

Commissary kitchens and their value in the business community

Introduction

Over the years food trucks have emerged and become popular due to excellent opportunities for chefs to begin their own food service businesses. But one of the main challenges in opening up a food truck is the space which is small and hence no place to store food. Most of the food truck dealers have opted to use commissary kitchens. These kind of kitchens provide a lot of benefits in the brick and mortar stores even though it has its own limitations as well. Commissary kitchens can be defined as kitchens where chefs can go and prepare meals at a certain fee. They are usually located in the towns or estates and give space for food providers to cook their food while at the same time used as a store for such kind of food. Some other commissary kitchens use this purposely for food trucks and any other mobile business for food stuff whereas others just use their kitchens as a business by renting it to chefs.

Importance of commissary kitchens

- These kind of kitchens are so convenient. It allows chefs to move around easily and prepare food due to its large space. This makes the whole process convenient.
- Commissary kitchens provides more space where all forms of kitchen equipment and other gadgets are stored. Food trucks are small and hence they don't provide space for equipment and storage.
- It is much cheaper renting a commissary kitchen compared to someone who purchases a brick and mortar space. On top of that, the user will not have to pay for the space where appliances are stored.
- In some countries such as in United States chefs are not allowed to cook inside a food truck and hence the only option is use of commissary kitchens.
- Allows the use of one lease, one internet service and utility bills at the same time.
- The insurance premiums are so cheap and affordable. This happens due to fee locations that have less equipment.
- The cost of food is lower while at the same time the price of goods that are sold is higher. This is due to the strategic position.
- The par level and inventories is accurately monitored through the weekly food purchases.

Before opting out for a commissary kitchen it is important to first review the laws in your country and check whether you are allowed to use it while considering other factors such as space, price and others. There is need to seek consultation from the local government and guidance on how to purchase and use commissary kitchen.

Types of commissary kitchen

There are various commissary kitchens that are available and users can just decide the one they like. Decisions can be made based on other factors such as price and availability. This paper discusses four main types of commissary kitchens.

- ❖ Private commercial kitchens. This kind of commissary kitchens allows you to access the needed equipment and space which shall be used for business required. The user takes the entire lease themselves this means that it will give them full access in the entire room. The services offered here are the best though they are very expensive.
- ❖ Shared commercial kitchens- This type of kitchen is one of the most options for food truck owners whose desire is to achieve economical space for cooking. These types of kitchens are leased out to several caterers, pop-up chefs and other food trucks. They however share space which has been allocated to several business units. One big limitation with this type of kitchen is that it is very difficult for users to operate efficiently due to congestion.
- ❖ Renting of restaurants –This kind is operated by renting the restaurant when it is not in use. This is a good business and allows users to find enough space at an affordable price which is much cheaper than leasing of a different kitchen. The restaurant however may not offer other amenities such as parking space.
- ❖ Non- traditional sources. There are several spaces in this category and can be used for renting kitchens. Some of these places include social clubs, schools, churches and retirement communities. They offer kitchens to chefs at an affordable fee. This type of kitchens offer bigger spaces while at that time saving your costs.

Benefits of using commissary kitchens

Most of the food truck operators are forced to use the commissary kitchens due to laws made by the local governments while others use them as they are convenient. Some more benefits of commissary kitchen include;

- ❖ **Strategically positioned.** Most of these commissary kitchens are strategically positioned such that customers can easily access services found in there. A good number of them are located along the highways and hence becoming convenient. Chefs like such kitchens since this will boost their businesses.
- ❖ **Social amenities provision.** The commissary kitchens along the highways have better amenities such as waste disposal, water and other services. This works well with the health code of regulations and is the reason why many individuals follow that. Chefs seeking to rent a commissary kitchen should first consider if they have such essential amenities.
- ❖ **Availability of equipment.** One of the main benefits of these commissary kitchens is that they are well equipped with the relevant equipment that is necessary for all operations in the kitchen. They have all those kitchen appliances such as ovens, smokers and other necessary equipment. Chefs who use them are required to carry a few items. The commissary also has bigger spaces compared to food trucks and this is more efficient. It is important for all those seeking to work in such place to consider if the kitchens have enough equipment before signing of any contract.
- ❖ **Storage.** Space is one of the factors that makes any kitchen to be real and convenient for use. Most of the commissary kitchens as said before offer enough space which includes refrigerated space
- ❖ **Other benefits.** These commissary kitchens have other benefits such as support from the staff and much more. For instance, other companies offer direct support through their managers and support staff especially if one is looking for a kitchen that well fits their needs. Others can provide network services to their clients and hire them during parties or special events.

The negatives or disadvantages of using commissary kitchens

Although use of commissary kitchens is convenient for other businesses, there are risks involved and in some other cases this may render someone's business losses if not carefully considered.

For instance, some of the downsides of using commissary kitchens include;

- **Costly.** Most of the commissary kitchens are quite expensive compared to food truck businesses. Their rates depend on the location but most of them are above \$15 per hour. This means that individuals who rent them for businesses may end up paying a lot in the long run. Any successful business person who has benefitted from the commissary should move ahead and buy their own kitchen space so as to cut down the cost.
- **Inconvenience in location.** Some of the commissary kitchens are located outside the city Centre or in the suburbs and hence it will be difficult for those leasing the kitchen to find customers. These commissary kitchens developed outside the city Centre have plans to increase due to bigger space. Though rental costs in such a location is much cheaper, the business person will not find enough customers and if food is moved directly to the customers it will lead to further costs, it is therefore important for all individuals looking for commissary kitchens to consider the location of the building first.
- **Scheduling and how to control.** It has appeared severally that businesses operating in this commissary kitchens would have to use schedule as the apartment involves multiple business persons and with time it becomes difficult scheduling the operation hour as this may clash with another business being run at the same time. This causes a lot of inconvenience and ineffectiveness in the business.

How to utilize the commissary kitchen

- ❖ Use the available space as much as possible. It is important to maximize the space in the commissary kitchen as this is the same thing you have leased with money. If the space is much bigger for you then you can ask a baker to bake bread the whole night while he pays you for that business. Through this you have utilized the space.
- ❖ Prepare everything before service. The business people should plan things and prepare in advance to ensure smooth running of the business. And in this way they will gain approval from the customers.
- ❖ Make use of your staff and their talents. The lead manager should delegate responsibilities to individuals based on their talents and capabilities.

- ❖ Provide more tools and equipment to the workers. Through this it will enable your business run efficiently and accurately which in the long run shall help you reap a lot of benefits.
- ❖ Be keen on how customers give feedback and what they say and try to improve the food quality across all concepts for better productions.
- ❖ Organize your delivery programs and orders made in a convenient way. This will help you to consider issues that arise from the food deliveries.
- ❖ Create more space for storage.