

COMPEAT'S PREP-TO-SHELF LIFE FEATURE GIVES RESTAURANTS A POWERFUL NEW APPROACH TO PREP COST MANAGEMENT

An area typically overlooked as a place to improve performance is food preparation. Food prep is the backbone of almost every restaurant operation. Everyday restaurant managers calculate how much of each food item needs to be prepped to meet sales projections. Each restaurant then spends hundreds of dollars or more supplying the raw ingredients and labor hours required to do the work. Despite a restaurant manager's best efforts, a significant portion of the food prepared will be wasted due to overproduction and prepping may be done too frequently resulting in higher labor costs than necessary.

While food preparation problems have existed in the restaurant business for years, there has not been a practical solution to overcome them — until now. Compeat Restaurant Management Systems has developed an innovative feature called "Prep-to-Shelf Life." This feature helps restaurants manage their food prep with the highest level of control over food and labor costs ever available.

As every seasoned restaurateur knows, every food item has a shelf life. In other words, there are a specific number of days that each food item, when properly stored, will retain its quality. Despite understanding this, many restaurants do not maximize production based on this fact. Instead, they either prep without a specific system or prep more frequently than necessary, believing this will either yield higher quality or ensure adequate supply.

Typically, shelf lives on restaurant items range from two to seven days. For example, al dente pasta may have a shelf life of two days, while a marina sauce may have a shelf life of seven days. Using Compeat's Prep-to-Shelf Life system when prepping pasta, the Prep Cooks will not just make enough for one day, but for two days. And when prepping marinara sauce they won't just cook enough for one or two days, they will cook enough to last

seven days. It's easy to see that when this prep management approach is applied to all of the dozens or hundreds of items a restaurant uses daily, the potential to save on labor costs quickly multiplies.

Compeat's Prep-to-Shelf Life feature also keeps costs in check by tracking average work-hours required to prepare each item and then adjusting daily prep quantities according to actual sales for each day of the week over time. The first step ensures that prep times are adhered to, and the second step allows restaurants to use an average quantity that is closer to actual day-of-the-week sales.

Compeat's Prep-to-Shelf Life system reduces over prepping and saves restaurants money in two ways:

The high cost of **excess labor hours** & **food waste** will continue to **eat away at restaurants' profits**

1.) LOWER LABOR COSTS

Preparing each food item is a process that requires many steps, including gathering the ingredients, equipment, and utensils, and then preparing, storing, and cleaning up. Substantial time and cost can be saved if cooks make fewer batches of each item throughout the week.

2.) LOWER FOOD COSTS

Making too much food results in waste. Waste costs often contribute as much as **10% of total food costs**.



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The twelve Zea Restaurants nationally, run by Taste Buds Management, have been using Compeat's Prep-to-Shelf Life system since 2005. The management team credits the automated functionality with significantly reducing their food and labor costs. For example, before implementing Prep-to-Shelf Life, each of the Zea restaurants had four prep chefs preparing food for over 12 hours a day. Now each restaurant only pays two people to prep for five hours a day, despite having 280 items to prepare.



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To use Prep-to-Shelf Life, the Zea management team first entered its restaurants' unique food preparation data into the program, including all of the items it preps and their shelf lives. Then they set up the system to automatically capture daily usage quantities. With that information in the database, each Zea restaurant is able to print out a daily Compeat Prep Item Production Worksheet that tells them exactly which items and how much of each needs to be prepared that day.

The Zea management team says that with the Prep-to-Shelf Life feature they are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in labor and food costs. They have also increased their food prep savings in their Semolina restaurants, which they acquired in January 2007. Here is what the Zea team says about Compeat's Prep-to-Shelf Life system:

“Prep-to-Shelf Life is without a doubt the most sophisticated program for forecasting prep in a full-service restaurant. Traditional systems drive labor costs up, increase opportunity for waste, and create rotation problems. Prep-to-Shelf Life eliminates the guesswork and, most importantly, adds profit directly to our bottom line — especially from labor cost savings. In fact, even with a recent increase in cooks' hourly wages in New Orleans by \$2 an hour, we have not experienced a payroll spike. We believe one of the key factors is our ability to keep prep-work-hours low.”

— CHRIS RODRIGUE, CEO

“Every morning our restaurants run the Compeat Prep Item Production Worksheet and instantly know exactly what needs to be prepped and how much, without manually assessing how much is on hand and guessing how much is needed. Prep-to-Shelf Life gives us the information we need in exactly the format our restaurants need it.”

— SCOTT JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

“Prep-to-Shelf Life is our favorite Compeat tool. It is a revolutionary way to forecast prep in a full-service restaurant. It constantly gives us accurate information so that our product mix is always up-to-date. As a result, we've reduced our food rotation problems, eliminated food waste, and lowered our labor costs.”

— PAUL HUTSON, VP OF OPERATIONS

How Much Product Do We Prep Today?

Without systems and controls in place to help determine which food items and in what quantity needs to be prepared, the high cost of excess labor hours and food waste will continue to eat away at restaurants' profits. The Compeat Prep-to-Shelf Life management tool offers a powerful way to maximize prep time, and immediately add cost savings to restaurants' bottom line.



To learn more about Compeat, or to find out if Compeat is a good fit for your organization, please contact a sales representative.

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