



Street Food Opportunities for Youth Tutors and Trainers Guide



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Introduction

How to use this course?

This course is constructed on an open learning framework. That means that there's no set way that you have to go through the course material; you can choose any of the modules or chapters as you wish, depending of the interests of the learners. The syllabus of the SFOFY classroom course is divided into six different units called modules, each of them focusing on important aspects of the street food sector:

Module 1: *The Street Food Business*

Module 2: *Getting it right*

Module 3: *Making a profit*

Module 4: *Where should you trade?*

Module 5: *Financing your new Venture*

Module 6: *Promotion and marketing*

Module 7: *Equipment, Regulations & Staff*

What is the tutors guide?

This guide is a help for the tutor/trainer when teaching their students, suggesting how to use the content and materials in a structured way. The guide shows the aims, learning outcomes and how to use each module. It contains several hints for the tutor/trainer, enabling a diverse and interesting mix of teaching methods for this special target group. At the end there is a suggestion on how to assess the learning progress.

How can I use the PowerPoint presentation together with the tutors guide?

The PowerPoint presentation can be used together with the Tutor's Guide. This presentation gives the tutor/trainer a possibility to underline the most important facts and information using attractive pictures and other graphics. If it is your first time delivering the course, this is a good help for the tutor/trainer to structure his or her teaching process.

Module 1 - The Street Food Business

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Street food and mobile catering is a great industry to get into and can be very rewarding, but it will take a lot of hard work and dedication from you to make it so.• Starting a street food business isn't a way to make a quick fortune and will probably require sacrifices in some parts of your life if you want to do it as a career.
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learners are aware of what they need to know and expect before they begin with street food.• The learners learn what street food actually is all about, the advantages of getting into the industry, and the commitment, investment and sacrifices they'll have to make if they want to be successful over time.
Slides	??? - ???
Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let the learners make a desktop research about street food as a trend in their city/region/country. They should collect information about recent street food activities and how the media is reporting on the street food phenomena.• divide the learners into smaller groups (2-3 learners). Let them discuss and write down 5 positive and 5 negative things with street food on index cards. At the end all groups will present and discuss their results together in front of the others.
Review/Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play 1-2 videos with testimonials from the show case platform made by experienced street food vendors, focussing on the above mentioned traits. Hold a group discussion at the end.

The opportunity

Street Food in Europe is today a very important economic factor big business with new markets and trading groups spring up all over the place so why not get yourself a piece of the action, if your passionate about food and see yourself as an entrepreneur that is willing to work hard to create a lifestyle business for yourself than you will find this course the first step into your new life.

What is street food?

Undeniably the king of street food is **Asia**. Anyone who's ever been there can't help but notice the enormous amount of street food traders operating small, mobile stalls on every street corner. They sell an incredible array of food in every city, town and village across the continent. And the vast majority of is really fresh, tasty food. Cheap too.

The **USA** also has a significant street food environment, one which is changing rapidly due to the rise of the food truck scene.

Presumably you already know something about the burgeoning street food scene in **Europe** which is why you have chosen this course.

Although influenced by the Asian and American street food scenes, the European industry has come to represent something different.

To try to define street food? We could say that it's a movement towards restaurant quality food that's sold on the street by passionate vendors who care about the food they sell.

To define that even further we might say that street food is about great-tasting food that's of restaurant quality, isn't confined to any gastronomic or geographical boundaries. It's inexpensive but not cheap and made from high quality ingredients and, ideally, ethically sourced

But street food is about more than just the food itself. Yes, the food is absolutely critical, but anyone who's ever been to a street food market will know that it's about the whole experience, which is created by the passion that goes into making the food and the atmosphere in which the food is enjoyed.

The passionate, fun and friendly atmosphere that should surround a street food stall is the reason consumers seek out street food. It's this buzz that's influencing its rapid growth, as a fun alternative to high-priced restaurants and fast food chains.

At this stage it's probably beneficial to also point out that street food isn't buying food from a restaurant and eating it on the street or buying mass produced food that's simply cooked outdoors; it's a lot more than that.

The key ingredients of street food are:

Quality Food

Passionate vendors

The theatre of watching and smelling your meal being cooked

Enjoying eating it with others

How street food has evolved

Content slide 3: Potential street food customers have become more mobile and more and more interested in other food concepts and modern food culture. As a result, food business has become more cosmopolitan, which opens up for street food

Historically, street food has had a proud history in Europe but over time restaurants, and particularly fast food chains, took over and eating food purchased on the street became unfashionable.

The modern street food scene in Europe has been evolving since the early 2000's, having initially started in the USA. Then in the late 2000's financial difficulties hit Europe, with real **economic implications** for lots of people.

With less money to spend, consumers were looking for cheaper alternatives to traditional restaurants and fast food chains. Young entrepreneurs unable to invest in a traditional restaurant were looking for a way to start a food business, and street food as we now know it was born. Low start-up cost and risk coupled with low legal barriers to entry, particularly in the UK, spelled opportunity and consequently the trend has seen rapid growth.

What's more, the rise of low cost airlines has meant that people travel abroad more often now, and food choices have become more cosmopolitan. So foreign-inspired foods served with a smile or a cheery word are very attractive these days!

Social media plays a big part in the street food scene, informing customers 'where and what' traders have on offer on a particular day. It's hard to imagine the industry's explosive growth over the last few years without it.

Advantages of running a street food business

Advantage 1. It's anything but boring

Who wants a boring job? Probably not you! Well, in this industry you certainly won't be bored. You'll meet lots of different people from many different backgrounds. You could be operating in several different venues over a week. How does a night market Friday, a rock concert Saturday and a craft fair Sunday sound? Plus the days will go incredibly quickly.

Advantage 2. Low start-up costs

Street food offers a great way to be your own boss for just a few thousand pounds. You won't get a big fancy motorised trailer for that, but you can make a living. It keeps the industry fresh and new people bring new ideas to the market all the time.

Advantage 3. Happy customers

The satisfaction that you'll get from seeing customers really enjoying your food isn't something that you can really understand until you've experienced it. It's even better knowing that they've paid you for it, and better still when they genuinely thank you for your delicious food!

Advantage 4. It's cool & growing

The street food revolution is in full swing and it's not going anywhere. And it's cool. From converted VW camper vans to gazebos to decorated stalls, there's a new generation of vendors who have brought chic to the industry. New markets are springing up everywhere, and the public are loving it.

Advantage 5. Little experience is required

You don't need a degree or 10 years of experience to start a street food business. But that doesn't mean that everyone can do it. We always advise new mobile catering businesses to start operating at weekends and evenings, so you don't have to give up your day job until you know what you're doing!

Advantage 6. It's a springy spring board

We've known caterers who've set up and started trading on a couple of grand, and then gone on to build a fleet of vans worth hundreds of thousands, or restaurants which have turnovers in the tens of millions! It really is possible.

Advantage 7. Great profit margins

A typical gross profit margin in the mobile catering industry is 65-85%, and some are even as high as 95%! Few businesses offer those kind of margins, meaning you've got great potential to make a lot of money.

Home truths of running a street food business

Think about this question and answer honestly. Why do you want to start a street food business? Because you like cooking? Because you like food? Because it's cool? Or just because you need to make a living and you can't think of anything else?

Every year hundreds of street food catering business will start up around Europe. Of these only 1 in 5 will still be trading after a year.

Why? Because they met challenges that they weren't expecting during their start up. Before you go any further we're going to make you aware of a few home truths.

Truth 1. Operating a street food business is hard work, physically & mentally.

Are you prepared for hard graft? If you really are serious about working in the street food industry then you need to get used to the idea that hard work and long hours when everyone else is having fun are the order of the day. It's not as easy as it may look.

Truth 2 - You probably won't make as much money as you'd like (and you could lose some).

There's money to be made in street food but it's definitely not a get rich quick scheme. One of the great things about setting up a street food business is the minimal start-up costs, but on the flip side it's easy for others to also get started too. In other words you'll be facing growing competition and an endless battle to try to find ways to distinguish yourself from the rest.

If making large sums of cash is your core motivation then a street food business might not be the best avenue for you.

Truth 3 - It'll have a significant impact on your social life.

Operating any small business takes a significant amount of time investment and a street food business is no different. It can place a real strain on your time and social life, especially in the early days when you're juggling the pressures of finding work, preparing food at night, setting up, serving, taking down and then preparing for the next day.

Truth 4 - It'll be stressful.

Consider this very real scenario on the day of a big event that you've invested lots of money in:

- You oversleep your 5am alarm after a late night prepping
- Your van breaks down enroute
- The baker has baked the wrong bread
- You forget some equipment
- Your staff don't turn up
- Heavy rain keeps the customers away
- The customers that do turn up are really awkward
- You run out of ketchup but you can't go and get more
- You're on your feet all day, and you're tired

How will you cope with the inevitable challenges?

Are you the right person for the job?

Running a street food business definitely isn't for everyone, and requires certain skills and attributes. Here's 6 personality traits you'll need:

Trait 1. A passion for food

Having a passion for food is vital; you'll be preparing, cooking, eating, breathing and sleeping it.

Trait 2. Great people skills

When operating a street food business you'll need to be able to juggle all sorts of people who expect different things from you. Think suppliers who want you to spend with them, event organisers who want your cash, tricky customers and family and friends who are competing for your time and energy

It's also important to be aware that often customers aren't just buying your food, they're buying you and your personality too. So make it shine out through what you offer! You'll be working in the service industry so good customer service is very important.

Trait 3. A hard working, 'get-up-and-go' attitude

This business isn't a walk in the park; it requires a lot of discipline. For example you'll need to:

- Get up and work outside on cold, dark mornings
- Be enthusiastic about your food when it's raining
- Work late into the night preparing for the next day's job
- Call event organisers to find places to work
- Be proactive about promoting your business
- Be present and up to date on social media and advertising

Trait 4. Not a quitter

You'll need to overcome whatever setbacks come your way to succeed in this game. Can you handle it? Typical problems might include:

- Your vehicle getting stolen
- Your cooker breaking down the day before a big event
- Staff calling in sick the morning of an event

Trait 5. Financial awareness

You're operating a business, not a hobby. That means you need to know about finance to know whether you're making money or not. If you're losing money, you need to rethink what you're doing, how and where you're doing it. There's no mystery, all you have to do is get to a place where people want to buy food and then supply it to them.

Trait 6. Not afraid to stand out from the crowd

The best street food businesses are willing to stand out. You've got to make customers want your food more than other traders'; whether that's because your food is different, your unit is eye-catching or your personality draws people in. If you're not unique, you risk not being noticed.

Do's and don'ts to help you decide whether street food is for you

If we've started to make you think twice then we're achieving our goal! The last thing you should do is go into this industry with your eyes closed.

Opening a street food business is a major undertaking, and it's important to know all of the potential hardships and challenges before you start.

Here are a few do's and don'ts before you make the leap into your new career:



DO speak to existing traders.

DO get some experience working on a street food stall. Most traders will appreciate some extra help and you'll soon figure out whether or not you like it.

DO work out your finances to make sure you can afford it. Complete the activities in the Finance module and speak to an accountant.

DO speak to your family and friends; you'll probably need their help and support with your venture so make sure they're on board!

DO be honest with yourself about whether you have the skills and characteristics to succeed. There are various activities within the resources section to help you figure this out.

DO complete the Risk / Reward activity exercise. It's an excellent way to help you make a balanced decision.

DO seek out some external advice and talk to your accountant or business advisor.



DON'T presume that just because you love food you should work in the industry.

DON'T give up the day job until you've realised that this is something that you genuinely want to do. You might find that street food isn't for you and need to go back to your past employment, so don't go sending off any resignation letters full of expletives!

Module 2 - Getting it right

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concentrate on doing one type of food not lots of different ones.• Do something different from other people – this will help you stand out from the crowd• Some foods are best avoided due to risks or inability to make money• Invest in making your food taste AMAZING• Consider carefully the suppliers that you use.
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learners learn the key aspects of a good street food business which can survive over time in the industry.• The learners will have a good eye for food concepts which will and won't work.
Slides	??? - ???
Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let the learners look up one street food business on the internet. They should describe the food, brand story and the unit of the business. Ask for their opinion if the business has a good unique selling point.• Give an example and discuss the usp.
Review/Assessment	Divide the learners into two groups. Let one group draft a street food business which is good in their opinion. The other group drafts a business which is bad. At the end the groups present and explain their results.

In this module we're going to think about the right food for your business. In particular we'll look at how to come up with a great concept, how to create wow factor food and the foods you should avoid. Selecting suppliers will come up too.

Ingredients for a fantastic business

So you still want to go ahead and set up your own street food business? Great. Let's get down to the nitty gritty.

In the street food industry the general rule is that the more unique your concept is, the more jobs you'll get, and the more sales and profit you'll make.

But what is a concept?

It's the unique selling point (USP) that you want to build your business around, and it's what will make customers want to buy from you. In this industry it's made up of three things:

USP



1. Incredible food that customers want
2. A great brand story behind your business
3. A cool unit to sell your food from

Producing amazing food that your customers love and want to eat is an absolute necessity. If it's *really* good then you'll have people following you wherever you go and organisers will be begging you to work at their event. Your food will really have to stand out to reach this level.

Whether it's your Grandma's secret recipe, or something that you discovered in a mountain village in Nepal, a strong story behind your product will help establish your brand.

Having a great looking unit is important too. It helps traders to stand out from the crowd and secure more bookings than the average Joe. Does an event organiser really want *another* boring burger van or would they rather see a converted fire engine at their event? Of course, finance plays a big part here so don't worry, great tasting food is more important.

It doesn't matter if you don't start out with all three of these elements, you can always upgrade your unit later on after all.



How to choose food that sells

First and foremost, your food needs to be *very* tasty, different from everything else on the market and something that people will shell out for.

Food journalist and European Street Food Awards chief Richard Johnson recently said,

"Our lives have become very internal and when we do break away from our laptops, phones and tablets we want an authentic community experience - that's what street food can give us".

What does this tell you? The people who'll buy your food will want authenticity in every aspect of the street food experience. That means fresh, high quality ingredients as well as a friendly and very *real* atmosphere at your stall need to be the norm.

Basically you need to find a balance between traditional, low-risk menus that you know customers will want, and being as unique as you dare.

Improving a copy-cat concept might guarantee that you'll get custom, but you'll also have to accept the risk that you might not be able to get the best pitches. Could you put a great twist on something that's already popular?

On the side of the coin is coming up with a menu that no-one's ever heard of. If you're passionate about something and can make it great, it could take you far. In the long run it could guarantee loads of custom, but to get to that stage you're going to have to educate the public from scratch.

Bringing something completely new to the street food scene could take time and become really frustrating and costly; you're going to have to get people walking the street with free samples if you want to get noticed.

So you need to work out how you can be as unique *and* as low-risk as possible.

Don't be lured into thinking that doing a bit of everything is a great idea; if you can successfully be a master of ONE trade, customers will remember your brand and keep coming back. Don't make things confusing!

If you already know what you want to sell

We're guessing you've got an idea about what you want to sell. Are you sure? Have you done *all* the research? Well if you haven't all is not lost; the beauty of street food is that you can be flexible (and that's a good thing to remember when you're choosing your business name).

With your suggested product in mind, make sure you can answer these questions the right way, before you *really* start planning:



- Is there enough demand for the product?
- Can the product be scaled up to large volumes?
- Could there be a lot of waste?
- Does the menu have all-day appeal? Will it be popular at breakfast, lunch and dinner times?
- Is it different enough to get you onto great pitches?
- Is it *too* different? (By the way, did you know that Churros was a complete flop in the UK when a major company first tried to introduce it 10 years ago?)

If you don't know what to sell

If you haven't got a clue where to begin, ask yourself these questions.

- What's popular in my area?
- What's lacking in my area?
- What am I good at making?

You can never do enough market research. First, check out what other traders are selling in your area. Do you think you could make similar dishes but better? Could you introduce a unique twist?

Next, see what's popular in other places, and take notes and photographs wherever you go. Street food is thriving in London so it can be a great place to start. Just bear in mind that something that works in one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world won't necessarily work in another part of the country.

Are any popular foods missing in your area? If you think that local customers seem receptive to new ideas and different foods, there could be a great market for bringing something completely new to the table.

Do you have a secret specialty? If you think it will be popular with customers and it's something that you really know how to do well, why not go for it?! Selling something you like to make and *love* to eat will put you in a great position for chatting to customers about the dishes.

Did your great granny hand down a secret samosa recipe? Creating dishes from your heritage will bring passion to your cooking and authenticity to your menu, and that will go a long way with your customers.

How to make your food different

The most important element of street food is, of course, the food itself. And making your food unique is vital. That doesn't mean you need to invent a brand new type of food, although if you can that could be great! What most street foodies do is make small variations to traditional menus.

They'll add sauces or toppings that they've invented themselves, or use different ingredients that are twists on the original or bring unfashionable foods back in.

So where can you find inspiration to make your food a little bit different and give it a real WOW factor? Here's a few pointers:

- Check out the current market trends by watching TV chefs.
- Visit as many street food events as you can and make notes on the most popular foods, and think about the improvements you could make.
- Go travelling. The world is a big place and has different flavours in every corner.
- Make some dishes in your own kitchen, and invite your family and friends to taste test them. Don't stop developing your food until it tastes amazing.
- Ask your customers for feedback, and don't take negative feedback personally. How else will you know where to improve?

Foods to avoid

Once you've chosen your cuisine, you'll want to work out a menu and source your ingredients. You can save time, money and worry through the selection of your ingredients, so be careful to avoid the following:

- Dishes with lengthy preparation times
- Dishes that are extremely labour intensive
- Ingredients with a short shelf life
- Poor quality ingredients
- High risk ingredients

Street food customers want great food without having to wait too long. So trying to sell dishes that take 20 minutes to prepare is unlikely to get you much business.

Your speciality might be something that you make at the beginning of the day, keep hot and 'plate up' as soon as the customer orders it, like paella or risotto. If this is the case, leave yourself enough time to thoroughly cook your dish and make it delicious, *before* you start selling!

Hundreds of ingredients might give your dishes intense flavour, but you might be able to achieve the same thing with much fewer elements.

Perfect the art of making incredible food with as few ingredients as possible to cut buying costs and preparation times.

This is especially important while you're setting up your business as you have very little way of gauging how much you are going to sell.

Purchase high quality ingredients wherever possible. Consumers love the authentic experience that street food exudes, which means food that doesn't taste like it's come out of a tin!

It's best to save yourself as much trouble as possible in terms of foodborne illnesses and environmental contamination. Wherever possible avoid high risk ingredients, like raw fish and shellfish. They're more likely to give your customers food poisoning. If you do you high risk foods, promise yourself that you'll always be extremely careful.

Selecting suppliers

This is easy, right? Wrong!

We've said it already, street food is about high quality dishes. If you want to produce real quality food, you need to start with good quality ingredients. Without that you don't stand a chance.

A huge issue that street food traders and customers are both concerned with is sustainability. It's really important that you consider using local produce and sourcing ethical and organic alternatives. In this industry you're really looking to avoid cheaper catering standards that you might find at a cash and carry warehouse

When selecting your suppliers it's also important that you consider traceability, because it's a big deal if things go wrong. You need to be able to prove where, when and how you bought your supplies. You also need to show that you've taken care to use suppliers who put every effort into supplying goods that are free from contamination. It all ties in with your due diligence, which will be your only defence if you ever have to go before the law (we hope not!). Essentially, cheapest isn't necessarily best. It's better, and much safer, to pay a little more to get the right product with the right provenance.

Module 3 – Making a profit

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good understanding of your potential costs and what price you will need to charge is essential to make a profit • Direct costs are the costs that are completely attributed to the production of the dish • Indirect costs are all of the other costs associated with running your business • Different products have different gross product margins
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learners learn the essential key words when it comes to making a profit • They will learn to calculate the true costs and have a profit margin which makes them viable
Slides	??? - ???
Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the learners calculate the gross profit margin for their product. • Let them discuss and explain the two case studies
Review/Assessment	Let the learners present and explain their product and why it is good to achieve a healthy profit.

Before you start your business; it makes sense to get an idea of whether it will make any money, or what will need to happen to make money, otherwise there won't be much point in starting. This means having a good understanding of your potential costs and what price you will need to charge.

Many food businesses make strong sales but still fail because there wasn't enough profit margin to make them viable, because they didn't understand the true costs of what they were doing.

For this reason, having a keen understanding of your costs, your portion sizes and your profit margins will be essential.

Costing A Menu to make a profit

In order to understand whether your business will be profitable you need to cost your menu effectively. This means that you must make enough profit margin for selling your product to make it viable.

Let's explain some key terms you need to be familiar with.

Gross Profit: this is the profit a company makes after subtracting the costs that are associated with selling the product.

Gross Profit Margin: shows the percentage of revenue after the costs associated with selling the product is subtracted. In short, the higher this percentage, the more efficient you are generating profit for every Euro of cost involved.

How to calculate the above:

Gross profit (GP) = Sale price – cost of ingredients (Direct costs) is the difference between the sale price and the cost of ingredients.

Gross profit margin (GP%) = sale price – (minus) cost of ingredients divided by the sales price.

Gross profit margin is a key measure of profitability.

In order to be successful, a food business needs to make about 65-70% Gross profit margin, meaning that food costs can't be more than 30-35% of the cost of the dish sold. This is because when other costs are accounted for a GP margin of less than 65% will make it difficult to actually make a profit.

So, for example if you are selling a dish for 10 Euros, the most it should cost you to produce is 3.50 euros, ideally closer to 3 euros. Any more than that and you're doing a lot of hard work for no profit – and selling more won't necessarily help!

A high GP% does not necessarily mean a high GP. You may sell a cup of coffee with a 95% GP percentage for 2 euros. But a pasta dish sold for 8 euros but costing 2 euros has a GP of 6 euros but a GP percentage of 75%. So, the pasta has a higher GP but the coffee a higher GP margin.

Working out your costs

Direct Costs

Direct costs are the costs that are completely attributed to the production of the dish. This includes the cost of the food or the raw ingredients, even down to the seasoning, the oil used etc to produce that dish. It therefore also needs to take into consideration portion size and potential wastage. Portion control is a key part of menu planning and costing. Too much of anything added to the dish will affect the GP of that dish and you may see your GP dropping below the required 65%.

In restaurants, some dishes may have a higher GP than other dishes, but the food business is likely to look for these disparities to even themselves out with other offerings they can serve from their menu. For street food where there are likely to be far less dishes on the menu, the opportunity for this approach is reduced. Street food businesses therefore need to hit their required GP figure on most if not all dishes.

The cost of produce will change, and you may need to be flexible with your dishes, portion sizes and your sourcing to ensure the right level of GP is achieved.

Case Study: American Airlines.

This example has gone down in business folk lore, however, in 1987 American Airlines calculated that it could save \$40,000 per year by removing just one olive from their salads in their first class service and their customers wouldn't notice or mind.

Understanding where your costs come from and being precise and consistent with portion control can enable you to run a profitable business.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are pretty much all of the other costs associated with running your business. These are the costs that are not directly related to the specific dish you are selling. Although these costs cannot be easily traced back to the dish, they are vital to managing your profits. These costs include; staffing, pitch fees, vehicles and transport, equipment's, insurance, all of these make up your indirect costs and must be built into your overall costs when working out your pricing.

At music festivals and events, you will often see food for sale at a higher price than your local takeaway, however, this is most likely because the pitch fee to work at the event has pushed up the indirect costs of producing and selling the food and this is reflected in a higher price. The cost of producing the food is greater and therefore the sales price will have to increase to maintain the profitability of the business.

Case Study: Low Emission Zone

In February 2008 a low emission zone was introduced in London to combat traffic congestion and poor air quality in the city. People and businesses would be charged a fee to drive within certain parts of the city.

For mobile food businesses with older vehicles this would mean a daily charge of £100 to drive in much of the city.

This would have pushed up the indirect costs of operating the business significantly. Many of London's street food traders upgraded their vans and other vehicles – which would also have counted as an indirect cost.

Keeping an eye on the costs associated with operating your business is critical to ensure ongoing profitability.

Pricing your whole dish

Products such as vegetables, legumes, pasta, rice and bread are all relatively inexpensive and as such can command higher GP%'s. Seafood and meat can be relatively more expensive and tend to have lower GP%.

Seafood and meat also tend to have a shorter shelf life and as such can add expensive waste to your direct costs.

Getting the right balance of higher and lower GP% products in your dish and on your menu can aid profitability.

Quick tips to achieving a healthy profit:

- Buying in bulk – often when you buy large quantities or negotiate with suppliers, the price per ingredient is reduced and therefore increases your margin. This ideal for non-perishable ingredients.
- Reduce waste – Don't buy excessive stock. If your ingredients are likely to decay or go bad quickly, you will likely have to throw them away. Throwing food away, is the same as throwing money away. You should also consider safe storage options, so that you are not left with too much waste. If your portions are too large and you see your customers throwing away food, consider balancing your portion sizes.
- Indirect costs – pay for what you need, for example only hire staff that you need for the shift. Don't overstaff.
- Pricing strategy – Know your figures. Learn your breakeven costs so that you know how low you can go in pricing your dish to cover your costs should you need to shift your remaining portions towards the end of the day, or should you face yourself in a price competitive market. If you price below your breakeven price, you *will* be making a loss.

Achieving a satisfactory gross profit percentage on your products is essential for business success. This means understanding your costs, analysing and reviewing your pricing, ingredients and indirect costs, as well as managing the portion size and waste are key components of a successful street food business

Module 4 - Where should you trade?

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are lots of different places that you can work; your target market will determine the one that's right for you. Avoid the big shows to begin with; at this stage it's just too risky and stressful to try to tackle them. Getting on the right shows will take a lot of time and hard work when you're starting out. Be very careful when tendering and don't be naïve to the possibility of fraudulent event organisers.
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learners learn about the many different places where they can trade. They will know the advantages and disadvantages of the different locations. The learners will know how to best secure a pitch and how to recognize fraudulent event organizers.
Slides	??? - ???
Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learners want to book a location for their unit. Let them look up one possible venue. They should collect all necessary information and present them to the group.
Review/Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the learner discuss the venues they have found for their unit. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the specific locations

There are loads of places you could take your business as a street food vendor. That's the beauty of working from a mobile unit rather than a bricks and mortar establishment.

Where do street foodies work?

Only *you* can decide which of the various street food locations will be best depending on your food, your lifestyle and where you see the business going in the future. Starting with small local, events is a much better way to do it.



Consider these questions when considering where you should work:

- Will I find my target market there?
- Will I sell enough to make the pitch worthwhile?
- Do I have enough equipment and experience to operate at this event successfully?

Your food and your venue have to be harmonious; if they don't you'll never have a sustainable business.

You're not going to make money if:

- your prices are too high or low
- if people aren't passing your stall
- if your food hasn't got kerb appeal

During the start-up phase of your business it's unlikely that you'll need a huge amount of equipment. We'd actually discourage having lots of equipment. Keep it simple to begin with; good equipment is expensive and heavy.

And if you're not yet physically or mentally equipped to deal with long queues of customers, you're risking letting lots of people down and damaging your reputation.

Markets (that includes street food markets)

Street markets are undergoing a renaissance in many towns and cities around Europe. London, Sheffield, Leeds and several other cities all have a lively street market culture and offer fantastic food stalls for you to take inspiration from.

Unfortunately pitches in popular street markets like these can be rather hard to come by; they're expensive and highly sought after. So you'd probably need a bit of luck, perseverance and some great haggling to secure a pitch at a reasonable price. But if you *can* get onto one, street food markets are a great place to start. That's because you're with other traders who have similar passions and who will hopefully attract lots of customers for you to share. Street food markets are often run by groups of caterers, as a 'cooperative' or a 'collective'.

Town centres

Street trading in town centres is one of the hardest ways to make your business concept a reality. As you would expect, it's controlled very strictly.

The method of control is usually by way of a licence which is issued by the local authority or council, they are usually hard to get as they are very limited, it's really important that you check with your local authority that you have all the right licences or permissions in place *before* you start trading.

Many street food traders or groups of street food traders have managed to convince councils to give out licences on the basis of regenerating an area. So if you find the right place, why not try talking to a local councillor or official?

Shows, events & festivals

Shows can be very profitable. The larger ones are normally well advertised and well attended, but the small local shows can be just as profitable, or even more! Smaller shows are likely to be closer to home, and site rents are often cheaper which means the job carries less risk.

Here are some hints and tips for working at shows, events and festivals:

- Event organisers often expect higher crowds than actually turn up, so try to talk to someone who's traded there in the past before you pay a hefty deposit.
- Working at smaller events with lower rents can be more profitable than larger ones.



- Remember the weather can cause even the public to not come.
- You need experienced staff and a p system that works to make good money.
- The selling time at most shows can be surprisingly short. You have to maximise the amount of product over the counter during that window.
- Getting the organiser to work on a percentage of takings rather than a fixed rent is a lot safer. You need to be honest about your takings, or you will not get asked back.

Private functions

Catering for private functions like weddings, birthdays and parties is a great way for many street food caterers to supplement their regular income. Some traders have actually moved away from the more traditional street food environment into this area of work.

Private functions are relatively risk-free because you get paid up front, you don't have to compete for customers, staff don't have to handle cash and the work isn't seasonal.

To specialise in private functions you'd need a business model that can cope with volume. 100-300 wedding guests aren't going to want to hang around all night waiting to be fed, and a corporate client will be even less patient. The typical street food businesses that work at private functions are hog roasts, BBQ's, pizza etc.

The key to obtaining private functions is great tasting food, a good looking unit and great marketing to make people aware that you are available to hire.

How to get the best jobs

We asked 100 event and market organisers how they secured caterers for an event.

- 52% reused caterers they'd used before
- 27% used caterers recommended to them
- 17% were contacted by the caterer
- 4% actively searched for a caterer

What can we learn from these statistics?

The fact that 96% of organisers did next to no work to secure caterers means you can't expect organisers to come banging on your door just because your website looks nice.

17% of organisers accepted caterers who contacted them. In this industry, jobs don't just fall into your lap. There's nothing wrong with showing that you're keen so don't shy away from making a phone call or two (or several hundred!).

A whopping 79% used previous experiences to influence their decision. That means that if you do a good job the first time around, an organiser will be more inclined to want you at their future events. If you've got a smile on your face and you're keeping customers happy, you're less forgettable.

Essentially, market and event organisers want to keep their attendees happy. And attendees are usually happy when they can find a wide range of great quality food at reasonable prices. Organisers also want to make a great profit with as little stress as possible

So how should this affect the way you work at an event?

You need to make your menu stand out, and resist the temptation to overprice your dishes. Delivering a high standard menu and service with a smile is going to put you in a better position to be asked to trade at future events.

How should you go about securing a pitch? Here are four tips.

1. A **friendly phone call** to an organiser well in advance of the event can do wonders. It's an opportunity to **outline your business** and menu. It doesn't hurt to ring a few days before an event if you're free too; you might just be able to take advantage of a **late cancellation**.
2. **Email** organisers with your contact details and links to your **website** and Facebook page. Some great **quality photos** that showcase your menu and your passion won't go amiss either!
3. Offer to **demonstrate** your menu. Why not show them that you're **keen** and **hard working** by offering to take your unit to them to give them a taste of your products?
4. Be the friendliest trader at every event you work. Ask satisfied customers for **testimonials** so you can show organisers that it's not just you who thinks you're great!

Fraudulent events - how to spot them

A fraudulent event is one which is never actually going to take place, but everything is set up as though it will happen. Sadly traders get taken in by this scam every year.

How can you spot them?

Find out if the event has taken place before; fraudulent events are nearly always new. You should also find out whether the venue is aware of the event. Why not give them a call? They should be able to tell you what stage of planning the event is at, as well as expected attendee numbers. Be very wary if those numbers differ from the ones the organiser has given you.

Most events are licensed by the local government. They should be able to tell you whether they have granted a license or if one is pending. They should also be able to tell you how many people the event is licensed for.

You should also check to see if they are a legitimate business. Be cautious about any company that has only recently been set up, or is yet to file accounts.

If you don't get a contract specifying the terms of the deal with the organiser, you'll find it difficult to take legal recourse.

Module 5 - Financing your new Venture

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financing your new venture can be complicated and worrying .• Keep a clear head and be confident in your business concept to succeed.• Self-fund it if you can without taking any debt.• The second best option is to borrow from family and friends.
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learners are aware of what they should take into account when they raise finance for their business.• They will know different sources to raise money and the prevailing pros and cons.
Slides	??? - ???
Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let the learners make and present a detailed calculation of costs for their business. Use the Street food calculator!
Review/Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the learners what their very first idea was to finance their business. Has the idea changed after doing module 1 to 4? If yes let them explain what and why. Reflection is good!

Raising finance for start-up requires careful planning. You need to decide:

- How much finance is required?
- When and how long the finance is needed for?
- What security (if any) can be provided?
- Whether you are prepared to give up some control (ownership) of the start-up in return for investment?

The finance needs of a start-up should take account of these key areas:

Set-up costs

These are costs that are incurred before the business starts to trade and would include such things as:

Fixed assets that the business needs before it can begin to trade

- Catering equipment
- Stall, gazebo or motorised vehicle
- Uniforms
- Insurance
- Licenses
- Business cards and signage
- Miscellaneous items / contingency (at least 10% of the total of the above)

Working capital

Ongoing costs to keep the business running

- Stock
- Disposables
- Wages to staff

- Owners drawings
- Training of staff
- Advertising / marketing
- Professional membership
- Print post stationary
- Phones
- Accountancy / bookkeeping

What you will need to have in place before you start looking for finance

It can be difficult to raise finance to start up a new as lenders are easily put off by the risk.

Depending on the amount you need to borrow and the term and the businesses ability to repay finance there are many different options, some are short term and must be paid back within a year. Other sources of finance are long term and can be paid back over many years.

Funds can also be raised from different types of source as follows:

Self-funding

The simplest option is to start by using your own savings, investments and assets.

Pros

- You get all the profits and retain control of the business.
- You don't have any interest repayments or loan charges, unless you've decided to re- mortgage your home.

Cons

- You might not have anything to fall back on if your business hits hard times.
- If you decide to re mortgage your home, it could be at risk if you don't keep up repayments

Bank loan

Just like any other loan, you pay back a certain amount each month, with interest, for a set period of time.

Pros

- A repayment schedule means you can forward-plan your finances.
- You don't give up equity in your business.

Cons

- Banks can be reluctant to loan money to young businesses with short business track record. In fact, business lending by banks has dropped generally in recent years.
- Interest rates can be high.
- It's likely that you will have to put up 30-50% of the money yourself.
- You may be asked to guarantee the loan by using your personal assets such as a home, so if the business fails you could lose your home

Leasing Equipment

A lease is in essence an extended rental agreement under which the owner of the equipment allows the user to operate or otherwise make use of the equipment in exchange for periodic payments

Pros

- You get the use of the equipment without ever owning it, usually for a fixed period contract

Cons

- You never own the equipment and the lessor will expect the goods returned in the state they were supplied less a small amount of wear and tear, so if the goods have been in any way damaged you can face large repair bills

Hire / Rental

Equipment rental, also called plant hire in some countries, is a service industry providing machinery, equipment and tools of all kinds and sizes

Pros

- There is no long term commitment and you can usually return the goods on very short notice

Cons

- There is no asset value on the balance sheet

Grants

Grants from charities or the government to help businesses get started, especially in areas of high unemployment. It is extremely unlikely that you will find a funding body to cover all the costs, but every little helps.

Pros

- The money does not have to be paid back.
- You retain control of your business.

Cons

- The application process can be a long, arduous process, taking up a lot of your time.
- The money will usually only cover a small proportion of your costs.

Crowd funding

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising monetary contributions from a large number of people, today often performed via Internet-mediated registries, but the concept can also be executed through mail-order subscriptions, benefit events, and other methods.

Pros

- You do not have to give away equity in your business or intellectual property rights.
- You can take advantage of your backer's social media clout to help spread the word about your new project and reach new customers.
- You can get feedback early-on in the innovation process through the comments section of your projects and on updates.
- Backers and pledges can be used a validation of

Cons

- You must invest time and money in creating an attractive project page, and make a compelling video.
- You must pay taxes on any pledges that are not donations and that are not used in the creation of the rewards for backers. This is because you must invest most of the money in fulfilling the rewards that you promised backers.
- You risk the chance of having your product or

- your target market. This is data you can bring to angel investors or venture capitalists for future investment.
- idea ripped off.
- You must spend time marketing the project, reaching out to reporters, and being attentive to backers.
- You risk embarrassment if you fail.

Friends and family

This is a cost-effective way to get finance. Decide between you whether the money is a simple loan, or if you give over part of your business in return. Then draw up a formal agreement to protect against any disagreements down the line.

Pros

- Family and friends are more likely to support your idea.
- The terms and conditions are usually better than those offered by a bank.

Cons

- It could potentially put relationships to the test

Module 6 - Promotion and marketing

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Branding is essential for your street food business.• The right promotional strategy for you will depend on where you are planning to operate.• Amazing food and great service will encourage organic word of mouth marketing.• A website and a presence on social media is pinnacle to engaging with customers.
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learners will learn what branding is and how they can develop a good story for their business.• At the end of this lesson they will also know about different promotion methods and when to use them.
Slides	??? - ???
Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show the Learners a good food truck example. Let them tell a story which matches the business in their opinion.• Let the learners make an Instagram post with a picture, a short description and a few hashtags.
Review/Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show different examples of good and bad promotion. Let the group discuss which ones are good and which ones are bad.

The way you promote your business brand can make a huge difference to your success. And it can be a lot of fun too.

In this module we'll go through:

- What branding is
- Choosing a name
- Branding your business
- Developing your story
- The right promotion for your business
- Websites
- Word of mouth marketing
- Blogging
- Social media
- Public Relations
- Leaflets and brochures
- Special offers

Branding - What you need to know

Branding is the process of **creating the character** of your business for **consumers to connect with** in different ways. Consumers will recognise your brand when they can identify various aspects of its **design** that represent your street food business.

Branding is about creating a **unique and recognisable identity** for your company.

- It allows you to easily communicate a message about you and your food
- It creates a way for customers to recognise and relate to you
- It helps to differentiate you from other traders
- It creates value and allows you to charge more

Your brand is **built through every avenue of communication** between your business and your customers, including:

- Your name
- Your design; that includes your logo, colour scheme, fonts, tone of voice and image
- Your trading unit
- Your food & presentation
- Your online presence
- Your marketing materials

When you're creating your brand, you should consider 4 things: target market, the food, your tone of voice and your likes and dislikes.

Who will you be selling to? If your plan is to focus on festivals, what kind of people will be there? Planning to trade in city centres? Who's likely to be coming to your stall? It's no good having a 'fine dining' brand unless it suits your audience; the same goes for 'urban' and 'edgy' brands.

Take a look at your menu; it might sound obvious, but your food's country of origin could be great inspiration for your design, and would certainly seem appropriate. Vibrant block colours such as green, red and yellow will probably suit a Caribbean street food business, but it wouldn't necessarily suit a fish & chips unit!

Tone of voice is about the *way* you words to express the people behind your brand. Your tone of voice must be consistent across every single one of your marketing platforms to help consumers to recognise you. The types of words you use, the lengths of your sentences and your level of formality will all be determined by your business's organic tone of voice.

What are you passionate about? What colours do you love? Street food is a personal industry, because it's all about getting to know your customers. So there's no reason not to showcase your feelings and beliefs through your brand! If you don't like something, a colour or an image, don't use it. If you're dissatisfied with your brand you might subconsciously dilute it which can be confusing for customers.

Here are 3 tips for branding your business:

1. Create a 'mood board'; you'll soon see a pattern that you can draw inspiration from.
2. Be as informal as you dare; a big part of the street food industry is building a relationship and having a laugh with your customers. Don't confuse them with overly formal content!
3. If you just haven't got a clue and you can afford to employ a designer, do it! Professionals will be able to interpret your inspiration and create something original for you to use across your business.

Choosing a name

It can be tricky but getting your business name right is really important; it's an opportunity for you to **capture the essence** of what your business is about.

The name is probably going to be the **first point of contact** between you and your customer, so don't let it put them off! They're more likely to remember something short and simple, so wrack your brains for something catchy!

These handy tips should help you pick a name:

- Choose a name that's **catchy** and relatively **short**
- Make sure that it's **consistent with your brand** identity
- Puns only work when they're **easily understood** by *everyone*
- Be **unique** - ripping off another trader's name won't win you any brownie points
- **Rhyming** names can be **fun** and easy to remember
- Alluding to your **cuisine** can help to define your business
- Ask your **friends and family** for their honest opinions
- **Avoid** sensitive or offensive terms
- Conduct a **business name search** before you register the name
- If you go for something food-specific like 'Paella World', don't stop serving paella!

Here are a few of our favourite street food names for inspiration:

- Hardcore Prawn
- Jamon Jamon
- Bhudda Belly
- Tongue 'N Cheek
- Mamma Wang's
- Bean & Gone
- What the Dickens

Branding your unit

The way customers perceive your unit will have significant impact on your profits.

Put yourself in their shoes. If there are ten units on a site, which one will they go to first: the unbranded, plain white gazebo, or the colourful and kooky truck that showcases the food on sale?

Don't worry; you don't have to spend a fortune to make your unit look amazing. Some of the best are done up at minimal cost and convey the brand perfectly.

When you come to decorate your unit, make sure that you maintain your brand throughout your unit, incorporating your logo, colours and font style. You need to get your unit sign written in a way that reflects your brand and, if you're operating from a gazebo, at least have a banner at the front of your stall; they're inexpensive but invaluable. Get your sign up as high as possible so potential customers can see you in big crowds and make the name of your business obvious; it's what customers are most likely to remember, apart from the food, of course.

Branding your menu

It might seem odd to think about branding your food, but it's a common part of the business.

Would you walk into McDonald's and ask for "a burger with 2 patties, 3 bits of bread, cheese, lettuce and that 'unknown' dressing"? No, you'd ask for a Big Mac.

And you should brand your dishes too. It gives you an opportunity to distinguish your food from competitors', even if the dishes themselves are pretty similar.

Just be careful to come up with names that are consistent with your brand. If your brand has a Mexican vibe, why not use recognisable Mexican names for your dishes, like 'The Famous Flaming Fajita'?

If you're really taken with a name that doesn't clearly communicate the ingredients, provide a written description below. That way you can avoid spending loads of time explaining the dish to every customer.

Menu board descriptions give you scope for getting more creative and fun with the names of your dishes too. Customers won't worry about what they're getting and will enjoy requesting dishes with quirky names from your menu.

Here are some handy hints for branding your menu:

- Give each different item on your menu a name, without giving your customers too much to choose from (you've got to be able to make their dish quickly!).
- Make sure that your customers know what they're ordering (either through the name or a decent description).
- Make the names consistent with your brand.
- Try to allude to a story about each dish through its name.
- If a customer can't pronounce a word on your menu, they might shy away from asking you for it.
- Place names can give customers a sense of what to expect (e.g. 'Hawaiian' implies there's pineapple inside).
- Rhymes and puns can add a bit of fun to your menu.

Developing your story

Cultivating relationships with customers is really important in the street food industry. They're more likely to return if they know that they'll have a laugh with you, and get some great food.

Developing the story of your brand is a **powerful tool** in building customer relationships. Without a personal story, you're just another food seller.

As the foundation of your brand, your story will give you **value** and will help to persuade customers to eat your food. You can use it to lay down **your vision and mission** in the street food industry.

What should your story be made up of? It probably should include any of the following:

- How and why your business started
- Where your passion for your food came from
- How your food can affect people
- How you choose your ingredients; are they ethical or organic?

- The history of your ingredients; how they are grown
- The history of your recipes (really great if they've been passed down through your family!)

You should put your story everywhere! Get it on your **website**, in **leaflets** and *talk about* it to customers.

Your story should be at the core of your brand so will inevitably seep into all aspects of your marketing; **online**, in **print**, in your **design** and in your **food**. It should be as **authentic** as possible, you want your customers to believe you after all!

Which promotion method is right for you?

Promoting your business is really important. Promotion is all about using your brand to get the attention of existing and potential customers. You have many promotional tools at your fingertips; online, in print and via the spoken word. So it's best to find the balance of different approaches that works for you.

You need to work out how much time you have to spare on creating marketing materials and updating social media. The types of events that you hope to work at will affect the sorts of promotions you should be doing too because you'll need to tailor your promotional materials to the type of work you're after.

Websites

These days you can't really get away with not having a website especially if you need to find work; organisers will be able to find you online, and contact you. Plus your customers will be able to find out more about you.

The good news is that good looking, professional sites can be created easily and cheaply these days. Just type 'website builder' into a search engine and you'll find loads of sites offering simple steps to create websites that look good. You can find plenty of inspiration on other street food websites, just don't lift their content!

Here are our tips for creating a great website. Make sure you maintain your brand throughout your website via logos, colours, fonts etc, and include an up-to-date copy of your menu and a great gallery. You should upload a high quality images that showcase your food, your customers, your unit and queues outside your unit.

You want to include your story on the website, and integrate your social media platforms so that customers can access them easily. It's not a bad idea to dedicate a section to your latest news either, alongside a trading schedule and map so customers can keep up to date with your movements.

Don't forget to include a contact page so that customers and event organisers can reach you easily too.

Word of mouth

Organic word of mouth marketing occurs when customers talk you up because you've impressed them.

Word of mouth has the potential to be your greatest source of marketing, but only if you're doing a good job – i.e. if your food is amazing and you're really friendly. Studies have shown that it can have a significant impact your sales.

If your brand is satisfying your customers and making them come back for more, there's not much more you can do apart from hope that they'll shout about you!

Here are our tips for encouraging organic word of mouth marketing:

- Cook AMAZING food
- Be the sort of seller that customers would want to recommend; chatty and friendly!
- Ask customers to recommend you if they like you
- Use Social Media
- If possible, extend a special offer or discount which involves recommending your business to a friend

Blogging

Blogging for your business can increase your online presence. It also gives you a platform to express your opinion. The more content you produce online, the higher up you'll appear in those endless lists of search engine results which is great if you want event organisers to find you on the internet. Regularly posting fresh content is a great way to show that your website is active.

You can use a blog to drive traffic to your website or social media profiles, where customers can engage with your brand and story.

Here are our top tips for blogging:

- Share links to your latest blog posts on all your social media platforms
- Include relevant images with your content
- Try to post regularly to show customers that you want to 'keep in touch'
- Encourage customers to respond to your blog posts so you can interact with them
- Your customers will probably be interested in how you physically set up your unit so, while you're setting up your business, make notes about the process and take photos to add
- Comment on relevant news from the industry
- Write posts about your reasons for menu changes

Social media

The explosion of the social media scene over the last few years means that most of your customers are active online; sharing, liking, tweeting, pinning and doing all those other things that didn't exist a few years ago. Now you can get to know your customers online through social media, and use it for your marketing and promotions strategy too. Let's run through the benefits that social media can bring to your business:

Social media can significantly reduce your marketing costs. There are free versions of pretty much every social media platform, offering you different, effective ways to market your business.

Social media can improve your SEO (search engine optimisation). Social networks are platforms for sharing content about your business. The more popular content you publish, the higher up you'll appear in search engine results.

Social media gives you an opportunity to show off your customer service. Responding to customers' questions quickly on public forums will increase customer loyalty. Plus anyone can see that you care about your customers.

Using social media broadens the reach of your brand. It's a great place to show off the personality of your business. Humanising your brand will build your relationship with customers and increase their loyalty.

Social media gives you an opportunity to associate with other businesses and helpful contacts. Aside from customers, social media offers you the chance to connect with other street foodies and organisers. If you're wondering how to get people to find you on social media, here are four tips.

Display your social media handles on or around your unit, and ask people to follow you whenever you get the chance.

Embed links to your social media platforms on your website.

Follow lots of people on every social network that you use.

Use your social networks regularly and get hashtagging!

There's now a vast array of social networks for you to choose from, but using them all might prove to take up rather a lot of your time. You can find out more about the seven most popular social media platforms in the resources section at the end of the course.

Public relations

With some word of mouth recommendations and a great social media programme in place, you don't need to spend thousands on PR. Wherever possible though, you should draw attention to your business to get it into the mass media.

The street food industry is growing by the day which makes it a popular subject with writers and reporters for major publications across the country.

It's not as hard as you might imagine to generate coverage for the key moments of growth or change to your business, starting with the grand opening. You can create interest with local press and food bloggers by sending them your brand story, new menus and information about your more inventive dishes. Special promotions and discounts and big news about work at important events are likely to get the attention of the local press too.

Here are some steps that you can take to promote your business through PR:

- Contact all your local publications that follow the street food industry
- Get in touch with every website you can find that follows street food trends
- Tweet local reporters and bloggers
- Create clear, concise press releases for your biggest news and email them to reporters (there are lots of online guides if you need a helping hand)
- Always give the most noteworthy aspects of your news first, to grab the attention of reporters and bloggers
- Never put off to a later date a reporter who wants to cover your business; your news might not be of interest tomorrow
- Hire a local freelance PR writer if you have the budget for it

Leaflets & brochures

The current trend is to use digital advertising but using printed marketing materials are still effective too. It's no longer particularly expensive to have leaflets and brochures printed, so you aren't going to break the bank if you decide to do some.

As you might expect, leaflets and brochures are most effective if they look good. They provide another great opportunity to publicise your brand so it's a good idea to design them in a way that is consistent with your brand; through colours, logos, fonts, tone of voice etc.

The trick with leaflets and brochures is to avoid forcing people to take them because you don't want to be considered intrusive. Ask customers if they'd like to take a leaflet with their food so they can find out a little more about you, and you'll be surprised at how many people say yes.

Depending on how much space you have in your leaflet or brochure, you'll do well to include a combination of the following:

- Great quality images of your unit at work
- A list of dishes that you do
- A condensed version of your story
- The benefits of your food
- Contact details
- Details of trading times and places

Special offer

Using promotional offers can encourage repeat purchases from existing customers and pull in a whole new set of customers in one go. You're unlikely to need special offers at events but they can be useful in drawing customers to a regular out-of-the-way pitch.

Special offers, discounts and loyalty schemes might not substantially increase your profits but they *will* help your sales. Offers like these are the sort of thing that customers will tell their friends about, so they're good for word of mouth marketing.

Immediate discounts are reliable for a quick increase in sales if you need to get rid of stock quickly.

Popping up a sign that says 'everything half price' or '20% off all dishes' will certainly grab the attention of passers-by. You just have to be able to keep up with the inevitable demand that will result from this type of offer.

Voucher schemes like Groupon are a good way to build a database of customers that you can tap into at a later date. BUT you should always do a lot of research and be very cautious if you're going down this road. You might find you're unable to support the substantial discount that you'd be required to offer.

Offering a loyalty scheme is a great way to motivate repeat purchases to turn a one-off customer into a customer who keeps coming back.

Add a stamp to a 'buy 9 meals, get the 10th free' card each time a customer purchases one of your dishes. It will make them more likely to keep coming back so they can get that lovely free tenth meal.

It might sound a bit painful, especially when you're just starting out, but sometimes it can do you a world of good to give away a dish every now and then. It's much more useful than throwing stock away too.

Tell customers to try the food, and come back if they like it. You never know, you might win yourself a new customer and save yourself some wasted food.

Module 7 – Equipment, Regulations & Staff

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different advantages and disadvantages to each type of unit; you need to pick the one which is right for your business • Power is a major issue that many don't consider, costing them time and money • There are legal requirements for different pieces of equipment that you must adhere to • Buy cheap buy twice! Your equipment has to be up to the job if you want to succeed • Train your staff they are your best asset
Learning Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learners will know different types of units and different kinds of power supply with their advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, they will be aware of what to take into consideration when buying equipment. • They will know the most important things about regulations and staff.
Slides	??? - ???
Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the learners look up a good and a bad offer for an unit on the internet. Let them explain their choice. • Let the learners search newspaper articles about allergic reactions in the catering industry.
Review/Assessment	Play 1-2 videos with testimonials from the show case platform made by experienced street food vendors, focusing on the unit and the equipment. Hold a group discussion at the end. (What unit and equipment does the vendor have? What can you say about his/her staff?)

Now we are going to look at the sorts of things you need to consider when buying equipment.

You're going to need a lot of equipment and the items you decide to buy will depend of several different factors: the food you're going to cook, the quantities you'll be cooking eventually, and your budget.

Different food types require different pieces of equipment. You'd need a griddle and bain-marie for hamburgers and hot dogs, whereas chips require a deep-fat fryer. The best way to work out exactly what you need is to find someone who produces a similar menu and ask them for advice, but you could also speak to someone at your trade association.

If you have ambitions to sell large quantities then you'll need a lot of storage equipment, like fridges and freezers. Like all things in this world there is a huge range of equipment available which means that prices range drastically too. You can pay anywhere between £500 for a basket fryer and £50,000 for a frying range, so trawl the internet and ask around for the best deals.

Equipment budget

There are a few ways to keep your costs low when buying catering equipment, but those come with certain pitfalls that you'll want to avoid.

A lot of catering equipment gets sold when it's past its useful life which means you need to be wary when looking into second hand equipment. It might have been refurbished prior to sale but its second life may well be very short. Second hand equipment will only have a limited warranty so you could be left facing hefty repair bills.

In our experience people rarely sell good, worthwhile vans and trailers unless they are getting out of the business. You should watch the unit in action before you commit to buying to make sure there's nothing wrong with it. It's worth knowing that a good operation with a second hand unit might actually cost more than starting afresh with a new unit too.

You need to be especially cautious if someone is selling a site alongside their unit, because sites are rarely transferrable.

Here are our tips for buying the right equipment:

Don't be fooled into thinking that eBay is your best bet. The equipment on offer there might be cheap but a lot of it isn't actually legal. You'll often find that cheap equipment is missing CE marks, or they've been forged. The necessary safety protection is often missing too, like flame failure devices.

You don't have to buy everything straight away. You'll probably find that your processes will change over time as you get to understand the business better. Try to source equipment in other ways. Could you borrow things from anyone you know? Speak to existing traders; many have equipment around that they aren't using and they might be willing to lend it or sell it to you cheaply.

When you *are* purchasing something make sure you buy the best you can afford. Buying cheaply usually means buying twice. Take into consideration the equipment's warranty, how easy it is to clean and how heavy duty it is. Quality equipment has strong resale value and cheap imitation products just won't match up.

Don't forget that we've advised you to start small, either. You shouldn't really be tackling huge events to begin with so you shouldn't need to start by buying huge amounts of equipment.

Powering your business

People often forget about power when planning their catering business, but chilling, heating and cooking food can only be done with power.

The way you power your equipment will influence what you buy and the amount of items that you can operate, so you want to get it right.

As a rule of thumb electricity is the best source of power for fridges, freezers and lighting, whereas LPG, that's Liquid Petroleum Gas, is best for cooking appliances. Some specialist traders use wood and coal but they come with strict pollution regulations and can't be used in an enclosed space. You'd have to be extremely dedicated to your cause if you wanted to go down the wood and coal route!

Let's think about electricity first. It can come from three different sources: mains, generators and batteries.

Mains electricity is generally the most practical source, but it's not always available. It's best not to rely on mains electricity unless you're absolutely confident that it will be available at the site you're going to trade at.

Generators are a great backup for when disaster strikes and the mains fails, but there are lots of disadvantages to relying on them for electricity. Firstly you'll have to make sure that your generator is the correct size for your equipment. Then there is the fact that they require regular servicing and attention, and are also highly susceptible to theft. Larger generators are very heavy and will require lots of effort to get them to and from site.

Batteries can be used to power some small electrical items and can be useful if you're operating out of a motorised vehicle. But obviously they have a limited amount of power and life so should only be used for bits and pieces.

LPG is the most popular power source that street food traders use for cooking. The problem with LPG is that it's extremely dangerous and is a potential bomb if treated improperly.

LPG fridges and freezers are available but they aren't particularly practical due to cost and size limitations.

Chilling and cold holding equipment

Keeping hot food hot and cold food cold are the most fundamental requirements of food safety. Realistically cold holding can only be achieved by use of refrigerators or cool boxes.

Refrigerators come in various shapes and sizes; from small under-counter electric fridges to walk-in versions to refrigerated display counters like the ones you see in a delicatessen.

When traders don't have access to electricity they often use cool boxes to keep food chilled during transportation and on site.

If you use cool boxes, you need to use adequate freezer packs so that the temperature of the food never rises above 8 degrees centigrade. You should always keep the box away from sunlight and any source of heat in your unit. The lid of the cool box should always be secured and replaced immediately once you've removed something from the box. And if you're working a long event, make sure you have fresh supplies of freezer packs delivered during the day.

10 factors to consider when choosing a unit

In this section we'll go through ten factors you need to think about when you come to select your trading unit.

- 1) **Purchase Cost** - The first factor is the purchasing cost. It's possible to buy a unit for as little as £500 and for considerably more than £100,000, with a raft of options available in between. How much do you have to invest? Purchasing a second hand unit can reduce these costs.
- 2) **Running cost** - The second factor is running costs, which you should never underestimate! A 1960's converted H van might look great but it's not likely to be particularly economical. A break down enroute to an event will cost you wages, stock, fees plus your break down recovery!



- 3) Space - Factor three is space. If you want to sell high quantities of food, you'll need enough space to make it. Your unit must be able to house equipment and stock, as well as areas for employees to cook and serve. Don't be lured into thinking that you should get the largest unit you can find; you might be required to pay for a double or triple pitch, and that would decrease your profits significantly.
- 4) Height - The fourth factor is height. Food is an international language that everyone speaks. If your customers can watch their food being prepared while you chat to them about the dish, you will sell more. Don't underestimate the power of eye contact when choosing your unit type.
- 5) Size - The fifth thing to think about is manoeuvrability. You'll often be required to fit your unit into tight spaces, so you need it to be easy to manoeuvre.
- 6) Set up time - Factor number six is the amount of time it will take to set up and take down the unit. Build-up units take considerably more effort to transport, set up and take down than trailers and vans.
- 7) Safety - The seventh factor to consider is safety and legalities. You must have the required driving licenses to drive certain vehicles and tow trailers. If you don't already have the correct ones you'll need to allow time and money to procure them. We'll go through licences and towing in module seven.
- 8) Branding - Factor number 8 is branding. Presentation is king. With a vintage van or a new unit with a retro makeover, you can really stand out from the crowd. Gazebos might be inexpensive but without a lot of effort to make them really individual, they just won't cut the mustard. Kerb appeal is what will catch a passer-by's eye and turn them into customer.
- 9) Storage - The ninth thing to think about is storage. Where are you going to keep your unit? Gazebos can be folded up and put in the garage, but a van or trailer might need to go to a storage yard. Bear in mind that travel between home and a storage yard will increase your set up and take down times, and at a cost.
- 10) Temperature - The tenth and final factor in this chapter is temperature. It can be very cold working outdoors through the winter. Vans and trailers provide some protection from the weather.

Storing your unit securely

We mentioned unit storage in the last chapter, but we'll think a little more about it now. Insurance statistics show that most catering units that get stolen are taken from home driveways, and few are ever recovered, that's why insurance premiums are so high.

We want you to take security extremely seriously. You should install a tracker in your unit and use wheel-clamps as often as possible. Aside from helping to keep your unit secure, these actions might lower your insurance premium too.

It's always best to keep your unit in a secure compound, rather than at home.

Trucks and vans

Converted trucks and vans can make ideal street food trading units because they are quick and easy to set up and 'take down'. All you have to do is arrive at your pitch, open the hatch and serve your wares. Vans and trucks can be easily branded to make them look cool, retro and very attractive to both customers and organisers. Converted vintage units are particularly popular. But don't get carried away with the cheque book just yet, there are also some disadvantages to trading from a truck or van. They're usually the most expensive units to buy. Prices tend to range from £3,000 for a low quality second hand unit to £100,000 for a brand new modern truck. The running costs are high too, particularly with the vintage units that look great but *are* prone to break downs.

You'll need insurance for a motorised vehicle, and there's also the possibility that you don't yet have the right categories on your driving licence. Vans aren't the easiest vehicles to get into tight spaces so you might find your pitch options restricted by your unit size. When you *can* get your van into the pitch, you're in for the day. Without another means of transport you won't be able to pop to the shop if you've forgotten something.

Most importantly, you need to be really careful to select a *reliable* unit. Imagine having paid £1,000 for a pitch at the other end of the country and blowing a head gasket on the journey! The pitch fee, stock, staff wages and potential takings would all be wasted.

If you're thinking about buying a van or truck and converting it *yourself*, you might find the '10 steps to DIY Converting' useful. The document can be found in the resources section at the end of the course.

Towed trailers

One advantage of trading from a towed trailer is that they're easy and quick to set up; once you've manoeuvred into position you can open the hatch and start serving. Similarly to trucks, towed trailers are also a warmer option for winter and provide a safe, solid platform from which to conduct business.

The great news is that there are plenty of towed trailers available out there to buy, with lots of second hand units among them.

Additionally, you can't forget that the vehicle you use to tow the trailer will need to be powerful enough and might require additional insurance covers. And once you've got to pitch, you'll find that trailers aren't all that easy to manoeuvre into small spaces.

Gazebo and stalls

Gazebos and stalls are a great place to start in the street food business. The most obvious advantage of trading from a gazebo or stall is that costs are low. Compared with other unit types, gazebos and stalls are pretty inexpensive.

You might find yourself subject to a higher level of scrutiny by an Health Officers for the reasons we've just gone through. You might also find yourself getting cold, wet and muddy if you're trading from a stall or gazebo during winter.

The last things to consider are storage, the weather and food hygiene. Gazebos are pretty bulky things to store so you need to make sure you've got enough indoor space to keep it dry and safe when you're not trading.

Food carts

The main strength of the classic food cart is its price. That's right, it's cheap. That's why street vendors all over the world use carts; from Mumbai to New York. They're the perfect choice for those who are looking to start operating with minimal investment.

If you need to move around the street during the day, food carts are the best option; all you have to do is push! They're ideal for anyone trading in town centre locations on a low budget. Another advantage to trading from a cart is that you're on the ground with the customer; there's nothing to stop you from chatting and building a relationship while you serve them. That's something that few other units offer. Sadly there are disadvantages to trading from a food cart too. You'll have very little shelter to protect you from the elements. You'll also need to find a way to transport your cart to and from locations; you can't push it everywhere!

You probably already know this but they aren't very big. That means that you're going to be limited on the amounts of product that you can store and serve, so don't expect to be catering for heavy volumes.

Commercial catering from home

It's becoming increasingly popular to run a street food business from your own home, using your kitchen as a preparation unit. If you intend to do this we advise that you check the legalities with your health department first.

The laws on food safety apply just the same to a business run from home as to any other commercial premises, so don't think that you can be lax just because you're at home.

You need your kitchen to be fully cleanable and in a good state of repair. You won't be able to carry on normal household activities in the kitchen during food preparation hours.

Storage for stock

Storage can be a major headache in the catering business; it's often the last thing that people think of. You'll find that there are three main types of storage that will be useful to your street food business: ambient, chilled and freezer.

Ambient storage refers to storing food at room temperature, like in a larder. Foods with a long shelf-life can be kept at ambient temperature, for as long as is specified on the product label. Food in ambient storage must be properly packaged and kept off the floor. It's really important to keep ambient storage areas clean to protect against contamination.

Chilled storage is for those foods that need to be cooled to keep them safe to eat. Any food with a use-by date, or with 'keep refrigerated' on the label need to be kept chilled. Ready-to-eat foods like sandwiches, and food that you've cooked but aren't going to serve immediately also need to be kept in chilled storage.

Freezer storage is useful for holding stock for longer amounts of time, but you need to be really vigilant with frozen food. It's easy to forget how long food items have been frozen, which can cause real problems during visits from environmental health officers. That's why date marking is so important for your stock control. You should never freeze something without clearly marking the date of freezing and the date it needs to be used by.

Safety equipment

Catering in any form is classed as a high risk occupation because of health and safety risks to both the caterer and the public. That's why safety equipment is so important; don't overlook it!

Typical safety equipment for street food traders includes gloves, oven gloves, goggles, aprons, shoes, head gear, high visibility jackets and protective clothing for extreme temperatures.

Hand washing

Legislation is very clear on hand washing for *all* food business operators. The law requires you to have a separate hand washing facility that runs hot and cold, or appropriately mixed, running water. You must also provide soap and a means for drying hands; disposable paper towels are best.

Gas-powered water heaters that are fixed into trailers and vans are the most reliable type of hand washing unit, but you'll also find great ranges of portable hand washers for those trading from gazebos.

Regulations

Taking liberties in the street food industry can have horrific consequences. It's for this reason that there are many rules and regulations that you must adhere to when starting and running a street food business, but these vary widely throughout Europe and even within countries so you need to ask questions to your local area health authorities and well as national ones.

Some of the areas that you will need advice on are:

- Registering your business
- Food safety management
- Cleaning
- Pest control
- Labelling and allergies
- Food safety training
- Health and safety
- Equipment legalities
- Fire safety
- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Insurance
- Licences
- Towing
- Employment

Cleaning

Keeping a food business clean is a daily task which is essential for maintaining food safety and is also a legal requirement. It's crucial that you use the correct cleaning products for each task. There are three main chemicals used in catering premises, detergents, disinfectants and sanitisers.

Detergents are required to clean items or areas which are dirty and greasy, they do not kill bacteria.

Disinfectants kill bacteria but do not remove grease and dirt. **Sanitisers** have detergent and disinfectant properties and should be used to clean food contact surfaces. You must only use 'food safe' cleaning products in food preparation areas.

The longer that dirt and grease is left, the harder it is to clean. The secret to a clean business is a regular programme of cleaning with a 'clean as you go' policy.

To help you make sure that all areas and equipment are cleaned regularly, you are strongly advised to create and maintain a cleaning schedule. A cleaning schedule is a written plan that states who should clean what at particular times of the day. You should keep your cleaning schedule in your food safety management system.

You should be aware that dirty cloths are a major cause of cross contamination. Dish cloths or wiping cloths should not be used in catering kitchens unless they are disposable or washed regularly in a high temperature wash. Best practice dictates the use of disposable paper roll wherever possible.

Here are some handy tips for cleaning the hard-to-reach areas of your unit.

Get rid of all food debris as you go to avoid attracting pests. Baits for pests will only be effective if there's nothing else for them to munch on! Move your equipment around and use a vacuum cleaner to suck up food debris is the hardest areas to reach. Using a toothbrush can do wonders for cleaning awkward fridge and freezer door seals.

Pest Control

As a food business proprietor it's your responsibility to deal with pests effectively. Prevention is always better than cure so act before an infestation happens or you might end up facing huge bills.

The law requires that adequate procedures are put in place for pest control. It's important that you work out procedures for the place where your products are stored and prepared, as well as where they are sold. Pest control measures should feature as part of your Food Safety Management System.

Labelling and allergies

People die as a result of an allergic reaction to food every year. As a street food seller you must provide the information that customers need to make safe, healthy and informed food choices.

When someone eats a food they are allergic to, even the tiniest amount can cause a very severe reaction called anaphylaxis. In theory any food could cause anaphylaxis, but the most common causes are nuts, sesame seeds, milk, fish, shellfish, eggs and soya.

Legally you need to be able to inform customers about allergens verbally or in written format. That means that you *have* to know exactly what goes into your recipes. Make sure you always check the ingredients of anything you buy.

If someone asks you whether a dish contains a certain food, you should never guess the answer. You should keep copies of the ingredient information on labels of any ready-made foods, and the labelling information or all other ingredients.

It's really important that you try to keep ingredients in their original containers wherever possible too, and always store foods separately in closed containers.

Often foods that can cause severe allergic reactions turn up in products where you might not expect them. You might find unrefined nut oils in salad dressings, almonds in marzipan, gluten in sauces and even nuts in cheesecake bases. Be careful!

Staffing

You will need to think about the importance of finding the right staff for your business, working out how many staff you need, how best to manage, motivate and pay your staff, and the sorts of training you need to carry out.

The importance of good staff

Without good staff it will be very difficult for you to operate a successful street food business. An experienced and reliable staff member will be able to serve at least twice as much food as a newbie. That's why you need to hire the right people and retain them.

These are our top tips for hiring the right people:

- It's ideal to employ people with experience in the catering industry.
- Don't trust them? Don't hire them.
- Ask other traders if they know anyone good that they won't be using.
- Give your staff proper training and practice BEFORE the event.
- When you find someone good, hold onto them, even if you have to pay them a little extra.
- When you're starting out, family and friends might be able to give you a helping hand.

Managing & motivating staff

As a street food business owner the performance of your team is *your* responsibility, so if they don't perform well it's *your* fault. That means that the way you manage and motivate your staff is really important.

Training your staff

There are lots of online courses that cover the technical aspects of the job, like hygiene, sustainability, gas safety, first aid and the use of fire extinguishers. But you could train your staff in other things that will help your business and the street food industry no end.

It's really useful for everyone to have a grasp on good customer service: how to handle complaints, what to do if a customer abuses you, what to do if faced with someone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, how to keep a queue calm when they've had to wait for too long. If staff know what to do in these situations, you'll make running the business a whole lot easier.