

# LEAN KITCHEN *Solutions*

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## LEAN KITCHEN SOLUTIONS, LLC BRINGS “LEAN” CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES TO THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY

*Designers Tom Ligocki and Mike Toska “trim the fat” from restaurant kitchens  
using the principles that made Ford and Toyota successful*

SHEBOYGAN, WISC. (March 24, 2010) –In these lean economic times, restaurants that are leaner are also “greener.” **Lean Kitchen Solutions LLC**, a Wisconsin-based design consultancy, helps restaurants and other foodservice operators achieve optimal performance by cutting down not only on their food, energy and water waste, but also on wasted time, labor and worker input.

Co-founders **Tom Ligocki**, a former manufacturing industry executive with experience in catering, and **Mike Toska**, a seasoned commercial kitchen designer, have done what no other designers have: apply the principles of lean manufacturing, developed by carmakers Ford and Toyota, to commercial kitchens. As a result, Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC helps its clients – from restaurants to university food courts, hospital cafeterias and corporate settings – not only save the environment, but also countless dollars associated with the high costs of running a foodservice operation.

## **What is Lean?**

Often referred to simply as “lean”, lean manufacturing is a production method aimed at driving out operational waste in order to improve efficiencies in time, energy, money, and product value. In short, lean focuses on improving output with the least amount of input possible, whether that means cutting down on the steps a worker takes to complete a task, or designing workstations and equipment that are ergonomically correct to improve workplace safety and comfort.

In the early 1900s, Henry Ford capitalized on the principles of industrial engineering when developing his assembly line system that made him the most successful auto maker in the U.S. Toyota later coined the term “lean manufacturing” to describe and implement these operational principles in their worldwide production plants. The Japanese carmaker’s “lean” system involves identifying and eliminating the top seven elements of waste: transportation, inventory, worker motion, waiting for production, overproduction, over-processing, and defects.

## **The Lean Kitchen**

In commercial kitchens, waste occurs with food, but also when it comes to the operation’s use of energy, water, and labor. Any expenditure of resource or energy that does not service the customer is considered wasteful under “lean” terms.

Ligocki and Toska first applied lean principles to commercial kitchen design when they founded **Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC** in 2008. Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC distinguishes itself from other kitchen design and restaurant consulting companies by using these principles to improve and streamline processes and improve a kitchen’s flow and energy use. Lean Kitchen Solutions also focuses on ergonomically correct equipment and layouts as well as reducing other waste in terms of space, equipment, inventory, personnel, and movement.

“Designing a lean kitchen means creating a value stream with the target of ensuring that value gets to the customer, and the customer remains the focal point for the entire process and business,” Ligocki said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s a restaurant, an elder-care center or even a hot-dog stand on the street, lean concentrates always on delivering quality product to the customer.”

In this unique type of kitchen design, Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC first evaluates the entire Value Stream to identify the tasks and movements of each and every worker in the kitchen, dining room, and surrounding area. Doing so identifies bottlenecks and helps Ligocki improve the flow in a kitchen by reducing potential “traffic jam” buildups of workers in busy areas.

Ligocki and Toska also work to ensure their kitchen designs help clients that are building new or remodeling existing kitchens achieve the following:

- Reduce or stay within budgets
- Use kitchen space wisely
- Improve staff comfort and morale
- Better control inventory and purchasing
- Lower construction and operational costs
- Reduce clean-up time
- Increase seating capacity
- Increase service time
- Improve the quality of the environment and dining experience

“If the kitchen doesn’t work for your staff, the food isn’t going to work for the guests,” Ligocki said. “There is a reason why ‘lean’ has revolutionized the manufacturing industry. A kitchen should perform to its highest level, not just cook stuff.”

Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC clients span both the commercial and noncommercial foodservice sectors, and across multiple industry segments. Some examples of clients include:

- Restaurants
- Franchises
- Colleges and universities
- K-8, K-12 and high schools
- Corporate offices
- Hospitals & elder care facilities
- Catering facilities
- Expo centers
- Architectural firms
- Community service buildings

For a list of other Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC clients and design, contractor and equipment services, visit [www.leankitchensolutions.com](http://www.leankitchensolutions.com). Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC has also partnered with Caterconsult, Inc., [www.caterconsulting.com](http://www.caterconsulting.com), a foodservice business management consultancy, to offer a host of additional services such as concept and strategy development; marketing and social networking; financial planning, and others.

### **Your Lean Score**

Even before the design/re-model phase begins, **Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC** will work with clients to determine their “lean” score, a numerical look at an existing kitchen’s level of peak performance. The object of the scoring process is to provide clients with a place to start while considering a redesign project.

Scores are based on the following kitchen performance attributes:

- Quality of the current business plan
- Efficiencies within each area of the operation
- Frequency of collision zones
- Quality of the equipment positioning and design
- Clear and appropriate employee job instructions and duties
- Dining room efficiencies and layout
- Inventory controls
- Level of waste (space, personnel, inventory, time, equipment, movement)

Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC follows up every initial visit with a written report, along with recommendations on how to improve upon the score. Arrangements can be made to return for re-scoring visits in 30-, 60- and 90-day intervals or as often as preferred.

### **Lean, LEED and Green**

Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC can help LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) projects earn more credits toward certification through the U.S. Green Building Council ([www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)). Lean Kitchen Solution’s designs can earn credits in the categories of Design Innovation, Quickly Renewable Resources and the use of Recycled Materials in fabrication.

Lean is also “green.” As opposed to the standard commercial kitchen format, an efficient, lean commercial kitchen usually requires less floor space, which in turn reduces the carbon footprint of the kitchen facility. In addition, Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC works to improve efficiencies in energy and water usage (through equipment selection and layout), as well as in food waste management and inventory control to reduce hauling costs and divert waste away from landfills.

### **Diner-Mite® by Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC**

While many kitchens traditionally take on a linear layout, Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC also offers their Diner-Mite® concept, an oval shaped, fully-fabricated cooking solution ideal for food courts and other applications. Diner-Mites® also incorporates ventless-hood cooking as well as vented applications.

Designed to fit one or two chefs or cooks, the Diner-Mite® is a self-enclosed, modular kitchen designed for optimum ergonomics and efficiency in terms of worker steps. Everything is within a cook's reach in the Diner-Mite® solution, from the cooking equipment in front of the worker to the prep-cooking space off to one side, undercounter refrigeration for storage below, and raised serving platform where customers grab plated food. All Diner-Mite® applications can be fully customizable to fit a client's menu and service needs. Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC offers an array of equipment choices: from top-name and Energy Star-rated brands, to fabricated solutions and alternative needs based on budget, production, energy-saving and "green" kitchen goals. For more information, visit [www.diner-mite.com](http://www.diner-mite.com).

### **About Lean Kitchen Solutions**

Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC is a forward-thinking company that utilizes lean concepts and principles to provide consultation, design, project management and build-installation services for commercial kitchen projects. Tom Ligocki grew up in the catering business, later going on to spend decades as a lean process specialist with various manufacturing companies. Mike Toska, a former naval submarine designer with experience in marketing and IT, spent a decade running his own commercial kitchen design firm before teaming up with Ligocki. Lean Kitchen Solutions, LLC is a proud member of the Lean Enterprise Institute (LEI) and the Lean Construction Institute (LCI), Foodservice Consultants Society International (FCSI), the National Association of College & University Food Services, (NACUFS), and The Professional Association for Design (AIGA). For more information, visit [www.leankitchensolutions.com](http://www.leankitchensolutions.com)

### **About Caterconsult, Inc.**

Caterconsult, Inc. is a full-service business management consultancy for restaurants and other foodservice operators, helping business owners with strategic planning; email and print marketing; website development, search engine optimization; social networking; contact management; software integration; leadership, communication, sales training; staff development, financial management and a host of additional services. Founder and President Jody Birnbaum, a twenty-plus-year veteran of the catering business, is the former owner of Pear Tree Catering, Ltd., and currently serves as an adjunct faculty member at the Culinary School of Kendall College. She is also a longstanding member of and speaker with Catersource, the country's leading catering industry resource, among other professional associations. [www.caterconsulting.com](http://www.caterconsulting.com)

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