

ALL-TIME HIGH PRODUCTION FOR KANSAS CITY STEAK COMPANY®

Putting premium beef on American dinner tables has revenue up 500% during shelter-in-place orders.

Kansas City Steak Company's April 2020 orders skyrocketed six-times year over year, increasing 50% over last April.

With shelter-in-place orders shuttering much of the country, and many Americans wary of going to the store, and still others, not able to find what they want — demand for quality beef has been at an all-time high.

“Obviously the pandemic has fundamentally altered many daily activities of families across the country. And while it’s been a tremendous challenge for our operation as well, it’s been a terrific opportunity for our business. New customers are coming to us in waves, and in a variety of ways,” said Bob Daberkow, Kansas City Steak Company’s director of marketing.

“We’ve been capitalizing on pay-per-click and Google Shopping ads, as well as direct-mail pieces, and space advertising in newspapers and magazines. We’re getting in front of these new customers in hopes of creating lifelong relationships with them.”

These relationships are the lifeblood of any business, but it’s specifically the case for Kansas City Steak. The massive influx in orders has led to an equally massive number of customer service calls, emails and comments for Kansas City Steak Company’s customer service team to field.

All while working from home, in new circumstances, with five times the amount of incoming activity, and all without any extra staff on hand to help.

There’s been a lot of heavy lifting, but as they’ve answered calls, responded to emails and messaged

continued on page 2



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— Tina Boutelle, customer service manager

continued from page 1

customers on Facebook, they've been privy to some pretty amazing customer stories.

One such story comes from friends at The University of Kansas Health System (TUKHS). As part of a growing partnership with Kansas City Steak, their team started placing orders for their cafeteria in order for staff, patients and families to have grab-and-go goodness.

Thrust into the nation's spotlight, frontline healthcare workers spend all day on their feet serving, caring for and nurturing patients back to health, in the middle of a terrifying pandemic. And then when they're finished, they still have to go to the grocery store to find ways to care for and serve their own families.

As the crisis began to unfold, TUKHS wanted to do more. They wanted to take care of their people.

In early March, TUKHS placed a large order for hot dogs, burgers, sirloins and potatoes, and put the product in the carryout area of their cafeteria. This time, they discounted the price of the products, and placed the items out for their employees to grab on the way home. Allowing them, after a long, hard day of caring for others, to skip the store and head home to their families.

That first order sold quickly, and TUKHS placed another right away.

"Those healthcare workers spent a long day serving others. This is a way for them to be taken care of — by cutting out that grocery store trip. Even deeper than that, it cuts out an uncertain stop when they're already worried about exposing others to the virus they've been battling for their whole shift," explained Paul Ghekas, Kansas City Steak Company

continued on page 3



Coolers holding orders of Kansas City Steak products head from packaging to FedEx and UPS trucks for delivery to the homes of consumers.

continued from page 2

director of corporate sales.

The team at Kansas City Steak Company has received a lot of calls, orders and stories just like that.

And what's more, customers on the other end of the phone would never know how stretched the team has been. They'd never know that their entire work culture and mode of operations were turned upside down. They'd never be able to tell that they're in peak, holiday-mode production — with the same non-peak, non-holiday staff.

The marketing, sales, operations and customer service teams at Kansas City Steak Company describe the current work environment like an all-hands-on deck, start-up culture kind of environment.

In the beginning, the switch to working remotely was a big undertaking. But Mike Pawela and his IT team enabled them to hit the ground running.

And with the boom in business, they've also run into shortages making it difficult to get product out the door. Shortages of dry ice, Styrofoam and even operations labor. Difficult, but not impossible. They've still made sure that product is shipped the day after an order is placed.

They've been juggling long labor hours from home, multiple tasks, new vendors — and yet, they're basically performing like rock stars.

"The team at our Osage Avenue cutting facility has been working tirelessly, going above and beyond to keep us in stock so we can keep providing steaks for our customers," Daberkow said. "There's no way we could have handled this enormous rush in orders without

their dedication."

With millions of Americans searching for beef from the comfort and safety of their homes, worried about potential meat shortages, the Kansas City Steak team and product line have been a welcomed relief. Because of the team working in unison, the influx of new customers will likely lead to long-term, repeat, loyal purchasers.

Beyond the order-number spike, the humanity behind the orders is what keeps the team motivated.

"We're hearing a lot of stories and gratitude from these new customers," said Tina Boutelle, customer service manager.

"We're providing something that people are struggling to get. People were afraid of going to the grocery store in those first few weeks. And even if they did go, their meat selection was extremely limited. Being able to order our incredible products from the safety of their couch or kitchen table, gives them such comfort. And then when they actually get to eat and experience our products, well...the taste tells the whole story."

One such story came from a new customer: "I ordered the gift combo during the COVID-19 quarantine as a birthday present for my husband. We were not together because I had to be isolated. The delivery arrived promptly and my husband said it was the best birthday present he ever received. He is finding comfort enjoying the delicious steaks and pork chops."

It's much more than enjoying really great beef. It's avoiding a trip to the store, and the quality and consistency that's delivered to your doorstep.

It's more about safety and peace of mind than anything else. Maybe like 500% worth. ♦



National Beef®