**Wedding Catering Business Plan**

Executive Summary

Fressen Catering is a kosher catering company that serves the Philadelphia market. Fressen offers creative, colorful, and unusual food options for kosher as well as the traditional standbys. The service offerings are quite a change relative to the existing kosher catering market which is quite stagnant. Most people make the incorrect assumption that kosher food means ordinary, boring food. This assumption prevails throughout the Jewish community so there is not much demand for new offerings.

Fressen catering will inject new life into the kosher catering market, leveraging Chef Susan Cheflly’s culinary skills to develop creative new catering options. Susan’s advanced skills, industry insight, and a great market opportunity will allow Fressen Catering to reach profitability by month 11 and generate $395,000 in revenues for year three.

**1.1 Objectives**

The objectives for the first three years of operation include:

To create a service-based company whose primary goal is to exceed customer’s expectations.

To increase the number of client’s served by 20% per year through superior service.

To develop a sustainable start-up business.

To develop enough cash flow to pay all salaries as well as grow the business.

**1.2 Mission**

Fressen Catering’s mission is to provide the customer with the finest kosher catering. We exist to attract and maintain customers. When we adhere to this maxim, everything else will fall into place. Our services will exceed the expectations of our customers.

**1.3 Keys to Success**

The key to success is to meet and exceed the customer’s needs in terms of quality of food and excellence of service.

**Company Summary**

Fressen Catering, located in Philadelphia, PA will offer high-end kosher catering to the Philadelphia community. Fressen Catering will serve parties of 25-300 people with high-end kosher foods that are currently only available in New York City. Fressen Catering will offer a large menu repertoire, from traditional favorites to creative inventions. All of the food and drink items served will be done under strict supervision of the Orthodox Rabbinic authority.

Fressen will rent space for the office and kitchen in an industrial area of Philadelphia. Renting in the industrial area will significantly lower the cost. Since the space will be used for food production it is not relevant for the store front to be aesthetically pleasing, or in a nice neighborhood. Fressen Catering is forecasted to generate $395,000 in revenues for year three.

2.1 Start-up Summary

Fressen Catering will incur the following start-up costs:

Two commercial stoves with ovens.

Dishwasher.

Two sets of cookware.

Two sets of dishware.

One van with rolling racks built in (a rolling rack is a wheeled rolling cart system that is insulated for both hot and cold food).

Assorted serving trays and utensils, knives and cutting boards (two each).

Desk and chair.

Computer with printer, CD-RW, Microsoft Office, and QuickBooks Pro.

Copier and fax machine.

2.2 Company Ownership

Fressen Catering is a sole proprietorship owned by Susan Cheflly.

Services

Fressen Catering will provide Philadelphia with high quality kosher catering. The catering service will be for weddings, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, and other assorted parties.

Kashrut is a specific, ritual/set of rules that applies to certain sects of Judaism in regards to food/drink preparation and consumption. A kitchen or catering service must be specially set up to provide kosher meals. The explanation below regarding the prohibition of dairy and meat served together or made in the same kitchen by the same pots and utensils is the reason that Fressen Catering will require two sets of everything, including two stove top ranges and ovens.

The Hebrew word kosher means fit or proper as it relates to dietary (kosher) laws. It means that a given product is permitted and acceptable. The sources for the laws of kashruth are of Biblical origin and expounded in Rabbinic legislation. These laws are codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Code of Jewish Law). Though a hygienic benefit has been attributed to the observance of kashruth, the ultimate purpose and rationale is simply to conform to the Divine Will as expressed in the Torah.

Kosher and non-kosher meat, poultry and fish:

The Torah (Leviticus Chapter 11) lists the characteristics of permitted mammals and fish, and indicates the forbidden fowl. The only mammals permitted are those which chew their cud and are cloven hoofed.

The Torah does not list specific characteristics to distinguish permitted from forbidden birds. Instead, it details 24 forbidden species of fowl.

The Torah establishes two criteria in determining kosher fish. They must have fins and scales. All shellfish are prohibited. One, however, should not eat fish with meat.

Another element of Kosher meat consumption applies to the way in which the meat is slaughtered. There are several different methods:

Shechita. Only a trained kosher slaughterer (shochet) certified by rabbinic authorities is qualified to slaughter an animal. The trachea and esophagus of the animal are severed with a special sharp, perfectly smooth blade causing instantaneous death with no pain to the animal.

Bedika. After the animal has been properly slaughtered, a trained inspector (bodek) inspects the internal organs for any physical abnormalities that may render the animal non-kosher (treif).

Glatt Kosher. Some Jewish communities or people only eat of an animal that has been found to be free of all adhesions. “Glatt” means smooth, that the meat comes from an animal whose lungs have been found to be free of all adhesions. “Glatt Kosher” is used more broadly as a consumer phrase meaning kosher without question.

Koshering. The Torah forbids the eating of the blood of an animal. The two methods of extracting blood from meat are salting and broiling. Meat once ground cannot be made kosher, nor may meat be placed in hot water before it has been “koshered.”

Salting. The meat must first be soaked in salt. After the salting, the meat must be thoroughly soaked and washed to remove all salt.

Broiling. Liver may only be koshered through broiling, because of the preponderance of blood in it. Both the liver and meat must first be thoroughly washed to remove all surface blood. They are then salted slightly on all sides. Then they are broiled on a perforated grate over an open fire, drawing out the internal blood.

One of the main tenets is the prohibition of meat and dairy in the kitchen together. The Torah forbids cooking meat and milk together in any form, eating such cooked products, or deriving benefit from them. As a safeguard, the Rabbis extended this prohibition to disallow the eating of meat and dairy products at the same meal or preparing them on the same utensils. One must wait up to six hours after eating meat products before any dairy products may be eaten.

Fressen Catering will serve a wide variety of dishes. This is offered for two reasons.

The larger repertoire of menu items is a benefit to the customers.

A large selection is required because meat and dairy cannot be mixed within the meal, therefore, in essence you have to have two different menus, one with dairy and one with meat.

Some of the menu offerings will be traditional kosher/Jewish meals such as beef brisket with potatoes and vegetables and a roasted chicken with rice and spinach. More inventive meals will also be offered to appeal to the higher end, more discriminating customers such as chicken pesto dishes or a red pepper coulis sauce, or maybe salmon with curry coulis and plum chutney.

Kosher catering is not cheap. The ingredients cost more, as well as the additional equipment that is needed to eliminate the mixing of dairy and meat products. Per person costs range from $45-110.

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Market Analysis Summary

The Philadelphia kosher catering market is an interesting one. There are several caters that offer services that are quite similar to each other in terms of price and menu options. For whatever reasons, there has been little demand by consumers to get caters to innovate their menu. This is not too say that consumers would not welcome new kosher menu items, it is just that people have incorrectly made the assumption that kosher meals have to be boring. Fressen will occupy a niche in the kosher catering market that offers new, creative menu items, broadening people’s conception of kosher food. This market consists of two target segments that are differentiated by household income.

4.1 Market Segmentation

Fressen Catering has two distinct target populations:

Middle class kosher clients. This group of people does not have huge amounts of disposable income, recognizes that it is costly to sponsor a kosher dinner party, and is willing to incur the expenses, but will try to minimize them.

Upper class kosher clients. This group has intertwined kosher values throughout their lives and is willing to spend whatever it takes to throw a high-end kosher dinner function. Typically, this group is characterized by a wealthy one-income family where the male works and the female does not. The female of the household typically thoroughly enjoys the planning of these events.

4.2 Target Market Segment Strategy

The target market segment strategy will not be significantly different to address the two different groups. Both groups, regardless of income typically belong to the same group of religious congregations. Therefore, to reach the different groups does not require a distinctly different strategy. What differentiation it will require is different menu offerings needed to satisfy the different groups. The upper-end menu items are cost prohibitive for the middle class target segment.

4.3 Service Business Analysis

The kosher catering business in Philadelphia is fairly unique. At the low- to mid-price point of the cost spectrum, there are four other kosher caters. These caterers tend to serve the part of the market that must have kosher food served at an occasion due to religious beliefs, but struggle to able to afford the cost variance between standard and kosher catering. All four of these caters have fairly standard menu offerings. There is a fifth caterer that also serves the lower end of the market (defined as middle class) but serves the high end of the market as well. Although there is a large wealthy population in Philadelphia that follows the laws of kashrut, they have been underserved.

4.3.1 Competition and Buying Patterns

As stated in the previous section, there are four other kosher caterers that serve the low to middle end of the market. These caterers compete to some degree on cost (due to budget constraints of some clients), but more so on service. The quality and the serving of the food are the main areas of service that the caterers compete on.

There is one high-end caterer who will compete with Fressen. This caterer, while serving the upper-end market, does not provide its clients with upper-end service. This company is not a strong competitor because of their overpriced service offerings relative to the service provided, and its business has been declining over the last few years. Lastly, one competitor for the high-end market is kosher caterers from New York City. When cost is no object, there are many people that are willing to pay the additional cost of bringing in the caterer from NYC.

The buying habits of consumers of kosher catering is to some degree price sensitive at the middle end of the market. Between two different service providers, the middle class group will choose the service provider with the best services. However, cost is certainly an issue and some of the caterers are not even options because they are priced out of this consumer groups price range. The buying habits for the high end of the market is price insensitive. Choices are made by menu offerings, reputation, and attention to service.