



**Empowering your team for max productivity**

**Gordon®**  
FOOD SERVICE



**It is no secret that labor is a top challenge in foodservice. Finding staff, keeping staff and staying competitive with elevated wages are ongoing pressures that force managers to search for meaningful solutions.**

This guide offers ideas that look beyond creative recruitment and retention strategies. It begins with lean thinking, a plan to optimize workflow and maximize the productivity of each team member. You will find it touches every part of your operation and can deliver huge dollar savings while enhancing your foodservice program.

**Lean thinking focuses on process and people to assure you are using the team you have in the best way, empowering people to achieve peak performance.**

#### BY THE NUMBERS

**30 minutes = 30 hours**  
Freeing up 30 minutes a shift from two people a day creates 30 hours of new labor per month at no extra cost!

### Gain Peak Performance With Lean Thinking

Lean thinking eliminates tasks that don't add value, providing results for you and satisfaction for workers through empowerment.

This guide will get you started, with a strong focus on the processes and the people in your operation.

- Understand Lean Thinking
- Efficient Purchasing and Inventory
- Optimize Meal Production
- Create Efficient Workflow
- People - Your Key to Success
- Resources



## Understanding Lean Thinking

**Take a look at the process before turning attention to people. Their peak performance starts with your operational excellence – a culture of efficient and cost-effective systems.**

### Eliminate tasks that don't add value

Kitchens are process-driven operations, supporting tasks for ordering food and supplies all the way to delivering meals. Examine each process to minimize wasted time. This will:

- Free up time for other activities.
- Reduce total labor hours.

### How it works

If you save 30 minutes a day from three \$15-an-hour employees, you can repurpose that 30 minutes into a more important task or save 7 hours per week in labor costs, for a total of over \$3,000 a month.

### How it's done

Look for waste in processes performed, especially those with higher-cost materials and workers. Start by looking at these complex processes:

- Purchasing and inventory of food and supplies.
- Meal production.
- Workflow in front and back of house.

### What it achieves

Done well, lean thinking enables operational excellence through:

- Increasing productivity
- Lowering costs
- Improving quality







## ASK 'THE FIVE WHYS'

Asking “why” is a common problem-solving strategy in lean thinking. Popularly called “The Five Whys,” it’s a practice that gets to the root of a problem quickly.

### How it works

When you question a practice, drill down by asking five “why” questions. You may find extra employee downtime indicates workflow problems, equipment issues or lack of training.

### How it’s done

For example, Susan, the dishwasher, is waiting around a lot during her shift, yet working a lot of overtime. Start by asking:

- **Why is this happening?** I can’t get all the dishes done on time.
- **Why not?** The last load of dishes comes in 10 minutes before my shift ends.
- **Why is that?** Chad is needed for dinner prep before he heads out to clear dishes.
- **Why the change?** Chef said the new dinner menu takes longer to prepare.
- **Why does it take longer?** The sauce needs to simmer.

### What it achieves

Five “why” questions tell you the dishwasher is working overtime because the new dinner menu takes longer to prep. Now you can determine the best solution.



**Transport** – The unnecessary moving around of people and equipment.



**Inventory** – Excessive inventory and the resources to manage it.



**Motion** – Walking or moving more than required.



**Waiting** – Waiting for the next step so work can be done.



**Overproduction** – Producing more than needed.



**Overprocessing** – Doing more than customers want or need.



**Defects** – Managing the effort to fix errors or defects.

## SEVEN MAJOR WASTE AREAS

Get on the path  
to operational  
excellence with a  
review of these  
areas





## Efficient Purchasing and Inventory

**You spend a high percentage of time and budget on foodservice supplies, and that makes this an important area to focus on. Put cash in your pocket with proper management of purchasing and inventory systems.**

### How it works

You can uncover hidden problems by paying attention to the actions your team takes when looking for and handling supplies.

### What to look for

Take a seven wastes meets five whys approach. Of the seven major waste areas, key in on transport, inventory, waiting, motion and defects. Ask “why” questions and drill down if you notice team members:

- Searching for the right product in storage.
- Waiting for others to bring ingredients.
- Spending excess time deciding on products and amounts to order.
- Throwing out excess inventory you over purchased.
- Questioning what to serve if you run short on a product.

### How to fix it

When you find hidden expenses, you can create cost-saving solutions, such as:

- Standard order lists based on the menu.
- Established par levels for all items.
- Regular inventory before ordering.
- Organized storeroom, cooler and freezer.
- An ordering system that indicates case quantities available from your distributor.
- Standardized recipes and production reports.

### TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

**We offer many ways to control ordering and inventory, including:**

- Gordon Ordering™
- Gordon Inventory™
- Gordon Cycle Menu™ Management™
- Gordon Culinary Pro™



Organized storage helps avoid time-wasting mistakes. Monitor shelving layout and easy product identification. Ask your Gordon Food Service Sales Representative for ideas on organizing your storeroom, cooler and freezer.

**TIME-SAVER TIP**







## Optimize Meal Production

**Food production may be the most frequent, time intensive, expensive and meaningful task your team does daily. Making changes here can quickly create big wins.**

### How it works

Observe food production in your operation on varying shifts and days and uncover time-saving swaps that create labor savings.

### What to look for

Consider the seven major waste areas of lean thinking and apply “why” questions. Key in on motion, waiting, overproduction, overprocessing and defects. Drill down if you notice team members:

- Spending a lot of time preparing a recipe that does not provide value.
- Not using the right product or prep method for each situation.
- Guessing how many servings of a recipe to prepare.
- Not using standardized, scaled recipes.

### How to fix it

Consider these helpful time-saving convenience methods where appropriate:

#### 1. Premade convenience items

- Entrees such as lasagna or meatballs.
- Prepared sauces, sides and soups.
- Pre-baked desserts.
- Fully cooked and/or sous-vide proteins.

#### 2. Speed scratch strategies

- Use plus-one recipes (add sous-vide chicken and fresh broccoli to a convenience macaroni and cheese entrée).
- Buy pre-prepped ingredients (think broccoli that is trimmed and washed).

### TIME SAVER TIPS

- Are labor-heavy recipes made during shifts short on labor? Try speed-scratch swaps or prepping ingredients on another shift.
- Switch to products packaged for speed and ease of use. For example, save time and reduce motion with bulk yogurt in a bag you can squeeze into the serving dish.





### Premade/speed-scratch considerations

Your goal is to streamline the cooking process without sacrificing quality or taste. Your decision-making process should keep these in mind:

#### 1. Cost benefit.

Evaluate any dollar savings resulting from:

- Less labor
- Higher yield
- Better shelf life

#### 2. Consistent quality.

Convenience products help to:

- Create the same flavor and presentation every time.
- Compensate for inexperienced staffers.

#### 3. Menu application.

Prevent food waste from leftover products by:

- Ordering quantities based on need.
- Aiming for a rule of 3 – use the ingredient in at least three recipes.

#### 4. Guest expectations.

Convenience products must meet your expectations:

- Ensure acceptable product features such as taste and appearance.
- Be cautious with dishes called a “favorite from-scratch recipe.”

### BEST OF BOTH WORLDS



Advice from Chef Kurt Kwiaktowski, Gordon Food Service Corporate Executive Chef: “Speed-scratch cooking leverages the convenience of pre-made items while still incorporating the flavor and quality of fresh. Use speed-scratch to strike a balance between time and labor convenience and culinary creativity.

### SUCCESSFUL LEAN THINKING

Chef Javier was known for his beef stew featuring a savory rib-eye roast beef as the star. Frequent call offs by other team members made it hard for the chef to find time to prepare the stew. His Gordon Food Service Sales Representative helped him save time by purchasing Markon Ready-Set-Serve fresh vegetables that were already chopped. Customers didn't notice because the beef was the star of the recipe.



## Create Efficient Workflow

**Workflow can make or break productivity. A thorough review of everything from storage to prep to service to cleanup will show areas for improving processes.**

### How it works

As a manager, observe workflow and look for wastes, keeping all seven major waste areas of lean thinking in mind. Calculate how one simple area of waste can affect operational workflow.

### What to look for

Start by targeting one of your more complex, busiest areas. Eventually work your way through the front and back of the house. Watch at varying shifts and days to get the big picture. Ask “why” and drill down if team members are:

- Excessively walking the same path.
- Waiting around or having a lot of downtime.
- Encountering congested areas, slowing service.
- Performing repetitive tasks.
- Frustrated by a confusing work station layout.

### How to fix it

Solutions might be obvious, or they might be corrected by small changes overlooked in the daily hustle. Changes could be as simple as:

- Organizing kitchen, storage, serving and dining areas.
- Creating efficient work stations.
- Getting the right equipment for the job.
- Using technology to increase efficiency.
- Ensuring you have enough supplies.
- Scheduling prep before service vs. at mealtime.
- Utilizing cooking styles such as batch cooking and cook-chill.

#### 1. Designing your workstations so:

- Employees take the fewest steps.
- Equipment is stored within reach.
- Enough space is provided to do the work.

#### 2. Look at staffing. If you are short on certain days or shifts:

- Consider moving tasks to when you are best staffed.

TIME-SAVER TIP



## SUCCESSFUL LEAN THINKING



**Sally, the foodservice manager,** was struggling to find staff for the early shift, unfortunately limiting them from preparing the fan favorite homemade salad dressing. Customers noticed and asked for it! Sally realized the prep-cook had down time on the late shift a few nights a week, so she started batch prepping the scratch salad dressing on those shifts.



**Sam, a dishwasher,** and his team complained about repeatedly walking down the hallway to a closet where they would pour and mix cleaning agents. Sam asked if a chemical dispenser system could be installed in the main dishroom. The manager connected with **InnoServ Cleaning** and Beverage Systems and thanked Sam for the time- and money-saving tip!



**Mina, the shift manager,** was observing her team. She watched staff repeatedly walk into the cooler with a roll out cart which would block access to the food they needed, so they would have to move the cart around constantly. This happened all day long. Mina rearranged the cooler so the cart had more space. A simple time-saving move!

## People Your Key to Success

The right processes won't have an impact unless your team is engaged. You can enable their success through employee engagement strategies.

### How it works

A manager must be purposeful to focus on the team members' needs, empowering them to share ideas and helping them understand they are part of an efficient foodservice program.

### How it's done

Engagement is a two-way street. Communication on your part sets expectations and builds confidence. Build success with these three strategies:

#### 1 Set clear expectations

- Provide clear and detailed job descriptions and task lists.
- Include time bound or measurable statements wherever possible ("Have table service ready by 4:30 p.m." or "Wrap 100 sets of silverware in napkins.").

#### 2 Prioritize training

- Prioritize training on core competencies.
- Offer training that goes beyond current job tasks to provide growth.

#### 3 Engage the team in quality assurance

- Get the whole team engaged in quality assurance activities.
- Proactively focus on the steps of a process. Examples include:
  - Conduct a pre-service huddle to assure a quality food service experience.
  - Use a checklist to confirm daily tasks are completed on time.

### What it achieves

Engaged employees are happier, more productive, and they stick around longer. All of this helps you build a strong, efficient and more profitable foodservice experience.

### WE'RE HERE TO HELP



Ask your Gordon Food Service Sales Representative for staffing resources available to help you engage your team:

- Foodservice Training Topics.
- Access to Gordon Food Service Specialists.
- Do-It-Yourself Audit Checklists.
- Team Effort Guide.
- Trust20 Food Safety Training.
- Pineapple Academy Partnership.
- And more...



## Resources and Checklist

**We'll help you achieve peak performance and improve productivity in your operation! The first step to a winning labor strategy is to **identify wasted time**.**

**Use this checklist:**

### ASSURE EFFICIENT PURCHASING AND INVENTORY SYSTEMS

Ask "why" questions and drill down if you notice team members:

- ☐ Searching for the right product in the storeroom, cooler or freezer.
- ☐ Waiting for others to bring ingredients.
- ☐ Spending too much time figuring out what and how much to order.
- ☐ Throwing out excess inventory you over purchased.
- ☐ Deciding what to serve if you have a shortage.

### OPTIMIZED MEAL PRODUCTION

Ask "why" questions and drill down if you notice team members:

- ☐ Spending a lot of time preparing or doing things that don't provide value.
- ☐ Not using the right product or prep method for each situation.
- ☐ Guessing how many servings of a recipe to prepare.
- ☐ Not using standardized, scaled recipes.

### EFFICIENT WORK FLOW

Ask "why" questions and drill down if you notice team members:

- ☐ Walking the same path excessively.
- ☐ Waiting around or having a lot of down time.
- ☐ Pushing through congested areas, slowing the speed of service.
- ☐ Performing repetitive tasks.
- ☐ Frustrated by a confusing workstation layout.



## LABOR SAVING SOLUTIONS

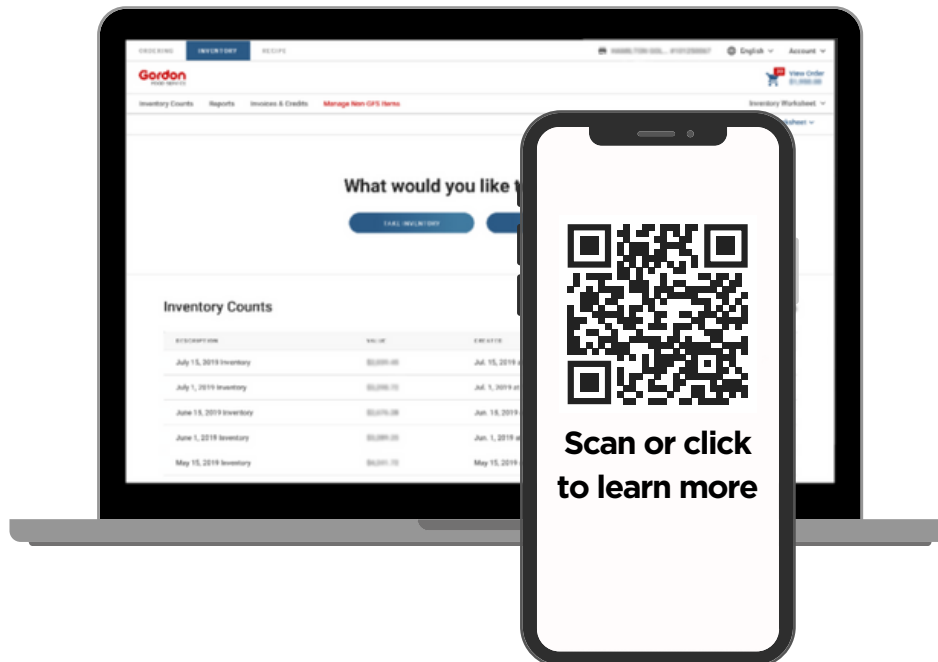
Gordon Food Service offers a variety of foods and supplies to meet your needs:

- 100% yield pre-cut produce.
- Prepared convenience items.
- Sous vide packaged products.
- Beverage systems.
- Cleaning systems.
- And more.

## TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

Gordon Food Service can provide digital and service solutions to increase efficiency:

- Gordon Ordering™
- Gordon Inventory™
- Gordon Cycle Menu Management™
- Gordon Culinary Pro™



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**Gordon**  
FOOD SERVICE  
*Always at your table®*