Get More From Every Purchase

A Guide for Restaurant Owners

A practical guide to understanding how purchasing decisions, supplier programs and rebates can help strengthen your margins.

- **Guide**
- **Checklist**
- **Worksheet**

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Every Purchase Has an Impact

Running a restaurant means making purchasing decisions every day. Food, beverages, packaging, cleaning supplies, equipment, etc all affect how your business operates - and how much value you get back from the money you are already spending.

But purchasing is more than keeping shelves stocked or finding the lowest price.

Every supplier relationship, product choice and program you use can influence your margins, cash flow, and day-to-day operations. A product may look like a good deal on the invoice, but the real value depends on more than price alone. Reliability, product availability, service, rebate eligibility and support all matter.

For many operators, there is limited time to step back and review where the money is going. Between staffing, service, food costs, and daily operations, purchasing can become routine. You order what you need from the suppliers you know and move on to the next priority.

That is exactly where opportunities can be missed.

This guide is designed to help you look at your purchasing more strategically. Instead of asking only, "Am I getting the lowest price?" it helps you ask, **"Am I getting the most value from the purchases I am already making?"**

In this guide, you will learn how to:

- Look beyond invoice price when reviewing supplier value.
- Understand how supplier programs and rebates can support your restaurant.
- Identify areas where you may be missing value.
- Review purchasing categories beyond food.
- Take the first step toward a stronger purchasing strategy.

Look Beyond Price

The Lowest Price Is Not Always the Best Value

Controlling costs is always a priority. When food, labour, rent, utilities and operating expenses put pressure on margins, it makes sense to look closely at the price you are paying for the products and services you need.

But the price on the invoice is only one part of the purchasing decision.

A lower product cost may seem attractive at first, but it may not create value if it comes with unreliable delivery, inconsistent quality, or limited support. In some cases, a slightly higher price may deliver greater value when it comes with consistency, service, program access and eligible rebates over time.

That is why it is important to compare total value, not just product cost.

When reviewing a supplier, consider the full picture:

- Is the pricing competitive?
- Are deliveries reliable and consistent?
- Is the product quality meeting your standards?
- Is support available when issues come up?
- Are your purchases connected to a preferred supplier program?
- Are any of your purchases eligible for rebates?

The goal is not always to change suppliers. In many cases, the first step is understanding whether your current purchasing is connected to the right opportunities.

OPERATOR TIP Before comparing suppliers, look at the full value: price, reliability, product quality, service, program eligibility and rebate opportunities.

Where Purchasing Value Comes From

Purchasing value is not created from one decision alone. It comes from the way pricing, supplier programs, rebates, reporting, and support work together over time.

01. Competitive Pricing

- Helps control costs across key categories
- Supports tighter margins
- Should be reviewed alongside reliability and service

02. Supplier Programs

- Can provide preferred pricing
- May offer product access and category support
- Helps simplify purchasing decisions

03. Rebates on Eligible Purchases

- Returns value from qualifying purchases
- Can support margins over time
- Works best when eligibility is clear and trackable

04. Support and Guidance

- Helps review supplier mix
- Identifies missed opportunities
- Makes purchasing more strategic

Purchasing value is strongest when these pieces work together.

KEY QUESTION Are the products and services you already buy connected to programs that can return more value to your restaurant?

TAKE ACTION List your three highest-spend suppliers. For each one, confirm whether you have access to preferred pricing, a supplier program, eligible rebates and a contact who can answer questions.

Unlock More Value

Are Your Purchases Working Hard Enough?

Use this checklist to identify areas where your restaurant may be missing value.

Even if your operation has long-standing supplier relationships, there may still be opportunities to get more value from your current purchasing.

Check	Question
☐	Do you know which of your current purchases are rebate-eligible?
☐	Do you review your supplier mix at least once a year?
☐	Do you use programs beyond food?
☐	Do you understand how your rebates are calculated?
☐	Do you receive clear reporting on eligible purchases?
☐	Do you compare total value instead of only invoice price?
☐	Are cleaning, packaging, technology, equipment, insurance, and payment processing part of your purchasing strategy?
☐	Do you know if your current suppliers are connected to preferred programs?
☐	Do you have someone helping you identify savings opportunities?
☐	Are you confident your purchasing strategy supports your margins?

How to read your results:

- 7-10 checked: You likely have a strong purchasing review process.
- 4-6 checked: There may be opportunities to improve or expand your purchasing strategy.
- 0-3 checked: A purchasing review could help identify missed value in your current supplier mix.

Common missed areas: payment processing, insurance, cleaning and sanitation, packaging, equipment, technology, beverage, and linen/laundry.

Savings Beyond Food

Your purchasing strategy should include more than food.

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When operators think about purchasing, food cost is often the first place they look. That makes sense: food is central to the menu, the guest experience, and profitability.

But food is not the only cost area that affects margins. Many restaurants also spend heavily on packaging, disposables, cleaning supplies, beverage, equipment, payment processing, insurance, and other services.

Reviewing these categories can uncover additional opportunities without changing the core of your menu or the way your restaurant operates.

Why these categories are easy to overlook:

Non-food expenses are often renewed without review.

Regularly assessing your providers, pricing, and rebate opportunities can help uncover additional value without requiring you to change every supplier.

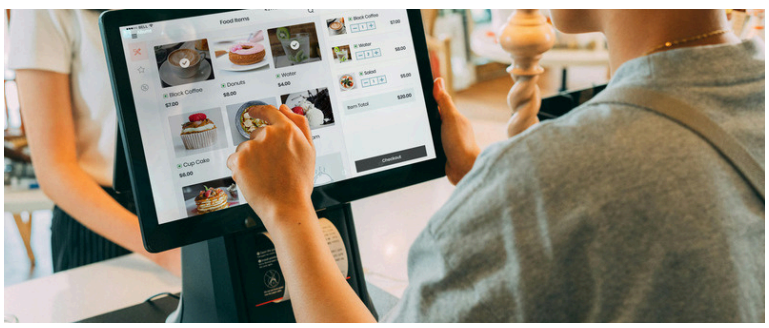
Categories Worth Reviewing

Packaging and disposables

Takeout containers, cups, lids, napkins, cutlery, bags and food storage products.

Cleaning and Sanitation

Cleaning chemicals, dishwashing products, paper products, pest control and janitorial supplies.

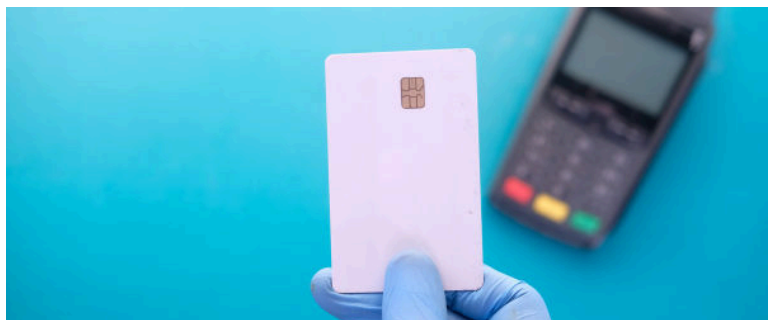


Payment and Financial Services

Payment processing, banking services, financing, insurance and employee benefit programs.

Equipment and smallwares

Kitchen equipment, smallwares, repairs, refrigeration, furniture and replacement needs.



Technology

Point-of-sale systems, scheduling, payroll, online ordering, reservations and communications.

Other operating services

Waste and recycling, energy, linen, uniforms, office supplies and delivery services.

Purchasing Review Worksheet

Start with your largest recurring expense categories.

Use this worksheet to begin reviewing where your operation might get more value from current or future purchases. You do not need to complete every column perfectly. The purpose is to organize what you know, identify what is unclear, and decide what may be worth reviewing.

How to use it:

- List the main suppliers you use in each category.
- Estimate your monthly spend where possible.
- Mark whether you know if a supplier program is available.
- Mark whether purchases may be rebate-eligible.
- Use the final column to note questions, gaps, or next steps.

Category	Current Supplier	Monthly Spend	Program Available?	Rebate Eligible?	Opportunity to Review
Food					
Beverage					
Cleaning & Sanitation					
Packaging & Disposables					
Equipment & Smallwares					
Technology					
Payment Processing					
Insurance					

Tip: Start with your three largest monthly expense categories. You do not need to review everything at once.

Not sure what to put in every column? That is normal. A Groupex Key Account Consultant can help you review your current supplier mix and identify available opportunities.

Get More From the Purchases You Already Make

Operators already have enough to manage. Reviewing supplier programs, eligible products, and rebate activity can be difficult without the right support.

Groupex helps Canadian foodservice and hospitality operators access supplier programs and rebates across key operating categories. Members receive monthly rebate statements and support from Key Account Consultants who can help review programs, clarify eligibility, and identify additional opportunities for value.

How Groupex can help:

- ✓ Review your current supplier mix and purchasing categories
- ✓ Identify eligible supplier programs and rebate opportunities
- ✓ Look beyond food to find value in other operating expenses
- ✓ Provide clear reporting through monthly rebate statements
- ✓ Support your team with guidance from Key Account Consultants

Want to see where your restaurant may be missing value?

Request a free cost evaluation with Groupex. Our team can help you review your suppliers, identify available programs, and explore where eligible purchases may provide bigger savings.

PREPARE FOR THE CONVERSATION

Bring your recent invoices and a list of regularly purchased products. Our team can review your current purchasing to identify rebate opportunities, eligible alternatives, and options with more competitive pricing.

REQUEST A FREE COST EVALUATION

1-800-670-6800 info@groupex.com www.groupex.com