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Breathe easy.

The Value in A Utility Distribution System

Many of today's food facility designers are faced with the decision of when to specify or when not to specify a Utility Distribution System (UDS). Despite the many features a UDS can provide, the most common reason given for not specifying one is the price. At Gaylord Industries we chose to challenge that reason and compare UDS advantages and pricing against its alternative - the "contractor built wall". Which is the better value is a question that we intend to answer with the following comparison.

Design Comparison

The usefulness of a product can often be defined by its advantages over the alternative's disadvantages. By examining the advantages of a UDS, we are able to expose the contractor-built wall's disadvantages.

Considerations	Disadvantages of A Contractor Built Wall (CBW)	Advantages of A Utility Distribution System (UDS)
Proper Sizing of Utility Requirements	Utility supplies are often sized to the minimum requirements to reduce material costs. This results in the possibility of cooking equipment being starved and its performance being quite less than what is expected. Correcting an undersized utility is extremely expensive.	Utility supplies are sized 25% larger than equipment specifications. This not only ensures proper operation but allows for expansion of the cooking line long after the initial installation.
Accessibility	Because utilities are located within a finished wall, access can be difficult or impossible and expensive. Accessing a CBW requires involvement of multiple trades.	All main and branch utilities and components are accessible through hinged or removable panels for quick and easy service.
Compatibility	The CBW requires designers to coordinate their utility requirements with plumbing, electrical, mechanical and HVAC contractors to ensure proper sizing. Unfortunately, assuming this responsibility often results in having to assume the contractor's errors and omissions if utilities are not compatible with equipment.	The compatibility of the UDS to cooking equipment and the UDS with contractors is assumed by the UDS manufacturer. Designers who specify UDS's protect themselves from any misfortunes in compatibility.
Versatility	Many cooking lines need altering right before opening due to menu changes or chefs' preferences. The CBW simply prevents alterations or makes them cost prohibitive.	A UDS can easily accept cooking line alterations. Minor alterations are accommodated by longer hose, cord and plug sets or by easy relocation of the branch outlet.
Tax Incentives	The CBW typically can only be put on a depreciation schedule of approximately 31 years.	The UDS is classified as an appliance and can therefore be put on a seven-year depreciation life, thus improving the rate of return significantly.
Quality Assurance	The CBW's quality is dependent upon the experience and supervision of the laborers. From project to project, this will vary and will reflect the standard of work on which designers are judged.	The UDS's quality is a direct reflection of its manufacturer. Specifying the right manufacturer can guarantee the standard of your designs.