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# THE PROFESSIONAL GARDE MANGER



*The term garde manger* WAS ORIGINALLY USED TO IDENTIFY A COOL FOOD STORAGE AREA. PRESERVED FOODS SUCH AS HAMS, SAUSAGES, PICKLES, AND CHEESES WERE HELD THERE. COLD FOODS WERE PREPARED AND ARRANGED FOR BANQUETS THERE AS WELL. OVER TIME, GARDE MANGER HAS EVOLVED TO MEAN MORE THAN JUST A STORAGE AREA OR LARDER. IT ALSO INDICATES THE STATION IN A PROFESSIONAL KITCHEN RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING COLD FOODS, THE COOKS AND CHEFS WHO PREPARE THESE COLD FOODS, AND NOWADAYS ALSO AN AREA OF SPECIALIZATION IN PROFESSIONAL CULINARY ARTS. MEMBERS OF TODAY'S GARDE MANGER SHARE IN A LONG CULINARY AND SOCIAL TRADITION, ONE THAT STRETCHES BACK TO WELL BEFORE THE DAWN OF RECORDED HISTORY.

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## THE EUROPEAN GARDE MANGER TRADITION

As our ancestors became herdsmen and farmers, they developed the practical skills necessary to ensure a relatively steady food supply. This meant learning not only to domesticate animals and raise crops but also how to preserve those foods. The first preserved fish were most likely produced by accident. Fish were “brined” in seawater and left to dry on the shore, where they either fermented or dried. Meats were hung off the ground and near the fire. This kept them out of the reach of scavenging animals and insects. The smoky bath surrounding them darkened, flavored, dried, and preserved the meats to keep them from spoiling.

Historical evidence shows that the Greeks had been producing and consuming salted fish for many years before passing their knowledge on to the Romans. In 63 B.C.E.,

the Greek writer Strabo detailed the importance of fish-salting centers in Spain and the existence of salt producers in the Crimea. Salt cod, made in the same basic way as Strabo described, is still an important food in cuisines around the world.

Food preservation skills and the necessary ingredients, including salt, sugar, and spices, were greatly valued. Cities such as modern-day Rome and Salzburg were founded near a ready source of salt. As the Romans extended their empire, they conquered lands rich in a variety of resources, including foodstuffs. They brought with them their own recipes and formulas for a variety of preserved meats, fish, and cheeses. As is the way of all such invasions, the invaders brought their taste for familiar foods from home. But the culinary exchange was never in one direction. The



LE GARDE-MANGER. U FROID.

An example of a historical garde manger kitchen.

conquering forces also learned to appreciate the local specialties. The Gauls, in what became France, were credited as highly successful hog domesticators and became renowned for their preserved hams and bacon. These products were regularly sent from Gaul to Rome and served at the Romans' legendary banquets. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the great houses of the Church and the nobility throughout Europe kept alive both local food traditions and those learned from the invaders.

Into the twelfth century, approximately 80 to 90 percent of the world's population still fell into the category of rural peasants. These peasants worked the nobles' lands to raise crops and farm animals. One of the most important activities of the year occurred at the end of the growing season. Vegetables, fruits, and grains were harvested and preserved by drying or by placing them into cold storage, along with pickles, jellies, and cheeses. Cows, sheep, and other animals were butchered and the meat preserved by a variety of means: pickling, salting, brining, curing, drying, packing in fat, or smoking. Once the foods had been prepared, they could be held in storage.

The right to collect and keep these foods, as well as to trade and tax them, provided a visible symbol of power, wealth, and rank. During the Middle Ages, this privilege belonged to kings, dukes, lords, and other nobility, as well as the monasteries and convents of the Catholic Church. The castles and manor houses of the nobility each had an area devoted to food storage. It was typically located in an area below ground level to keep the foods cool. *Garde manger* (literally "keep to eat") was the term used to identify this storage area. It is still used to indicate a larder or pantry—a place for cold food storage. The member of the household staff known as the *officier de la bouche*, or steward, was responsible for managing this storeroom, dispensing foods as necessary.

## THE GROWTH OF THE GUILDS

Some of these special items, such as hams and cheeses, became part of the commerce and trade between towns and states. Along with livestock, buildings, servants, and jewels, they were included as dowries and tributes, as well as being used as a kind of currency to acquire other goods. Eventually rules were established governing how merchants prepared and sold these goods and services, to prevent

monopolies and pricing abuses. The work itself was clearly defined and assigned to various groups known as guilds. The guilds developed training systems for their members, taking them from an apprenticeship to the journeyman stage and finally conferring the status of master. Each individual guild was granted a charter, giving it some specific rights.

By the end of the sixteenth century, there were approximately two dozen guilds dedicated specifically to food. Guilds fell into two groups—those that provided raw materials and those that provided prepared foods. For example, the guild of charcutiers prepared and sold cooked items made from the pig (the word *charcuterie* is derived from French root words meaning “cooked flesh”). This guild kept the practical work of preserving meats alive and thriving, making bacons, hams, sausages, and pâtés.

There were numerous strategies to get around restrictions imposed on any given guild, and the charcutiers were no exception. One of their tactics led to the development of terrines. Charcutiers were not permitted to sell foods baked in pastries, so making and selling pâté en croûte, forcemeat loaves baked in pastry, would not have been allowed according to a strict reading of the charcutiers’ charter. Rather than stop making pâté, the charcutiers baked the forcemeat in an earthenware mold (a terrine) instead of pastry—and so pâté en terrine was created.

## RESTAURANTS AND THE ROLE OF THE GARDE MANGER

The more essential the food, the more closely it was regulated. The more lucrative a guild’s activities, the more likely it was that one guild might be tempted to infringe on another. Each guild fought to protect its individual rights. There were several cases brought before judges to determine if one guild’s activities had crossed the line into another’s.

When the French Revolution began in 1789, the upheaval in noble households was enormous. Noblemen left France to escape the guillotine, leaving their household staffs to look out for themselves. The garde manger, as well as chefs and cooks, were household employees, and as such did not have a formal guild of their own. These workers found their way into restaurants in increasing numbers throughout Europe and the British Isles.

At first there was no widely recognized structure for kitchen workers. There were no established duties or areas of specialization.

It took several years before a serious attempt was made to organize kitchen workers.

Eventually the brigade system, recorded by Auguste Escoffier, detailed a logical chain of command that brought order to the unruly working arrangements of his day. We still use the brigade system and refer to the various “stations” in the kitchen with the names assigned by Escoffier: saucier, rôtiisseur, pâtisier, and garde manger.

When the guild system was officially abolished in 1791, some members of the charcutiers’ guild also joined the ranks of restaurant and hotel kitchen garde manger staffs. Others continued to operate their businesses as before. The positions of charcutier and garde manger have always been closely linked, since they are both founded on cold preserved foods. When the term *garde manger* is used today, it is often understood to include the work of the charcutier as well.

# TODAY'S GARDE MANGER

The position of garde manger, recast in a restaurant setting, has retained its traditions of preparing a variety of preserved and cold foods. It has also expanded its scope to include appetizers, hors d'oeuvre, salads, sandwiches, and the accompanying cold sauces and condiments. The garde manger is involved in à la carte service as well as banquets, receptions, buffets, and off-site catering.

The techniques required to prepare pâtés, terrines, sausages, and fresh cheeses are the particular domain of the garde manger. However, becoming a skilled garde manger also means learning a broad base of culinary skills, those directly related to handling basic cold food preparations as well as those required to prepare hot foods: roasting, poaching, simmering, and sautéing meats, fish, poultry, vegetables, grains, and legumes.

It is precisely because the skills and responsibilities are so broad that many of today's most highly regarded chefs got their start in the garde manger as apprentices or commis. In addition, recent years have seen a rebirth of the more traditional practices of charcuterie and cheese making by purveyors with retail shops and wholesale businesses. Handcrafted foods such as country-style hams, sausages, pâtés, and fresh and aged cheeses are increasingly available to both the restaurant chef and the home cook.

## establishments

Hotels, full-service restaurants, and private clubs that offer à la carte menus may have one or more people working exclusively in the area of garde manger, though the specific name of this area varies from place to place. Some operations refer to it as the pantry, others may call it the salad station, still others the cold side, and so on. The specific duties of this station can include cold sauces and soups, salads, hors d'oeuvre, and canapés.

During à la carte service, the garde manger typically plates salads and cold appetizers, and may also be responsible for plating desserts. The breakfast, lunch, and brunch menus often rely heavily upon the garde manger as well.

Cooks and chefs working in banquet and catering operations practice all the same basic



*An example of a contemporary garde manger kitchen.*

cooking skills as the garde manger in an à la carte restaurant. However, the approach to work is slightly different. This work is so stimulating and challenging that many professionals choose it as a lifelong career path. Here, where the goal is to produce and serve flavorful, attractive food to large numbers of individuals simultaneously, you learn to use the special equipment and cooking techniques of volume production. The chef not only develops a menu but also handles all the planning necessary to come up with scaled recipes, accurate and timely orders for food and other items, and food costs. Presentation is often a significant component of banquets and receptions. Decor, appropriate and effective garnishes for plates, platters, and other food displays, and concerns for food quality and customer safety are considered. The nature of large events often involves a certain level of risk, and always calls for the ability to think under pressure and come up with a creative solution to a crisis. To learn more about the development and management of a buffet, read Chapter 11, “Buffet Presentation.”

Delicatessens, charcuteries, and shops selling prepared foods of all types offer yet more options for the professional garde manger. Their goods may be sold through a retail shop or exclusively to those in the restaurant trade. Large companies, including hotel and restaurant chains and food manufacturers, look to those with strong skills in garde manger to undertake projects such as the development of a new line of sauces, condiments, spice rubs, or salad blends.

## types of work

Both employers and schools recognize that formal education on its own is not enough to ensure excellence. Garde manger is a practical art. To succeed, you need to work. Whether you work for yourself or for someone else, you must make choices about your work carefully.

It is tempting to make a decision based on salary, location, or some similar immediately tangible consideration. However, if you consider each job as an investment in your future, it is far easier to evaluate the long-lasting rewards.

Making wise career choices is complicated, so take the time to evaluate any career move. Develop your own plan for the future as specifically as you can so that you can determine the type of establishment and the type of work that will set you up to attain the next level in your career.

Look for work environments where each person has a stake in getting things done correctly. When all personnel have the opportunity to help make decisions and have the tools they need to perform at their best, everyone succeeds. If you want to do a job well, you need to know the quality standards. Objective evaluations, constructive criticism, and additional training are part of any good working situation.

## entry level

Work at the entry level includes cleaning and cutting produce, making vinaigrettes and compound butters, and following simple standard recipes under supervision. It is important to ask questions and follow advice, watch carefully what goes on around you, and supplement what you see and hear by reading. Taste foods that are both familiar and unfamiliar to you, and keep accurate notes and records. Begin compiling a foundation of knowledge by assembling a library of books and subscriptions, as well as important contact numbers and URLs.

Effectively juggling multiple projects over time is impossible without the ability to accurately evaluate your time, space, and resources. Since many tasks in the garde manger kitchen can span weeks or even months, organizational skills are of utmost importance. You can develop these skills by observing your more organized coworkers

and supplementing those observations with readings.

You should also learn the necessary skills to handle special equipment safely and efficiently. Slicers, mixers, grinders, blenders, food processors, thermometers, sous vide machines, smokers, sausage stuffers, and salometers are just a few of the specialized pieces of equipment used in the garde manger and smokehouse.

## advanced level

As your skills improve, you move from entry-level positions into positions of more responsibility. You take on more advanced and challenging work, and your title may advance to lead or executive chef. At this level you have more responsibility for conceiving new menu items, recording standard recipes, costing, and developing and maintaining a budget. You will train kitchen and dining room staff in the proper presentation of new and standard menu items. You are responsible for keeping food costs down and improving quality in all areas of your work.

Banquet and buffet chefs develop menus—both standard and custom—and go through a process of scaling and costing each menu item. Staffing and scheduling responsibilities for the banquet chef include maintaining and training a relatively large pool of talent, often working directly with the dining-room manager. One special aspect of this work involves coordinating with other service providers, such as florists, musicians, and photographers.

Entrepreneurs develop handcrafted specialty items that are produced on both small and large scales. Their work focuses more on the development of a product or line of products for sale. They must be concerned with a variety of regulations, certifications, and inspections in order to be sure that foods prepared for sale meet all necessary legal requirements. Food quality and cost remain as important as ever, and additional business concerns accrue. To grow a company from something small and local into something large, some key factors that should be focused on in order to sell and distribute items include consistency, timeliness, packaging, labeling, and general appeal.

# THE PRACTICE OF A PROFESSION

Any profession has a great many sides, and the culinary vocation is no different. A culinary professional is an artist, a businessperson, a scientist, and a cultural explorer, among other attributes. Acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in this profession is a lifelong journey.

## education and training

Employers today look for both experience and education when they hire at virtually all levels above entry level. At the most prestigious shops, even entry-level positions may demand

a degree or some sort of formal training. Employees look for jobs that offer the opportunity to use the skills and education they already possess and, at the same time, the chance to learn new skills.

## formal education

The increasing emphasis on formal education goes hand in hand with the emergence of a number of programs dedicated exclusively to the culinary arts. Employers rely upon the general and specific skills of the craft taught by these schools to establish a common

ground of ability. This saves them hours of on-the-job training. The demand for graduates continues to grow each year, and so has the number of programs specializing in the culinary arts. The best education couples hands-on practice with coursework devoted to product and equipment knowledge. In addition, a well-rounded program provides study in important aspects of culinary arts as a business: customer service, math, food and menu costing, team building, and organizational skills.

Programs that are recognized in the industry attract high-quality instructors and offer opportunities for students to network, join clubs and organizations, compete, and do advanced studies in an area of specialization. Their graduates receive plenty of hands-on experience and develop confidence and control in all areas of culinary arts. Industry leaders look to graduates of those programs to staff their companies because they bring with them a solid foundation.

Even garde manger chefs who already have achieved significant success in their careers take advantage of the many opportunities offered through continuing education. Classes that are tailored to a specific topic give professionals exposure to new techniques and methods and new equipment and ingredients.

## food knowledge

The ingredients that the garde manger uses on a daily basis run the gamut from the mundane and utilitarian, such as calves' heads and pigs' feet, to the costly and exotic, including saffron, foie gras, caviar, and truffles.

When you know what an ingredient looks like, tastes like, and acts like, you can use that knowledge to be more creative, more adaptable, and more efficient. At first you may rely solely upon the recipe or formula to tell you what to use. As long as everything required by the recipe is on hand, things should work

out. Take the extra minute or two required to really examine the ingredient and make note of what it looks like, how it smells or feels, its shape, and its color.

Classes, workshops, or demonstrations that offer comparison tastings are excellent learning opportunities. You can also arrange your own blind tastings. This information is invaluable, whether your responsibility is using ingredients appropriately or buying them to maintain quality and profit.

Beyond knowing the color, taste, and cost of an ingredient, however, today's garde manger chefs typically find themselves facing an increasing number of special concerns about the manner in which foods are grown, harvested, and processed. A safe and wholesome food supply is a growing concern of both the public and the profession. Topics such as sustainable agriculture, bioengineering, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), organics, and the support of local and regional growers all factor into the decisions you and your business must make.

## equipment knowledge

It is true that the foods made by the garde manger and charcuterie are not beyond the technical skill of any good cook, and many individuals enjoy making their own sausages, bacon, or smoked trout. However, acquiring the tools and ingredients, as well as the skills required to use them, can be time-consuming and somewhat expensive. To produce some items, you need not only the correct equipment and ingredients but also the appropriate storage space—one you can keep at the correct temperature and humidity. In addition to working with knives, pots, and pans, the garde manger must be well versed in the use of equipment such as meat slicers and grinders, food processors, smokehouses, brining tubs and salometers, and, for some practitioners, ice-carving tools.

Learn to use important business tools; computers, the Internet, budgets, accounting systems, and inventory control systems all play a role. Many organizations, from the largest chains to the smallest one-person catering company, rely upon software systems that allow them to efficiently administer a number of areas: inventory, purchases, losses, sales, profits, food costs, customer complaints, reservations, payroll, schedules, and budgets. If you are not using a system capable of tracking all this information and more, you cannot be as effective as you need to be.

## communication skills

A well-written résumé can sell you to a potential employer as well as facilitate interaction with coworkers. Your own mission statement, if properly worded, keeps you on track and helps you make the best possible career moves. A precise and specific plan for an event can keep it on track and on budget. A thorough and fair interview can unearth the perfect employee or business partner. Each of these activities demands good communication skills. Today's garde manger must communicate using a wider variety of media than ever before, from written memos and letters to e-mails, reports, videoconferencing, and interactive learning. A good education program addresses the general and specific communication needs of its students and offers courses, workshops, and tutoring or labs in a wide range of communication skills.

## continuing education

Your education and your experience combine to form the most important source for your personal professional development. Every career choice or move that you make is part of your lifelong education. If you have a long-term plan, you can choose jobs that give you the opportunity to learn new skills and

take on greater responsibility as you advance toward your goals.

Keeping current with basic skills and new trends is a lifelong task. Once initial training has been completed, continuing education is equally important, as the industry is constantly evolving.

Evaluate your career, both as it is right now and as you would like it to be in the future, and then take the appropriate steps to keep on top of the latest information in the areas in which you are most interested. Attend classes and workshops, hone your skills in specialized areas, keep up with new ingredients or equipment, learn new management strategies, or strengthen your skills in team building, writing and communication, marketing, and promotion.

Some of the courses or seminars you attend can earn you credits (CEUs, or continuing education units). They may be necessary to achieve certain certifications or advancements. Continuing education and professional development programs are available through a wide range of colleges and universities, in both traditional and online learning environments.

Not all continuing education occurs in a classroom or over an Internet hookup. Magazines, television programming, newsletters, Web sites, government publications, and books are all excellent sources. Directed travel programs can open up a completely new way of seeing the profession by exposing you to a new cuisine, a new part of the world, a new ingredient, or a new contact.

## networking

The old saying "It's who you know" has a great deal of truth. The group of professionals you know is called a network. A solid network is an indispensable tool for the professional and should include members of your industry from as many areas as possible. Knowing someone in

a niche not obviously related to your own can turn up unexpected opportunities.

Creating a professional network is a task that should be taken seriously. Working with other professionals to share information and knowledge is an important avenue of growth, both professional and personal. Networks can be formal or informal. The way to begin is simply to introduce yourself to others in your field. Have business cards with you when you go out to other restaurants or to trade shows. Write letters to individuals whose work you have seen and admired.

Join professional organizations to expand your network. Well-run groups typically have a variety of meetings and forums to allow members to come in contact with each other. Take advantage of local and national meetings and conventions to learn more about your profession.

When you make a good contact, follow up with a phone call or a note. The communication that you develop with your peers will keep your own work fresh and contemporary,

and an established network makes it much easier for you to find a new job or an employee.

## competition

Contests and competitions offer you a chance to really stretch yourself. Professional magazines, journals, newsletters, chef's associations, and Web sites have information about contests on the local, national, and international levels. Whenever you submit your work to the scrutiny of a panel of judges, you learn. Critical review provides you a means to keep improving in a way that your daily production work never can. Practice, research, and the stress of competition exercise your professional muscles, just as competing in a sporting event strengthens an athlete. Even if you are not entered in the competition, attend the judging if you can so that you can benefit from the experience.

# THE GARDE MANGER AS BUSINESSPERSON

## managing physical assets

Physical assets are the equipment and supplies needed to do business. In the case of a restaurant, these might include food and beverage inventory, tables, chairs, linens, china, flatware, glassware, computers and point-of-sale systems, cash registers, kitchen equipment, cleaning supplies, and warewashing machines. When we talk about managing physical assets, we are considering how anything that you must purchase affects your ability to do business well.

The first step in bringing the expenses associated with your physical assets under control is to know what your expenses actually are. Then you can begin the process of making the adjustments and instituting the

control systems that will keep your organization operating at maximum efficiency.

One of the biggest expenses for any restaurant will always be food and beverage costs. You or your purchasing agent will have to work hard to develop and sustain a good purchasing system. Because each operation has different needs, there are no hard-and-fast rules, just principles that you will apply to your own situation. Maintaining quality is of course the highest priority.

## managing time

It may seem that no matter how hard you work or how much planning you do, the days aren't long enough. Learning new skills, so

that you can make the best possible use of the time you have, certainly ought to be an ongoing part of your career development. If you look over your operation, you will see where time is wasted. In most operations, the top five time-wasters are: (1) no clear priorities for tasks, (2) poor staff training, (3) poor communication, (4) poor organization, and (5) missing or inadequate tools. To combat these time-wasters, use the following strategies.

## invest time in reviewing daily operations

Consider the way you, your coworkers, and your staff spend the day. Does everyone have a basic understanding of which tasks are most important? Do they know when to begin a particular task in order to bring it to completion on time? It can be an eye-opening experience to take a hard look at where the workday goes. Once you see that you and your staff need to walk too far to gather basic items or that the person who washes the dishes is sitting idle for the first two hours of the shift, you can take steps to rectify the problem. You can try to reorganize storage space. You may decide to train the dishwasher to do some prep work, or you can rewrite the schedule so that the shift begins two hours later. Until you are objective about what needs to be done and in what order, you can't begin the process of saving time.

## invest time in training others

If you expect someone to do a job properly, take enough time to explain the task carefully. Walk yourself and your staff through the jobs that must be done, and be sure that everyone understands how to do the work, where to find necessary items, how far each person's responsibility extends, and what to do in case a question or emergency comes up. Give your staff the quality standards they need to evaluate the job and determine if they have done

what was requested, in the appropriate fashion, and on time. If you don't invest this time up front, you may find yourself squandering precious time following your workers around, picking up the slack, and handling work that shouldn't be taking up your day.

## learn to communicate clearly

Whether you are training a new employee, introducing a new menu item, or ordering a piece of equipment, clear communication is important. Be specific, use the most concise language you can, and be as brief as possible without leaving out necessary information. If tasks are handled by a number of people, be sure to write each task out, from the first step to the last. Encourage people to ask questions if they don't understand. If you need help learning communication skills, consider taking a workshop or seminar to strengthen any weak areas.

## take steps to create an orderly work environment

If you have to dig through five shelves to find the lid to the storage container you just put the stock in, you haven't been using your time wisely. Planning work areas carefully, thinking about all the tools, ingredients, and equipment you need for preparation and throughout service, and grouping like activities together are all techniques that can help you organize your work better. Poor placement of large and small tools is a great time-waster. Use adequate, easy-to-access storage space for common items such as whips, spoons, ladles, and tongs. Electrical outlets for small equipment ought to be within reach of everyone. While you may be forced to work within the limits of your existing floor plan, be on the lookout for products or storage strategies that can turn a bad arrangement into one that works smoothly.

## purchase, replace, and maintain all necessary tools

A well-equipped kitchen will have enough of all the tools necessary to prepare every item on the menu. If you can't purchase new equipment, then think about restructuring the menu to even out the workload. If you can't remove a menu item, then invest in the tools you need to prevent a slowdown during service.

## managing information

The garde manger is part of the much larger world. Read about all areas that might affect your career and your industry: business and economics, arts and entertainment, society and politics. Popular culture has a curious way of influencing your work. Your customers and clients do not live in a vacuum, and neither should you.

There are numerous print and online sources devoted to the specifics of new or unusual ingredients, unfamiliar dishes or equipment, and more. Information gathering can become a full-time task on its own. To make use of the information available, you must be able to analyze and evaluate carefully to sift out the important material from useless data and use all sorts of media and technology effectively.

Learn more about the profession's history, not just because it is interesting but also because it gives relevance and ballast to the decisions you make.

## managing people

Restaurant operations rely directly on the work and dedication of a number of people, from executives and administrators to line cooks, wait staff, and maintenance and cleaning staff. No matter how large or small your

staff may be, the ability to engage all your workers in a team effort is one of the major factors in determining whether you will succeed or not.

Most people prefer to work in an environment where everyone can make a distinct and measurable contribution. The first task in creating such an environment is a properly written job description. Training is another key component. To do a job well, the employee needs to know the quality standards and have those standards consistently reinforced with clear, objective evaluations, feedback, constructive criticism, and, when necessary, additional training or disciplinary measures.

Everyone has the right to work in an environment that is free from physical hazards. This means that, as an employer, you must provide a workspace that is well lit, properly ventilated, and free from obvious dangers, such as improperly maintained equipment. Employees must have access to potable water and bathroom facilities. Beyond this bare minimum, you may offer a locker room, a laundry facility that provides clean uniforms and aprons, or other such amenities.

Workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, and disability insurance are also your responsibility. You are required to make all legal deductions from an employee's paycheck and to report all earnings properly to state and federal agencies. Liability insurance (to cover any harm to your facility, employees, or guests) must be kept up to date and at adequate levels.

Employers may choose to offer additional forms of assistance as part of an employee benefits package. Life insurance, medical and dental insurance, assistance with such things as dependent care, adult literacy training, and enrollment in and support for those enrolled in substance abuse programs are examples of the support an employer can provide for employees.

## key qualities of a professional

Every member of a profession is responsible for the profession's image. Those who have made the greatest impact in their fields know that the cardinal virtues of the culinary profession are an open and inquiring mind, an appreciation of and dedication to quality wherever it is found, and a sense of responsibility. Success also depends on several character traits, some of which are inherent, some of which are diligently cultivated throughout a career.

### a commitment to service

The food-service industry is predicated on service; therefore, a culinary professional should never lose sight of what that word implies. Good service includes (but is not limited to) providing quality food that is properly and safely cooked, appropriately seasoned, and attractively presented in a pleasant environment—in short, making the customer happy. The degree to which an operation can offer satisfaction in these areas is the degree to which it will succeed in providing good (and, ideally, excellent) service. The customer must always come first.

### a sense of responsibility

A culinary professional's responsibility is four-fold: to him- or herself, to coworkers, to the restaurant, and to the guest. This should include respecting not just the customer and his or her needs but also staff, food, equipment, and the facility itself. Waste, recklessness, disregard for others, and misuse or abuse of any commodity are unacceptable. Abusive language, harassment, ethnic slurs, and profanity do not have a place in the professional kitchen. When employees feel that their needs are given due consideration, their self-esteem will increase and their attitude toward the establishment will improve; both will increase productivity and reduce absenteeism.

### judgment

Although it is not easy to learn, good judgment is a prerequisite for becoming a professional. An ability to judge what is right and appropriate is acquired throughout a lifetime of experience. Good judgment is never completely mastered; rather, it is a goal toward which one should continually strive.