

## NEW DESSERT PREP

*Improved Service and Consistency*



**Background:** An independent steakhouse chain had introduced a new dessert item called a “Skillet Cookie”. The product involved placing a scoop of chocolate chip cookie dough into a small skillet, baking it in the oven and then “dolloping” vanilla ice cream, whipped topping, chocolate syrup and slivered almonds before serving it warm to customers. Pre-made dough, refrigerated in advance, was placed in the skillet by cooks and baked in a convection oven.

**Problem:** The final product was inconsistent and took too long to cook – 8 minutes before toppings. Customers were frustrated with the wait time, which often doubled because the cookie was burned the first time and had to be prepared a second time. In a nutshell it was spoiling the customer’s experience.

**Sound Advice:** KECdesign visited the kitchen during peak serving time – dinner hour – to observe the food preparation process and to find a better solution to serve the product quickly and efficiently.

**After the visit the two key factors were uncovered:**

- The dessert was being prepared by cooks. This item could easily be prepared by the wait staff along with other “service items” such as salads and drinks.
- Because it was cooked by cooks, the dessert was being prepared in the same ovens as fish, potatoes, and all other baked items.

**Proven Solution:** KECdesign recommended preparing the dessert on a mini-conveyor oven on the pick-up side of the operation by wait staff instead of the main cook line by the chefs. This would let wait staff gauge prep time in relation to customer need. It also established product consistency, as the conveyor oven was set to cook and exit in 4 1/2 minutes – so the dessert never burned again.

Better yet, this simple solution gave the server complete control of a “service item” and cut the cook time in half. All of this translated into enhanced customer satisfaction and increased dessert sales volume.

**Unbeatable Price:** The price of the mini-conveyor oven was nominal compared to the cost of losing a customer over a foiled dessert. And the operational cost was less, because it utilized existing wait staff labor, instead of hiring additional kitchen staff to fix the problem.