

New Deli Course Launched

By David Chen

The IGA Coca-Cola Institute has designed a new course to improve the performance of in-store deli associates at all levels. The new assistant deli manager course covers current consumer and industry trends, deli merchandising and sales and deli operations.

Current Deli Trends

A current trend in the deli industry is the consumer's need for convenience. The American family is being pushed more and more by demands on its time. With the increase of hours at work and both spouses working away from home, the grocery industry has seen a higher demand for convenience. According to ACNielsen's *Homescan*, 50 percent of Americans agree with the statement, "I am so busy and in such a hurry all day that by dinner, I'm too worn out to fix a meal that requires much in the way of time or effort."

The assistant deli manager course gives information about how delis are satisfying the convenience need by increasing the number of products that eliminate having to prepare dinner or prepackaged, precooked foods. Using research from the International Dairy, Deli and Bakery Association's (IDBBA) *What's in*

Store 2007, the course identifies the types of prepackaged meats that currently are selling and the types of prepared foods families are consuming.

The consumer's need for convenience is not the only trend in the deli industry. According to *The Natural Foods Merchandiser* magazine, natural and organic foods have seen a 15.7-percent increase in sales in the past year. The assistant deli manager course covers reasons for the increase in demand for natural foods as well as products that food manufacturers are introducing for delis to satisfy the demand and the USDA's organic standards.

Sales and Merchandising

Understanding trends and consumers are only part of operating a deli. Assistant deli managers also need to understand the importance of sales and merchandising. To maximize sales and profits, the right products and services must be determined by evaluating and improving the department to make it unique.

One of the ways to evaluate a specific part of the deli is by category management — a methodology designed to sell more products to the shopper and maintain or increase consumer satisfaction. The assistant deli manager course further defines category management and

takes students through an example.

Category management also requires a deep understanding of the deli's new and current products and services, including specialty hams and turkey, sausages, prepared foods and party trays. Assistant deli managers and deli clerks can improve suggestive selling abilities and customer satisfaction with product knowledge.

Daily Operations

After deli products and trends are discussed, the last section of the course covers day-to-day deli operations. To be successful, an assistant deli manager must be organized and must pay attention to details. The ability to plan in advance for ordering and stocking to meet sales demands and a thorough understanding of food safety and sanitation are critical needs in managing daily operations.

The assistant deli manager course also contains valuable information about how to differentiate from the competition and merchandising. To enroll in the course or for more information about other courses, visit the IGA Coca-Cola Institute Web site at www.igainstitute.com or call 1-800-321-5442.

David Chen is an instructional designer for the IGA Coca-Cola Institute and a former deli manager in Chicago.

Deli Manager Course Outline

- Consumer/Industry Trends
- Deli Sales and Merchandising (New & Standard Products)
- Deli Operations (Ordering, Shrinkage, Food Safety & Sanitation, etc.)

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