



# KEEPING CONTROL OF COSTS

Former Michelin-starred chef John Wood set up his software business Kitchen CUT to help restaurants, cafes and bars manage their operations better to boost profits, reduce food waste and deal with crucial issues like allergens



“Trying to get creative individuals like chefs to work in spreadsheets doesn’t work” **John Wood**

food, to work in spreadsheets doesn’t work,” Wood explains. The software is suitable for businesses of all sizes, from single-outlet cafes to large chains – they just upgrade as and when required. Customers just sign up online and get started. Wood says the basic £9.99/month package is a good start for most cafes: it enables them to cost every item on the menu, from sandwiches to milk shakes to cups of coffee. Armed with this information, they can better control portion sizes, for example, which can have a significant impact on profits, Wood says. Overfilling chicken sandwiches by as little as 10g each adds up. “If you sell 1,000 of them that’s 10kg of chicken you’re giving away! And that’s just one product.”

Controlling food waste can also lead to big savings, he says. Business owners need to be diligent about inputting data into the system – food costs, recipe ingredients and the weight of food destined for the bin. But with this information, the system calculates the value of what is thrown away. “The results of this can be absolutely shocking,” Wood says. “But knowing why, how and when you’re wasting food, and

the value of it, you can then do something about it. And by making fundamental changes to control food waste, you can improve your gross profit margins by anything between 1-2%.”



Keeping a tight control on food allergens is crucial for all hospitality businesses, and the system helps with this too. Once a business inputs all the ingredients contained in the food and beverages they serve – from fresh produce to every

ingredient listed on a jar of mayonnaise – the Kitchen CUT system identifies the 14 key allergens. This means customers can be accurately informed about what’s in the food they’re eating. “And should you ever end up in a court case, if you show due diligence and you have a process and a system in place identifying allergens, you are doing all you can to be compliant.”

Wood says food and beverage business owners should think of the Kitchen CUT system as way of simplifying tasks they often don’t do rigorously enough. “Kitchen CUT allows them to understand costs and margins so they can make better-informed financial decisions and make more money.”

**It started with a simple idea. Chefs have better things to do than count jars and fill in spreadsheets, tasks crucial to the financial success of a hospitality business.** So, John Wood devised his own technology to save chefs from these jobs so they can get on with what they do best: cooking and developing recipes. Now, thousands of businesses in 56 countries are using the unique cloud-based Kitchen CUT software to manage their businesses better and tightly control costs.

The leap from developing recipes to software solutions might seem unusual,

but makes perfect sense. Wood began his culinary career at the age of 15, working part time at the Black Cat, the Bristol restaurant owned by the late celebrity restaurateur Keith Floyd. Wood went on to work in and run some of the most prestigious kitchens in the world – The Savoy, the Dorchester, The Burj Al Arab in Dubai and the UK’s Cliveden Hotel. And he earned a Michelin star at his own restaurant, Chapter One, in Kent.

It got to the point where Wood, now 52, was being asked by more and more struggling restaurants to advise them on

where they were going wrong. And he realised that most chefs were failing to do the basics: stock control, costing menus, controlling portion sizes and curbing waste. So, he joined forces with tech-savvy colleagues to devise some easy-to-use software to help chefs carry out these tasks. The result was Kitchen CUT, a system that costs recipes, calculates their nutritional content and identifies allergens, tracks food waste, controls stock levels and more.

“Trying to get creative individuals like chefs, who just want to be cooking great

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## WHAT’S INCLUDED IN THE BASIC PACKAGE

### Recipe costing and menu planning

Allows chefs to easily write, cost and calculate the profitability of every recipe. This enables food and beverage businesses to maintain and improve margins. For example, when the cost of tomatoes goes up, Kitchen CUT applies the increase to every dish, identifying potential cost overruns.

### Nutritional analysis

Using the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) database and the McCance & Widdowson CoFID datasets, the system calculates the nutrient content of every menu item. This includes Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDAs) and calorific content.

### Allergen tracking

The system tracks allergens from supplier to serving, flagging up the 14 food allergens that need to be indicated to customers under EU regulations. This enables food and beverage businesses to offer menus identifying all allergens, giving customers peace of mind.

### Wastage tracking

The system tracks and traces kitchen waste, identifying when, where and how it was generated. This enables food and beverage businesses to work out strategies to cut back on the waste they generate and potentially turn waste into profit.