

RDF Coffee Byline
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Credit: Emily Wood Bowron

How to choose a quality coffee partner to boost morning sales during a pandemic

As the restaurant industry continues to navigate through the pandemic, one thing rings true-- consumers are hard-pressed to give up their morning coffee routine. It's up to operators to extend innovative coffee offerings and adjust their operations to meet the needs of today's cautious consumers while capitalizing on high margin items, like coffee, to drive profit.

Even as people continue to work from home and shift to a new normal, operators must keep in mind the importance of understanding what is driving their customers' needs and desires and how their offerings can fit into people's "new" daily ritual. Having a good quality coffee partner and program is a strategic way to not only help boost sales throughout breakfast hours, but throughout the rest of the day as well.

To get morning routine customers back, operators should consider implementing tactics like low-touch ordering, extended delivery capabilities, affordable menu items and high quality coffee offerings. By capturing a regular breakfast crowd, those morning diners may be more apt to return during other dayparts if they know that they can depend on an operation for a quality cup of joe.

A high quality coffee program provides significant benefits including selling more of a high margin item, driving repeat customers, and spurring food sales during the coveted breakfast daypart. Follow these tips to help your operation have a successful, pandemic-friendly coffee program fit for dining in or to-go:

- **Seek out single-origin or specialty coffee to serve**
 - Whether it's in the form of an LTO or one of several coffees you sell, a single-origin coffee is an on-trend offering that provides a story and little extra romance for your discerning customers. You can truly taste the difference when it comes to sipping on high quality coffee. Choose a coffee partner that sources only the finest beans from around the world. Ask if beans are handpicked by farmers and sun-dried for field-to-cup perfection.
- **Offer flavored coffee to show variety**
 - Today's consumer wants choices, and having a variety of flavor options will help operators retain customers. Knowing that a restaurant offers a unique selection of coffee gives customers the freedom to experiment with different tastes and offers them something they wouldn't normally have at home
- **Have cold brew available**
 - People often drink coffee in different forms throughout the day. Some may prefer a hot cup of coffee in the morning and then a refreshing cold brew caffeine boost in the afternoon. Keep in mind that as states begin to reopen, millennials and Gen Z will likely be the first to go out, so having options to cater to those demographics is key.

- **Ask about coffee in different formats**
 - One-size doesn't fit all. Having a coffee partner that offers different formats of coffee will not only allow for operational ease, but will give operators the opportunity to create a beverage offering specifically for their customer base. Look for a partner that can discuss what type of program best meets your needs whether it's whole bean, ground, liquid concentrate, cappuccino, etc.

Over the past several years, breakfast has been the only foodservice daypart to experience year-after-year traffic growth. Capture your fair share with a premium coffee program that compliments your food offering and you will be sure to become a destination that will generate repeat customers, even during a pandemic.



Written by Emily Wood Bowron, VP of Strategic Marketing at Red Diamond, Inc. in Birmingham, Ala. Bowron has worked tirelessly to grow and raise the profile of the 114 year old prominent Birmingham-based coffee & tea company. With the execution of successful marketing strategies, Bowron has secured a dedicated customer base, propelled new product development and managed sales launches that have help build the Red Diamond brand. A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Emily Wood has exhibited a stellar talent for overseeing and collaborating on facets from marketing and manufacturing to distribution and sales.