

Build-out Guide

This document presents detailed information on the build-out of MealsMadeEasy's Meal Preparation Facility in Fort Collins, Colorado

This document should be used as a companion to the other Guides available from Easy Meal Prep

meals made easy ™



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Contents

About this guide3

A. How do I specify what I need? 4

B. What location should I choose? 8

C. How should I lay out the space I have available? 9

D. What Equipment should I purchase and where should I buy this? 10

E. How do I navigate the health and building departments approval process? 13

F. How do I manage the build-out process? 17

G. What additional build-out issues and questions have others faced? 20

Conclusion 21

Appendix A. Meals Made Easy Store Layout 22

Appendix B. Meals Made Easy Equipment List 23

Appendix C. Sample Prep Station Configurations 25

Appendix D. Annotated Store Photos 26

Appendix E. Additional Resources 27

About this guide

Jim and Lynda Byrnes Pelichowski started Meals Made Easy in Fort Collins, Colorado, in early 2003. Their business has gone through three distinct phases from a build-out standpoint:

- From June 2003 to November 2004 sessions were conducted in a rented catering kitchen in the evenings. This allowed the company to get started for a minimal investment to prove the concept and validate that there was a market.
- In December 2004 the company opened their own 1700 square foot store. Until June 2006 Meals Made Easy used stainless steel tables for doing the assembly. This reduced the initial investment required to open the store.
- Since July 2006 Meals Made Easy has been using refrigerated prep stations.

This guide was originally written in April 2005 when Meals Made Easy was using stainless steel tables. It is now being rewritten by Bert Vermeulen to include new information learned in the last 18 months. This new information includes (a) the experiences of Meals Made Easy, (b) questions and answers from the over 150 purchasers of this guide, and (c) things picked up from other industry participants.

This guide is structured to make it as easy as possible to find the key information you need in order to open a meal prep store, either in a part-time facility or in your own dedicated space. It is organized around the following commonly asked questions:

A. How do I specify what I need?

We discuss share/lease/own, kitchen strategy, and how to specify what you want.

B. What location should I choose?

We provide inputs on what has worked and not worked for others.

C. How do I lay out the space that I have available?

We describe how to approach the problem and provide some sample layouts.

D. What equipment should I purchase and where should I buy this?

We provide typical equipment lists, suppliers, and a costing template you can use.

E. How do I navigate the health department and building department approval process?

We give general rules, regional variations, and examples of what can happen.

F. How do I manage the build out process?

We describe the general process and provide a template you can use.

G. What additional build-out issues have others faced how have they addressed these?

We provide interesting “war stories” and how they were addressed.

The appendixes provide additional background material. For example, Appendix A gives a sample layout for the Meals Made Easy store (when it had stainless steel tables) that is to scale.