

REFRIDGERATED



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# Cool judgement

The right refrigeration decision can bring rich rewards

In the ongoing battle to maximise profitability, it has always been absolutely critical that convenience and impulse outlets choose the right refrigeration option for their store.

In a country as warm as Australia, products such as cool beverages and ice creams have long underpinned many a healthy bottom line. And now, with the growing availability and range of fast food and ready-to-eat products that need to be chilled or frozen, it has become more important than ever to get refrigeration right.

And it's not just about fridge capacity. The style, accessibility, efficiency and environmental friendliness of units are all key considerations for today's C&I operator. Every store is different and will have individual needs dealing as they do with different customers, layouts, sizes and climates.

As well as assessing consumer traffic flow, factors such as direct sunlight, air currents and ambient temperatures are vital in ensuring that cabinets work as they are designed to. Smaller outlets need to consider the amount of heat and noise that will be generated by self-contained cabinets and ensure an adequate means of removing the heat for the customers' comfort is available. The ambient temperature, of course, needs to be kept at a level that will allow the cabinets to work most effectively.

With so much to consider it is no surprise to learn that, the leading manufacturers and suppliers of refrigeration merchandisers will happily make an assessment of individual store and advise operators on the most suitable options available.

Open deck refrigeration, like this ISA model, can lift sales by a huge margin



# Efficient & innovative solutions

**Skopec Refrigeration** says that with floor space in the convenience channel being at such a premium, it is vital that operators make the most of that which is on offer:

"Skopec has a dedicated project team which works with architects, shop fitters, contractors and builders and often meets on-site to establish the right solution and correct refrigeration models to suit the customer's specific requirements," said Skopec's Communications Manager, Sara Grant. "We also have a network of highly skilled regional distributors who can help determine the best solution for their business."

When impulse sales are as important as they are in a channel such as convenience, operators are obviously as keen as mustard

to maximise them. All the research, and no doubt personal experience, teaches them that due to the removal of barriers between the customer and the product, open display cabinets clearly outsell glass door cabinets.

And open deck cabinets, and in particular the smaller ones, are likely to continue to dominate the convenience market for some time to come.

To run efficiently though, open deck refrigeration needs to be located away from drafts, and there should always be appropriate space around refrigeration products to allow for correct airflow. Easy to move refrigeration cabinets obviously make cleaning and maintenance a far simpler affair.

"Open deck refrigeration does typi-

“ There are then no shortage of refrigeration options for C&I operators to ponder and no shortage of manufacturers willing to offer advice on how to make it all work. ’

cally cost more to operate, which is why in-tuitive electronic controllers for precise temperature control and energy saving features such as power saving modes, energy efficient lighting and night blinds are important," said Ms. Grant. "Skopec's OD100 and OD400 both achieve the MEPS (Minimum Energy Performance Standards) High Energy Efficiency rating."

The efficiency theme is one picked up on by Natalie Jenkins, the National Business Manager of Quirks Refrigeration, which boasts a product offering ranging from cold storage freezer rooms, frozen drink dispensers and new and used plug-in refrigerated units through to custom design and installation, and custom fit-outs.

"We have established, based on our experience, that open display units can increase sales by approximately 30%," she said. "Yet there is a demand for greener options such as our exclusive 'In-Touch' technology, and a demand for the modern designs such as the European Dialogue units."

As well as the use of use electronic controllers with energy saving modes and the use of night blinds, self-closing doors also help to reduce refrigeration power consumption.

Arneg, which offers a wide range of multi-deck display cases and island chill-

ers and freezers for the impulse market, agrees that it has been shown that open display cabinets can lift sales by a huge margin when compared to glass doors. Nevertheless, it says it has responded to the customer's demand for energy saving in view of rising electricity costs, by developing a new range of cabinets with lighter non-heated doors that are much easier to operate than the standard double-glazed doors and more energy efficient. It says a further evolution is Arneg's EVO system, a combination of flow-sell gravity fed (12% higher sales volume than standard shelves) and a fully enclosed front, which guarantees consistent power saving.

"Refrigeration will continue to evolve with the changes in customer's needs," said Arneg's General Manager, Laura Garbo. "In recent times the open display cabinets have evolved to have larger open display areas meaning newer refrigeration designs are required to fit condensing units into ever smaller areas."

Ms. Garbo believes that sliding or swinging doors must still be considered although there are advantages and disadvantages to both.

"Sliding doors don't intrude on aisle space however they prohibit the next door from being used as they slide," she said.

Arneg believes that store conditions

have a big effect on the decision on whether outlets go with doors and the associated energy saving benefits or with open display units due to the barrier to sales argument.

Cabinet aesthetics are also a factor as all product suppliers and store owners wish to make their product as appealing as possible. Sleek design with attractive colouring or corporate decalling has been proved to have a significant impact on sales.

Baker Refrigeration provides a number of different refrigerated unit options for convenience and impulse outlets.

While acknowledging the growing trend towards open face units because

of increased impulse sales, General Manager, Mike Baker, warns that the energy consumption factor needs to be fully understood, and he says that open face units consume up to 40% more power than glass door units.

"If your outlet is subject to very disturbed airflows, open face cabinets near entry doors should be discouraged," he said. "In addition, a mixture of glass door and open face units will provide a balance of display options ... open face is ideal for high-volume impulse items as well as pre-made food items, while glass doors are ideal for well-known items such as water, carbonated drinks and milk." ▶

## Location, location

**Location** then can be as important as the unit chosen and, as many convenience products are 'impulse' products, the operator needs to ensure the refrigeration display is close to the potential customers

Sara Grant for Skopec Australia emphasises also that operators should also be seeking to ensure maximum bottle loadings to save valuable restocking time.

"Maximising both bottle loadings and bottle facings is extremely important and when operators are considering refrigeration they need to consider the different options," she said. "For example a top mounted upright refrigeration cabinet provides approximately 18% more merchandising space than the same sized bottom mounted cabinet."

Skopec Australia offers a complete range of refrigeration units to suit convenience and impulse outlets and these range from both top and bottom mounted upright glass door merchandisers and under-counters to open decks, countertops and food displays. The company also has the ability to modify cabinets to ensure there is a solution for every location.

Ms Grant says operators who purchase quality products will minimise disruption times:

"Products such as the Skopec OD400 Open Deck Chiller have been designed specifically for the end of gondolas and checkouts to maximise valuable space," she said. "And, as aesthetics are also becoming extremely important, the stylish SK Series has been designed to enhance product display and merchandising while reducing energy consumption and noise levels."

With some 80 years experience in the refrigeration industry, Quirks also says it can work with an individual store to assess their needs, and assist in identifying a unit that best suits the environment and product offer. It says a wide range of finance options are offered including both rental, and financing programs.

"To have sustainable bottom line profit,

the right refrigeration is essential," said the company's Natalie Jenkins. "Given our in-house design capabilities we are able to create a unique offering to suit an individual store plan, taking into consideration the location, layout, size, and facilities available."

Quirks says traditional two-door units will emerge with EMS (Energy Management System) models soon which will meet the demand for energy efficient refrigeration. "The right unit placed in the right location is more important than the quantity of units," said Ms. Jenkins. "We have found in outlets where the owners, rather than increase their number of fridges, have moved towards custom built coolrooms saving energy and space with a neater presentation."

Laura Garbo from Arneg stresses also that store conditions are vitally important as attractive refrigeration is of no use it does not work in the environment chosen. "Ensure adequate air-conditioning in store ▶

### AT A GLANCE

- Open display cabinets that remove the barrier between the customer and the product and help lift impulse sales are continuing to dominate the convenience market.
- Convenience and impulse operators must ensure adequate air-conditioning in store and airflow for the cabinet, and they should place cabinets in locations that are appealing and designed to capture the most sales.
- The rising cost of electricity and growing environmental awareness has made energy efficient units even more important.

## refridgerated

and airflow for the cabinet and place cabinets in locations that are appealing and designed to capture the most sales," she said. "Products at eye level for example have high sales volume."

She says that unit location is also important as many impulse sales are made at the last moment and only possible if the product is near the check out.

"Multi deck cases come in various heights and widths to cover most requirements," she said. "Prices vary from \$3,000 to approx \$10,000 for outright purchase however rental and finance options are available via various financial institutions."

Mike Baker from Baker Refrigeration agrees that while selecting the right refrigeration option is critical, so too is the location of the unit or units. He says it is vital then that the operator understands what he or she wants to achieve with their layout, and customer flow and product placement are both important aspects.

"Given that the majority of C&I outlet equipment is self-contained, there is a large amount of heat that is released from the cabinets that needs to be adequately vented away," said Mr Baker. "This allows less onerous operating conditions, which also provides better temperature control and reduced running costs."

He says that locating high volume product lines in cabinets at the rear of outlets

also allows for impulse buying of slower selling stock, as customers are drawn past these lines to the more popular refrigerated section.

Mr. Baker says that door types should be decided upon with the store layout in mind. If the footprint and aisle width is very small, then sliding doors are an option.

"It should be kept in mind though that sliding doors can interrupt access to adjacent areas in the cabinet," he said. "Glass door cases, both vertical and horizontal, should have internal lighting, so that the main store lights do not reflect off and detract from the display."

One of Baker Refrigeration's most popular cabinets in convenience and impulse outlets is its multi-deck 'Onwave' series.

"This cabinet has a dual airscreen technology that allows the conditioned air inside the cabinet to be insulated, for want of a better word, from the store conditions," said Mr. Baker. "The model can come in a version for meat/dairy, as well as one for fresh produce, and from 1mtr wide to 2.6 metres wide."

There are then no shortage of refrigeration options for C&I operators to ponder and no shortage of people willing to offer advice on how to make it all work.

While there are an awful lot of factors to consider, the potential benefits from making the right decision are simply enormous. ■



A new generation of concept refrigeration, with features such as mobile wings and open decks, can increase impulse buys

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