shelves, dunnage racks, and pallets—heaviest boxes beneath (below) lighter boxes.
- Remove empty and wet boxes.
- Take cardboard to the recycle bin or box crusher.
- Load chicken on a cart and fill retail displays as soon as possible. Any product that will not fit immediately into your displays should be removed from their boxes and put onto meat storage racks to be filled from later.



**FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT**

## Back To The Old Grind (er)

**Guidelines for Grinding Beef.** Always grind the manufacturer produced coarse ground beef in sequence of the leanest to the fattiest. Give each customer products that are truly as lean or leaner than their product label indicates.

### Valuable Knowledge

- Leanest ground beef (sometimes referred to as super lean or ground sirloin) must have no more fat than 9%. Produced from manufactured chubs only. Must be labeled according to local laws.
- Extra lean ground beef (sometimes referred to as ground round) must have no more fat than 16%. Produced from manufactured chubs only. Must be labeled according to local laws.
- Lean ground beef (sometimes referred to as ground chuck) must have no more fat than 23%. Must be labeled according to local laws.
- Regular ground beef (ground beef) must have no more fat than 30%. Must be labeled according to local laws.
- Keep the ground meats at their freshest by grinding several times during throughout the day. Ideally, grind three times over the period of the day to maintain freshness.
- Use S&P reports as a guideline for maintaining enough grind for the day, but not more than will sell by the day's end.
- Ideally, there should be no more and no less than 5 packages of each variety of ground beef the next morning.
- Disassemble, clean and sanitize the grinder at the end of each workday.
- Packages must be labeled according to company policy and local laws.

Maintaining consistently high quality grinds in variety and proportions required by your customers will give your clientele reasons to come back. Running out of ground meats that customers are looking for may give them a reason to shop somewhere else. Always give customers the freshest and best quality products.



**TRAINING TIPS  
FOR RECEIVING  
MEAT AND  
POULTRY****Receiving And Inspecting**

A thorough inspection of incoming products can help you determine if your supplier is a quality business (according to Food Safety News, December 1998 edition). If the supplier does not pass this inspection, then be aware. His distribution system is not in control. Good quality products can be ruined during shipment. Poor quality on delivery may also indicate more general problems.

Although most of our retail products are coming directly from our own company warehouses, some meat markets may have special arrangements for direct delivery authorized by our company managers. Those receiving meat and poultry should be aware of the critical nature of inspection. Using contaminated meat or poultry can result in an outbreak that can cost several weeks worth of business.

** Valuable Knowledge**

- Inspect the incoming truck. Make sure the truck is refrigerated, with a thermometer that reads no more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit for fresh and 0 degrees Fahrenheit for frozen. Reject any shipment if the truck is not cold enough. The truck driver may insist that the product may have warmed due to the doors being opened. If this is case, close the doors, wait 10 minutes. This may be an indication the truck is not reliable and cannot control the product properly. If the temperature does not drop to the proper coldness levels, reject the product.
- Inspect the truck floor. Make sure it is clean. There should be no puddles of blood or fluids such as water on the floor. Leaking packages could cause cross contamination of fresh food with contaminated food. Poor sanitation in the truck may indicate poor sanitation at the warehouse.
- Inspect the incoming boxes. Make sure they are not wet from blood or fluids. Wet boxes indicate leaking packages, which could contaminate wholesome foods. If boxes are wet, then you should inspect each package to ensure packages did not allow dirty fluids to contact your food.
- Look for signs of mice or insects. Look for nibble marks, urine spots, flies, etc. on the boxes.
- If the boxes were not wet, inspect several packages from multiple boxes. Look for leaking or damaged wrapping, code date, thawed and

## FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

refrozen products, off temperature or temperature indicators showing abuse. Inspect for mice and insects. Look for discoloration. Check for off odor, stickiness, abnormal sliminess, dryness and presence of USDA inspection stamps.

- If you find three bad packages, reject the box. If you find three bad boxes, reject the entire shipment.
- For poultry, pay attention to the wings and joints. If the color is not normal, wing tips dark, or the flesh is soft or flabby, reject it.
- Discoloration results from the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide present and can be related to the presence of microorganisms. Most microbes grow on red meat. The amount of oxygen present in the meat is reduced from the microbes. This changes the meat's color from red/pink to brown, gray or green. Reject off color meats.
- Be sure to wash your hands after inspecting fresh foods. If you have touched a product you believe was not fresh, wash again.
- Consider wearing gloves while inspecting deliveries. Protect yourself and reduce risk of infections.




### **Proper Receiving Tips**

- **Prepare cooler and backroom in advance.**
- **Unload and refrigerate upon arrival.**
- **Refrigerate fresh items and store frozen product in freezer.**
- **Rotate cooler stock. Put incoming products behind old products. First In First Out (F.I.F.O) in coolers and freezers.**
- **Spot check weights against invoices.**
- **Count boxes (i.e. pork loin, beef, etc.).**
- **Carefully check code dates and exterior conditions. Look for wet, broken boxes, which indicate poor handling and possible temperature abuse.**
- **Write-up or call for product adjustments and credits for shortages or additional charges for overages.**

Using proper receiving practices assists in keeping your profit margin consistently high by reducing loss. It also ensures that customers are getting the freshest and wholesome



FRESH MEAT COUNTER REPLENISHMENT

 Notes:



## Tips on Training

This methodology for training was originally seen in an article written by Baldwin, T. T. & Ford, J.K. in 1988, published in *Personnel Psychology*.

1. Develop (and follow) clearly stated learning objectives for the training.
2. Maximize the similarity between the training situation and the job situation.
3. Provide ample opportunity during training to practice the task.
4. Use a variety of situations and examples, including both positive and negative models of the intended behavior.
5. Identify and label important features of a task.
6. Make sure trainees understand general principles.
7. Provide support back in the work environment, including clear goals, checklists, measurement, feedback, and rewards for using the new behaviors on the job.
8. Provide ample opportunity to perform what is learned back on the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

## Coaching Techniques To Be Used

### This information on Coaching

**Came From:** *Human resource development 3<sup>rd</sup> edition* By Desimone, R., Werner, J., & Harris, D., 2002, p. 387):

1. For performance management to be most effective, managers must ensure that as many of the following conditions and tasks as possible are actually present or done (Desimone, R., Werner, J., & Harris, D., 2002, p. 387):
2. An effective performance management system is operating within the organization. Among other things, this means that the organization's recognition and rewards system properly rewards managers and supervisors for effective coaching.
3. All managers and supervisors are properly trained in coaching skills and techniques.
4. A thorough coaching analysis has been done before employee performance issues are discussed with employees.
5. Supervisors prepare in advance for the coaching discussion.
6. Supervisor comments are constructive, helpful, and supportive.

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7. Supervisors provide specific and behavioral feedback on employee performance.
8. Employees are involved in the coaching discussion.
9. Specific goals are set during the discussion.
10. An action plan is jointly established between the employee and the supervisor.
11. Coaching discussions are followed-up, to ensure that the employee is following the action plan and to recognize performance improvements when they occur.

### Notes:

## Review The Basics For Effective Meat Counter Product Replenishment

Following these basic guidelines will give your team many advantages of increased productivity, greater sales, efficiency, profit and overall customer satisfaction. The basics of effective meat counter product replenishment are:

**This guide** was developed to fill the needs of proper training and development for efficient practices that save time and increase sales, profits and overall market potential that will satisfy customers.

- 1.** Customers must perceive that consistencies in these basics are fulfilled on a daily basis.
- 2.** Giving customers products they perceive to be fresh is the first guideline of consumer satisfaction.
- 3.** Meat counters that are filled with products that are dark and possibly filled with meats of less-wholesome quality will give customers reasons to shop with the competition.
- 4.** Building a reputation of consistent freshness will build business and create greater volume and profit over a long period of time.
- 5.** Knowing your customers is the single most important aspect in giving customers a meat counter that is not only acceptable, but also perceived as fresh and appealing.
- 6.** Know that each market have unique customer demographics that define specific needs and acceptability of perceived freshness.
- 7.** Your clientele will purchase products based on experience and upbringing, taste, quality, health and nutrition.
- 8.** Take the time to observe what your customers perceive as fresh.
- 9.** Giving selling suggestions accompanied by observation will be your greatest indication of whether your customers perceive meats as wholesome and fresh.
- 10.** Giving a customer quality means that meats are both wholesome and cut to professionally crafted specifications.
- 11.** Cutting according to standards of uniformity involves being consistent with professional cutting and trimming practices.
- 12.** Employees should be neat and well groomed at all times.

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- 13.** Never sell anything past the original code date, “use or freeze by date,” “best before” or “sell by date,” or other equivalent language (here after referred to as “code date”).
- 14.** Never alter/extend/change or cover up the code date with another scale or pressure sensitive label. The original code must always be visible.
- 15.** When re-wrapping, always use the original code date on the price label.
- 16.** Never grind any trimmings from reworked beef or any beef cuts previously wrapped for display.
- 17.** Always properly clean and sanitize the equipment and tables between species production and at the end of each day.
- 18.** Color is an excellent gauge for knowing when to mark products down and for eye appeal.
- 19.** Having just enough products in supply to get through to the next delivery is the best practice.
- 20.** Ordering products only when needed without excessive back stock can decrease purge.
- 21.** The weekly S&P report should be stored and utilized as a tool for ordering.
- 22.** Sending customers away without what they came for may deter them from coming back and may be creating opportunities for competition in other markets.
- 23.** Write a cutting list and prioritize necessity with numbers reflecting order of need.
- 24.** Save time and work safely by cleaning as you go and as needed.
- 25.** Using proper receiving practices assists in keeping your profit margin consistently high by reducing loss.
- 26.** Using proper receiving practices ensures that customers are getting the freshest and wholesome products available from suppliers.
- 27.** Train your team with effective communication about proper receiving practices and how it benefits them, customers, their team and company. Everybody can be a winner when proper receiving practices are utilized.

- 28.** Coaching is useful in the training process. Coaching discussions should be followed-up, to ensure that the employee is following the action plan and to recognize performance improvements when they occur.

## **Notes and Questions**



- 1.** What have you learned?
- 2.** List any questions you may have. Be sure to have a follow up with a supervisor, trainer or meat department merchandiser to review this information.

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