

Appetizers

The value of relentless customer service



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What you need to know about SBA 7(a) loans

By Steve Whitehill

If you're in the market for a small business loan, SBA 7(a) loans are a great option to explore. This particular type of loan is popular among small business owners because the capital lent serves many funding purposes. For example, some of the most common uses include business expansion, renovation, start-up costs, working capital, inventory and Business Acquisition.

So what exactly is a SBA 7(a) loan? Fundamentally, SBA 7(a) loans are meant to serve and strengthen the U.S. economy. This type of small business loan can be obtained for any amount, but typically range from \$350,000 to a maximum of \$5 million. The loan lengths range up to 25 years if they involve real estate, otherwise they are typically 10 years.

Programs generally encourage longer-term financing for businesses and maturities are dependent on the business's ability to repay. Interest rates start at 2.25% on top of the market prime rate. When this article was written prime rate was 3.25% (10-19-20) and therefore the interest rate on the loan would be 5.5%. The agreed-upon loan

amount is negotiated between the borrower and the lender and the interest rate may be fixed or variable. Lenders prefer SBA financing than conventional loans because the SBA guarantees a substantial portion of the loan – typically 75%+. The term SBA loan is a misnomer, the SBA as a rule doesn't lend money directly to the Borrower. The bank is induced to lend the money because of the SBA loan guarantee. It makes the loan safer.

Along with how your loan can be used, specific requirements vary based on the lender.

How to know if you qualify:

It's important to note that typically SBA loans are not as inexpensive as conventional bank loans mainly due to the SBA & Lender fees which can

exceed 2% to 3.5% of the loan. You should consider using conventional financing options before applying for an SBA 7(a) loan.

Along with how your loan can be used, specific requirements vary based on the lender. Additionally, there are some basic requirements that everyone must meet in order to be approved. These include:

- ◆ Your business must meet the SBA's definition of a small business.
- ◆ Your business must be registered for-profit.
- ◆ Your business must be domestically owned and operated.
- ◆ Your personal credit score must be 650 or above.
- ◆ You must be personally invested, either by time or money, in your business for a sufficient period of time.
- ◆ Your business's revenue must reach or exceed \$100K per year.
- ◆ Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSRC) of at least 1.15 (frequently lenders require a higher amount e.g. 1.25). This ratio is calculated by dividing the

See SBA 7(A) page 8

Panthers Player John Miller opens popular sandwich franchise in Miami

Pro football guard teams with father to open first Ike's Love & Sandwiches in Miami

Miami – Ike's Love & Sandwiches, the iconic San Francisco-based sandwich chain with a cult-like following, solidified a multi-unit franchise deal with John Miller, a professional football player for the Carolina Panthers, and his father Johnnie Green to bring the concept to Florida for the first time. On October 9, the father-son duo is opening their first location in Miami, located at 18719 Biscayne Blvd in Miami, with plans to open 10 Ike's Love & Sandwiches storefronts throughout Broward County and Miami-Dade County over the next seven years.

A former three-year starter for the Buffalo Bills, Miller recently signed an agreement to play for the Carolina Panthers. While his football career shows no signs of slowing, Miller is a Florida native and family man at heart who knows an outstanding sandwich when he tastes one. After trying Ike's Love & Sandwiches for the first time, Miller knew he wanted to bring the love to his hometown by partnering with his father to invest in the Ike's brand.



"My father and I immediately fell in love with Ike's Love & Sandwiches when we visited its San Francisco location, and saw a golden opportunity to bring it to our home state of Florida," said John Miller, professional football guard and Ike's Love & Sandwiches franchisee. "Ike's Love & Sandwiches is different than any other restaurant concept in Florida right now. We're excited to bring it to the East Coast as we know customers are craving the sandwich selections

and will jump all over it once we open the doors."

Founded by Ike Shehadeh in 2007, Ike's Love & Sandwiches currently has nearly 90 locations in operation throughout California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Texas and Hawaii, with additional locations currently in development in Chicago as well as Utah, California and Texas. The brand continues to see

See IKE'S page 14

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Appell Pie

Obesity, restaurants and neighborhoods

Howard Appell ♦ Today's Restaurant Publisher

Let me begin by stating that no restaurant has or ever will be responsible for anyone being obese. Any lawyer who ever tried to win a case based on this premise should take a good look in the mirror and ask himself if he still believes in the principles of law and the moral high ground which hopefully led him to the profession of law.

Obesity is a choice made by an individual not by a menu item being forced on him or her. The choice is yours to order the double cheeseburger with bacon and large fries and jumbo milk shake. The restaurant is not responsible for your choices. Obesity has many causes, one being wrong choices, and some are psychological in nature rooted in deep feelings but still the individual has the choice to do something about the problem other than suing a restaurant.


I remember my childhood and how none of my childhood friends were "obese". I lived in a 6 story apartment house with three wings all connected by a common hallway in Brooklyn NY. Beneath the ground floor was what seemed like a maze of basement hallways with different rooms for storage, laundry, boilers and the Super's (Superintendent) apartment. Outside of the building was a sidewalk with a narrow swatch of grass, which ran the length of my building, and the next building, which was separated by an alleyway. What I have just described was our playground. We played punch ball, stickball, football, tag, hid and seek, ringaleaveo, chased the ice cream truck and just plain ran around. Coming home from school did not mean sitting down in front of a computer or X-Box to playing games on a mobile phone, we were outside running and being physical.

We had no choice but to go out into our neighborhood and play, computers were not part of the society yet. The only television show I remember

watching in the afternoon was The Mickey Mouse Club. We watched it in friend's houses and then went out to play until our parents called us up for dinner. In the summer we went back out after dinner to play again. We couldn't get enough physical activity.

It's not the fault of the children and it certainly is not the fault of the restaurants if our children are becoming less fit.

Today we live in a society where both parents work, in some cases there is only one parent. Grandparents and other family members are spread out all across the country. Parents have given up control of their children to the cell phone, social media, television, computer and the video game. It's not the fault of the children and it certainly is not the fault of the restaurants if our children are becoming less fit. Parents have to take back control of their children's lives.

The restaurant and hospitality industry has to be on the cutting edge of changes in society to maintain its customer base and I believe that the industry as a whole has done a good job. Many new menu items are being presented to allow customers an alternative healthy choice but there will always be a place for the old standards. Vegetarian and Vegan restaurants are becoming mainstream and their menu choices are trying to appeal to a wide slice of society. It's up to the individual to make the proper choices and accept responsibility for doing so. 

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What's Going On

Important new products, corporate news and industry events

Tampa Bay's #1 health food cafe, **Grain and Berry**, is opening 3 more restaurants this year. They are also planning to open **50 restaurants in the state of Florida** over the next three years. Coming to Clearwater and Hamlin and others. **Full information is in our monthly Leads Report along with hundreds of others.**

◆◆◆◆◆
Chilean salmon distributor BluGlacier is bringing its award-winning, sustainably farmed Silverside Premium Coho salmon with the lowest feed to fish ratio in the industry to the U.S. market once again this fall. Distributed from October 1 through December 31 for the retail and foodservice sector, the salmon will be available fresh and frozen. Certified by Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP), Silverside is produced by Ventisqueros in the northern Patagonia region of Chile. Raised on AlgaPrime, a non-GMO, algae-based feed, Silverside ensures a high concen-



tration of healthy Omega 3's and lowers the dependency for wild fish utilized in the feed. For more detailed information visit their website online at www.bluglacier.com.



Renee Kirwan, founder of **Florida Honey Pot Farms** recently announced that her company, a CBD, and Terpene infused honey producer, has released their latest installment of their Wellness line of honey, **BEE IMMUNE**. BEE IMMUNE is formulated to aid digestive health and thereby boosting the body's immune response system. Recent university and private studies have shown, CBD and the terpene profiles associated with BEE IMMUNE have been effective in this arena. IMMUNE joins the Wellness lineup of BEE CHILL, targeted at anxiety and BEE FLUID, designed to reduce pain and inflammation. Researchers at Augusta University in Georgia have found new evidence that cannabis-derived CBD **may help those suffering from severe lung inflammation that occurs in more serious cases of COVID-19**. Taking note of this Kirwan is hopeful that Florida Honey Pot Farms can aid in the battle against the virus. She cautions that IMMUNE, CHILL and FLUID are not cures but another natural resource available for the public interest. The excitement is growing at Florida Honey Pot Farms as they ramp up national distribution. Major distributors have shown marked interest and are finalizing details for adding the honey to their product line. Online at FloridaHoneyPotFarms.com for info.

◆◆◆◆◆

Holiday Inn, a 6-story, 135-room full-service hotel will be built on the three city land parcels at 1651 Royal Palm Ave, 2465 Second

Street, and 2466 First Street, located on the northeast corner of Royal Palm Ave and Second St in Ft Myers. **The hotel will offer a restaurant/bar**, meeting space, amenities, and a local art space open and featured during Art Walk event nights. It will add approximately 152 construction jobs and 59 full-time jobs to residents of the area once it is completed. Project completion is planned for 2021.

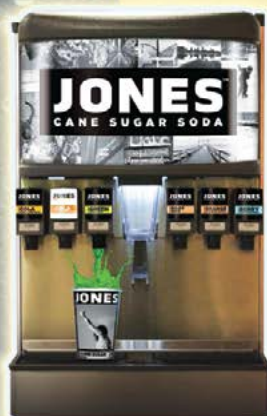
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Stoelting, has introduced **Flavor Burst®**, a versatile system for soft serve machines that creates visually appealing customized treats with up to eight flavors out of one spout, in a striped or blended pattern. The Flavor Burst spout assembly installs directly onto a Stoelting freezer's spout and the syrup lines that create the colorful designs are easily connected and disconnected. Stoelting Foodservice, a division of The Vollrath Company, LLC, is an industry leader in frozen dessert equipment, offering a broad and premium line of soft serve, frozen custard, batch and frozen



See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 6

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The value of relentless customer service in tough times

John Tschohl ♦ Restaurateur and founder of BellyMelly

To clarify the value of quality service, I believe that service retains the customers you already have, attracts more customers, and develops a reputation that encourages customers to do business with you in the future... even during tough times.

How do we do that? The best we can do is put ourselves in the customer's shoes: Do things for a customer the way that the customer would do themselves

and then we add the magic.

Case in Point: Wilderness Safaris.

Wilderness Safaris' customer service is light-years ahead of nearly every company in the world—even Disney. I've been on five trips with them and look forward to five more.

Wilderness Safaris was founded by two young safari guides in the early 1980s. They deliver unique experiences to guests and fair returns for

shareholders and stakeholders, while ensuring Africa's wilderness areas are sustainably protected. They operate camps in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe with access to over seven million acres of Africa's wildlife and wilderness areas.

The company is as committed to reducing its negative impact on the environment as it is to maximizing its bottom line. The sustainability team's ultimate goal is to achieve total carbon neutrality. They take care of their people and the earth.

Wilderness Safaris makes sure that financial benefits of their operations flow to the nations and local people wherever they operate. This helps with conservation of wildlife areas and employs staff from neighboring communities.

Many of the people Wilderness Safaris hires have never had a job. Most start with little formal education. The organization provides training and work experiences, transforming them into the most customer-service-driven employees I've ever seen.

Accommodations are as luxurious as a Ritz Carlton suite, even if they are under a canvas roof. In your "tent," beside your bed, you'll find a handwritten note welcoming you by name. The night before you leave, another handwritten note thanks you for coming.

Keith and Wilderness Safaris know that customer satisfaction drives their success. They empowered "Relentless" focus on customer service on the day they started operations.

As in any organization, 99% of a customer's experience comes from decisions of front-line employee. At Wilderness Safaris, employees are truly empowered to make and implement customer-focused calls constantly—few decisions come from above.

Wilderness Safaris workers love their jobs and their enthusiasm is infectious. Warm and welcoming, they are genuinely friendly and call you by name throughout your visit. This attitude helps create life-changing journeys that can change visitors' perspectives on the planet. They inspire visitors to effect positive change

in their lives and spheres of influence.

At Wilderness Safaris, employees feel empowered and excited to contribute. On their own, they devise training modules to implement good ideas and practices that serve customers. The organization rewards this energy and initiative, with recognition for completing extra training modules.


You can "feel it" at Wilderness Safaris. Everyone shares an infectious energy with a clear focus and positive attitude.

You "see it" at Wilderness Safaris. Employees working confidently to make customers happy.

You "hear" it at Wilderness Safaris. Employees really own the "our" in "How will this affect our customers?"

Wilderness Safaris exists to protect pristine wilderness areas and the flora and fauna that they support. The company believes that by protecting these areas, and including the local communities in this process, Wilderness Safaris will make a difference to Africa and ultimately the world.

It's vital that everyone in their organization understands how their work connects to customers. They make a "Relentless" effort to connect the dots. Empowerment has become an integral part of their organization's culture; a part of each employee. They need to be confident and believe in their own abilities

But magic happens on empowered front lines and that kind of customer service takes focused investment. You have to nurture it. You have to teach and reassure and support people for acting empowered. Wilderness Safaris knows that spending money on their employee training is much better for business and employee satisfaction than other more traditional ways of doing business. They have created a culture that will help them and their employees through the tough times. 

*John Tschohl is an international service strategist and speaker. He is founder and president of the Service Quality Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His new book, **Relentless** is now available. John's monthly newsletter is available online at no charge. He can be reached at 1-952-884-3311 or online at www.JohnTschohl.com. Also on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.*

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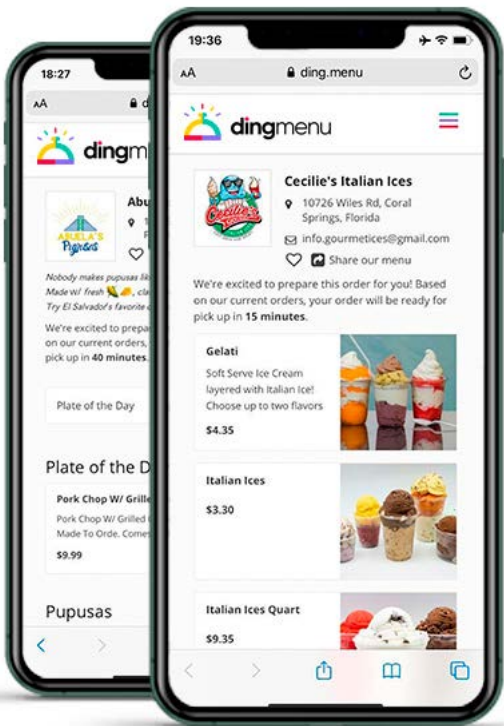
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What's Going On from page 3

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Until now, boaters have had to depend on their own knowledge or experience on where to take their boat to stop for lunch. Now with a couple taps on their phone, they are presented with all of the options in their immediate area. Boat Bistro, Inc. believes that **BoatBistro.com** will enhance the boating experience by providing an easy to use directory of "dock and dine" restaurants to boaters free of charge. The restaurants listed in the directory have the option of a free listing, or upgrading to display other features like their logo, pictures of their restaurant and a link to their website. Boat Bistro, Inc. President Brian Spence said "We hope to bring more business to dock and dine restaurants by assisting recreational boaters in finding them."

Nick Liberato (chef & star of Netflix's "Restaurants on the Edge") and partner Mike Dalewitz have launched their new revolutionary restaurant industry technology called **cueLess** so that customers never have

to wait in line again. **cueLess** is a proximity-based POS plug-in that dramatically increases the efficiency of every curbside and pickup business by accurately predicting customer arrival time, while providing automatic real-time adjustments of each customer's ETA. In addition, Mike & Nick head the 618 Hospitality Group which provides restaurants with the tools to perform, prosper, and profit while navigating the Covid-19 pandemic. **618 Hospitality Group** assists restaurants and bars by arming them immediate tools, guidance and expertise to survive and thrive as the country opens back up.

Hospitality executive Sean Christie and real estate, media and marketing executive Nelson Famadas have partnered to form **Carver Road Hospitality**. The venture will invest in, develop and operate lifestyle hotels, restaurants, lounges and other hospitality concepts. The company's mission is to create experiences driven by exceptional customer service layered in highly curated environments. **Headquartered in Las Vegas with offices in Miami, Carver**



Sean Christie



Nelson Famadas

Road Hospitality is currently completing late-stage deals in several domestic and international markets. To contact Carver Road Hospitality, visit them online at www.carverroad.com.

SNAC International, the leading international trade association for the snack industry, **announced SNAXPO, the most valued trade show and convention devoted exclusively to the international snacking industry**, will be held August 22-24, 2021 in Charlotte, NC. This new date supersedes the March 28-30 dates announced earlier this year. "We are pleased to announce the return of SNAXPO," said Elizabeth Avery, President and CEO of SNAC International. "Industry executives consistently tell us this is one of the most important events on their calendar, and it was sorely missed this year. So, we have developed a plan to bring the snack industry together, safely, in-person to help its companies and its leaders develop the products, marketing strategies and supply chain solutions that help them win with consumers." Founded in 1937, SNAC International (formerly Snack Food



Association) is the leading international trade association for the snack industry representing over 400 companies worldwide, including suppliers, marketers and manufacturers. Upon its three pillars of education, advocacy, and networking, SNAC is committed to connecting the snack industry to create growth and opportunity. For more info, visit www.snacintl.org.



Plant-based meat provider Before the Butcher is expanding its wholesale lineup that will appeal to restaurants as they are working to keep margins razor thin without compromising quality. The new Mainstream Plant-Based Patties will join the company's premium UNCUT brand and is available through distributors at a low wholesale cost. Adding the Mainstream Plant-Based Patties gives diners a plant-based option, available at a cheaper cost to the restaurant, achieved through family-pack packaging and minor adjustments that reduced ingredients costs.

Johnsonville is now offering food-service operators the chance to grow their breakfast sales with the launch of

See **WHAT'S GOING ON** page 12

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Order Up! Dingmenu disrupts online ordering for independent restaurants

When a new infectious respiratory disease started making the news in early 2020, Evan Kraham knew he would need to be quick on his feet. His Italian ice shop, Cecilie's Gourmet, had become a staple in Coral Springs, Florida, since opening its doors in 1995. But when it became clear that COVID might halt indoor dining at restaurants and establishments like Cecilie's, even community pillars could shutter for good from drastically diminished revenues.

Kraham decided to be proactive before Florida instituted a business lockdown. He stopped welcoming customers inside the store, began offering curbside pickup and eventually built a takeout window to ensure that patrons and employees remained safe. Word got around to his customers about the changes, and a surprising thing happened.

"I quickly gained a reputation for being the safest place around, and my sales doubled," he says. "Things got crazy."

But that business boom came with its own problems. During regular times, Kraham's employees could manage customers who walked in to purchase one of the 48 flavors he offered. Curbside pickup, though, meant a dramatic surge in the time and labor needed to take orders. When customers pulled up to his shop, someone would need to go out to the person's car to take the order, come back in to fill and bag it, ring it up and



deliver it to the vehicle. At the same time, other patrons were ordering by telephone, which demanded another person just to field phone calls.

Technology's pros and cons

He needed a technological tool to streamline ordering and keep up with surging sales. Though he had a website, it wasn't set up for online takeout and curbside pickup sales. Sure, he accepted online orders from websites like Uber Eats and DoorDash, which helped speed up the ordering and purchasing process, but those platforms took a big bite out of his income. Online ordering platform commissions can reach 30% of each order's total.

"These apps have really taken advantage of the situation where customers are staying home," he says. "They're killing restaurants and places like mine with their fees."

Customers may place their orders through a link on the restaurant's existing website or in a text message sent by the restaurant.

Authorities in several municipalities feel the same way as Kraham. From New York City to Los Angeles, urban areas instituted temporary fee caps on ordering and delivery apps during COVID to help restaurants avoid being gouged and stay solvent.

Kraham took another route. He went to his friend Steve Popkin, a successful software entrepreneur and loyal Cecilie's customer, to create a better solution.

"With service providers like GrubHub and Seamless, who needs enemies?" Popkin says. "I knew there was a better way for independent restaurants to make money online than what the big-name platforms offer."

Shaking up the status quo for independent restaurants

Within months, Popkin unveiled Dingmenu. Aimed at small food businesses struggling to stay afloat during

COVID, Dingmenu makes it easy and cheap for establishments like Cecilie's to start taking online orders and keep more money that comes from them.

Customers may place their orders through a link on the restaurant's existing website or in a text message sent by the restaurant. Patrons can also scan a QR code printed in an ad or on a business's front window with their smartphone. Clicking the link opens the interactive ordering system and posts a bookmark to the restaurant's menu on the customer's home screen.

For restaurant owners, Dingmenu is a no-brainer because it takes neither sales commission nor ongoing subscription fees from its customers.

Instead, restaurant owners pay a one-time \$99 setup fee to create their branded online menu. Restaurant customers who place a takeout or curbside pickup order through Dingmenu pay a small \$0.99 fee. The app also supports online ordering for restaurants offering in-house delivery to patrons. Leading payment processor Stripe handles the transaction and assesses restaurants its standard credit card processing fees of 2.9% plus \$0.30 per order.

That's it—there are no term contracts, hidden fees or cancellation

See DING! page 9

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Disclaimer: The settlement was approved by the Court on December 13th 2019. An appeal of the final approval order was filed with the court on January 3rd, 2020. At this time it is unknown how long the appeals process will take. As of now, claim forms are not yet available from the class administrator and no claims filing deadline exists. No cost assistance will be available from the class administrator and class counsel during the claims-filing period. No one is required to sign up with any third-party service in order to participate in any settlement. For additional information, class members may visit www.paymentcardsettlement.com, the court approved website for this case.

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The Local Culinary expands portfolio of brands

Forward-thinking virtual restaurant group adds five new distinctive concepts to growing roster of nearly 50 brands

Miami, FL – Following the successful launch of its groundbreaking ghost kitchen franchise model in July of this year, The Local Culinary has added five new brands to its growing roster of offerings, which now totals nearly 50 unique virtual restaurant concepts. Known for pioneering innovation in the food delivery space, the Miami-based virtual restaurant group provides consumers with modern, chef-driven food delivery options, while affording independent restaurant owners the ability to leverage its designed-for-delivery concepts within their own kitchen spaces, creating new revenue streams at a critical time for the industry.

Led by seasoned European restaurant industry veteran and entrepreneurial visionary Alp Franko, The Local Culinary has quickly attracted a growing fanbase since its launch last year. The virtual restaurant group provides modern, chef-driven food delivery options inspired by worldwide cuisine. Each concept is trendy and fresh, with the menu offerings aligned with current consumer demand.

“As many restaurant owners are fighting to stay in business due to limited dine-in service and other setbacks caused by the pandemic, we saw the opportunity to help make a positive impact on our industry, sharing access to our unique, proven



The Local Culinary currently operates several locations in Florida, and offers a portfolio of 50 unique delivery-only brands.

profit-driven brands that can easily be replicated in any restaurant kitchen,” said Alp Franko, founder of The Local Culinary. “Through this innovative new franchise program, restaurant owners can maximize their kitchen space and bring new options to market, increasing revenue almost immediately with easy-to-prepare items designed for delivery.”

As a true pioneer in the ghost kitchen movement, opening the first of its kind in Florida, The Local Culinary

currently operates several locations in Florida, and offers a portfolio of 50 unique delivery-only brands. Available for delivery via Uber Eats, Postmates, GrubHub and DoorDash, its concepts include, among others: The Chef Burger, Mama Roma, El Taco Loco, The Green Kitchen, Dirty Fingers, Shu Shu, Yoko Bowl, Hot Potato, Chicks & Gyros and Hot Dog Station. The new franchise program is now available nationwide.

“As the demand for high-quality food delivery options continues to increase, so too does the pressure on independent restaurateurs, who are facing challenges unlike any other time in history,” said Franko. “Our expansive portfolio of designed-for-delivery concepts have been successfully replicated in our first franchisee’s kitchens, helping them create new revenue streams and diversify their local customer bases. We are excited to continue expanding our brand offerings with new concepts on a consistent basis, and we look forward to welcoming other restaurant owners into our family as we grow into the future.” 

About the Local Culinary: The Local Culinary is an innovative virtual restaurant group providing modern, chef-driven food delivery and franchise model options inspired by worldwide cuisine. With 50 individual mini-restaurants all operating in the same kitchen to produce a range of menus, cuisines vary from Mexican, Italian and Asian and include items such as burgers, fried chicken, rice bowls, gourmet salads and more.

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SBA 7(a) from page 1

profit (before loan payment but after paying yourself) by the annual loan payment. Simple example if the profit of the business is \$115,000 and the loan payment is \$100,000 then the DSCR is 1.15 (or 115% of the payment).

♦ Thorough 3-5 year business plan including financial projections and competitive intelligence.

♦ Equitable assets that can serve as security.

♦ Individual banks place what are called overlays on top of the SBA requirements. Thus, an otherwise qualified loan that might be done by one lender might not be done by another.


How to apply for an SBA 7(a) loan:

To get started on your SBA 7(a) loan, you'll want to work through an approved lender preferably a direct lender (for the SBA). They'll help you identify your need for the loan, whether it be one of the reasons mentioned above or something else. Then you'll need to gather documentation and records such as tax returns, a balance sheet, business ownership breakdown, and other financial information. Once you've completed these steps, you'll complete an official application. There will likely be some back and forth in order to clarify details.

However, frequently a better option is to work with a Commercial Loan Broker who will have lenders compete for your business. Brokers frequently charge fees, which should be disclosed upfront, as they put in a lot of work to earn them.

Summing it Up

Should you find your business in search of an SBA 7(a) loan, know that you have options. Research lenders & brokers and discuss your needs upfront, in order to find the best long-term financial fit for you and your business. Know that the process is not fast and requires a fair amount of work on your part, but the end result is a loan that lets you accomplish your goals.

To learn more about SBA 7(a) loans, or discuss your options with a professional, contact us here. 

About the Author: Steve Whitehill has a richly diverse background, with decades of experience owning or holding key management positions across several different industries. Some career highlights include senior management positions in consulting and auditing for such firms as Anderson Consulting and PricewaterhouseCoopers, where he was directly responsible for obtaining top clients such as Gulf Oil, NYC Off-Track Betting and Nivea.

Steve served as Vice President and Executive of the DSDR Division of Chase Manhattan Bank's internal audit department. He is also the founder and Chairman of Southern Construction, Best Buy Mortgages and PropertyOne Realty.

in the age of COVID-19

John Kelly ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor

As the coronavirus pandemic rages on—and with public health experts concerned about a major surge in cases as we enter the final months of the year—there’s a growing trend in the restaurant world: ghost kitchens. This model, and the closely-related “virtual concept” model, are based on setting up food preparation facilities focused exclusively on online delivery and takeout orders. (The term “virtual concept” specifically refers to models using a restaurant’s existing facilities; ghost kitchens operate out of rented facilities.)

At Zenreach, we are already hearing a number of success stories about brands which have implemented the ghost kitchen model.

For restaurant owners and managers, it's easy to see the appeal of ghost kitchens. Opening a brick-and-mortar restaurant involves massive up-front risks and costs: typically, an operator has to sign a multi-year lease, hire full front- and back-of-house teams, and invest in additional construction or remodeling. Ghost kitchens, on the other hand, reduce the costs of real estate, labor, and menu innovation by shifting resources to focus exclusively on off-premise sales channels. Furthermore, the ghost kitchen model obviates the need for customer-facing staff such as servers, expeditors, bussers, etc. In essence, ghost kitchens strip food preparation down to its leanest, most necessary elements.

Of course, there are drawbacks to the model as well. Restaurants lose the opportunity to make a lasting impression on guests by "wowing" them with an incredible dine-in experience. They also lose the ability to upsell on items like alcohol, appetizers, and desserts. And they cannot offer guests the full benefits of the dine-in experience. (Personally, I love engaging with personable waitstaff, eating a good meal with proper accoutrements, and of course, not having to do the dishes at the end.)

Ross Resnick is CEO of Roaming Hunger, an online catering platform with over 18,000 food truck vendor partners. He sees the explosive growth of ghost kitchens as part of a larger movement in food service. “We strongly believe that there is an alignment with the macrotrend in off-premise dining growth, food mobility, and the idea of ghost kitchen space,” Resnick says. “We see food mobility as a cornerstone of essential restaurant infrastructure.”

At Zenreach, we are already hearing a number of success stories about brands which have implemented the ghost kitchen model. One client in particular, a craft-casual hot dog and sausage concept called Dog Haus, has

seen tremendous results over the past several months.

“We added ghost kitchens as an option for new and existing franchisees. Now more than ever, the trend towards off-site dining experiences via delivery and pickup is changing the entire restaurant industry,” explains Dog Haus co-founder Hagop Giragossian. “The current crisis has made third-party delivery a crucial component to the restaurant business, and we’re constantly looking for new ways to allow people to experience our food and brand.”

Although the Dog Haus team was well ahead of the ghost kitchen curve—the brand actually opened their first facility pre-pandemic, in the spring of 2019—they began partnering with commercial kitchen brokers such as Kitchen United and CloudKitchens this year to rapidly expand their presence in the space. “With COVID, our timeline has accelerated,” Giragossian says. “We’re working hard to open as many ghost kitchens as possible in the coming months.” The Southern California-based restaurant chain currently operates from six ghost kitchen facilities: one in Pasadena, two in Los Angeles, one in Austin, and two in Chicago.

But Dog Haus did more than simply expand its ghost kitchen operations—they also developed a roster of sister brands to better meet the needs of the growing off-premise dining market. “Earlier this year, we launched The Absolute Brands, a restaurant group comprised of Dog Haus and additional unique brands,” says Giragossian. “Each new brand offers delicious new items that are offshoots of Dog Haus’ signature menu.”


Giragossian reveals that the Absolute Brands concepts have proven to be so popular, they gave their franchisees the option to run them out of their brick-and-mortar locations as well. “Most took the opportunity and are now seeing outstanding results,” he says. “The Absolute Brands have been an amazing resource during this difficult time. We’re seeing franchisees make record-breaking sales—even compared to before COVID.”

It's clear that consumers are responding to The Absolute Brands in a major way. "Customers are big fans of the ghost kitchen setup," Giragossian tells us. "Delivery and pickup are booming right now, and with the ghost kitchen model, it's even easier for our customers to get their favorites delivered right to their door." Speaking to ongoing consumer concerns about the pandemic, Giragossian explains that "convenience and safety are key right now, and will certainly remain top priorities for months or even years to come. Ghost kitchens are a great resource for nailing both of those aspects."

Although Dog Haus has seen excellent results, ghost kitchens may not be for everyone. “For a restaurant to succeed in a virtual kitchen, it needs to ensure that it’s prepared for delivery and has established strong partnerships with third-party delivery providers,”



Giragossian stresses. He also says restaurants operating ghost kitchens should be ready to reach audiences through nontraditional marketing channels, particularly digital and social. “Restaurants with a limited digital presence may not be a fit. It’s also essential to ensure that the demand and brand recognition is there for expansion and delivery through an off-site location.”

Despite these challenges, it seems clear that the ghost kitchen model is not an ephemeral phantasm. Although dine-in service will never go away, ghost kitchens represent a new and innovative means for brands to get their offerings in front of a wider audience. “Takeout and delivery are a great way to enjoy your favorite restaurants wherever you may be,” says Giragossian. “Restaurant brands are absolutely exploring every way possible of getting their food into their consumer’s hands, and this will lead to great success for ghost kitchens.” 

About the Author: John Kelly is Zenreach's CEO. He has extensive experience in both e-commerce and ad tech. Prior to joining Zenreach, he was Head of Seller Growth at eBay and VP of sales at Criteo, a company that pioneered retargeting technology. John has a B.A. from Brown University, a J.D. from Georgetown University, and is a Fulbright Scholar. Learn more online at <https://zenreach.com>.

Ding!

from page 7

penalties. And since Dingmenu is a web-based platform, businesses don't need any special devices or even POS systems.

Popkin says this new model for restaurant ordering puts power and money back in restaurant owners' hands.

"Dingmenu is standing up for independent restaurants and saying enough is enough with outlandish fees and unbearably competitive listings," says Popkin. "We knew the time had come to disrupt the status quo in online ordering, and we think Dingmenu does exactly that."

Now using the platform for a few months, Kraham says Dingmenu orders have been increasing daily.

Besides allowing him to keep more money in his pocket, it's also helping him realize operational efficiencies he couldn't have imagined. He now doesn't have to schedule an extra person to take phone orders or run back and forth to waiting cars. It has also cut by half the time he needs to receive and fill orders. And customers are getting better service with easier ordering.

"Dingmenu does everything I need it to do," Kraham says. "It helps us run more seamlessly. It's a smart tool for my business, and customers love it." **TR**

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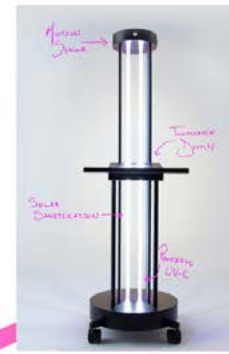
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What's Going On from page 6

its first-ever, premium breakfast sausage lineup designed specifically for the foodservice industry. “It’s our goal for foodservice operators who add Johnsonville their menu can yield wide consumer appeal while creating a powerful point of difference in the competitive breakfast market segment,” said Craig Yoder, Sr. Product Marketing Manager for Johnsonville. “We believe that brand recognition can help operators improve their breakfast traffic and their sales.” Johnsonville® Foodservice is dedicated to the foodservice operator’s success. No matter which segment served, Johnsonville speaks the language and understands the issues operators face. Dedicated to be problem solvers, Johnsonville is armed with an arsenal of products and programs designed to help the foodservice business thrive.



White LED
When Idle



Blue LED
When Triggered

In a move that represents an expansion of its marketing efforts, **King’s Hawaiian**, the leading producer of Hawaiian bakery products, has named **the Sterling-Rice Group** as its **first food service agency-of-record**.

“We are extremely excited to extend our marketing efforts into the food service universe with this partnership with such an accomplished team at SRG” stated Chad Donvito, Chief Marketing Officer at King’s Hawaiian. SRG will work with King’s Hawaiian to drive growth in the foodservice industry, creating irresistible new ways for consumers to experience the variety of King’s Hawaiian products away from home. King’s Hawaiian – KingsHawaiian.com - is a beloved brand, and made its mark in foodservice through such partnerships with Arby’s Brown Sugar Bacon Sandwich promotion and the recent Instagram favorite, King’s Hawaiian Crispy Chicken Sandwich at Fatburger. King’s Hawaiian also partners with the Los Angeles based Craft Casual favorite, Dog Haus, as the primary carrier of their dogs, sausages, and burgers.



Primera Technology, a leading manufacturer of specialty printers, has announced the **Eddie**, the world’s first-and-only NSF and GMP-certified edible ink printer for printing onto cookies and other food items. Simply add a logo or message to be included with meals or desserts for special occasions, seasons and holidays. More information on the Eddie:

- ◆ Prints onto cookies, candy, white chocolate, biscuits, macarons, and much more, fast and easy
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cookies or other similar-sized items in just two minutes

- ◆ Printed cookies or other food items will be dry and ready for sale immediately after printing
- ◆ Images are bright, vibrant, smudge-resistant and even color-matched to ICC Color Standards. Visit Primera.com.

Videotel Digital, a leading manufacturer of industrial grade digital signage media players, looping DVD players, innovative touchless interactive solutions and directional sound speakers

has now added **Infrared Touchless Buttons** to its full array of touchless interactive products. Because today’s consumers are now reluctant to interact with public-facing surfaces, Videotel Digital offers a choice of touchless alternatives

that allows customers to continue to interact with no fear of contamination. Lisa Schneider, Videotel Digital’s EVP of Marketing and Sales points out that, “Videotel Digital’s new Infrared LED buttons are the perfect interactive solution for **restaurant operators** because they can be used in self-service displays and kiosks to

take the fear out of touching the screen to order. It is the perfect touchless alternative.” For more detailed information, see the website online at Videoteldigital.com.

Krowne, a multi-generational, family-owned company that has been manufacturing high-quality stainless steel products in the U.S. for over 70 years, named **Kyle Forman** as its **new president**. Kyle is succeeding his father, Roger Forman, who served as president for more than 36 years. After assuming the role from his uncle, Peter Miller, Roger grew the corporation from a regional, eight-person fabrication shop to an industry-leading manufacturer with over 100 employees and a large international presence. Through rapid expansion and innovation, Krowne – krowne.com - is now the fastest growing bar equipment company in the U.S. with experience ranging from custom underbar equipment and refrigeration to high quality faucets and pre-rinses.

Their dedicated team of professionals provide a seamless purchasing experience from the initial order to support after the sale.

Today’s Restaurant invites you to submit your information for the What’s Going On column. E-mail your company, product, service or event information to terri@trnusa.com.

Setting up systems to secure your future

David Scott Peters ♦ Today's Restaurant Contributor



We're months into a pandemic that isn't letting up anytime soon. As restaurant owners adjust their operations to their new sales numbers and labor needs, the lesson I hope you take away from this industry crisis is that you can never go back to operating the way you were prior to the pandemic. That means if you were flying by the seat of your pants in any way such as using your gut to place orders and schedule your staff, it's time to accept and adopt systems. This starts with the foundation to all restaurant systems.

What is the foundation of restaurant systems? Checklists! Checklists allow you impose your will without being in the restaurant. They set up your standards for your business, from cleanliness to service standards to product quality to line checks to passive and critical control points. They give the steps to make sure that food is safe, the portions are consistent. They guide you in the prep list, scheduling and cutting labor. You can literally checklist everything.

Another reason to start with checklists is if you can't get a manager to use a checklist, what makes you think that they're going to follow more

involved systems such as inventory every Sunday night?

As an independent operator, if the first thing that came into your mind was, "We have checklists; I can't get anybody to use them. They don't work," I'm going to tell you right now, it's because your checklists suck. They're not

You want to create a culture of close to open, that each manager has each other's back.

detailed enough, and you're holding the wrong person accountable.

For example, if you're going to hold your management team accountable to those checklists, and they decide to let employees go home without doing that side work, then they must get it done themselves. You want to create a culture of close to open, that each

manager has each other's back. Do that a few times and guess what – your managers are going to make sure those standards are met.

So, if you're ready to move forward with establishing a strong foundation on which to build systems for a more stable and profitable restaurant, let's get started with checklists. The best place to start is your opening and closing side work for every position. Your checklists should be so detailed that anybody could pick it up and do it. It's not just "clean the bathroom," but, "Make sure the bathroom is clean: the mirrors have no water spots, there's no standing water on the counter, wipe down the counter and throw away the paper towel, if the garbage pail is 50% filled, take it out and replace the liner." It is step-by-step instructions how you want it done, how well you want it done and by when.

Walk around your building with a pad of paper, write down everything that makes you mad, grab any old checklists, grab your new checklist and put it all together. From this point forward, use your checklists to set expectations for every part of operating the restaurant. This is especially useful as you have to implement new

processes for cleanliness, delivery and to-go orders.

Checklists are critical to your restaurant's future because:

- ◆ They set your standards.
- ◆ They allow you to impose your rule without being there.
- ◆ They implement accountability without being a micromanager or a frustrated owner.

Our industry is going through something it's never gone through. You have opportunity. Yes, your sales may not be as strong, but there will be less competition, which means it's an opportunity to be great. Don't miss your opportunity!

David Scott Peters is an author, restaurant coach and speaker who teaches restaurant operators how to use his trademark Restaurant Prosperity Formula to cut costs and increase profits. His first book, Restaurant Prosperity Formula: What Successful Restaurateurs Do, teaches the systems and traits to develop to run a profitable restaurant. Known as THE expert in the restaurant industry, he uses a no-BS style to teach and motivate restaurant owners to take control of their businesses and finally realize their full potential. Thousands of restaurants have used his formula to transform their businesses. To learn more about David Scott Peters, his formula for restaurant success, his book, or his coaching program, visit www.davidscottpeters.com.

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Food service orders are rebounding



Noam Wolf

By Noam Wolf
CEO MarketMan

New York, NY – While restaurants, cafeterias, and retail food purveyors have been failing at double the normal rates, the survivors have seen a significant recovery, according to data from MarketMan, a leading food service technology company. MarketMan's data, compiled from more than 4,000 restaurants in the United States, indicate a significant and steady rebound since suppliers saw orders plummet by 70% in February 2020.

"After 20% of restaurants fell victim to the COVID-19 pandemic, and restaurant purchases were at 30% in February, we saw an impressive

recovery, back to 80% of normal supply dollar volume in September," said Noam Wolf, co-founder and CEO of MarketMan. "However, the rebound still leaves problems to be solved on the supplier side – suppliers are serving fewer restaurants, with lower revenues to cover existing operating expenses."

While some suppliers have been able to pivot by selling direct to consumers or specialty grocery stores, they still have significant overhead costs that affect their ability to compete in a tightening market.

"We have long been trying to streamline our operational costs, even before recent events," said Desi Saran, Founder & CEO at Sweetberry Bowls. "Allowing our stores to order everything via mobile is something that's saved tremendous time and allowed much more transparency over what is ordered and when. It provides the whole organization a really effective way to manage purchasing and price updates on a daily basis"

MarketMan's new order management system for suppliers significantly lowers operational costs, increases productivity, reduces onsite visits, and replaces manual processes, such as calls, fax, and email ordering. The online system has been demonstrated to reduce order errors by 85 percent, which has a direct impact on the bottom line.

Suppliers get a white-labeled app

their customers can use for mobile and online ordering, while the back-end allows fast, real-time input of available inventory and up-to-the-minute pricing, comprehensive inventory tracking, ERP integration, and creation of specials and close-outs.

"The entire food service industry has been forced to react to the crisis," said Wolf. "While the supply chain has been working to serve different markets, they need to further streamline operations to do whatever it

takes to remain competitive in the new environment." 

About MarketMan: MarketMan develops collaboration software to streamline operations, reduce costs, increase bottom lines, and strengthen relationships of foodservice operators and suppliers. The technology streamlines management of procurement, supply, pricing, delivery, and accounting. MarketMan customers include full- and quick-service restaurants, coffee shops, bars, food trucks, and suppliers of all sizes, who get simplified order management, eliminate wasted labor, and jump-start profitability. The company serves thousands of companies across 50 countries. Online at www.marketman.com.

Dr. McEntire wins Food Safety Leadership Award

Ann Arbor, MI – NSF International, a global public health and safety organization, announced Dr. Jennifer McEntire, Senior Vice President of Food Safety and Technology at the United Fresh Produce Association, as this year's Food Safety Leadership Award recipient. Dr. McEntire developed United Fresh's Produce Safety Immersion program to help accelerate the education and careers of aspiring food safety professionals.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that roughly 46% of foodborne illnesses each year can be attributed to contaminated produce. After identifying gaps in how produce handlers were trained, Dr. McEntire saw the need to shape training protocols to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Launched last year with the support of United Fresh, Dr. McEntire's new year-long program offers 15 individuals the opportunity to build the technical competencies, critical thinking skills and leadership attributes required to ensure the safety of produce in the United States.

"Dr. McEntire continues to think beyond the status quo and pushes the envelope related to education and training in the food safety arena," stated Jason Bashura, Senior Manager of Global Food Defense at PepsiCo and award nominator. "I am optimistic that her approach of the Produce Safety Immersion program can be modeled for other facets of a truly integrated food safety system to help bolster, build and sustain a culture of food protection; one that encompasses quality, food safety and food defense within and across the food industry."

During her 20-year career, Dr. McEntire has demonstrated a commitment to food safety, food safety education and the protection of public health. While at the Institute of Food Technologists, Dr. McEntire co-led the development of a career guidance program implemented in 18,000 U.S. high schools, encouraging youth to pursue careers in food science. She has also held senior leadership roles



Dr. Jennifer McEntire

at the Consumer Brands Association (formerly the Grocery Manufacturers Association) and the Acheson Group (formerly Leavitt Partners Global Food Safety Solutions).

Dr. McEntire received a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Delaware and earned her Ph.D. at Rutgers University as a USDA National Needs Fellow in Food Safety.

NSF International's Food Safety Leadership Award recognizes individuals and organizations for real and lasting improvements in food safety. Nominations are evaluated by the Food Safety Summit Educational Advisory Board, which is a volunteer group of industry leaders representing manufacturing, foodservice, regulatory, academia, retail and distribution. Award winners are then selected by NSF International. 

For more information on NSF International and its annual Food Safety Leadership Award, visit www.nsf.org.

NSF International (nsf.org) is an independent, global organization that facilitates standards development, and tests and certifies products for the food, water, health sciences and consumer goods industries to minimize adverse health effects and protect the environment. Founded in 1944, NSF is committed to protecting human health and safety worldwide. With operations in 180 countries, NSF International is a Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center on Food Safety, Water Quality and Indoor Environment.

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New COVID-19 conflict de-escalation training for restaurants & hotels

Chicago, IL - ServSafe has announced the release of two new COVID-19 Conflict De-escalation training modules, one for restaurants and one for hotels. The training provides specific actions employees can take to de-escalate difficult situations and provide solutions for handling conflict throughout all interactions. The modules meet expanding COVID-19 training needs across the hospitality industry.

“The feedback we’ve gotten from restaurants and hotels is that they continue to face scenarios where difficult situations arise around adherence to new processes and procedures,” said Sherman Brown, executive vice president of Training and Certification for the National Restaurant Association. “These new modules offer hotel and restaurant employees guidance on how to reduce tensions and promote a safe environment while maintaining the spirit of hospitality.”

The training videos provides best practices to use in the complex situations arising from social distancing changes and mask requirements including steps for:

- ◆ Preparing for de-escalation
- ◆ Staying calm

- ◆ Approaching de-escalation
- ◆ Challenging situations

The restaurant training module is now available with the suite of free COVID-19 training videos on ServSafe.com. The hotel training module was added to the existing COVID-19 Precautions product available on AHLEI.org. Anyone who purchased the course previously, now also has access to the conflict de-escalation module.

For 30 years, ServSafe has been at the forefront of preparing restaurant and foodservice workers to deliver safe hospitality experiences for their guests, while also keeping themselves safe. For more information about National Restaurant Association and ServSafe key COVID-19 responses, go to restaurant.org/COVID19.

About the National Restaurant Association: Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises 1 million restaurant and foodservice outlets and a workforce of 15.6 million employees. We represent the industry in Washington, D.C., and advocate on its behalf. We sponsor the industry's largest trade show (National Restaurant Association Show); leading food safety training and certification program (ServSafe); unique career-building high school program (the NRAEF's ProStart). For more information, visit Restaurant.org and find us on Twitter @WeRRestaurants, Facebook and YouTube.

Ike's from page 1

explosive growth as it builds its dedicated, loyal following and brings its famous secret menu and pop culture-inspired sandwich selections to customers from coast to coast.

The concept is a sandwich lover's paradise, offering over 800 sandwiches – including vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options – all spread with “Ike's Dirty Secret Sauce,” that's also baked right into the Dutch crunch bread. Beyond the extensive and flavorful menu offerings, Ike's Love & Sandwiches follows a proven business model with low build-out costs, efficient labor practices and waste-reducing operational standards, positioning the concept for rapid franchise development potential. Ike's is the exciting, modern answer to tedious, old-fashioned sandwich franchises.

“Love, appreciation and respect are at the forefront of everything we do at Ike's Love & Sandwiches,” said founder Ike Shehadeh. “The happiness and enjoyment of our customers are the drivers behind Ike's. I'm excited to work with John and Johnnie to celebrate our Florida customers and their unique tastes as we bring the concept to the East Coast.”

In addition to the brand's unique, mouthwatering menu items, the concept's profitability outlook and successful franchise business model are among the factors that inspired Miller and Green to become

franchisees. Supported by their strong father-son connection and commitment to bringing positivity to the community, Miller and Green will deliver the Ike's experience to its East Coast customers. With the help of leading franchise development company Fransmart, the duo will position the concept as the dominant sandwich brand in Florida.

Fueled by the power of Fransmart, the franchise development company behind the explosive growth of brands like Five Guys Burgers and Fries and Qdoba Mexican Grill, Ike's Love & Sandwiches will continue to expand nationwide. Franchisees receive training and support from start to finish, from site selection expertise to custom training systems to localized brand building. The brand is currently seeking experienced franchisees to continue bringing the concept to the top 40 media markets throughout North America. **TR**

About Fransmart: Fransmart is a global leader in franchise development, turning emerging restaurant concepts into national and global brands for over 20 years. Company founder Dan Rowe identified and grew brands like Five Guys Burgers & Fries and QDOBA Mexican Grill from 1-5 unit businesses to the powerhouse chains they are today. Fransmart's current and past franchise development portfolio brands have opened more than 5,000 restaurants in 45 states and 35 countries. Fransmart and their partner brands are committed to franchise development growth—as of 2020, over 1,000 new restaurants are in development across their current portfolio. For more information, visit www.fransmart.com.

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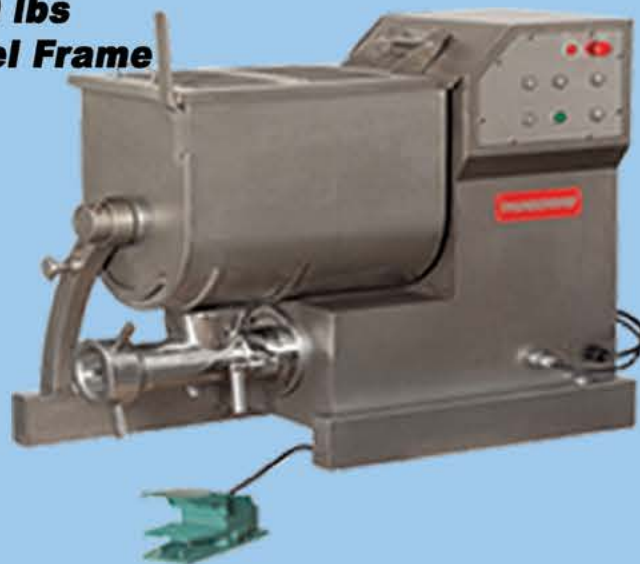
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