

Customer: Chef-K, Alameda, CA



**The Challenge:**

- Offer Chef-K affordable and flexible menu analysis with expert customer service.

**Executive Summary:**

*Chef-K wanted to offer nutrition information as part of its culinary health programs. Founder Laurie Zerga researched menu analysis options including laboratories, consultants and nutrition CD-ROMs. She identified web-based MenuCalc to be the perfect solution for her needs, combining a cost-effective package with built-in flexibility and responsive 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 delivered instantly.
- MenuCalc's database includes 20,000+ ingredients compiled from USDA Nutrient Laboratory data. It is continuously updated for accuracy.
- MenuCalc automatically recognizes FDA-approved Nutrient Content Claims per recipe.



**MenuCalc Cooks Up Cost-Effective, Flexible Nutrition Analysis for Chef-K**

Headquartered in Alameda, CA, Chef-K (an acronym for Culinary Health Education for Kids) provides culinary education programs geared to children and teenagers. Founded by former Fortune 500 executive Laurie Zerga, Chef-K offers age-specific programs for use in schools and youth community groups. The six-week courses are typically for groups of 12 to 15 youngsters, and cover everything from nutritional basics and menu planning to cooking techniques like pan grilling, roasting and sautéing. Chef-K's client roster includes the San Francisco Unified School District, the Boy Scouts of America, the Alameda Boys & Girls Club, U.S. Air Force, and private schools.

**Situation**

For Zerga, offering nutrition information as part of her programs was an intuitive decision. "Since I'm trying to teach kids how to read labels and be aware of nutrition content, it makes sense to include this data for each of my recipes," she noted. After investigating various menu analysis options in the marketplace, Zerga concluded that laboratories and third-party consultants were cost-

prohibitive since they charge on a per-recipe basis. Furthermore, the technical overhead involved with software programs made them an impractical choice as well. She decided to try MenuCalc, a web-based tool that instantly calculates the nutrition analysis of recipes, with results that are accessible 24/7 from any

online computer. MenuCalc cuts 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.

### **Cost-Effectiveness, Flexibility and Customer Service**

"MenuCalc is affordable and offers the flexibility I need," said Zerga. "Multiple people on my team can access nutrition information from different locations, which makes things very easy. Plus, the company's customer service is always very responsive to our comments and questions. When we once told them we were unable to update our recipes without re-entering all the ingredients, they took immediate steps to fix the problem. Now, all we need to do is tweak a recipe slightly and it's definitely made our lives much easier."

Erin Kamei, Chef-K's Food Scientist, agrees that MenuCalc is superior to other menu analysis solutions such as nutrition CD-ROMS. "When I worked for a previous employer, I used Genesis R&D nutrition software, which required installation on each work station and license fees as well," she said. "I prefer MenuCalc because the system is on-line, which is convenient for multiple users. Plus, MenuCalc's customer support is great!"

### **Customization and Cutting-Edge Consulting**

An exclusive feature of MenuCalc allows clients to log into their individual online accounts and easily customize recipes for increased healthiness or to qualify for FDA-approved claims such as "low-fat". In addition, CEO Lucy Needham and lead Registered Dietitian Alyson Mar regularly counsel clients about new regulations, current industry issues and developing food trends. These services underline the company's commitment to fulfilling all its customers' needs as part of a 'one-stop nutrition analysis solution', says Needham.

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. It is also possible to effectively combine the two approaches.

### **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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