

# GOURMET NEWS

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## 14 IDDBA SHOW WRAP-UP



### Buddy's Kitchen offers quality items at competitive prices

In 2001, Minneapolis-based Buddy's Kitchen was a robust supplier of custom frozen entrees to airline customers. Its specialty: premium hand-made omelets. Events that year dramatically reduced the food that airlines served passengers.

Nine years later, Buddy's still supplies major airline customers, but airlines, once 80 percent of revenue, are now only 30 percent.

"Recently, we have successfully added customers in the retail, c-store and specialty restaurant arenas," said Buddy's CEO Dave Smith, who invested in Buddy's in 2007. "People ask us to customize frozen sandwiches and breakfast entrees for their labels. We deliver that at a very competitive price."

Buddy's uses its 200-member production team to its advantage. "We have very skilled food assemblers," said VP of Operations Lyle Hormmann. "We're not afraid to invest in technology, but we produce such unique products because our core process is manual."

A recession year for many, Buddy's grew 40 percent in 2009 after a 20 percent 2008 surge. The formula seems to be working.

An example of the customization is a 'Green Chile Cheeseburger' developed at the request of a southwestern C-store chain. "A sandwich of the Minnesota palate wouldn't sell in El Paso," said Smith.

Buddy's has a passion for food safety. "We co-pack for some of the largest food companies in the world, and our QA/food safety team matches them stride for stride," according to Hormmann. Buddy's expects to earn the SQF (Safe Quality Food) designation in late 2010.

Learn more about Buddy's Kitchen at [www.buddyskitchen.com](http://www.buddyskitchen.com).

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