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Job Title: Kitchen & Food Production Manager
Employer: Apley Estate
Location: Apley Farm Shop
Reporting to: Director of Customer Operations
Responsible for: Kitchen, Bakery and Butchery
Contract: Permanent, full-time

Role Purpose

To lead the operational, commercial and people performance of Apley Estate's Kitchen, Bakery and Butchery, delivering high-quality food products and services that meet customer demand, strengthen the Apley proposition and contribute to sustainable, profitable growth.

Combining culinary creativity, product innovation, operational leadership and commercial discipline, the postholder will be responsible for the development, costing, preparation and production of food for immediate consumption, retail sale and the fulfilment of agreed internal and external requirements.

The role will support food and catering requirements across Apley Estate, including Apley Kitchen, Apley Farm Shop, Apley Playbarn, Apley on the High Street and Stockton House.

Key Responsibilities

1. Menu & Product Development

- Lead the development and continuous improvement of menus and food product ranges, ensuring they reflect customer preferences, emerging trends, seasonality, local provenance and the Apley brand.
- Develop commercially attractive products for retail sale, including, but not limited to, prepared meals, sandwiches, pies, pasties, baked goods, prepared meat products and other value-added food offerings.
- Use sales data, customer feedback and product profitability to identify development opportunities and inform decisions on existing and new product ranges.
- Ensure all products and menus are fully costed, commercially viable and supported by documented recipes, specifications, portion sizes and presentation standards.
- Maximise opportunities to utilise ingredients, products and production capabilities across the Estate.
- Work collaboratively with Marketing, Events and departmental managers to support product launches, promotions and seasonal opportunities.
- Ensure appropriate approval is obtained for new products and significant changes to menus or ranges.

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2. Operations & Food Production

- Lead the effective day-to-day operation of the Kitchen, Bakery and Butchery, maintaining consistently high standards of quality, presentation, freshness and customer service.
- Ensure customer orders are prepared accurately, efficiently and within agreed service expectations.
- Plan and manage production in response to forecast demand, ensuring product availability while minimising shortages, overproduction and waste.
- Establish effective operating procedures and production standards to maintain consistency, efficiency and quality.
- Manage production capacity, equipment utilisation, product yields and resource requirements to optimise operational performance.
- Ensure the Butchery maintains appropriate technical expertise, product quality, customer service and production capabilities.
- Work collaboratively with front-of-house and Farm Shop management to ensure effective service delivery, product availability and customer satisfaction.
- Continually improve operational processes, identifying opportunities to increase productivity, improve quality and reduce unnecessary costs.

3. Commercial & Financial Performance

- Take accountability for achieving agreed budgets and financial performance targets across the Kitchen, Bakery and Butchery.
- Manage and optimise revenue, gross profit, direct profitability, labour costs, food costs, stockholding and waste.
- Maintain accurate and regularly reviewed product costings, taking account of ingredients, production yields, portions, packaging, labour and other relevant operating costs.
- Review selling prices, product ranges and sales mix to optimise profitability while maintaining customer value and product quality.
- Manage purchasing and supplier relationships to achieve the appropriate balance of quality, availability, provenance and commercial value.
- Maintain effective stock management and stocktaking processes, ensuring losses and variances are investigated, understood and addressed.
- Champion responsible sourcing, prioritising local produce and environmentally responsible packaging wherever commercially and operationally appropriate.
- Contribute to budgeting, forecasting and business planning.
- Provide accurate and timely performance reporting, demonstrating an understanding of the factors influencing results and the actions required to improve them.

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4. People Leadership & Performance Management

- Take responsibility for the leadership, people management and performance of all colleagues within the Kitchen, Bakery and Butchery.
- Maintain a competent, engaged and flexible workforce, with the capability and capacity to meet changing customer demand and production requirements.
- Ensure effective workforce planning and deployment to optimise productivity, service standards and labour costs.
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities, expectations and performance standards.
- Recruit, induct, train, coach and develop colleagues to achieve consistently high standards of performance.
- Manage colleague performance, attendance, conduct and capability in accordance with Apley Estate policies.
- Promote a positive working environment founded on effective communication, teamwork, accountability, recognition and continuous improvement.
- Develop technical expertise and succession capability, reducing dependency on individual colleagues and strengthening operational resilience.

5. Food Safety, Quality & Compliance

- Take operational responsibility for food safety, hygiene, health and safety, and product quality across the Kitchen, Bakery and Butchery.
- Establish, maintain and continually improve effective food safety management systems based on HACCP principles.
- Ensure compliance with applicable requirements relating to allergens, hygiene, traceability, food handling, storage, transportation, packaging, labelling and shelf life.
- Maintain appropriate quality assurance processes, compliance records and colleague training.
- Ensure specialist technical expertise is available where required to maintain safe and compliant food production.
- Maintain readiness for inspections and audits, ensuring identified risks or deficiencies are promptly addressed and appropriately escalated.
- Support consistent food safety and quality standards across wider Estate operations in collaboration with relevant managers.

6. Estate-Wide Catering & Production Fulfilment

- Support the food production and catering requirements of Apley Estate, including Apley Kitchen, Apley Farm Shop, Apley Playbarn, Apley on the High Street and Stockton House.
- Work collaboratively with relevant departments to develop suitable food offerings for events, weddings, private functions and other business requirements.
- Assess the operational feasibility, cost and resource requirements of proposed food production activities.

- Ensure all agreed production requirements, whether for internal or external customers, are fulfilled to the required specification, quality, quantity, timescale and cost.
- Coordinate the people, ingredients, equipment, production and distribution resources necessary to fulfil agreed requirements.
- Evaluate the operational and financial performance of catering and production activities to identify opportunities for improvement.

7. Business Collaboration & Continuous Improvement

- Contribute to the delivery of Apley Estate's wider business objectives and commercial strategy.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Estate to maximise shared resources, capabilities and commercial opportunities.
- Use customer insight, operational information and financial performance to identify, prioritise and deliver measurable improvements.
- Encourage innovation and continuous improvement across the teams and departments under the postholder's leadership.
- Communicate effectively with the Director of Customer Operations and wider management team regarding performance, opportunities, risks and operational requirements.

Key Performance Measures

Performance will be assessed against agreed objectives, including:

- Revenue, gross profit and direct profitability.
- Budget achievement and cost control.
- Product costing accuracy and completeness.
- Labour productivity and resource utilisation.
- Product quality, availability and consistency.
- Customer satisfaction and service performance.
- Production efficiency, stock management and waste.
- Menu and product development performance.
- Fulfilment of agreed production requirements.
- Food safety, quality assurance and regulatory compliance.
- Colleague engagement, performance, development and retention.

Specific targets will be agreed with the Director of Customer Operations, informed by business performance and the strategic objectives of Apley Estate.

Person Specification

Essential Experience & Capabilities

- Proven experience in a senior kitchen, food production, culinary operations or comparable food management role.

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- Strong culinary knowledge and experience of menu and food product development.
- Demonstrable commercial understanding, including product costing, gross profit, budgeting, purchasing, labour productivity and waste management.
- Experience managing food service or production operations in response to changing customer demand.
- Proven ability to lead, develop and performance-manage colleagues.
- Strong knowledge of food safety, HACCP, allergen management and applicable food production requirements.
- Ability to interpret financial, operational and customer information and translate findings into effective actions.
- Strong organisational, communication and problem-solving skills.
- A creative, commercially minded and customer-focused approach, supported by operational discipline and personal accountability.
- A practical and collaborative leadership style, with a willingness to support operational delivery when required.

Desirable Experience & Qualifications

- Experience within a farm shop, food hall, bakery, premium food retail or multi-outlet hospitality environment.
- Experience managing both food service and retail food production.
- Experience leading bakery or butchery teams or working with specialist food production departments.
- Experience developing food products for retail sale, including packaging, labelling and shelf-life requirements.
- Experience supporting event catering or fulfilling production requirements across multiple locations.
- Experience using recipe costing, stock management and production planning systems.
- Relevant culinary, food production, management or advanced food safety qualifications.

General Provision

The postholder is employed by Apley Estate and will be expected to respond positively to reasonable requests for support from across the Estate.

This job description outlines the principal responsibilities of the role and is not intended to be exhaustive. The postholder will be expected to undertake other reasonable duties appropriate to their role, experience and capabilities, as directed by the Director of Customer Operations.

The responsibilities of the role may evolve in response to the operational and commercial requirements of Apley Estate.