

## Smart maintenance is a recipe for casual dining success

Casual dining groups can significantly boost their bottom line due to a new smart maintenance programme developed by commercial kitchen specialists The Advance Group. The company's smart maintenance service is part of a comprehensive kitchen solution aimed at food developers and property and purchasing businesses with multi-site operations.

Advance's lifecycle kitchen solution covers the design, installation and maintenance of casual dining group kitchens. Darryl Pannell, Commercial Director commented: "Smart maintenance is crucial to our solution because it maximises availability for our customers. Our process focuses on having the right part in the right location, an extensive geographical network, and engineering expertise. Just as importantly, our van fleet is specifically designed to deliver customer solutions and a clearly defined repair versus replace methodology."

The company has established a virtual team of 280 engineers who operate nationwide and strike a productive balance between customers' inhouse resources and their need for external experts, operating alongside Advance's network of specialist cooking equipment engineers. Pannell said: "Where possible we repair the equipment immediately. If a first-time fix isn't viable, we quickly diagnose the problem and use experts in the specialist field to make a further assessment and find a solution. This eliminates the need for repeat visits and repeat parts."

Advance has completed more than 2,000 one-off equipment replacements and 25,000 service calls over the last year and achieved a first-time fix-rate of more than 90% across the group's customer base. Substantial investment has gone into the maintenance service offering over the last 12 months. This includes reconfiguring the whole van fleet with uniform racking and spending £120,000 on parts and equipping engineers with tablet computers. Pannell continued: "In repair versus replace situations we help to reduce the risk of a wrong decision by using advanced data management systems to help the customer make an informed choice. Parts are received within 24 hours and delivered directly to the vans overnight to minimise downtime and ensure a next day fix in most cases."

Advance has seen numerous examples of its smart maintenance approach delivering real productivity benefits to customers, including a leading American style restaurant that has renewed four preventative maintenance contracts over 12 years. Despite continuously adding new sites, the customer's average cost per call has reduced by an incredible 33% as a result of using knowledge gained through Advance's IntEquip technology. Pannell said: "92% of the time we can turn up and fix these products for the customer, dramatically improving the uptime of their equipment."

Another example of a business boosting productivity thanks to Advance's smart maintenance programme was a British bar and restaurant group that needed a product-focused solution after management realised that using a generic refrigeration engineer to fix a complex ice machine was not

cost-effective. Pannell added: "Most maintenance providers would send a general engineer, or at best a refrigeration engineer. We brought in an ice machine expert from the product manufacturer who could pinpoint exact problems. This guaranteed a first-time fix every time – and even though the solution was more expensive for us, ultimately it represented a 100% customer-focused solution."

For further information on the smart kitchens revolution visit [www.smart-kitchens.co.uk](http://www.smart-kitchens.co.uk)

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