

Building bonds with food

Well-known for its chilli crabs, Jumbo Seafood now ventures forth into new dining concepts and retail products

by mike lee

MENTION Jumbo Seafood and one thinks of its famous chilli crab and its convivial atmosphere that make group dining a treat.

Set up in 1987, it has not only expanded to six seafood outlets but also developed dining concepts including JPOT, Chin Huay Lim Teow Chew Cuisine, Ng Ah Sio Bak Kut Teh and Yoshimaru Ramen Bar under the parent Jumbo Group.

Those who cannot get enough of Jumbo's award-winning flavours can now even recreate them at home, with its new retail products like chilli crab paste, black pepper crab spice and Bak Kut Teh ready-to-use mixes.

What ties everything together goes back to the Jumbo belief in building bonds through food. And while maintaining this through the years, Jumbo has successfully used technology to adapt to changing business conditions.

Says group chief executive officer Ang Kiam Meng (right): "The increased use of technology is certainly one feature that has changed the restaurant landscape over the years. As we attend to larger crowds and customers who demand efficiency and quality, tapping into technology has been our answer to meeting their needs."

"From making a restaurant reservation to promoting seamless communication of orders between the service crew and kitchen, Jumbo is known for utilising technology to enhance our productivity and providing customers from around the world, a thoughtful, efficient class of service."

"Jumbo also has the use of a high-tech central kitchen that is HACCP-certified and this is in tandem with the increasing awareness and demand of customers to be able to savour the same standard of food across our outlets wherever they are."

Personal digital assistants across outlets have greatly reduced steps in the ordering process and food waiting time; the recently opened JPOT restaurant at Tampines 1 mall uses iPads.

The central kitchen not only ensures food consistency but also reduced food preparation time by 67 per cent since its establishment in 2010.

More than leveraging on technology,



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Jumbo puts an emphasis on building its people. Each new staff member undergoes orientation and an individual training roadmap, with access to over 50 courses including language and service soft-skills courses.

Its recently introduced Fast Track Programme trains ground-level staff to be mid-managers within a year instead of the conventional two and a half years, drafting a progression path for each individual. No staff is overlooked and this has resulted in higher staff morale and motivation, says Mr Ang.

Many staff have remained loyal. About a quarter of employees have stayed more than five years, and around one out of every eight employees has served more than 10 years.

Says Mr Ang: "The key to Jumbo Seafood's success is in our employees, who have stuck true to the motto of bonding people through food. This could not have been possible if not for their years of dedication, effort, perseverance and innovation."

"We can also give huge credit to our customers. Their feedback has allowed us to continuously renew our efforts and strive to give them better dining memories at our outlets."



Happy employees contribute to Jumbo Seafood's success. PHOTO: JUMBO