

Finding the Co-packer Right for You

Any food company interested in producing their own product must be aware of state and federal health regulations and standards, as well as the time and costs associated with getting a kitchen up to code. In addition to regulations regarding the kitchen, there are also city zoning laws that might restrict certain business activities on the company's property. If your company is facing these obstacles, you might want to consider contracting with a co-packer and using the following tips to simplify the search process:

Start with TDA

TDA has the comprehensive resources you need to start your search. Check with the GO TEXAN program by calling (877) 99GO-TEX for a list of co-packer companies.

Decide on a recipe

Determine whether you will use your own recipe or if you will work with your co-packer to develop a new recipe according to your specifications.

Research

Take a look at how long your co-packer has been in business and check references. Contact other GO TEXAN food companies who use co-packers and ask questions about their experiences and whether or not they have any recommendations or suggestions.

Be selective

Target co-packers that produce and package similar food products, as they will be set up to efficiently produce your company's product.

Meet and greet

Once you've determined which co-packer interest you, arrange for a meeting with the company and bring your specifications. You might want to consult with your attorney on instructions to protect the confidentiality of your documents and conversation. Also, many co-packers have a model confidentiality contract that you may be able to use.

Take a tour

Arrange for a meeting with the co-packer company and take a tour of the facilities. Take notice of cleanliness and order. Ask to see the most recent inspection report and check to see if the co-packer is operating under a quality control or food safety system. Make sure the co-packer company has the equipment necessary to process, label and package your product.

A good relationship with your co-packer is vital to your company's success. By establishing a solid business relationship with your co-packer company, you'll find that you have the freedom to concentrate on marketing and selling your product.