



Six Mistakes you need to avoid when purchasing new Bakery Oven Racks

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Bakery Racks are an integral, vital part of every bakery. Even the most automated bakery has a requirement for racks, whether it is to cool the bread or move the finished product, or for a more specialist activity such as staling, or simply to be on standby for a line breakdown or maintenance.

Bakery Oven Racks are specifically designed to hold the uncooked product, normally dough, and transport it, generally on pans, through the ovens and towards the packaging. These Racks have to contend with a wide range of temperatures and humidity, from the dry heat of an oven to the damp environment of a wash down area, and still perform day after day. After all, without the Racks, the bakery would have to cease operation.

So often, when selecting Bakery Oven Racks, simple mistakes are made which can have a lasting effect on the productivity and output of the bakery. This White Paper, addresses the issues and mistakes made and provides solutions which, if implemented, will result in years of reliable service and great products.



Six Common Mistakes made when purchasing new Bakery Oven Racks

1) **Selecting the Wrong material**

You've got to have either Stainless Steel or High Grade Aluminum. No options, other materials don't cut it. Gone are the days when a galvanized rack may work, and while there are many aluminum Racks out there, Stainless Steel or High Grade Aluminum are the only options. Why? Simple. Galvanized Racks are actually steel based with a coating, and so they will, very soon, and sadly much too soon, start corroding and breaking down. Also, it is virtually impossible to galvanize a rack in one piece, so it will have been galvanized in sections and bolted together. And that equals weak points and extra maintenance.

Aluminum Racks, while they heat up and cool down faster due to the metal type and composition, lower grades simply aren't quite as durable, and when heated and cooled, heated and cooled, and heated and cooled over and over again, you will find they start to wear down.

Solution - always specify Stainless Steel or High Grade Aluminum

2) **Picking the wrong Caster**

When a rack moves, it's got to have casters. There is no other way. But, think of what those casters have to put up with; being pulled over concrete, bumps and metal sheets all the time or in water and damp atmospheres, in the oven at 400°F, in a cold storage area and all the places in between. Not to mention carrying anything from 50lb to 400lb. In cases like this, quality equals longevity. Put simply, a cheap caster will make your time or your staff's time more difficult.

Solution - ensure you pick the top caster option

3) Not Allowing Enough Airflow

The oven has a lot of work to do. It's got to get every part of the dough on the rack, every molecule, every atom, to the optimum temperature. Not too hot so the cookies aren't burnt, and not too cold so the bread isn't doughy in the middle. That's a tough task, so the rack, which can make or break this process, has a very important part to play. The only way for the air to flow through every part of that rack, over every surface of every product on the rack, and for the product to get to the optimum temperature, is for correct shelf spacing and frame design. If air flow isn't consistent, some of the product won't get up to temperature and other product on the same rack will get too hot or burn. The correct slide spacing and frame design of the rack makes it totally vital you select a rack which allows consistent air flow everywhere.

Solution - make sure you have your slide spacing correct

4) Not allowing for ongoing maintenance

It's not fit and forget. Those Racks will need cleaning and sanitation, if not only to comply with industry standards, also to stop buildup of debris and dirt on the Racks, in the corners and around the base. Those casters need regular maintenance. Greasing both the axle and the bearing, on a regular basis, depending on use, will make sure they last many times longer. How often is a regular basis? That depends on your use, it could be every week, or every month, depending on how often the Racks are used and the environment. However, you can't carry out maintenance too often. New casters are a lot more expensive than a tube of grease.

Solution - make sure your maintenance team are ready for regular maintenance

5) Not buying enough Racks

How many do you actually need? Really? Think about it. Without the rack you can't use the oven. You will have power, water, ventilation, staff, every bakery has these, but without the Racks, forget it. So if all your Racks are busy moving product to and from the oven, maybe waiting in the proofer, or simply waiting for packaging after baking, how are you going to bake the next batch? Don't forget maintenance time mentioned earlier. It's easy to use a spare rack for transport around the bakery, but it's a lot harder to watch dough go stale or have staff tell your customers you don't have anything to sell.

Solution - always estimate more Racks than you think you need

6) Thinking quality is cheap

It's easy to buy the cheapest, and hope for the best. That old age saying, "The bitterness of Low Quality remains long after the Sweetness of Low Price is forgotten", rings so true. You really do get what you pay for. These Racks are going to be your workhorses for years, so invest wisely. Cheaper today could well mean more expensive in the long term. Look closely at the warranties offered, ensure they cover labor and materials, not just now, of for 3 or 5 years, but for years to come.

Solution - look on your Racks as an investment and look for value not economy



Summary

With careful consideration of the options available, making the correct choices at the above decision points can result in great benefits for both the person responsible for the decision, and the users of the Bakery Oven Racks. After all, who wants to repeat a decision and buying process again in a few months, knowing full well they made the wrong decisions the first time around and time and money was simply wasted?

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