

Tailoring concessions to increase revenue

Extra money could be spent on field improvements

BY JOHN UHL

Whenever a ball team negotiates a new stadium contract, you will find that concession rights are always an integral part of the contract terms. The next time you attend your local state or county fair, festival or flea market, take a closer look at the food vendors. All of them have paid for the opportunity to be there.

There are two main reasons why event promoters and operators arrange for food concessions at their events; first, it rounds out the event. Watching a baseball game without a hot dog and a drink just isn't right! Food concessions are a complimentary and integral component of any large public event or gathering. If you offer food and drink, people will tend to remain at the event for a longer time than if you do not.

The second reason is revenue. Admission prices to any event can only be so high before people find other forms of entertainment. Many smaller events or activities charge no admission charge at all. So where does the money come from to pay for electricity, rent, trash pickup, security, insurance, or any of the many things that must be provided? Revenue can be generated by any extra service that is provided over and above the entertainment value of the event. This can take many forms, depending on the facility or the event, but the one universal constant is some form of food service, which can range from vending machines to a sit-down meal.

Why should public recreation be any different? Revenue from taxes will only go so far in building, staffing, and maintaining facilities. It is not appropriate to charge admission at many public facilities. At facilities

where it is appropriate to have an admission charge, such as a public pool, it is often only a nominal charge that does not come close to covering the operation expenses. How do you make up the difference between what it is costing to operate a facility and the money that you are currently receiving?

One solution is to look at an appropriate food service operation.

Like any other program, food service must be carefully evaluated and planned if it is to be successful. Start by determining the number of potential customers, who will oversee and run the operation, the items or menu to be offered, times of operation, and the facility in which it will be housed. Volume and margin are the keys to a profitable concession operation. These are easy concepts to grasp but are often much harder to implement.

In assessing the potential sales volume, determine how many people pass through the facility on any given day, and at

what time of day. Do these people typically stop for something to eat before or after visiting this facility, or do they bring a snack or a meal with them? How long are people likely to stay at the event or facility during a single visit? Are the majority of people participating or watching?

The more people that you have in attendance and the longer they stay, the more chance you have of a successful concession operation. The type of event has a major impact on concession activity. With some activities you can expect a relatively constant, steady flow of business throughout the day as people come and go. With other activities, you have spikes of high volume sales for limited time periods with only limited sales in the interim periods.



A concession operation must be structured accordingly. Stadiums and arenas are often faced with events where the majority of the business is accomplished within very narrow time windows. Aware of these time opportunities, commercial concession operators will anticipate the sales and produce and hold enough product to handle the rush. During lulls

in sales, they will rebuild inventories to prepare for the next rush. Often they will also resort to taking products to the people, when the people will not come to them. Having enough people at an activity does not necessarily assure success. It is critical that the concession operation is structured for buying patterns encountered.

Fish on a stick?

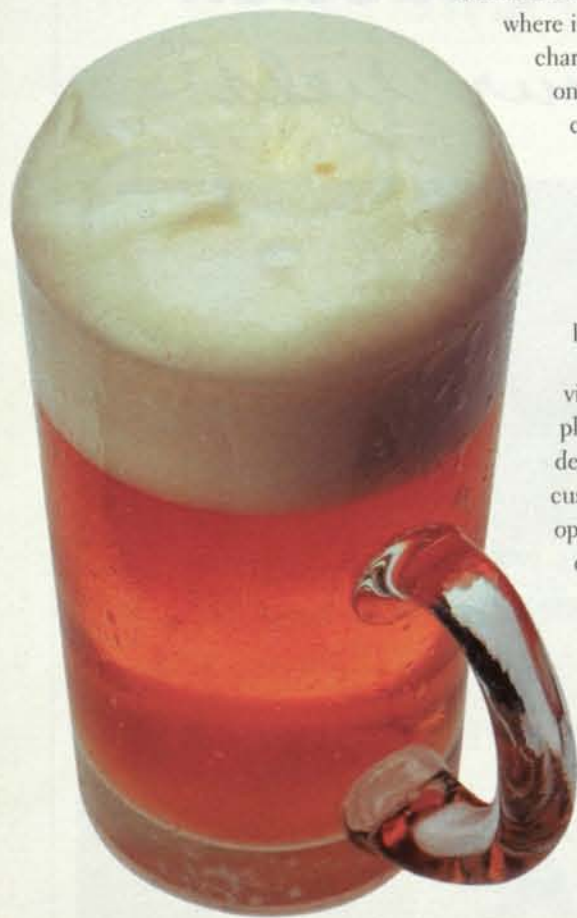
Menu selection is extremely critical in producing both sales volume and profit. Menu development requires the utmost care with regular monitoring and periodic refinement. For success, the menu should be simple to prepare, limited in variety, appropriate for the activity and preferences of the group being served and have an adequate margin between cost and selling price.

Items requiring simple preparation offer several benefits. The first is that the fewer the steps, the less equipment required to store, prepare, and merchandise the item. The skill level required for the operators is reduced significantly when the steps required to prepare and serve an item are kept to a minimum. Higher product quality, product consistency and speed of service are enhanced with a simple menu. One of the challenges faced by many recreation departments is that they often depend on seasonal labor, which may change each year. The more simple the item, the easier it is to staff and train the operators and expect them to do a good job.

Carefully thought out and executed food concessions are a compliment to an event or activity while generating needed revenue. For success, it must be appealing and convenient to your customers and easy to staff and operate. Do it professionally and keep it simple.

ST

John Uhl is vice president of Century Industries, LLC, a manufacturer of transport mobile bleachers, mobile shell stages, mobile platform stages and food concession trailers, 800-248-3371.





NOZZLE REDUCES DRIFT, IMPROVES COVERAGE

The TurboDrop XL offers the widest operating range of flows, pressures, and speeds of any nozzle on the market, says the manufacturer. The nozzle also reduces drift with improved coverage, and can be used for practically any spray application, at up to 120 psi.

To reduce off target movement with systemic products, 30-70 psi is recommended. To improve leaf coverage and thatch penetration with contact chemicals, 45-100+ psi is recommended. The TDXL may be operated as low as 15 psi.

The product features a polyacetal (TDXL) or ceramic (TDCXL) venturi orifice, which determines the flow rate of the nozzle, and a SprayMax exit tip, which evenly distributes the large, drift-reducing spray droplets on the target.

Estimated life for the poly TDXL is 10-20,000 acres.

Estimated life for the ceramic TDCXL is 40-80,000 acres. XL nozzles are available in sizes -01 through -10, and are ISO color coded for identification.

Greenleaf Technologies/800-881-4832

For information, circle 175



EXTREME WRAP SAFETY GLASSES

This is one of the boldest safety glass designs to hit the market. Sphere-X offers a unique combination of style, coverage, and protection. A dual lens construction, with base 9.75 lenses, allows for excellent optics and extreme coverage, says the manufacturer.

Temples adjust in four positions while all lenses offer 99% UV light protection. Glasses are available in six lens options, including anti-fog, indoor/outdoor, and mirror finish. Comply with ANSI Z87.1 requirements.

Elvex Corporation/203-743-2488

For information, circle 176

The versatile, powerful TerraForce®

Turf utility vehicle

See us at the GCSAA show, booth #2921.



The Broyhill TerraForce® gives you heavy-duty UV performance with a 4-speed, 18-hp V-twin engine, one-ton payload, and 18-mph ground speed. CVT automatic drive also available. Maximize flexibility with Broyhill's wide range of interchangeable attachments:

- Steel cargo box
- Hydraulic dump box
- Fastliner® line marker
- VacMate®
- And many other options!
- **New** LiftMate®
- SpraMate®
- RefuseMate®
- TerraRoller®

Broyhill

Making you look good.

For complete product line or dealer information:

1.800.228.1003
www.broyhill.com

Dealer inquiries welcome.



Compaction is a Leading Cause of Injuries on the Sports fields

AerWay®

- No Clean-up of Messy Cores
- No Disruption of Play
- Up to 7" of Deep Tine Compaction Relief
- Starting at under \$3,000.00



AerWay® offers low cost, low maintenance, long lasting options

for more information call **1-800-457-8310**

Advanced Aeration Systems

www.aerway.com aerway@thehollandgroupinc.com

Circle 128 on Inquiry Card

Circle 129 on Inquiry Card

Around the Grounds



OUTFIELD FENCE COVER

SmartCap and SmartScreen are available from Markers Inc. Bright yellow color heightens player awareness, and the company says the SmartCap won't crack and stays soft for many years.

Easy to install 25-ft. rolls come with nylon straps. SmartScreen comes in rolls of 3- or 6-ft. high by 25-ft. long. This P-E-M extruded and molded PVC product won't unravel, and comes in dark green that is UV-stabilized and won't fade. It provides 80+ percent screening and also can be used as a backstop screen.

Markers Inc./800-969-5920

For information, circle 177

WALL PADDING

Promats Inc. has supplied protective padding for more than 250 stadiums across the country, including for every major professional outdoor sport. Its plywood-backed, "Z" clip attached pad is constructed with 3/4-in. APA BC or better exterior grade plywood, 3 in. of high-density polyurethane foam cores, and UV-resistant 16-oz. laminated vinyl covers. Normally meant for concrete or wood walls, can be used on chain link fences as well, says the company. Works when applying logos or advertising.

Promats Inc./800-678-6287

For information, circle 178



New! **Sideline Mat**

How many times will you replace sideline turf before investing in EnkamatPlus?

- ★ Football, soccer & other sports
- ★ Tough polyester fabric teamed with strong and durable Enkamat
- ★ Reusable season after season
- ★ Easy to store
- ★ 95% open structure of mat provides air space for field to breathe and liquids to flow through
- ★ 16' x 150'
- ★ One time investment for a lifetime of turf protection.

Call our distributor Covermaster for product information and pricing.

COLBOND

info@colbond-usa.com
1-800-365-7391
www.colbond-usa.com

**COVERMASTER
COVERMASTER
COVERMASTER**

info@covermaster.net
1-800-387-5808
www.covermaster.net

Circle 131 on Inquiry Card

Protective Covers for Chain Link Fence

FENCEGUARD™

New Lower Prices & Now in 6 Colors!

Protect against chain link fence injuries on ballfields, playgrounds, parks, schools and at home.

- High visibility Safety Yellow, plus Dark Green, Red, White, Blue, or Orange.
- Heavy Duty, UV-resistant, polyethylene.
- 5-Year Manufacturer's Limited Warranty.
- Ships by UPS.
- Neat and distinctive appearance.

Fence Guard™

- Standard: 2-5/8"W x 4"H x 8' Long.
- Premium: 3"W x 4 1/2"H x 8' Long.
- Ten 8-foot sections per carton with 50 - 8" UV-resistant ties for securing every 2' to fence.
- Remove crowns from post so entire top of fence is covered and level. Attach sections end-to-end or overlap.

Bottom Guard™

- Size: 1-1/4"W x 3-1/4"H x 8' Long.
- Twelve 8-foot sections per carton with 60 - 8" UV-resistant ties for securing every 2' to fence.
- Drainage holes every 6".
- Designed for easy installation.
- Adjustable depth to reduce erosion of warning track under fence and prevent weed cutter string from catching on fence.

Fence Slats

- Two 1-7/8" x 150' poly rolls per carton.
- Install in a diagonal direction.
- Trim with tin snips or industrial scissors.
- Reduce wind and visual distraction.
- Improve background for sports.



PLUS: Windscreen • Ball Netting • Wall Padding

Your "One-Stop Source" for America's Leading Baseball Surfaces & Supplies!
Over 200 Infield Products • Distribution Centers Nationwide

CALL TOLL FREE: **1-800-247-BEAM • 908-637-4191**

PARTAC PEAT CORPORATION, KELSEY PARK, GREAT MEADOWS, N.J. 07838 FAX 908-637-8421

Circle 132 on Inquiry Card

SPORTSTURF • <http://www.greenindustry.com>