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INFOST 230-003

Organization of Non-bibliographical Things

Just about everyone knows the secret behind the “billions and billions served” saying on McDonald’s light-up sign panels. The mass production food process, modeled after assembly lines used in the automotive industry, was quickly adapted by major “quick service” restaurants around the world. The system was used as a way to ensure that food reaches customers in a timely manner with a consistent quality and taste. As of 2012, McDonald’s has opened 34,492 globally, with 41%*¹ operating in the United States alone. McDonald’s food assembly line, originally known as the “Speedee Service System”, has astounded the restaurant world despite its humble beginnings.

McDonald’s was first created by brothers Mac and Dick McDonald in December of 1948. The brothers implemented a new cost-effective system that removed the need for a high quality chef, dish washer, waitress, or car hop². Through their new division of labor, each person was only assigned one task. The brothers redesigned the entire menu and threw out everything on it that required utensils and dishes to be washed and opted for a simpler menu of burgers and fries wrapped in disposable products. They also removed everything from the menu that took more time and ability to create, and purchased appliances that simultaneously cooked larger volumes of food than before.

Today, a lot of the legacy of the Speedee Service System is still flourishing though it is managed by a different corporation. The McDonald brothers were bought out of the franchise by their first licensee Ray Kovic in 1961 who still continued operating the company under the

¹ (Burn-Murdoch 2013)

² (HighwayHost.org n.d.)

McDonald's name. The company is now franchised in 123 countries (116 independently owned), and due to the differences of standards and customs within each, information provided will be limited to the McDonald's food manufacturing operations within the United States only³.

Presently at the corporate level, McDonald's has implemented several illustrated visual aids to ensure that all food is assembled correctly⁴. The corporate office also directs the individual franchises on how to organize packaging, food, and equipment to facilitate the process. Sometimes, the corporate office will introduce new items or remove items from the menu which as a result alters the assembly process for the franchisees. At the restaurant level, management of the assembly line has changed little. Food preparation and cooking are responsibilities divided amongst the crew members. Crew members with higher tactic knowledge are usually appointed to train new hires in safe and proper food handling and assembly procedures. Ranking above the crew members, a hierarchy of managers⁵ are appointed to oversee individual locations to ensure quality, efficiency, and excellent service from the assembly line. Technology is also implemented to manage the food manufacturing process as well.

Computer systems and several monitors are used to keep track of individual orders, and then time the order from the instant the cashier is finished processing the order, to the moment the order is completed and being delivered to the customer⁶. The computers provide averages and totals that are used to evaluate the system's efficiency at each location. Managers assess the data processed by the systems and make their decisions based accordingly.

To have access to the assembly line, one must be employed by McDonald's. Traditionally, being an audience to the food assembly line was often a form of entertainment. The original restaurants featured an open-concept layout that allowed patrons to fully watch the process of their

³ (HighwayHost.org n.d.)

⁴ See Appendix A: *Sample Burger Assembly Chart/Cheat Sheet*

⁵ See Appendix B: *Chart of the Managerial Hierarchy of McDonald's Restaurants*.

⁶ (Barnett 1977)

food being made⁷. Today, customers can still see crew members working the food assembly, but it is no longer a focal point in society.

Due to the decline in popularity of viewing how the food is made and improvements in design flow, the cooking area has been restructured to a compact design to maximize the eating area and make the kitchen area more efficient though it is smaller.

The prep station is identical on both sides and located in the middle of the kitchen which allows for more elbow room and more workers to assemble products at the same time. The containers, wrappers, condiments, and non-meat items are conveniently located in the middle of the station between the two counters used for assembling the food. Bread is toasted and ejected from a machine located at the end of the prep station. It is connected to the prep counters which allows buns to be accessible within arm's reach⁸.

The grill and meat fryers are located against the wall containing the menu. The fry machine, pie oven, and beverage items are located on the drive-thru wall or behind the cash register. All items once cooked have assigned storage drawers at the main prep station with the exception of fries which are placed in a warmer connected to the fry station⁹. With this design along with the use of provided food assembly instructional cards, all guesswork has been removed. However, according to an article written by Ann Pappert on HealthDay.com, the Fast Food industry is leading in restaurant related industries amongst young people¹⁰.

63% of work-related injuries in the restaurant industry equate to an estimated 28,000 injuries per year for teens alone in the Fast Food industry. Though training introduces safe handling procedures at McDonald's, little is done to ensure that the safety precautions are being followed with upmost care. Usually being their first job, teens are unaware of how dangerous

⁷ See Appendix C: *Old fashioned McDonald's Restaurant Design Showcasing Assembly Line.*

⁸ See Appendix D: *Prep-area layout for assembly line visual aid description.*

⁹ See Appendix E: *Fry area layout for assembly line visual aid description.*

¹⁰ (Pappert 2013)

taking shortcuts in the procedure and not wearing the proper attire and footwear truly is. As a result, they often do not know their rights as far as workman's compensation, disability, or legal procedures following work-related injuries. As a result, McDonald's Corporation typically save a lot of money yearly due to non-reporting of issues¹¹.

Also, breaking the restaurant service down to the essence of food manufacturing has long raised some concerns in food health. John Cordo discusses Morgan Spurlock's documentary *Super Size Me*, and quotes from the movie that 25% of Americans visit a fast food restaurant everyday. Not only are we the fattest nation in the world, with 60 percent being overweight or obese, but we don't necessarily have McDonald's not to blame as 99% of Americans live within 100 miles of a McDonald's restaurant¹².

As a result of the growing health concerns and worsening image, Wal-Mart proceeded in a giant overhaul to remove all McDonald's restaurants from within their Superstore locations in exchange for Subway's cleaner image. McDonald's has made several attempts to clean up their image in the United States with the introduction of salads, grilled chicken sandwiches, healthier breakfast options, fruit smoothies, and an online nutritional meal-planning guide. Unfortunately, they added several unhealthy foods to the menu throughout the same time period like the Mc Café line of specialized coffee and cocoa beverages, McFlurries, seasonal pies, and new burgers. This had a two-fold effect. It somewhat discredited McDonald's efforts to have a cleaner image, and introduced slower service due to the increase in the amount of food, types of food, and processing times for each type of food.

In 2007, 90 seconds was the goal for my McDonald's crew from the time I finished taking the order, to the time the customer drove off with the food. Today, McDonald's is doing an average of 189 seconds in the drive through, 9 seconds more than the other major fast food chains.

¹¹ (McDonald 2011)

¹² (Lubin 2012)

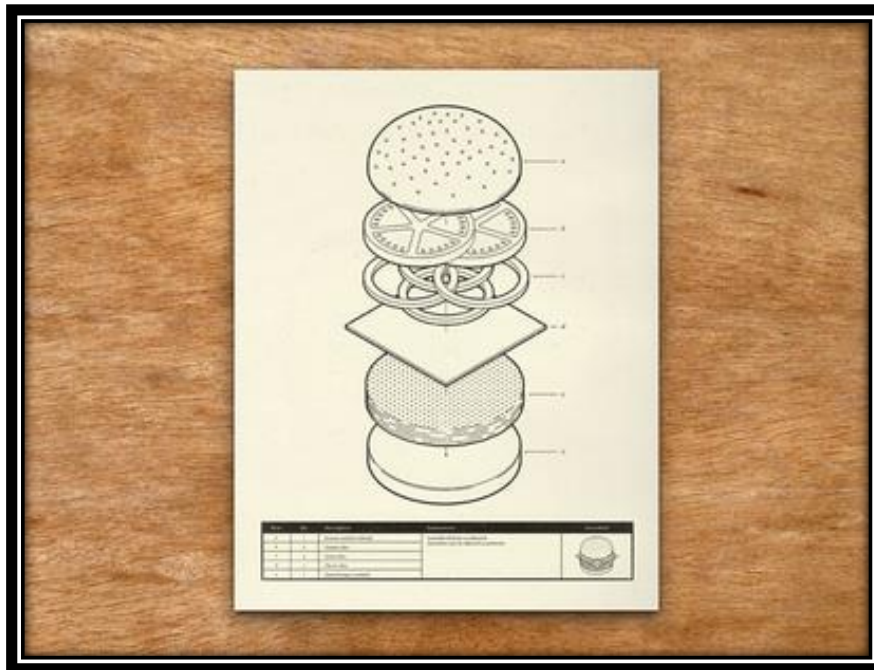
With all the menu additions over the last six years, McDonald's admitted they are much slower now than ever before, and are being forced with the tough decision of figuring out what to keep and get rid of on their menu in order to stay successful¹³.

Though their assembly line isn't popular anymore in terms of entertainment or timing, McDonald's still has successes in their system. By far the most popular fast food restaurant in terms of volume, McDonald's sees a daily volume of about 62 million customers, which is more customers than the entire population of Great Britain according to Business Insider. Their money-saving assembly technique has made McDonald's the 68th biggest economy and one of highest volume of employers. According to the article entitled "McDonald's Hired More than All of the Rest of the Economy Combined without McDonald's Hiring Binge, America Would Have Lost Jobs Last Month," Good.is explores the actual impact of McDonald's on the rest of the nation. Due to the lack of skills necessary for initially starting the job, McDonald's is responsible for employing many people who have low education who would otherwise find it very difficult to find employment elsewhere¹⁴.

¹³ (Cordo 2007)

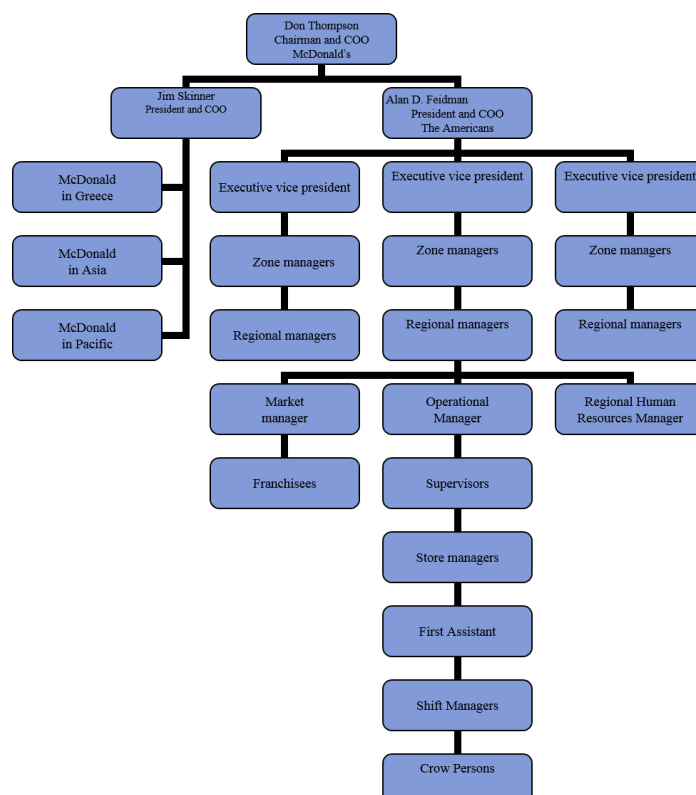
¹⁴ (Goldmark 2011)

Appendix A: Sample Burger Assembly Chart/Cheat Sheet

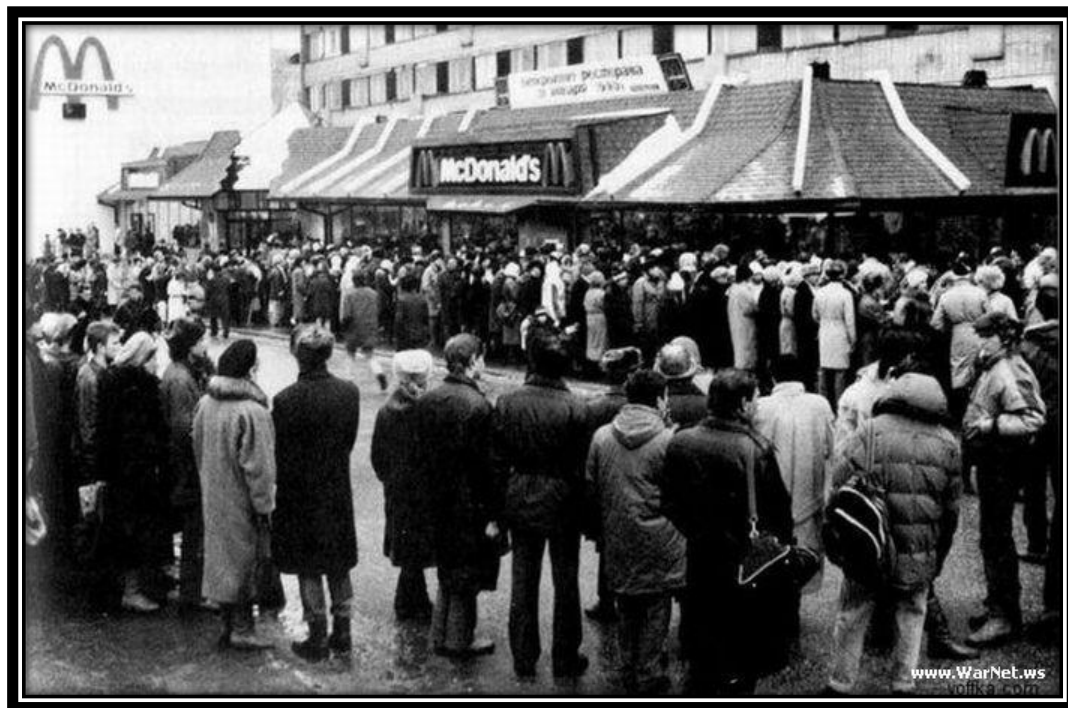


Source: (Bozart 2013)

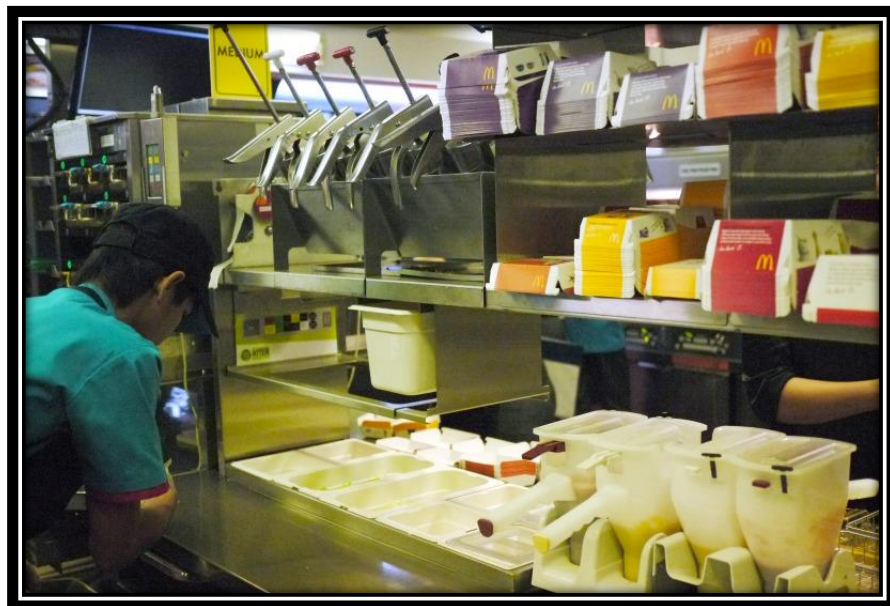
Appendix B: Chart of the Managerial Hierarchy of McDonald's Restaurants



Appendix C: Picture of Crowd Viewing Original Speedee Service System



Appendix D & E: Prep/Fry Area of McDonald's Restaurant



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