

Food/Beverage Distributors/Brokers

Overview

Food distributors are the companies that deliver perishable and non-perishable food to restaurants, coffee shops, convenience stores and grocery stores. Beverage distributors handle many of the same accounts delivering non-alcoholic or alcoholic beverages in much the same way.

There are national food brokers such as Sysco and U.S. Foodservice, plus there are regional companies throughout each market. The beverage distributors would be Coca Cola, Pepsi, RC, Miller/Coors and Budweiser. Both types of brokers will usually have hundreds of clients in the market so use of tickets is not an issue.

Food brokers may use their delivery people as 'salespeople'. If the delivery person is on their route and notice a new restaurant or store opening, they are tasked with stopping in to develop a relationship and try to solicit new business. Larger food service companies will have salespeople who handle that responsibility, sometimes up to 20-30 reps.

One key food broker prospect is whoever delivers to food to your building. Check with your arena/stadium concessions team to find out who the food distributor is for the building. That company should own a suite or high level premium seating. If they don't, that's a call your team's VP of Sales should be making.

Why they buy tickets

Price and confidence in delivery are the two key facets for restaurant decision makers. That decision maker is usually the owner or the head chef. Because restaurants are small businesses with limited employees, there is a strong opportunity for one on one out of office bonding between the salesperson and the decision maker. Once a food broker has an account and delivers effectively, the next step is to maintain strong relationships to prevent competition from getting any portion of the order.

Food buyers at large grocery chains will be the target of distributor's entertainment efforts. These food buyers typically purchase across multiple stores in the market. They are wine and dined frequently so average seats don't make much of an impact. The brokers usually are willing to spend big money to entertain so a suite or high dollar premium seating is a very viable option.

Some brokers will also entertain at the store level for smaller stores or local managers in an effort to get better placement and local promotion of their product.

Each salesperson for the broker should have 1-2 games/month for maintaining existing relationships and developing relationships with new prospects. Depending on the number of salespeople, this could be a very big sale.

Decision Makers – Who to talk to...

The main decision makers at the food distributor are the President of the company or the VP of Sales if it's a larger distributor. Go right to the top.