After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- Recall the names and roles of workstations in the traditional brigade.
- Recognize modern variations on the classical brigade.
- Explain how the kitchen interacts with other departments to satisfy guests.
- Summarize recent trends in foodservice to reduce labor.

The Brigade

Prior to the second half of the nineteenth century, most hotels were small inns. In the 1900s, classical cuisine was introduced to the professional kitchen at the same time very large grand hotels came into being. Grand hotels required grand kitchens. For the first time, chefs were preparing fine cuisine in commercial kitchens on a large scale. Fine cuisine requires a large number of trained cooks to perform a wide variety of tasks. Coordinating the efforts of so many workers in a large kitchen required structure and leadership. Armies and navies were experts at organizing large numbers of people to accomplish a central task. Chefs chose the military’s brigade system as a model. Large kitchen staffs became known as brigades because they were organized like the military. The brigade used a chain of command—each workstation had a leader and each leader reported to the head chef—to complete a task.
In the brigade system, similar tasks and products were assigned by station. Most modern kitchens don’t employ all the stations of a classical brigade. However, the traditional names are often used for specific jobs in the kitchen, 3-2.

A hierarchical organization typical of the traditional brigade is still used in many large kitchens, 3-3.

**Organization of Modern Kitchens**

One hundred years ago, larger staffs were needed to work kitchens than are needed today. Fewer cooks are needed to staff today’s smaller operations equipped with modern conveniences and more limited menus. Despite the reduced staff size, a chain of command and the organization of tasks by stations still exist.

**Brigade System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workstation Positions</th>
<th>Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chef de cuisine (chef deh kwih-ZEEN)</td>
<td>Chef de cuisine literally means “chief of the kitchen.” The chef supervises all the positions in the kitchen. He or she is responsible for the quality of the food and the safety of the guests and cooks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sous chef (SOO chef)</td>
<td>Sous means “under” in French. The sous chef is the second in command. In the absence of the chef, the sous chef assumes the authority and responsibility of the chef.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef de garde (chef deh GAHRD)</td>
<td>Chef de garde is the night chef. In a large operation that operates 24 hours a day, the chef de garde is in charge of the kitchen after the chef has left for the evening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chef de partie (chef deh pahr-TEE)</td>
<td>A chef de partie is the position in charge of any of the particular workstations in the kitchen. In American kitchens, the chef de partie may be called a station chef. The number of cooks working in each station varies with the size of the kitchen and scope of the menu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saucier (saw-see-YAY)</td>
<td>As the name of the position implies, the saucier is responsible for making sauces. The saucier also prepares any sautéed or panfried items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poissonier (pwiw-sawn-YAY)</td>
<td>Poisson is French for “fish,” therefore the poissonier is the fish cook. This position is responsible for the preparation of all fish and shellfish items. In many kitchens, the poissonier is not under the direction of the saucier, but is the head of his or her own workstation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garde manger (gahrd mohn-ZHAY)</td>
<td>The garde manger is in charge of the cold food station. This position makes salads, dressing, fruit plates, and many types of cold appetizers and buffet platters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>The butcher cuts and trims meats and poultry for other stations in the kitchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotisseur (roh-teess-UHR)</td>
<td>This position is charged with roasting meats and poultry and preparing pan sauces or gravies to accompany them. The rotitisseur also carves these roasted items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grill cook</td>
<td>All grilled and broiled meats, poultry, and fish are cooked by this staff member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fry cook</td>
<td>Deep-fried items are prepared and cooked by the fry cook. Since grilled items often have deep-fried garnishes, some kitchens combine the jobs of grill cook and fry cook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entremetier (ehn-treh-meh-tee YAY)</td>
<td>The entremetier oversees the preparation and cooking of vegetables, starchy, egg dishes, and hot appetizers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potager (poh-tahj-AY)</td>
<td>The potager makes all stocks, soups, and mother sauces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Légumier (lay-goo-mee-YAY)</td>
<td>The légumier prepares and cooks vegetables. In some kitchens, the tasks of the potager and légumier are combined and known as the preparation station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastry chef</td>
<td>The pastry chef is the head of the baking and pastry department. He or she oversees the work of specialists in that station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastry cook</td>
<td>Pastry cooks prepare primarily sweets and pastries. These cooks work in the bakeshop during the daytime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>The baker makes breads. Duties of a baker may also include breakfast pastries. Bakers typically work during the night and early morning hours so breads are fresh for the beginning of the workday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorator</td>
<td>Many bakeshops have a specialist who decorates cakes and pastries. The decorator also makes chocolate carvings or sugar sculptures for pastry displays. This job requires artistic ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tournant (toor-NAHN)</td>
<td>The tournant is also called the swing chef or roundsman. This position fills in for other staff members on their days off. A versatile and talented individual is required to perform a different job each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commis (koh MEE)</td>
<td>In addition to cooks, a department may also have one or more commis (koh MEE) or “assistants.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communard (corn-muh-NAHR)</td>
<td>In large operations, one person is assigned the task of preparing meals for the staff. This position is referred to as the communard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expeditor</td>
<td>In restaurants, the expeditor reads the servers’ food orders to the cooks. This position then organizes the finished dishes so servers can deliver them promptly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3-2 Continued.
54 Part 1 Introducing the Foodservice Industry

The Classical Brigade

A foodservice operation's menu is the most important factor for determining the staff size and organization of a kitchen. A seafood house requires a large fish station, grill stations, and fryer station. However, this operation may have no need for a rotisseur. On the other hand, a restaurant specializing in steaks and prime rib of beef will have large rotisseur and grill stations. This business may need little or no staff to prepare fish.

Many large hotels and resorts operate a number of restaurants. Each restaurant has its own chef de cuisine and brigade. The hotel or resort employs an executive chef to coordinate the operation of the restaurants and departments. Many of the duties of an executive chef are managerial. However, an executive chef must also be an excellent cook in order to oversee the work of other cooks and chefs. Successful executive chefs interact often with all members of their team and even periodically work alongside them.

Most hotels have a special department that prepares banquets or meals for large groups. This department is headed by the banquet chef. The banquet chef oversees a staff of cooks that prepare meals for large groups.

Cross Training

The traditional way of organizing work in kitchens created specialists. A cook performed one specific job and became expert at it. This narrow focus made very intricate food preparations possible. It also made labor hard to manage. What happens when the expert fish cook is out sick? Who works their position?

Cross training became popular because it solved this problem. Cross training teaches staff to do more than one job in the kitchen. Scheduling staff is easier when employees are cross trained. The chef has more flexibility in assigning jobs. If a cook is sick or quits, another employee can perform his or her job. Cross training also eases the boredom associated with performing the same task every day.

Some restaurants take the concept of cross training one step further. These businesses cross train employees to do all the jobs in the restaurant. This type of cross training has restaurant staff cooking, serving guests, or cashiering with equal ease.

Working with Departments Beyond the Kitchen

Foodservice operations in large restaurants, hotels, clubs, and resorts are complex. The kitchen must work with other departments to be successful. Efforts must be coordinated between the kitchen and the stewarding, dining room, catering, room service, and purchasing departments.

Stewarding

The stewarding department's primary task is sanitation. Warewashing—the cleaning of dishes, glasses, and serveware—is done by this department. They also wash pots and pans. This department is often responsible for cleaning the kitchen as well. In addition...
to cleaning, people who work in stewarding store, inventory, and transport serviceware. Because many tasks in the stewarding department require unskilled labor, its importance is often overlooked. Yet, this department is key to a good foodservice operation. Imagine a cook trying to serve a meal and there are no clean plates. Consider the impact of a kitchen being shut down by a health inspector due to poor sanitation. In all foodservice operations, cleanliness is crucial.

Dining Room

No matter how good food tastes, if not served properly the diner will not be satisfied. The kitchen works closely with the dining room to ensure that their carefully prepared food is served to the guest in a pleasing manner. Timing the cooking and serving of food is the most critical interaction between the kitchen and servers. If the food preparation takes too long or the food is cold, guests will be dissatisfied. Additionally, food must be served correctly and with a friendly attitude, 3-4.

Catering

In large operations that do banquet and catering, the sales staff and chefs must work closely to plan events. Chefs are consulted to create menus for large events. Communication between the sales, kitchen, and service staffs for large affairs is crucial to the success of catered events. During an event, banquet chefs consult often with the sales staff and servers to discuss timing of the meal service and special requests from guests.

Room Service

Larger hotels offer guests the option of dining in their rooms. Special staff is assigned to take room-service orders and serve them in guests’ rooms. The food is prepared in one of the hotel’s restaurants. In some cases, the hotel has a separate kitchen for room service. No matter where the food is prepared, good communication and timing between the kitchen and room-service staffs are essential to please room-service diners.

Purchasing

Many large operations have staff whose job is to purchase, receive, and store the food and supplies used by foodservice. The chef works closely with the purchasing staff to ensure the right products and correct quantities are being purchased. The staff issues food and supplies out of the storeroom to the cooks as needed.

Labor Saving Trends

The size of the kitchen staff needed to create fine cuisine in the 1900s is not in the budget of a modern kitchen. If the same number of staff were needed today, only the wealthy would be able to afford fine cuisine. Labor is one of the largest costs in the foodservice industry. The trend in foodservice is to reduce labor costs. Chefs have been successful using technology and prepared foods to control labor costs. This trend will undoubtedly continue.

Technology

Advances in the technology of foodservice equipment have made great labor savings in the commercial kitchen possible. Food processors and grinders allow one cook to do the chopping and pureeing that used to take many cooks to do by hand. Vegetable cutting machines eliminate many hours of knife work. Roll-in rack ovens allow one cook to load and remove hundreds of portions from the oven quickly and easily.

Some kitchens prepare entrées for the entire week and vacuum-pack them in special plastic bags. During service, one cook can reheat and plate meals that used to take several cooks to prepare.

Prepared Foods

Many prepared food products designed to decrease labor in the kitchen are available to chefs today. Though these products cost more than the basic ingredients needed to make the item, less labor is used. Labor can be one of the largest costs for a foodservice operation. The labor savings means lower cost. The labor savings is usually greater than the increased product cost. Prepared foods also contribute to product consistency. Some common labor-saving items in commercial kitchens include the following:

- Portion-controlled meats and fish
- Precut vegetables
- Prepared sauces and soups
- Powdered soup base and sauce mixes
- Frozen precooked meats and vegetables
- Ready-made breads and pastries

Culinary Trends

Vacuum packing has been used in commercial food production since the 1960s. Now sophisticated restaurant kitchens are using this method also known as sous vide (soo VEEED). Sous vide is a technique that combines fresh ingredients in vacuum-packed pouches. These pouches are then cooked for long periods of time at low temperatures. The pouches are then cooled and stored for future use. The vacuum packing seals in juices and the extremely slow cooking tenderizes the product. Sous vide is growing in popularity with chefs. It gives them freedom to prepare food to their specifications in advance and leave someone else in charge at service time. The end result is also very pleasing to diners as well. Due to the long, slow-cooking technique, special health and sanitary guidelines are often required.
Key Points

- The kitchen brigade creates a chain of leadership and responsibility.
- The professional kitchen is organized into workstations to keep similar jobs and food products together.
- The staffing and number of stations is determined by the menu and size of the business.
- Cross training teaches staff to do more than one job in the kitchen. This gives the chef flexibility in assigning tasks.
- The kitchen brigade relies on other departments in a foodservice operation, like stewarding and dining room staff.
- Chefs use technology and prepared food products to save labor and reduce kitchen staff.

In Review

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why did chefs use the military as a model for organizing the work in their kitchens?
2. What station takes charge of the kitchen in the absence of the chef?
3. List three responsibilities the saucier has.
4. Which station in the traditional brigade would perform the following tasks?
   A. Poach salmon filets.
   B. Portion a loin into steaks.
   C. Bake rye bread.
   D. Clarify a broth for soup.
   E. Cook dauphine potatoes.
   F. Fill cream puffs with whipped cream.

Thinking like a Chef

1. Compose. Some employees resist cross training. Write a persuasive paper to explain how cross training benefits them.
2. Consider. Managing labor cost is one of a chef’s most important responsibilities. If a chef based his staffing decisions only on saving labor cost, how might this impact his operation?
3. Assess. Identify equipment and food products that save labor hours in your kitchen at home.

Workplace Skills

You have been hired as the chef de cuisine for a large hotel kitchen. The manager who hired you told you there have been numerous customer complaints about long waits for meals, spotted glassware and flatware, and indifferent servers. What departments and positions would you meet with to resolve these issues? Explain.

Chef’s Math

By purchasing a commercial food processor, you will be able to reduce labor spent processing vegetables every day. The food processor costs $5,376. Currently, three cooks each work 8 hours per day at a rate of $10.50 per hour. Only one cook will be needed to work the food processor for 8 hours per day at $10.50 per hour. How many days will it take before the cost of the food processor is paid for in labor savings?

Chef’s Lab

Review a menu from your favorite restaurant. Based on the menu, create a plan outlining the workstations you would use to organize the kitchen staff.