



## Profiles in Partnership: Sysco website helps its customers build business

By Caroline Perkins

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Sysco Corp. is doing its best to help its customers through the recession. It has launched a new online tool that contains recipes, consumer trends and other information to help operators protect their businesses during tough times. The website, [www.syscotabletop.com](http://www.syscotabletop.com), is for use exclusively by loyal Sysco customers. However, it serves as a model for the value that distributors can bring to operators who are seeking ways to survive.

The website is robust in terms of menu ideas. There is a section called "Chef Connection" that is populated with more than 600 recipes that have been created and supplied by 80 chefs at Sysco's operating companies nationwide. Recipes can be accessed by clicking on cuisine type, recipe category or menu category. Operators can choose items that are in their concept's price range. They also can learn about the top 10 menu items by U.S. region. This data is provided by Technomic's Menu Monitor service.

Table Trends features selected recipes from the Chef Connection that can be used with products that are on special that month. The recipes are designed to be value-conscious and fit in with a seasonal or holiday concept, such as Mother's Day in May.



Good things  
come from  
**Sysco**





Another tab provides seasonal and holiday business-building ideas that are designed to encourage repeat traffic. Along with the usual holiday promotions there are some interesting new ideas. One is to cater a lunch on Saturdays for busy salespeople at the local car dealerships. Another suggests holding a block party, inviting people in a neighborhood or ZIP code to a private community event that has a specially priced meal. There is even an Elvis Week idea, where the staff dresses in '50s outfits and offers special Elvis-favorite desserts like a banana chocolate milk shake.

The site offers menu-marketing tools such as the ability to create and download customized menu inserts. There also is a library of growth strategies, with links to Sysco publications and to Technomic's Technomic Viewpoint, a complimentary newsletter that covers the latest market trends.

John Miko, director of marketing at Sysco Corp., says the site was created to help customers survive during the economic downturn.

Miko says the Chef Connection is the most popular section of the site, followed closely by Table Trends and the library of tips and trend information.

The program was rolled out to Sysco operating companies in early March. Introduction of the site to customers occurs through marketing associates, or sales reps, at operating company food shows or through their business review process. Use of the site is by invitation only, underscoring the value of the information to Sysco customers.