



How to Survive (and Even Thrive) With a Shrinking Culinary Team

by Gilles Stassart, CEC, CCA

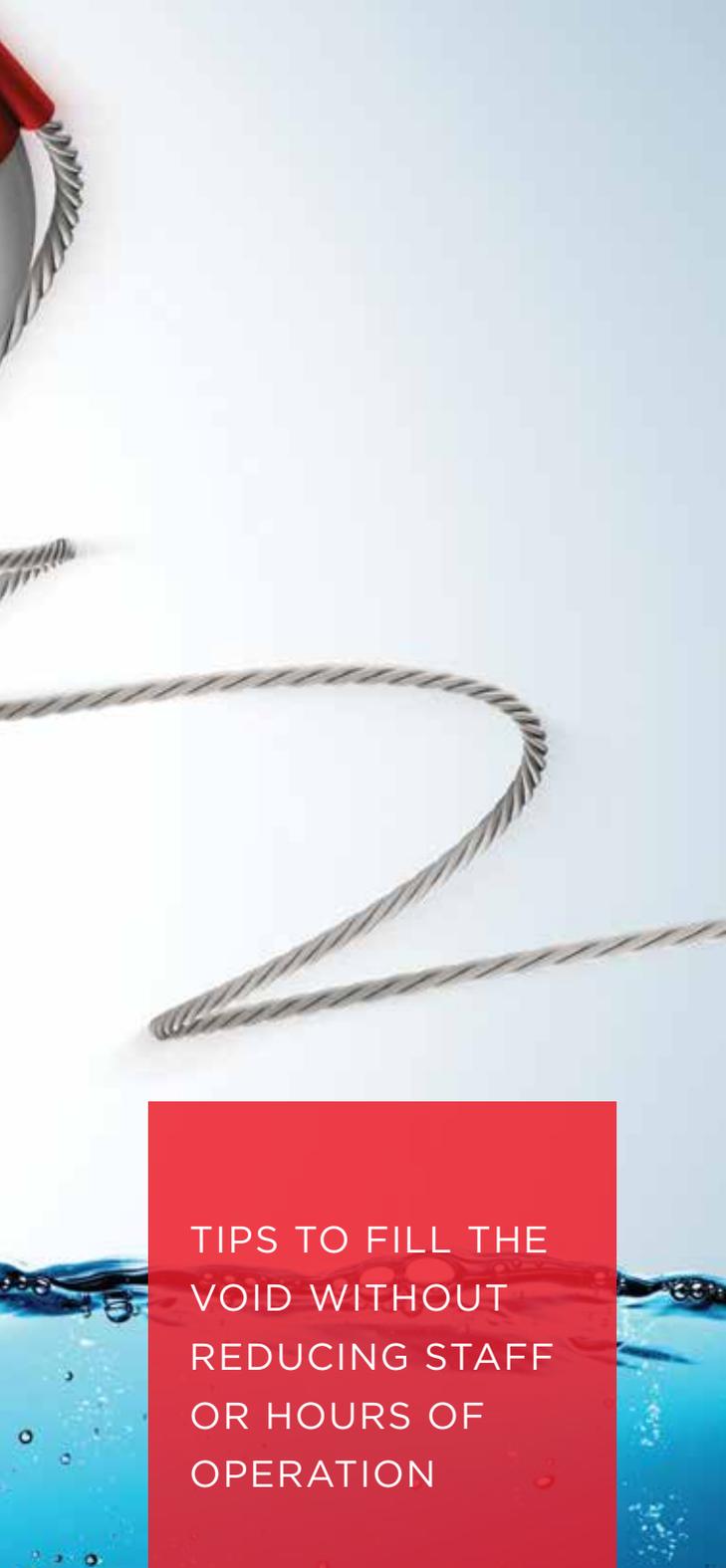


Between culinary school tuition, the cost of living in a big city, and fixation on becoming a television food celebrity, line cooks are in short supply and high demand in healthcare food service today. Turnover is high and many cooks are leaving the industry entirely. Many foodservice operations report that it is more difficult than ever to find skilled labor, while the increased cost of that labor is impacting food budgets.

And while many foodservice facilities are reporting shortages of qualified labor in kitchen operations, health

care—in particular—has been impacted by more and more culinary school graduates who are choosing to work in hotels or restaurants. Likewise, some cooks chafe at the strict dietary guidelines surrounding food served to patients in healthcare settings, preferring to take their creativity to another establishment or industry sector.

While a shortage of skilled labor does present a challenge for healthcare foodservice operations, the following tips can help your organization fill the void without having to further reduce staffing levels or hours of operation.



TIPS TO FILL THE VOID WITHOUT REDUCING STAFF OR HOURS OF OPERATION

USE MORE HIGH-QUALITY, LOW-LABOR MENU SOLUTIONS

You can help compensate for lack of qualified labor while increasing both consistency and sales when you turn to convenient products that have multiple applications. Biscuit mix, for instance, can be turned into breakfast sandwiches and scones, hamburger buns, a soft taco shell and donuts – not to mention biscuits, which are an all-day favorite. Bulk yogurt can be used to create yogurt parfaits, desserts such as chocolate mousse, lemon bread, smoothie bowls, and more.

If you work at a hospital with a full-size bakery that makes everything from scratch, but you lack qualified labor, consider high quality baking mixes that can save you time and money. You no longer have to weigh all of the ingredients, but you can still customize them to your operation's needs. And mixes will produce more consistent results than baking from scratch.

On the other hand, if you buy all of your baked goods from a local bakery and are hoping to save money by baking on site with a minimum of staff hours, frozen baked goods such as scones, turnovers, and muffins take only a few minutes to make and offer that just-baked fresh flavor. Customers always respond to the aroma of something good baking in the oven!

FOODSERVICE FACILITIES are reporting shortages of qualified labor in kitchen operations, particularly in health care, as culinary graduates are choosing to work for hotels or restaurants.

INCENTIVIZE YOUR TEAM

If you are able to offer competitive pay and benefits as well as incentives such as tuition reimbursement, you will garner a reputation as a great place to work, building loyalty and reducing staff turnover.

TRAIN TO AVOID BRAIN DRAIN

Training is a game-changer when it comes to finding and keeping qualified labor. Cooks who have access to effective training and the tools they need to succeed can really excel, regardless of their background. We are all busy today, but training is something that shouldn't be overlooked. Regular training ensures confidence and consistency, and helps you prepare your staff to take on that next role.

Partner with nearby facilities to collaborate on training. Splitting up the work will make it more manageable for everyone.

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WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Not only is it frustrating to waste food when so many people in the world go hungry, but it also makes a big impact on operators' budgets and wallets, and ultimately impacts funds available to hire staff. Offering the right product for the right customer is key. If you run a smaller healthcare foodservice operation, it makes sense to use the muffin tubeset that only produces a few muffins at a time to avoid waste. Meanwhile, if you run a very large operation, you should be using muffin pails.

Assessing your kitchen and waste on a regular basis is key to any operation's success. If you haven't reviewed your waste lately, there is no time like the present.

SHORTCUTS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

You can set your operation up for success in the long run with a few thoughtful shortcuts. In addition to versatile

mixes and frozen baked goods, think about the set-up of your kitchen and how it is left at the end of each shift. How can your operation be more efficient? More organized? And more effective? Shortcuts can revolve around prepping, scheduling, ordering, and serving food. Some ideas:

- When making muffins, make an extra quantity of muffin batter to freeze for another day.
- Make cakes once a week; portion and freeze until needed.
- Pre-measure ingredients to make multiple recipes in advance; when you need it, you only have to combine.

Again, look closer at how your foodservice operation is functioning on a daily basis to determine how to make the most of labor you have, or where you may be able to streamline operations and reduce labor necessary to complete certain tasks.

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Scone Biscotti

32 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS	WEIGHT	MEASURE
Pillsbury™ Place & Bake™ White Chunk Raspberry Scones	2 lbs. 13 oz.	12 each

METHOD

1. Place block of 12 scones on cutting board, scored side facing up. (Do not break apart individually.)
2. Cut block in half lengthwise, creating 2 separate loaves (6 scones each).
3. Place scone loaves on parchment-lined sheet pan, scored side facing down. Note: For mini biscotti, cut loaves in half lengthwise, creating 4 loaves, before placing on sheet pan and baking.

Bake

Convection Oven*	300°F	38-42 minutes	
Standard Oven	350°F	44-48 minutes	

*Rotate pans baked in convection oven one-half turn (180°) after 19 minutes of baking.

1. Cool scone loaves completely. Cut into 3/4-inch thick slices.
2. Place cut biscotti standing up onto parchment lined sheet pans, spaced 1/2 inch apart to allow air circulation.

Bake

Convection Oven*	275°F	38-42 minutes	
Standard Oven	325°F	44-48 minutes	

*Rotate pans baked in convection oven one-half turn (180°) after 19 minutes of baking. **TIP:** Place several biscotti in a food storage plastic bag tied with a decorative ribbon, and place in basket by the register for a grab 'n go treat.



NUTRITION INFO.

Nutrition values are calculated using the weights of ingredients.

Serving Size: 1 Biscotti; Calories: 160; Calories from Fat: 70

Total Fat: 8 g; Saturated Fat: 4-1/2g; Trans Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 5mg; Sodium: 125mg; Total Carbohydrate: 20g; Dietary Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 10g; Protein: 2g

% Daily Value:* Vitamin A: 0%; Vitamin C: 0%; Calcium: 2%; Iron: 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Lemon Bread

48 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS	WEIGHT	MEASURE
Lemon Zest		2 Tbsp.
Lemon, peeled, sectioned, chopped	3.5 oz	1/2 cup
Yoplait® ParfaitPro® Lowfat Vanilla Yogurt	1 lb.	2 cups
Lemon Extract		2 Tbsp.
Water, cool	2 lbs.	4 cups
Egg shade food coloring		1/2 tsp.
Gold Medal™ ZT Variety Muffin Mix	5 lbs.	1 box

METHOD

1. Zest 2 large lemons.
2. Section lemons and finely chop.
3. Combine yogurt, extract, zest, and lemon sections in medium mixing bowl. Whisk together until well blended; set aside. (Keep yogurt refrigerated <40°F until ready to prepare.)
4. Pour water and food coloring into mixer fitted with paddle attachment.
5. Add mix on low speed for 1 minute. Stop mixer, scrape bowl and paddle.
6. Add yogurt mixture and mix on low for 1 minute.
7. Deposit 1 lb. 6 oz. of batter into 6 greased loaf pans.

Bake

Convection Oven*	300°F	35-40 minutes
Standard Oven	350°F	40-45 minutes



*Rotate pans baked in convection oven one-half turn (180°) after 15 minutes of baking.

Keep bread covered and refrigerated.

TIP: Add 4 Tbsp. of finely chopped fresh rosemary for Rosemary Lemon Bread.



NUTRITION INFO.

Nutrition values are calculated using the weights of ingredients.

Serving Size: 1 slice; Calories: 220; Calories from Fat: 60

Total Fat: 7g; Saturated Fat: 3g; Trans Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 0mg; Sodium: 300mg; Total Carbohydrate: 38g; Dietary Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 21g; Protein: 2g

% Daily Value:* Vitamin A: 0%; Vitamin C: 0%; Calcium: 0%; Iron: 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Filled Muffin Tops

24 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS	WEIGHT	MEASURE
Pillsbury™ Place & Bake™ Lemon Poppyseed Muffins	2 lbs. 4 oz.	24 each
Raspberry Filling, prepared	1 lb.	1-1/2 cups
Ready-to-Spread Vanilla Creme Icing	5 oz.	1/2 cup

METHOD

1. Place frozen muffin pucks on parchment-lined full sheet pan in 4x6 pattern. Thaw 5-10 minutes.
2. Thumbprint each muffin puck to create a well approximately 1 inch in diameter.
3. Fill each thumbprint with fruit filling, approximately 1 Tbsp. per muffin top.

Bake

Convection Oven*	325°F	12-16 minutes
Standard Oven	375°F	18-22 minutes



*Rotate pans baked in convection oven one-half turn (180°) after 6 minutes of baking.

1. Cool before finishing with icing.
2. Heat icing in microwave until melted.
3. Drizzle muffin tops with melted icing; allow icing to set before serving.



NUTRITION INFO.

Nutrition values are calculated using the weights of ingredients.

Serving Size: 1 muffin top; Calories: 210; Calories from Fat: 90

Total Fat: 10g; Saturated Fat: 4-1/2g; Trans Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 25mg; Sodium: 180mg; Total Carbohydrate: 29g; Dietary Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 20g; Protein: 2g

% Daily Value:* Vitamin A: 0%; Vitamin C: 0%; Calcium: 4%; Iron: 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ultimately, it is about choosing your battles. Chefs all want to serve the best food possible for every customer – whether it’s patients in a hospital, students at a local college, or a bride and groom and their wedding party at a luxurious country club. I encourage operators to focus on serving freshly made food that their patrons will love while maintaining a focus on food and labor costs. When all of that comes together, operators can make use of shortcuts in the kitchen while maintaining quality and consistency. When you create an organization that is functional and fun for employees, you will achieve greater success with staffing as well as sales.

LOW LABOR, HIGH QUALITY RECIPE IDEAS

“Take and bake” products can help save time in the kitchen yet turn out amazing results, while also allowing operations to add their own flair by adding a few ingredients. Some examples:

- Scone Biscotti
- Filled Muffin Tops
- Lemongrass Cilantro Flatbread

ONE PRODUCT, THREE WAYS

Look for multiple uses for one product. For instance, bulk yogurt can be used in everything from recipes for baked

goods to smoothies to overnight oats, parfaits, hummus, salad dressings, and more. Here are three distinct ways to use yogurt on menus:

- Lemon Bread
- Spice is Nice Smoothie
- Gluten-free Chocolate Mousse

For additional recipes and inspiration, visit www.generalmills.com. 



Gilles Stassart, CEC, CCA, Corporate Chef for General Mills Convenience & Foodservice, was born and raised in Belgium. After training at the Namur Hotel and Culinary Management School in Belgium, he gained extensive experience in fine dining restaurants, hotels, and private country clubs as well as serving as executive chef for nutrition at a leading healthcare organization. Today, he works with General Mills’ healthcare customers to provide training, ideas, and inspiration.

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Gluten-Free Chocolate Mousse 56 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS	WEIGHT	MEASURE
Yoplait® ParfaitPro® Low Fat Vanilla Yogurt	4 lbs.	1 bag
Non-dairy Whipped Topping	4 lbs.	4 qts 1 pint
Chocolate Chips, semi-sweet	12 oz.	2 cups

METHOD

1. Add yogurt and whipped topping to large stainless mixing bowl.
2. Mix with wire whisk until mixture is light, airy, and well blended.
3. Melt chocolate chips in a separate bowl in microwave on high about 20 seconds, stirring twice until melted.
4. Add 1 cup of the mousse with the melted chocolate and fold with a rubber spatula to temper. Continue adding 1 cup of mousse at a time until mixture is well blended and tempered.
5. Store covered in an airtight container in the refrigerator.



NUTRITION INFO.

Nutrition values are calculated using the weights of ingredients.

Serving Size: 2.5 oz.; Calories: 150; Calories from Fat: 70

Total Fat: 8g; Saturated Fat: 6g; Trans Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 0mg; Sodium: 20mg; Total Carbohydrate: 18g; Dietary Fiber: 1g; Sugars: 12g; Protein: 1g

% Daily Value:* Vitamin A: 2%; Vitamin C: 0%; Calcium: 4%; Iron: 0%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.