

The A – Z of building a successful in-store bakery

There is nothing quite like the smell of freshly baked bread. And a luscious selection of sweet treats and savoury delights on display has led many a budget-conscious shopper astray from their neatly planned grocery list. But what exactly is happening in bakery in the current climate? Has customer behaviour and demand changed?

The bakery in a pandemic landscape

Since the initial scare of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting effect of lockdown in various parts of the globe, consumer behaviour has shifted significantly from trends in recent years. “A back-to-basics trend and a renewed preference for packaged bakery products are among the most noticeable [in baked goods consumption],” says Andy Flounders, senior application specialist at DuPont (Bakery trends in corona times).

These trends contrast with the previous few years’ growing focus on ever-more experimental taste combinations and new recipes, while also upsetting the trend to eliminate packaging waste to some extent. While choice across the board



Photo by Brooke Lark on Unsplash

Much can be done with some creative garnishing – for example, these summer-inspired cookies decorated with fresh fruit and edible flowers would make an ideal dessert platter on a hot day.

is still important, customer behaviour indicates a new preference for simplicity and traditional wholesome goodness, and the market has not seen many new products launched. Sustainable packaging is still the preference in the middle-to upper-income brackets but eliminating waste has taken a back seat in favour of preventing contamination of consumables.

Health, and affordability, is top of everyone’s mind when choosing food, and baked goods are no exception. However, this category has the benefit of including both affordable staples and comfort food, and so, bakery continues to grow. The confinement of the various lockdowns of 2020 sparked a renewed interest in the pleasure and benefits of home-baked goods, which is extended to retail as people become busier.

Considering these changes, how can you as store owner start, expand or improve your in-store bakery to gear it for sales?

The key to success is a good business plan that can serve as a roadmap to reach your goal – improved sales. Start with brainstorming and plotting exactly what you want to do, by considering the following aspects.

Naturally
at your
side.

AHT
a member of **DAIKIN** group

EUROSHOP 2020 – AHT Makes its Easy!

PARIS

The plug-in freezer/refrigerator that redefines economy and lifts product presentation to an innovative level.

PARIS also maximises your sales space by means of shelf inserts, which will further increase your revenues. PARIS – an extremely efficient all-rounder that can lay claim to prestigious excellence.



ATHENS – Future proof investments in Refrigeration and Freezing

Our overall philosophy is based on four pillars.

- Sustainability
- Energy Efficiency
- Innovation
- Maximum customer benefits

“WE COOL AND YOU SELL” Plug it in, refrigerate or freeze, and sell more – that’s our motto at AHT, which has been inspiring customers and boosting their business since 1983.



MANHATTAN - Food Retail

AHT has been the experienced expertise, product and service partner for leading supermarket chains and discounters throughout the world for decades.

The sustainability of our activity is visible in our daily work, our products, and our persistent development efforts. Thinking in a forward-looking manner.



Contact Us:

Phone: 021 851 9616

Email: sales@ahtafrica.co.za
multilayertrading.com



In a globalized world of constant change, we as innovation leaders think it is important to act sustainably and in view to the future. It is our duty to set standards which the following generations can build upon – about environment aspects as well as the ability to finance our future.



The advantages are obvious: Product safety, lower running costs.

AHT showed a “HERO retro chest” at Euroshop that has been used successfully every day for over 20 years. AHT was already focused on energy efficiency at that time. Since then, the technology for the presentation and storage of refrigerated and frozen goods has been continuously improved through more efficient components and new control strategies. As a result, it is now possible to achieve a daily energy consumption of less than 4kWh even with units that have a net volume of 1000 litres and more.

AHT is making a clear statement in regard to the global climate discussion. The most efficient island freezers are those with the closed glass tops. We are seeing a massive drive towards the R290 self-contained units.

With this update that has been in use since 2019, we emphasize our expertise in energy efficiency. We have once again managed to reduce the energy consumption of the AHT chest freezer fleet by up to 20%. It makes us especially proud that we have achieved these savings and at the same time have also optimized product temperature safety in combination with our new defrosting concept. Thanks to this efficiency, with the update, we have managed to achieve the lowest energy consumption in the industry. By using eco-friendly propane, AHT refrigeration technology lets the environment breathe.



Energy efficiency & Cost savings are critical in every supermarket, but how does a store go about achieving concrete savings in the current climate?

Plug-in for cool sales success

AHT is the inventor of the plug-in installation: the revolutionary Plug & Chill concept makes AHT's refrigerated multideck cabinets and chest freezers the logical choice for supermarkets to buy.

Sustainable cost reduction

Thanks to the complete integration of all the refrigeration components, no additional installation costs are incurred. This ensures that AHT appliances are convenient and reduces the cost of developing and/or refurbishing supermarkets.

1998 to 2020 AHT is continuously expanding our position as a world leader – these principles guide us in everything we think and do!

Decide on service offerings

More sales start with greater customer satisfaction. As a store owner, you have a good idea who your customers are and what they want. When looking to expand or improve your in-store bakery, the first thing you should consider is: what is in line with customers' demand and which service offerings will you be focusing on, as this will guide your strategy going forward.

What you decide to bake, stock, and source, and how much of each item, will also be informed by customer demand and the service offerings you choose to provide to your customers.

There are a variety of service offerings to be considered:

- **Category items and staples.** Breads, buns, and rolls – these are the items you absolutely must stock, as they form part of the average shopper's grocery list. Especially among middle to higher income groups, consider including some gluten-free offerings as well.
- **On-the-go snacks and breakfast items.** Fresh croissants, muffins, savoury buns, pies, and similar offerings are an easy, low-fuss revenue generator and a welcome solution to many a hungry, hurried shopper.
- **Specialities.** While category staples such as bread and rolls are a necessity, speciality items are what differentiate your store from your competitors. Speciality baked goods should ideally be made in-store (even if par-baked) but can alternatively also be sourced ready-made from local artisanal suppliers.



Food Lover's Market bakery section.

- **Pre-orders (bulk).** Especially with goods like rolls baked in-store from scratch, the more you bake, the better the profit margins. Here, consistency is very important – the restaurants, cafés, and catering companies ordering large quantities from you will expect this and will only continue to use you if they know what they will be getting. Orders are normally placed the previous day for pick-up or delivery the next, but you should also be able to accommodate late or on the day orders if possible, within a turnaround time of three hours. You need a responsible person to keep track of pre-orders.
- **Catering.** Custom-decorated cakes and platters of baked savoury and sweet delicacies for corporate and private catering purposes provide yet another service opportunity for your in-store bakery. As with bulk pre-orders, you will need a responsible person well-versed in customer service best practise to handle orders.
- **Custom orders.** Sometimes customers will approach your bakery manager with special requests. This person should be knowledgeable and confident to assist or advise. While fulfilling custom orders will not be highly profitable, it is still important as it builds customer loyalty by showing you are there for your customers' specific requirements.



Photo by Jeremiah Lazo on Unsplash

creating a chewy interior and crispy exterior. (<https://www.signaturebreads.com/bread-guide/par-baked/>)

- **Consistent product quality.**

If a bakery is relying on part-time employees who possess varying degrees of comfort with baking from scratch, product consistency will be a challenge. Frozen dough and par-baked products will ensure a consistent product, without the potential waste associated with mixing from scratch.

- **Bake-on-demand.** Premade frozen products allow you to bake as much as you need, as often as you need, without wastage and with quick turnaround times. In addition, baking more often provides customers with an opportunity to see the baked goods come out of the oven, and of course keeping the smell fresh in-store.

- **Frozen dough can be customised to a surprising extent.** Once thawed, frozen dough lends itself beautifully to customisation. This allows you to create signature offerings without baking from scratch – with creativity and some small additions and changes, you can create great-tasting wonders. For example, try scoring the top of white bread dough and brushing on some olive oil with herbs or sprinkling some shredded cheese on top.

Anyone who has the touch and passion to bake, can be taught.

Once you have decided which service offering(s) you want to focus on, you can look at the range of items you wish to stock. If you are starting out or expanding your bakery, it is better to start with a wider range of goods and refine your offerings as you go along. Over time you will notice what sells, and what does not, and be able to make the necessary adjustments.

The benefits of par-baked and frozen products

For smaller bakeries and bake-on-demand, par-baked and frozen products have become the norm in recent years.

Par-baked bread (short for partially baked) is baked to 80 – 90% doneness, then cooled and quick-frozen to seal in freshness. Once thawed, the bread can be oven-finished in just minutes. Finishing the bread caramelises its crust, adding a rich golden colour, and refreshes its moisture,

Why some shoppers prefer baked-from-scratch goods from your bakery

From a customer's point of view there are various health and taste benefits to freshly baked goods (<https://food.allwomenstalk.com/benefits-to-making-baked-goods-from-scratch/>):

- **Lower refined-sugar levels.** Replacing refined sugar with fruit or other sugar alternatives makes for a healthier and lower-calorie sweet treat than commercially available cakes.
- **Fewer artificial ingredients.** Baking from scratch allows you to eliminate potentially harmful ingredients that are manufactured in labs and designed to make food taste good instead of being good for you. Many people are also allergic to preservatives and other additives and welcome products that are free of these artificial ingredients.
- **Gluten- and allergy-free alternatives.** Many people are gluten- or lactose-intolerant, or allergic to standard baking ingredients such as eggs. Providing alternative options for your allergy-prone customers and their families goes a long way toward greater customer satisfaction.
- **Fresher taste and texture.** While premixed frozen and par-baked offerings are of the highest quality, nothing beats the taste and texture of well-made homemade baked goods.

A combination of par-baked, premixed frozen and scratch baked products will give you margins, convenience, consistency, speed, and an exclusive offering.



STOP



Sanitise hands & surfaces

medi-wipes®

100 x 80% alcohol

paper based biodegradable wipes

hand and surface sanitiser



Small enough for school and gym bags, fits into a cup holder.
Ideal for cell phones, electronic & gym equipment,
sanitising without leaving equipment wet.

info@sanitouch.co.za
www.sanitouch.co.za



don't just touch,
sani-touch®

Location and layout matters

Where your bakery is positioned in-store should be aligned with the service offerings on which you want to focus. The right location can greatly contribute to the type of products and the quantities you sell. For example, by positioning your in-store bakery near a coffee offering, you can tap into the impulsive nature of category shoppers and generate additional impulse sales. Below is a look at some of the different locations and layouts for an in-store bakery and their individual strengths:

Counter deli and display. Probably the most common type of in-store bakery section, this is traditionally positioned adjacent to your actual bakery; but can also function as a stand-alone island or a U-shaped walk-in section. Even if you extend your baked goods counters with a sit-down area, the display counter will still be the main attraction and selling point.

Sit-down bakery / café. For stores that focus on baked goods and other freshly made offerings, an in-store sit-down section can be a great way to showcase your products and add an additional service. Sit down sections in supermarkets, bakeries, delis, butchers, fruiterers, etc. have been gaining more and more traction over the past few years, as people are starting to take an interest in where their food comes from. If you have the space and think of doing this, the best way would be for customers to order and pay at the counter, instead of being served, as you would ideally want to keep the level of staff involved in this section to a minimum.



Karaglen SuperSpar In-store Bakery.

Staff, skills, and equipment

The staff, skills, and equipment you need for your in-store bakery will depend on whether you plan to keep to small quantities and basic offerings, or if you want your bakery to handle larger quantities and speciality goods.

Whether you bake small or large quantities from scratch, baking requires precision. “Firstly, if you intend to bake from scratch, you need staff who have the touch to cook – which not everyone has. A passion for baking and willingness to learn and innovate are also very valuable qualities to consider when recruiting. Your staff should be able to follow

recipes to the T and keep time precisely, as the slightest variation can impact the consistency of your product,” says Leon Sanders, independent consultant at Jozi Restaurant Solutions, a Johannesburg-based consultancy specialising in menu development and kitchen optimisation.

In terms of equipment, Sanders mentions that any amount up to 50-100 rolls per day can be handmade, but for larger quantities (more than 100 rolls per day) you would need electronic mixers, rollers, and perhaps proofing ovens. For either type of bakery, he recommends an oven with a steam function if you intend to bake rolls: “Some

products, like burger rolls, require steaming to keep the roll light and fluffy, otherwise it can easily dry out and become flaky,” he says.

Furthermore, retailers are advised to use local suppliers when sourcing equipment: “If you buy equipment through local suppliers such as BCE, Cater Pro Equipment, Cater Master, Cater Web, Core Catering, etc. they can provide service support and maintain your equipment easily. But if you buy from overseas you would have to get specialised servicing which might not be readily available,” says Sanders.

Training and upskilling your bakery staff

“ Staff should be able to follow recipes to the T and keep time precisely, as the slightest variation can impact the consistency of your product ”

If you only intend to bake from premade frozen stock, or par-baked goods, very little training – other than on standard hygiene, time-keeping and equipment – would be required for your staff.

But if you are baking from scratch, more skill and training on baked goods is needed. Firstly, your staff should be informed about popular types of baked goods available to best serve customers – even if you do not stock all these products.

There are a variety of free online resources available for bakers who are looking to up their game. Below are listed some examples of eLearning courses, tutorial videos and recipes to try:



Photo: Leon Nicholas

Bakery staff serving customers at Pick n Pay, Sandton.

- *Yuppichef Baking Fundamentals eLearning Course: <http://learn.yuppiechef.com/>*
- *Rich's eLearning Courses: <https://www.richs.co.za/courses/>*
- *Anvil Tutorial Videos: <https://www.anvilworld.com/media>*
- *Eureka Mills Tutorial Videos and Recipes: <https://www.eurekamills.co.za/eureka-mills-blog/>*
- *Dèlifrance Recipes: <https://www.delifrance.com/recipes.html>*

Getting the word out there

There are several ways in which you can make it known that you mean business baking.

- **The allure of the freshly baked aroma**
For the most part in South Africa, people still prefer to shop in-store rather than online; and nothing promotes a bakery better than the smell.
“To be able to sell to or attract customers, creating a constant aroma of baked goods is probably one of the most important advertising

strategies to put in place. Even if you are not baking at that moment, a lot of bakeries will often make a very fragrant dough and pop it in the oven, or bake a bread for the staff, so that you know the smell will carry throughout, and outside the store, and attract people,” says Sanders. A full 360 in terms of smell and display will soon enough alert the neighbourhood about your baked goods offerings – and word of mouth carries.

- **Foodie culture and #foodporn**
– your bakery on social media

Social media can be used to great effect for generating excitement and creating demand for everything from freshly baked bread to speciality treats and baked indulgence.

Instagram is arguably the best and simplest platform to promote your baked goods through visuals and short descriptions. Instagram posts can also easily be shared to Facebook. Make sure you always provide a link in your Instagram bio to your store’s website or Facebook page, where potential customers can view the full range of baked offerings and access your bakery’s contact details.

To effectively target potential customers on social media, you need to understand the online culture of your bakery’s target market, and the following two terms in particular:

#foodporn: This hashtag term simply refers to images that portray food in a very appetising or aesthetically appealing way.

Foodie culture: The new foodie thinks critically about the food that they eat. Foodies want food that tastes good, and that is socially and environmentally responsible. For this type of consumer, quality food is



In uncertain times, sweet indulgence is justified. Sweet treats, especially traditional and established products, continue to sell despite dips in the economy.

a combination of the taste and the story behind the taste. While foodie culture had previously been very elitist, a new trend of the return to wholesome simple and traditional foods took preference during the pandemic – i.e. food that is sensitive to economic pressure and feeds the soul, such as mac and cheese (<https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2020/05/foodiness-isnt-about-snobbery-anymore/611080/>).

- **Menus, menus, menus**

Both in-store and online, you need to clearly communicate to customers what you are offering, and at what price point. Especially with services like platters for catering which you cannot put on physical display in-store, a menu with clean design, good photography and description of the product makes it much easier to convert a potential sale.

Keep in mind that while approximately 60% of customer awareness might be generated online, there is still another 40% that will only come to know of your products through in-store activation or traditional media.

Ideas for leftover or unsold baked goods

Leftover bread rolls should ideally not be kept over for the next day, but there are many ideas for repurposing yesterday's bread. Firstly, as ingredients for your fresh Bain Marie style food or freshly made Home Meal Replacement offerings; and secondly, both croutons and breadcrumbs can be packaged to be sold as independent product offerings.

- **Croutons.** Croutons can be used in salads and with soups. To make croutons, slice old rolls thinly, rub with butter, garlic and herbs and bake until they are crispy.
- **Breadcrumbs.** Handy in many recipes, breadcrumbs are used for deep-fried products such as chicken strips, or as an ingredient in meat pie fillings. To make breadcrumbs, simply break up the old bread and dry the chunks in the oven completely. Another idea is to flavour your breadcrumbs for deep fried products to create a signature taste.

Other baked goods can also be repurposed in new and exciting ways. Here are two examples of what has been done with great success:

- **Re-baked custard cake.** If you sell individual slices of cake at your in-store bakery or deli, unsold cake can be remixed and take on a new, fresh form for the next day. For example, a tapas restaurant and deli called Mezze Bar in Auckland, New Zealand, made a custard cake by breaking up different pieces of leftover cake into smaller chunks, combining it with a custard mix and re-baking the batter. This custard cake soon became a best-seller, to such an extent that often cake had to be baked specifically for this purpose.
- **Monster gingerbread cookie.** The Pick n Pay at Ferndale on Republic in Randburg, Johannesburg repurposes their baked goods leftovers in over-sized gingerbread cookies. Priced at R4.50 for a cookie weighing in at approximately 500g, it is an irresistible impulse buy for those with a sweet tooth. This cookie can be achieved by re-baking a mix of stale bread and cakes together in a batter with some fresh flour, egg, sugar, baking powder and seasoning (in this case ginger).

Having your own bakery is also very useful for eliminating waste in other store categories. Overripe fruit and veg, as well as dried products such as sultanas past expiry date, can be baked off in a variety of delicious sweet and savoury treats.

Ideas courtesy of Jozi Restaurant Solutions



Photo by Sean Bernstein on Unsplash

Single-serving savoury treats can be an excellent on-the-go snack.

A final word

For optimal success, it is important to find a balance between baking from scratch and baking from frozen products. Consider what would work best for your store, and what your customers would most appreciate.

Once you have your bakery up and running, continue to refine and improve your offerings and services, as the competition is strong in this popular category.

Keep at it and you will succeed! **SR**



Marguerite Sanders is an autodidactic writer and designer with a passion for creative problem-solving. Nowadays she writes for business, and on business, specialising in retail and tech. Her writing and art have been published on various online platforms and in print. She holds a B.A. Fine Arts degree and has completed additional courses on the business and professional practise of art, and a few modules of philosophy.

Contact Wilkins Ross Communications at marguerite@wilkinsross.co.za.



Want to improve your efficiency and profitability?

Integrated retail
management
solution

giving you the edge



Retail



Enterprise



Mobile



Financial
Integration



Loyalty



eStore



eReplenish



Value Adds



Fuel

+27 21 556 2724
webinfo@archsoftware.co.za
www.archsoftware.co.za

