

7 Ways to Better Manage your Foodservice Recipe/Inventory Software

[by Chefs-Resources.com](http://Chefs-Resources.com)

1. Properly train all personnel...especially in each of the following steps

Sounds obvious, but too often the data entry people are simply trained to enter the data...not how to enter it in a logical, consistent, “foodservice intelligent” manner. To make matters worse, they seldom have much culinary background in regards to costing recipes and taking inventory.

2. Data entry and naming of items **MUST** follow the Chef’s direction

This is important because the Chef is the one searching for the info in the system to create recipes, do menu analysis, and take inventory. S/he knows best what units of measure will be used both in recipes and for inventory taking. And s/he will know best how to differentiate between similar products.

Accountants/Purchasers think differently than chefs do and do not understand the products as chefs do.

They therefore enter info into the system

incorrectly, creating product names with errors (or misspellings), creating unnecessary duplicate items, combining items which should be separate, and assigning units of measure which are wrong.



3. **ALWAYS** name items in the system by category from general name to specific name

For instance:

1. Salmon King Fillet Fresh
2. Salmon King Whole Fresh
3. Salmon Sockeye Copper River Fillet Fresh
4. Salmon Coho Fillet Frozen (if you only serve fresh salmon then there is no need to use the word “Fresh” because it is redundant. Same thing if you only use one species of salmon...”Salmon Fillet” is all you need
5. Tarragon Fresh
6. Lemons 115 CT
7. Potato Yukon Gold #1
8. Potato Russet 80 CT

4. **Don’t** make things too specific

1. Name items according to how you will identify it in a recipe...but stop short of over-specificity.

2. If you regularly order King Salmon Fillets then you may receive a range of sizes. If you don't actually order by the different sizes (because all you care about is getting King Salmon and the size is irrelevant) then there is no need to have:
 1. King Salmon Fillets 7/11
 2. King Salmon Fillets 11/18
 3. King Salmon Fillets 18-Up

Adding the size to the item name only clutters and confuses the process, unless you specifically have a use for 2 or more sizes and regularly purchase those different sizes for different recipes. If you create a recipe, which size King Salmon will you use? If don't choose the most recent purchase then it will pull in the price from the last time you purchased that size Salmon...which could have been months ago! And if you do add the correct size now but in 4 months you are using a different size then your cost analysis for the recipe will be wrong in the future. King Salmon Fillets is therefore the best name.

5. NEVER name items simply using the invoice or vendor name!

First, all vendors will have variations on the name for the same product. Second, invoice names are often **HORENDOUS** for inventory and recipe software because they frequently say something like "fresh tarragon". Great, I'm standing in my produce cooler doing inventory and half the items begin with the word "fresh"...utterly useless info to have at the start of the name because everything in the produce cooler is fresh!

Here are some examples of how **NEVER** to name an item:

1. Fresh Tarragon (should be Tarragon Fresh)
2. Fresh Herb Basil (should be Basil Fresh...or Herb Basil Fresh if all Herbs begin as such)
3. 115 CT Lemons (should be Lemons 115 CT)
4. Fish Ahi (why would someone use "Fish" in the item name? Yet I've seen it done!)
5. Fillet Sockeye Salmon (should be Salmon Sockeye Fillet)
6. Kumamoto Oysters (should be Oysters Kumamoto)
7. Fuji Apples (should be Apples Fuji)
8. Chicken Base (should be Base Chicken, or Soup Base Chicken, or whatever makes sense to the Chef)
9. Fresh Peeled Cloves of Garlic (should be Garlic Cloves Peeled)

6. Always use spell check!

It is very difficult to find an ingredient if someone created its name with an incorrect spelling (I've seen "Scollop" instead of "Scallop!")

7. Always consider the best Units of Measure for Recipes & for Inventory

1. The best units of measure for recipes generally break down into weight (pounds/oz) and volume (cups/tbl),
2. The best unit of measure for counting inventory generally break down into either weight, or cases and its pack units (cans, containers, etc).
3. Proteins should always be inventoried by the pound, not by the case.

It sucks when you are inventorying sugar packets and your only unit of measure is by the each! Or, vice versa, you're creating a recipe and the only option is by the case.

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