



HackMTY 2025 – Pick & Pack of the Future

Pick & Pack Process Overview

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gategroup

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Pick & Pack Process Overview

1. Context

In airline catering, the **Pick & Pack process** is a key operational step where individual service items such as snacks, beverages, and equipment are assembled into standardized drawers, boxes, or trolleys according to each flight's service plan.

It acts as the bridge between **inbound equipment handling** and **outbound flight preparation**, ensuring every aircraft receives correctly packed and verified service equipment.

This activity takes place in a dedicated production area designed for **accuracy, speed, and hygiene**. It requires close coordination between multiple teams such as dishwashing, logistics, and dispatch, and relies on standardized procedures and specifications to maintain consistency across hundreds of daily flights.

2. Process Flow (Simplified)

a. Inbound Equipment Reception

The process begins when **partially or fully consumed trolleys and boxes** return from inbound flights.

These may include:

- Clean equipment already processed by the dishwashing area.
- Slightly dirty trolleys or boxes returned directly from inbound transportation.

Each item is:

- Inspected and sorted.
- Re-cleaned or reassembled if required to meet hygiene and usability standards.
- Then distributed to the Pick & Pack area for refilling and rebuilding.

b. Preparation & Material Supply

Items required for assembly are staged on **pallets or in bins on racks or flow racks** positioned near the working area.

Each flight or customer has a **Specification (Spec)** defining exactly what products and quantities must go into each drawer, box, or trolley.

Typical materials include:

- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages
- Dry grocery items such as snacks, biscuits, and confectionery
- Disposable service items like cups, napkins, stirrers, and lids
- Hygiene and cleaning materials such as wipes and waste bags
- In-drawer components, kits, and other small service items or documentation

To maintain flow and efficiency:

- Materials are pre-staged in small batches.
- This reduces unnecessary movement and waiting time.
- Employees can work continuously without interruption.

c. Assembly Step

Employees assemble drawers following the specification, using a working surface that supports easy access to materials and comfortable handling.

During assembly:

- Items are picked from bins or racks and placed in a specific orientation and position.
- Some products must be squeezed or adjusted to fit within limited space while maintaining neat presentation.
- The most complex specifications require layered packing, where items are stacked in a defined sequence for efficient use of space and easy onboard access.

In high-volume operations, two employees may collaborate:

- One focuses on assembling drawers.
- The other swaps inbound drawers for completed ones to speed up the process.

d. Outbound Preparation

After assembly, drawers, boxes, and trolleys undergo a **quality check** to confirm that contents match the specification.

Then:

- Fully assembled equipment is staged for loading, grouped by flight or service type.
- Some units remain unsealed to continue through a mixing step, where components from different assemblies are combined for final flight configuration.
- Verified units are labeled, recorded, and moved to the dispatch or holding area until loading onto the aircraft.

3. Key Characteristics

- A manual, detail-oriented process requiring precision and coordination.
- Operates under tight deadlines with multiple flights prepared simultaneously.
- Driven by standardized specifications, yet flexible to adapt to different airline setups.
- Offers high potential for digital tools that guide, verify, or track assembly activities in real time.