



## EDUcatering – September 2014

### Catering Distributors

*Please attribute any quotes from this information to Ray Hall, Managing Director, RH Hall*

- ***What are the benefits of a catering equipment distributor for schools?***

When dealing with RH Hall, caterers can benefit from professional, independent advice, coupled with sound customer service and after sales back-up. However, there is a further level of expertise that caterers can benefit from and they would be wise to explore the full range of services that can be offered from the more well established, highly regarded and reputable distributors .

Our breadth of knowledge goes beyond the supply of products - we pride ourselves on understanding and anticipating the needs of our customers built up from our 36 years of being established in the industry. We can consult and advise both caterers and food companies on how to get the optimum results from their food, menus and equipment - we are innovators and provide total foodservice solutions that meet clients' needs perfectly. We can even adapt standard foodservice equipment, tailoring it technically and cosmetically to suit the clients' needs. We have our own fabrications business so we can also offer bespoke products from scratch, which is quite a unique position for a distributor.

We have a nationwide network of approved distributors to offer advice and after sales care on a regional basis too, working with our own Area Sales Managers to understand and meet the needs of school caterers. We advocate that if possible, it best to see the equipment in the flesh to get the correct feel for build quality, functionality etc. Our distributors help here too in terms of showrooms and arranging on-site demonstrations and we also have a 3,000sq.ft. state of the art development kitchen facility at our Bedfordshire HQ which showcases a vast range of the equipment we offer from the leading brands we represent.

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So clients can not only look at the equipment, but gain hands-on experience of how the pieces work and feel too – invaluable when investing in equipment.

If they select carefully, then a caterer can use one distributor – but it will need to be one that carries a large and comprehensive range of equipment and one that can advise on the equipment and overall project; manage the installation and then provide a complete after sales support in terms of servicing and spare parts. There are benefits also to using the one distributor i.e. a relationship and understanding will be built up between the two and that distributor should then be in a position to fully understand and anticipate the operational needs of the caterer and the organisation and give more informed advice accordingly.

- ***What is the schools market like for catering equipment distributors? What is the biggest area they deal with for schools?***

The schools market is becoming increasingly busier for us as a distributor – not just in terms of demand for our range of catering equipment such as refrigeration, prime cooking and food preparation utensils, but for our bespoke solutions too. Our Foodservice Solutions division are being asked to provide tailored solutions to school caterer's needs which can involve us modifying standard equipment through our own fabrications manufacturing facility and providing bespoke tabling – projects as opposed to single one off equipment needs.

- ***What are the most popular pieces of equipment in schools?***

One of the most popular pieces of equipment we sell because it offers speed of service, multi-functional and versatile, plus ideal where space is at a premium, is the Maestrowave Combi Chef 7 - this oven is able to operate in a veritable combination of modes – bake, roast, grill, steam, defrost, regenerate, microwave, boil or simply keep food warm – all of these stages of cooking can be pre-programmed into the unit under individual menu dishes and then caterers can quickly regenerate dishes in super quick time - this oven can do it all and is extremely easy to use, producing quality results in minutes.



- ***Are there any emerging trends within the catering equipment sector?***

There are developments emerging all the time, with equipment manufacturers pushing ahead with 'green' and innovative equipment with features and modifications being enhanced in terms of greater cooking control – this green equipment can help with savings on running costs and in turn pay for themselves many times over.

The developments in accelerated cooking continue as does the incidence of induction into prime cooking equipment.

- ***Should schools go to catering equipment distributors for advice on the market?***

Yes definitely if they have selected one of the highly regarded distributors. RH Hall has a vast and extensive knowledge of the market and of foodservice equipment. Our breadth of knowledge goes beyond the supply of products - we pride ourselves on understanding and anticipating the needs of our customers built up from our 36 years of being established in the industry. We can knowledgeably and unbiasedly advise clients on not only equipment solutions, but on market trends, menu's and what is happening in other sectors of the industry that they may be able to adopt and adapt successfully for their own needs.

- ***Please include any other comments that you feel our readers will be interested in.***

It is best to choose a company that is well established, reputable and one that can give independent, professional and unbiased advice. Also one that operates to acknowledged standards e.g. ISO accredited. Also with regards to purchasing within the education sector, caterers can be sure of their supplier's credentials through the ESPO buying agreement – RH Hall is an ESPO accredited supplier. All the financials, pricing, service have already been checked out at the tender stage, so caterers in the sector can buy with even greater confidence.



- **Please include a definitive website address where readers can go for more info on your company.**

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