

A Report of the Process Flow of

Hunan Wok

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By

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Executive Summary

Hunan Wok is one of 21 Chinese restaurants located in Midlothian, Virginia. There are numerous shops, specialty boutiques, art galleries, professional offices, and an Ukrops (Richmond's leading grocery chain) all arranged in clusters to resemble a small town. The restaurant is located in one of the more appealing locations in Midlothian.

Hunan Wok is a family focused company where the owners are always there to help and answer questions, offering customer service on a more personal level. The restaurant also has a very high standard of cleanliness. "It is the cleanest Chinese restaurant in Midlothian," stated Wayne Young, an environmental health specialist with the Virginia Department of Health.

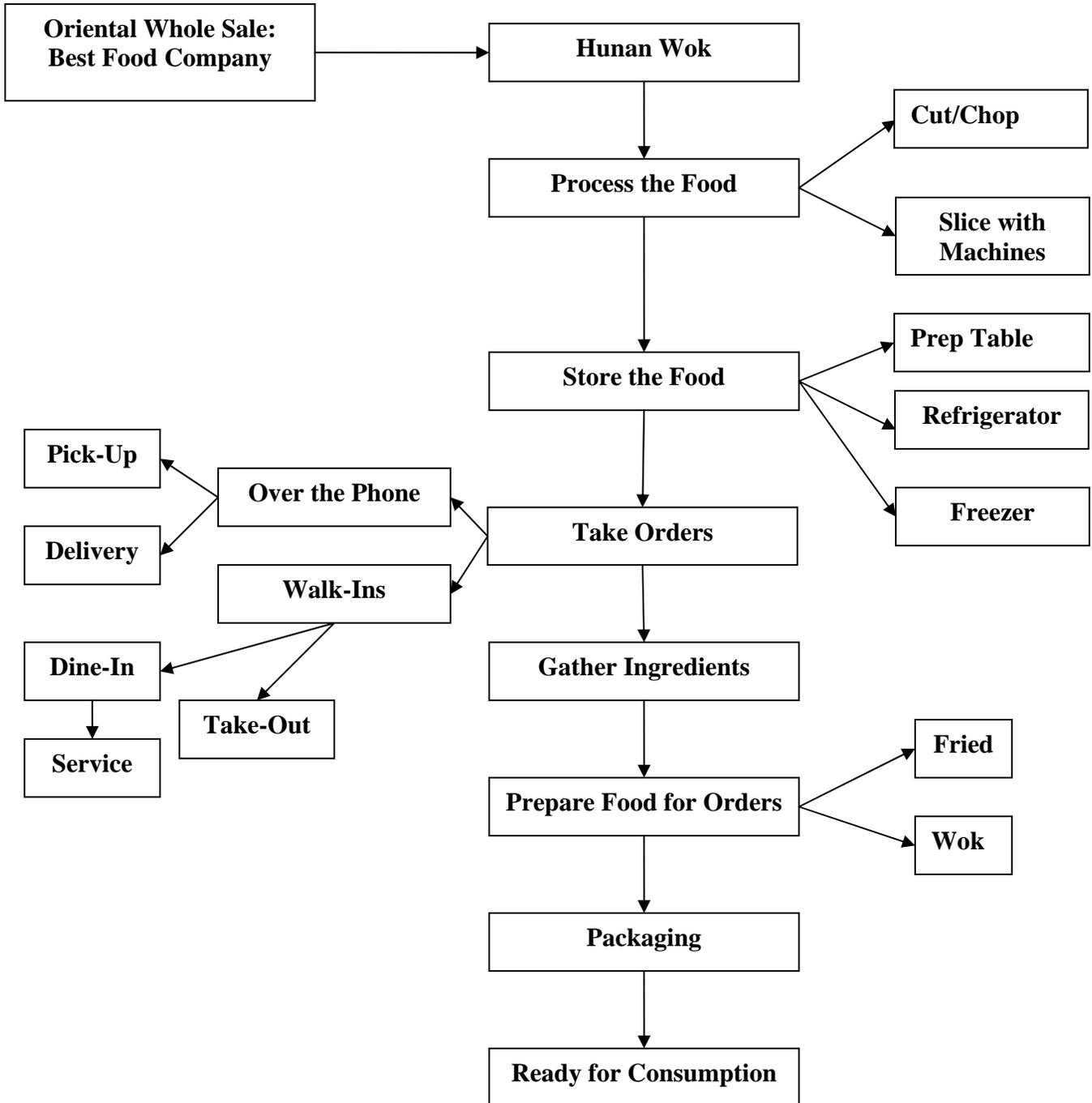
A flowchart was developed for the process of how unique dishes are prepared at Hunan Wok restaurant. The chart begins with ordering raw goods from the wholesale supplier to the presentation or delivery to the customer. The process is divided into several steps for a detailed description.

Introduction

The owners, C.C. Fang and James Hu, moved down from Manhattan, New York where they previously had a Chinese restaurant. They started Hunan Wok in Midlothian, Virginia mainly for the huge advantage of having less competition in the market in 1997 and the edge over competitors because of their family-oriented focus and the overall cleanliness of their restaurant.

Having less competition allows them to gain more of the local market share which they were having a hard time obtaining in New York because of the size and competitiveness of the industry there. Their business efforts were very successful for the first few years they were open, creating annual gross sales of \$2,100,000. However, due mainly to the loss of employees and the difficulty in hiring replacements, the restaurant was forced to cut back to only dinner hours, which are from 4:30 PM to 9:00 PM with only carry out and limited dine-in. This change has caused the business to suffer a drastic loss of sales to the competition that has grown since 1997 when they first opened and now has cut their profits nearly in half.

The Food Preparation Process



The Narrative Description of the Process

The process that Hunan Wok operates starts off with shipments coming by truck from Oriental Whole Sale: Best Food Company of Springfield, Virginia every Tuesday and Thursday. Typical shipments include products from all over the world such as fresh whole chickens, beef, pork, seafood, vegetables, bagged rice, a variety of noodles, and other specialty items required in Chinese cooking.

Upon the arrival of the food, the next step is for the chef, James Hu, and his helper to process the food either by machine or hand cutting and chopping. Some of the machines used are a slicing machine for meats and a food processor for preparation for egg rolls. Once the food has been processed, they must properly store the prepared ingredients. The storage facilities it uses consist of the preparation table, refrigerator, and freezer.

Orders can be taken over the phone or by walk-ins. Orders over the phone are designated as pick-up or delivery. Deliveries are made upon special requests for catering. Walk-ins may dine inside the restaurant or they can make an order for take out. For dine-in, the dining staff caters to the customers through delivering food and taking care of drinks. Once the orders have been placed, the ingredients need to be gathered. The process used to gather ingredients is to select the items in the order from an assembly line fashion. After the all the ingredients are selected, the chef either fries or sautés the ingredients in woks. Hunan Wok also prepares batches of rice in a rice cooker and replenishes based on demand throughout the day. The frying processes for battered chicken dishes like General Taos Chicken, Sesame Chicken, and Orange Chicken are cooked in the fry boilers. For Sweet and Sour Chicken, egg rolls, and other appetizers,

Hunan Wok uses the deep fryer. In order to keep the temperature of the hot soups constant, a steam table is needed. Steam tables are commonly used in buffets; the sealed wells contain gas to heat water under the pan that holds the soups.

After the food has been prepared, it is placed in microwavable containers for main dishes. The traditional cardboard containers are used mainly for rice and plastic containers are used for soups. Finally, the finished food product is now ready for customers to pick-up for consumption or plated for dine-in customers. Fortune cookies are then distributed depending on the number of dishes that the customers ordered or requested.

Conclusion

The processes that Hunan Wok uses to prepare quality food for its customers have worked well for them since 1997. Just-in-time orders and also batch productions are used to maintain the quality and satisfaction of their customers. When customers order their meals, the chef starts those meals from scratch or just-in-time. While all rice, noodles, and soups are made before the restaurant opens, they are constantly replenished when needed throughout the day. To save the time of the orders being prepared, having the batches of already made food helps cut the waiting time. However, there is a large amount of excess unused food that must be thrown out at the end of the day. On the other hand, when using the just-in-time process the quality, freshness, and temperature of the food is guaranteed. The time that it takes to prepare the individual orders tend to extend the wait time for the customers, which could lower the satisfaction of their consumers. The balance between the two productions has lead Hunan Wok to a successful and smoothly run business.