

Foodservice

equipment & supplies.

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At the end of the makeline, says Cardamone, there should be a staging area if employees top the pizzas faster than the ovens can keep up. A speed rack can hold uncooked pizzas, he notes.

drawers contain lesser-used toppings such as feta and Gorgonzola cheese.

Including these drawers prevents employees from bending down to retrieve unusual ingredients in the cabinets under the makeline, which takes much longer, Morgan says. The concern is that during busier periods staff might leave these less-used toppings out — unrefrigerated — on the makeline. This can disrupt the flow and introduce potential food safety issues when not addressed quickly. With the drawers, staff simply open the drawer, take some toppings out of a container and then close it again.

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The ideal fast-casual pizza makeline has a 72-inch counter with a 42-inch workspace for finished pizzas, according to Ryan Mikita, FCSI, principal, Ricca Design Studios, Greenwood Village, Colo.

Mici, a Denver-based chain with six locations, uses a sandwich prep station with a larger top, which enables employees to have all toppings within their reach. Before this equipment was introduced, employees had to open drawers and bend down a lot.

They “were wasting motion,” says Joe Melton, senior vice president of operations. “But I love ease of execution and motion. We want to make it as simple as possible.”

Within the prep table, staff at Mici lay out toppings depending on which pizza they’re for, meaning all ingredients are in small groupings so employees can take the required amount of each with minimal movement. The Giardino pizza, for example, has mushrooms, garlic, roasted red pepper, spinach, artichokes, and zucchini, grouped together. Likewise, ingredients for the Caprarola are also all in one place: pepperoni, sausage, onion, mushroom and green pepper. Items that are featured on more than one pizza, such as pepperoni, will be adjacent to all the pizzas they’re included on as much as possible.

This design also includes two containers of commonly used items like sauce, cheese and pepperoni so two employees can work the line without leaning in front of each other, though usually one deals with sauce and cheese and another with toppings.

Show Me Pizza, which has two locations in Austin, Texas — one of them a ghost kitchen — launched last spring using

traditional sandwich prep containers for its pizza toppings. The company quickly switched them out for longer sandwich prep containers, 4 feet long in one location and 5 feet in the other, which makes a longer runway for pizzas to be prepared concurrently. These hold the same amount of product but create space for more pizzas to be prepared simultaneously.

The newer prep tables are longer and shallower “so it’s easier to reach the ingredients so you’re not reaching over the pizza and possibly destroying it,” co-owner Dimitri Voutsinas explains. “It’s also great for people who are not as tall.” Sandwich stations are usually quite a bit less expensive than pizza topping stations, he points out.



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