

# Perk Up Sales

## By Taking a Cue From Coffee Shops

Coffee shops are having their moment. Who doesn't have that favorite place in their neighborhood or near the office where they stop to get their morning coffee or grab a quick bite to eat on-the-go during the day?

Reports show that popular coffee shops like Starbucks have been growing morning traffic by capitalizing on the morning meal and snacking away from home. As hospitals seek to compete, it's time to wake up and smell the coffee.

Soin Medical Center in Beavercreek, Ohio, is doing just that by revamping its onsite coffee shop, Creek Coffee Company, to draw in more staff and visitors. Foodservice Director Tina Banning explains that initial changes, from serving premium coffee from a local brand to offering an assortment of bakery items baked fresh onsite, are already working. And more updates are in progress.

"We are adding new leather furniture and electronic charging stations, even music, to make the space more



Photos courtesy of Soin Medical Center



**Katrina Oyanagi** is a marketing communications senior planner at General Mills Convenience & Foodservice, where she works with a dedicated team to address the specific needs of healthcare foodservice professionals.

Brewing up a little coffee-shop flair can go a long way towards customer excitement and additional sales.

inviting,” said Banning. “If you get people to stay longer, they will buy more.”

Bringing some “coffee-shop appeal” into your cafeteria and retail locations can help to increase both guest satisfaction and profits.

### **MORE THAN A GOOD CUP OF JOE**

What do you love about your favorite coffee shop? The delicious baked goods, the aroma of roasting coffee beans, the comfortable atmosphere? You can bring more of these coffee-shop concepts into your location via the items you offer and the ways you market them.

While serving high-quality coffee is a no-brainer, there are other ways to create coffee-shop appeal to make food a highlight of the day for staff, patients, and their caregivers.

“A very important reason coffee shops are so successful is they provide convenient and satisfying options like fresh baked goods and breakfast sandwiches that consumers are looking for, primarily in the morning hours,” says Gilles Stassart, CEC, CCA of General Mills Convenience & Foodservice, who works closely with healthcare foodservice professionals to provide education, training, and inspiration. “With a few simple

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### **GENERAL MILLS**

offers several resources to help healthcare foodservice professionals bring coffee-shop appeal to their locations, including recipes for fresh baked goods, a step-by-step guide to creating coffee-shop appeal, and downloadable marketing assets (posters, table tents, window clings). Visit [www.generalmillscf.com](http://www.generalmillscf.com).



offerings, healthcare foodservice operations can provide many of the same menu items that are found at consumers' favorite coffee chains."

Stassart elaborates that some of the "must-have" menu items that consumers are looking for at coffee shops include muffins, cookies, and breakfast sandwiches.

- Breakfast sandwiches, in particular, are the top growing item<sup>1</sup> when it comes to breakfast on the run. Healthcare food service can use croissants, biscuits, or breads to craft popular options such as egg and cheese, pesto chicken, or ham and cheese. General Mills also offers ready to bake and thaw-and-serve versions of customer favorites that are especially easy to serve.
- Blueberry and chocolate muffins are top-sellers as well, and are easy to bake and serve from a mix, pail, or tub set for a satisfying grab-and-go option.
- Finally, cookies remain a popular snack-time item, with chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin reigning supreme.
- Other items to consider include savory options such as sandwiches and bagels, or sweet items like Danishes, scones, and quick bread (banana nut and chocolate, in particular). A few signature items can also differentiate any operation and bring staff, patients, and families back for more. Starbucks, for instance, showcases cake pops and stuffed bagel bites for something unique.



At Soin Medical, Executive Chef Jennifer Ball stocks the coffee shop's bakery case with a variety of muffins, scones, and cinnamon rolls as well as a number of gluten-free options to meet growing demand. With the addition of a new oven, she plans to add more snack and lunch choices to the mix such as pretzels and sandwiches.

Beyond the menu items themselves, Stassart says there should be an emphasis on food that is fresh. He says if you bake items on-site, let your patrons know with a sign that reads "Baked Fresh Here." Transparent or earth-toned packaging can also transmit that fresh feel. Likewise, that

fresh-baked aroma and that fresh-from-the-oven warmth assure customers that you offer something special.

"We bake as much as we can throughout the day, recognizing that the aroma of cinnamon rolls or cookies can be very enticing," said Banning.

Last, as more and more operators and consumers seek clean-label products, showcase your commitment to serving menu items with cleaner ingredients. Panera is well known for its efforts to promote its menu that is made entirely of ingredients that are free from artificial preservatives and with no sweeteners, flavors, or colors from artificial sources.

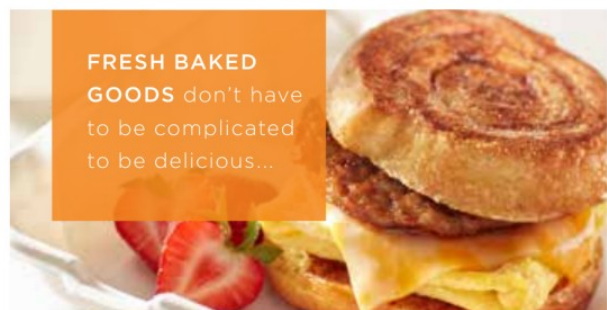
"When you are purchasing baked goods to evoke coffee-shop appeal, look for those that offer a clean label as well as great flavor, texture, and appearance," said Stassart.

## GROUNDS FOR SUCCESS

Brewing up a little coffee-shop flair can go a long way towards generating customer excitement and additional sales.

"Fresh-baked goods don't have to be complicated to be delicious. When you update your recipes, you will create new aromas, flavors, and interest in your operations," said Stassart. "Coffee shops known for the quality of their food sell more than just hot beverages. Even if you bring customers in with your coffee, you can leave them smiling with your new menu items."

Menu updates can include popular items such as a Southwestern Breakfast Sandwich with a biscuit, chorizo, eggs, cheese, and pepper sauce; or a cinnamon roll stuffed with baked apple slices, for example. Healthcare foodservice operators can use a combination of fresh and frozen products designed to provide consistent results





## CINNAMON ROLL ROSES

**Yield: 12 Servings (1 serving = 1 Roll)**

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs. 4 oz. Pillsbury™ Place & Bake™ Cinnamon Roll Supreme Freezer-to-Oven, 3 oz.
- 1 cup Ready-To-Spread Vanilla Creme Icing

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thaw cinnamon rolls covered, 20 minutes at room temperature or overnight under refrigeration.
2. Place cinnamon rolls in 3x4 pattern on parchment-lined full sheet pan.
3. Cut each roll from the center out, using scissors, making 4-5 cuts halfway through dough.
4. Bake as directed below and allow to cool completely.
  - > Convection Oven | 300°F | 22-26 minutes (rotate pans baked in convection oven one-half turn (180°) after 11 minutes of baking)
  - > Standard Oven | 350°F | 28-32 minutes

### FINISHING

1. Heat vanilla icing in microwave until melted.
2. Dip each cinnamon roll rose into melted icing to just coat tips and serve.

when it counts. It is also important to offer a combination of favorite items with ongoing variety.

When it comes to marketing your baked goods, consider the following:

- Create cross-sell opportunities: “Buy a coffee, get a muffin for free” or “Try new menu items for half-off this week with the purchase of any beverage.” Cross-selling ultimately leads to up-selling and new fans.
- Everyone loves a freebie: If you can offer a trial or free offer, you will win the hearts and pocketbooks of your customers. You can offer a buy-one-get-one-free muffin, for example, or 50 percent off your next breakfast sandwich with the purchase of one.
- Promote the attributes consumers are seeking, such as no artificial colors or flavors: Create signage and specials that remind customers of your efforts to focus on clean labels, fresh ingredients, or top-notch quality.

Finally, take a look at the environment in which you serve food. Could you add more comfortable chairs for those wanting to relax for a few minutes? Attractive round tables? Options for privacy? Charging stations for mobile devices? When you create a welcoming environment, you encourage your consumers to stay awhile and come back often, bolstering your business in return.

When you consistently deliver that coffee-house charm with the right combination of food, marketing, and quality, you will establish the grounds for long-term success. ■

### REFERENCE

1. *NPD GMI Commercial Topline—SON '17*

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