

# OPEN ALL HOURS?

**NEW RESEARCH ON CHEFS AND** restaurant owners shows customers are not satisfied with the service of major wholesalers – especially their opening hours.

The first comprehensive study of chefs and restaurant/café owner operators in New Zealand reveals that customer satisfaction with broadline food wholesalers could be greatly improved and that wholesalers could be serving the food service industry far better than they are at present. One aspect they are particularly dissatisfied with is the inflexibility of wholesaler opening hours.

A recent Coriolis Research study was conducted across New Zealand, amongst chefs and owner operators and included a wide range of outlets, including; rural town lunch bars, ethnic restaurants, smart suburban cafes and upmarket, central city, fine dining restaurants.

The report *Inside the Kitchen: How to grow your Business in the Restaurant and Café Sector* is to be released next month and shows amongst other things, that many chefs and café/restaurant owner operators have quite low expectations of broadline wholesalers. Despite the low expectations customers were still dissatisfied. The research showed that customers are unhappy with many wholesalers particularly large ones. Chefs and owner operators felt that wholesalers do not understand their needs and should focus much more on improving their service and doing the basics right.

One major area of dissatisfaction for most restaurant and café staff, which they feel exemplifies suppliers not understanding their business needs, is foodservice wholesaler opening hours.

“Overall, chefs and owner operators feel trapped. They feel there is only one major supplier in most cities for them to use for the bulk of their day-to-day dry goods and grocery items, with no genuine competition,” says Virginia Wilkinson, director of Coriolis Research. “To meet their needs, many restaurant and café operators are being forced to look to multiple suppliers, some using between 15-30 different suppliers, which they see as adding additional time and costs to their businesses.”

“Most chefs and owner operators interviewed are just not happy with the service they are receiving from the major food wholesalers. They felt they were treated as if the wholesalers were doing them a favour as opposed to providing a service,” says Wilkinson. “Many New Zealand chefs stated that they would relish the opportunity to change suppliers if they had the chance and they openly wished for more competition, especially in the larger markets.”

One area of the country that reported more satisfaction with the present wholesaler situation was Wellington. Wilkinson says Wellington customers seem better served on opening hours than other regions, and they have the added advantage of several players in their market, including; Toops, Moore Wilsons and Davis Trading.

“In Wellington there are several operators open more or less 12 hours for 7 days,” says Wilkinson, adding that the greater flexibility resulted in higher satisfaction levels among chefs and foodservice business owners interviewed.



## **Opening Hours – Auckland**

Weekdays: 8am - 5:45pm

Saturday: 8am - 4pm

Late night Monday: 8pm



## **Opening Hours – Christchurch**

Weekdays: 7am - 5pm

Late night Monday: 7am - 6pm

Saturday: 8am - 1pm

## **Dunedin/Nelson:**

Monday – Friday only:

8am - 4:30pm



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## **Opening Hours – Wellington**

Weekdays: 7am - 10pm

Weekends: 7am - 10pm

**Chefs and foodservice owners expressed growing frustration with opening hours of wholesale outlets around the country.**