

**Customer:** Specialty's Café and Bakery,  
San Francisco, CA



**Specialty's**  
Cafe & Bakery

**The Challenge:**

- Offer Specialty's Café and Bakery flexible menu analysis with expert and personalized service.

**Executive Summary:**

*Specialty's had to obey various regional ordinances mandating that chain restaurants post nutrition information for diners. Also, as a made-from-scratch bakery offering handmade quality, they also needed to quantify and standardize variable ingredient amounts. Plus, they wanted the capability to modify recipes in-house. Co-founder Dawn Saxton discovered MenuCalc to be the perfect one-stop solution to Specialty's' needs, with a convenient online application that offers accurate analysis with built-in flexibility. Furthermore, MenuCalc's expert team is a knowledgeable resource on food industry regulations and trends, offering personalized advice and customer support.*

**MenuCalc Features:**

- Online nutrition analysis tool designed to service restaurants and culinary professionals.
- Clients can either elect to license MenuCalc's application for unlimited use and independently perform their nutrition analysis, or to utilize the services of MenuCalc's expert staff.
- Clients can conveniently access their secure user accounts and generate labels from any online computer.
- Concise, export-ready results are



**MenuCalc Makes Nutrition Analysis As Easy as Pie  
for  
Specialty's Café and Bakery**

Headquartered in San Francisco, CA, Specialty's Café & Bakery is a highly respected and successful foodservice company with 22 bakery-cafés in the San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle and Chicago markets. Typically situated within high-traffic business areas, each Specialty's store features an exhibition bakery. The company's focus is its renowned food: fresh-baked, breads, cookies and pastries; plus handmade sandwiches; homemade soups; and fresh salads. Appreciative customers consistently rate food quality and flavor as the number one reason they prefer Specialty's. Ever since the company's establishment in 1988, co-founder and vice-president of product development Dawn Saxton has personally supervised recipe development, product creation and food quality. In 2003, Specialty's expanded its catering business following the acquisition of SandwichDirect.com.

**Situation**

When new ordinances in California and Washington mandated that chain restaurants post nutrition information for diners, Specialty's Café and Bakery faced an unusual challenge. As a made-from-scratch bakery offering exceptional handmade quality, many recipes utilized ambiguous quantities such as a "pinch of corn" and a "handful of flour." Saxton knew she needed assistance in complying with the new rulings. Furthermore, she had to precisely quantify variable

ingredients in order to ensure complete consistency throughout Specialty's various stores and preserve the company's famous homemade taste. She researched and then rejected most of the menu analysis options in the marketplace, including costly laboratories, third-party consultants and nutrition CD-ROMs.

Saxton said the big impersonal laboratories seemed unable to provide the level of attention and personalization that Specialty's needed, whereas many consultants gave the impression of being just a single person inputting recipes into their PC without the food know-how she considers indispensable to the process. Also, Specialty's earlier attempt at "do-it-yourself" nutrition analysis using computer software had garnered inaccurate results.

### **Flexibility, Expertise and Value**

"I discovered that laboratories and consultants were very definitive – they would supply nutritional analysis for recipes, but would charge a high hourly fee for any extra service," stated Saxton. "Also, none of them offered the flexibility I need. Since I frequently create new menu items, I have to be able to experiment with different ingredients and quantities to achieve the perfect balance between calories and taste."

Saxton discovered MenuCalc, a sophisticated online tool that instantly calculates the nutrition analysis of recipes. MenuCalc claims to effectively slash the high fees charged by laboratories and consultants in half by utilizing a database of 20,000+ ingredients primarily compiled from USDA Nutrient Laboratory data. Results are instant, accurate and accessible 24/7 from any online computer. The application's most unique feature is its built-in flexibility – after the nutrition analysis is complete, clients can log into their customized online accounts and easily modify recipes for increased healthiness or to qualify for FDA-approved claims such as "low-fat". In addition to providing expert, responsive customer service, founder and CEO Lucy Needham and lead Registered Dietician Alyson Mar counsel clients regarding regulations, industry issues and developing food trends. Saxton says that once she met with the MenuCalc team and understood the value of their product, she knew she had found the perfect solution for Specialty's.

"We are super pleased with MenuCalc and can only sing their praises," she noted. "Lucy and her team are food professionals with a fabulous amount of expertise, certification and knowledge. And they are so friendly, helpful and nice – truly the kind of people with whom you want to do business. They have given us a great package with all-inclusive service and there's no nickel-and-diming at all!"

Clients can either choose to license MenuCalc's application for unlimited use and independently perform their nutrition analysis, or else to utilize the services of MenuCalc's staff at a set, per-item rate. Specialty's has selected a third option that effectively combines the two approaches.

## **Stress-Free Service**

Since MenuCalc is web-based, it does not require any new software or elaborate computer set-up procedures. Saxton says she appreciates not having to “own the technology” and “deal with the complications of updating it per changes in FDA rules.”

“Since we own 22 stores across three states, we have three different mandates to observe and likely more on the way,” said Saxton. “I’m so happy to not have to worry about researching new rulings – Alyson takes care of everything for me! She’s also helping us determine exactly how we display the nutritional data in our stores – on menu boards, at point-of-purchase, etc.”

MenuCalc customer support utilizes GoogleDocs online-file sharing to communicate project development. Saxton says that she appreciates the added convenience of this tool. “With GoogleDocs, I can exchange almost immediate feedback with Alyson – it’s so convenient!” she said. “And there’s no need for loads of extra emails, which is an added plus. I’m just so impressed with everything about MenuCalc – Alyson and Lucy are amazing and I’d definitely recommend them to everyone in the industry. MenuCalc is the nutrition analysis service that everyone needs!”

## **More about MenuCalc**

MenuCalc is one of two nutrition analysis applications developed by San Francisco, CA-based FoodCalc® LLC. Founded in 2003, FoodCalc develops unique online solutions for a healthier America. FoodCalc also built LabelCalc®, the only online tool that instantly generates accurate, up-to-date FDA-compliant nutrition facts panels for small-to-medium sized food manufacturers. For more information, visit [www.MenuCalc.com](http://www.MenuCalc.com) and [www.LabelCalc.com](http://www.LabelCalc.com); email [info@MenuCalc.com](mailto:info@MenuCalc.com) or [info@LabelCalc.com](mailto:info@LabelCalc.com) or call (888) 804-0001.

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