

Chris's Corner: Plan Ahead

We try our best to be proactive and anticipate our customer's needs, even in some cases before they do. In the service business, we don't like surprises and are sure our customers feel the same.

As some of my readers may be aware of, the independent group of Shop 'n Save operators run two day sales every two weeks on Thursdays and Fridays. We have marked our calendars to remind us of these high volume days and understand the importance of having properly functioning equipment during these promotions.

If we are in a Shop 'n Save early in the week of a two day sale, we anticipate the need for quick turn around on repairs so we are good to go on Thursdays. If time permits, we will check in with all departments in the store to make sure there are no lingering or small issues that could turn into a situation that impacts operations later on in the week.

For years, we have offered our school districts and private schools the chance to have their equipment checked over the summer with no travel charges, prior to a new school year, to make sure on day one everything is ready to go.

Due to a lack of participation we have stopped promoting the program because we didn't get sufficient return on our marketing budgets. We continue to offer the program to those schools have used it over the past several years and ask us to do it again.

I guess the reason for this topic in this month's blog is because as the school year is just kicking in we've had several calls, creating a mini backlog.

I understand a labor situation is a labor situation and as stretched our school district budgets are, many cannot afford the luxury of having a few staff members come in a few days before the start of school and checking all the equipment out a few days before they go live. But it might prevent some first day of school headaches.

Most restaurants know the weekend is their busiest times of the week. It still amazes me, the volume of calls we get on Fridays, where operators report that they've had issues all week but want to get it taken care of before the weekend.

In my opinion, Friday is already the weekend. You call us on a Friday for a problem you've had since Monday, you are taking a risk or two. You risk, because you have delayed like many of your peers, that we won't be able to get to you without overtime. Overtime is a price premium. Over and above that, if we come on Friday and don't have a part in stock, you are looking at Monday at the best to get up and running. You've lost your weekend because of delay.

I have said it time and time again, unlike the human body, food equipment is not self-healing. If you have a problem it is not going to go away on its own.

If you know you have a big, money making, event coming up or a promotion, plan ahead. Check with all staff to see if there any issues which might turn into a problem. You cannot be penny wise and dollar foolish.