

# INSIGHT.



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### About the IHFA

IHFA was founded in 1997 to provide a unified voice for Hardee's franchisees. While serving as a resource for franchisees of all sizes and locations, IHFA provides input and feedback to Hardee's Foods Systems. Today the IHFA provides input into Hardee's operational decision-making, including the successful launch of the Thickburger in 2003.

### **Calendar of Events**

IHFA Convention & Tradeshow October 9-11, 2023



The Independent Hardee's® Franchisee Association

4919 Lamar Ave., Mission, KS 66202 P: 913-387-5624 | F: 913-584-5112 | IHFA@IHFA.com

www.IHFA.com

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### THE PRESIDENT'S INSIGHT



Atlanta, GA

Greetings IHFA Members,

"Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great" – John D. Rockefeller

Change is inevitable, and a Hardee's constant since 2015. Nonetheless, within this environment of constant change, I believe we are still able to achieve our major goal of \$1.75 million average unit volume if we resolve to "keep the main thing, the main thing".

Writing this message, nearly six months have passed since becoming the Organization's President. During this time, I have observed many positive developments, which include:

- a revised marketing approach and strategy (which appears to have solid potential),
- **promising test market results** in the application of this strategy,
- greater overall alignment between the IHFA Board and CKE Leadership.

By contrast, during this same timeframe the brand has experienced additional executive level turnover (CEO, CFO, CMO) and a chapter 11 bankruptcy filing – all adding to uncertainty regarding the Brand's way forward and our franchisees' financial futures.

As franchisees, our "main thing" is driving traffic growth by delivering improved food quality (temperature, accuracy, and speed) and customer service, as now measured through black box social media scores. The "main thing" for CKE continues to revolve around (a) streamlining menus, (b) effective marketing and product innovation, and (c) balancing franchisee financial health with needed capital improvement projects.

**Marketing** - By all accounts, the Brand is delivering on these: General Managers using the new "Bold Menu" love it, and upcoming menu innovations tested in April were impressive and point positively towards products that consumers will crave. Lastly, the shift to digital marketing may seem risky, but the upside should greatly outweigh the downside by delivering ads to target consumers in target trade areas.

**Financial Health & Capital Needs** – CKE has acknowledged the delicate financial position many franchisees face; simultaneously, the IHFA has acknowledged the general need for the Brand to have a face-lift through reimaging. We've also had hard discussions around store closures and food enhancing equipment needs, and subsidized ways to pay for it.

Boddie-Noell Enterprises, (largest Hardee's franchisee) and CKE will suggest a new tiered reimaging plan based on sales volumes, to be delivered at the June Board of Directors meeting. Additionally, CKE agrees with the need for better equipment, and the need to subsidize franchisee costs, to accomplish a wide scale rollout.

"Hospice closures" refers to our ability to close units that are terminally ill, with no prospects of survival. CKE continues to be committed to their current process of closure analysis on a franchisee-by-franchisee basis and are reticent to issue a broad closure criteria – needless to say, much work remains to resolve this issue.

During the past few months of working with Max Wetzel, I've gained more insight into his approach and have confidence in him and his "all in" mindset on fixing the brand. In addition, Chris Bode has repeatedly voiced his commitment to the brand as well. Max is an experienced marketer with ambitious AUV targets and the backing of the Roark board. Let's agree to see this glass as half full, and not "be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." Focus forward.

Sincerely, Frank Heath, Jr. IHFA President





### Convention & Tradeshow

OCTOBER 9 - 11, 2023
COCONUT POINT RESORT
BONITA SPRINGS, FL



Meet us on the beach, October 9-11 for the 2023 IHFA Convention & Tradeshow! Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa hosts this year's event and who could ask for a better backdrop than a coastal-inspired ambiance, providing the perfect setting to soak up the spirit of Southwest Florida!



We are working closely with CKE leadership to provide an informative platform for discussions around the future of the Hardee's brand and best practices of your fellow franchisees.

We will kick off the convention on Monday, October 9th with a Welcome Reception at the head of the resort's centerpiece, the terraced linear fountains and waterfall. Look forward to themed-signature cocktails and long-overdue networking. The reception will end around 7:30pm so you will still have time to venture out for dinner and a walk on the beach.

Tuesday, October 10th will consist of CKE General Session Updates and the 2023 Tradeshow where the IHFA Associate members will be available to meet with you! We will be working with them on creating a lively experience with giveaways and prizes that are sure to keep you energized all day!





combinations, or just grab a refreshing drink and relax by the pool taking advantage of all that sunny Florida has to offer!

Wednesday evening's Celebration Dinner will be a special time to gather together with old and new friends and reflect on the successes of the previous year, recognize the 2023 biscuit bakers finalists, and pay tribute to our top franchisees. Be sure to pack your favorite Hawaiian or tropical attire for this event!





You will not want to miss this amazing opportunity to meet with your peers - your FRIENDS - on the Florida Gulf Coast!







### FRANCHISEE NEWS

# STACORP



### Showing some breakfast love!

Hardee's Store #1503978 in Springfieldshowed some love toward the officers at Sangamon County Sheriff's department, and to the deputies in the jail and courthouse by making heart-shaped biscuits and gravy!







Thank you to everyone that participated in our "Share the Love" community day on February 10th 2023 here in the Illinois market!

The buzz around Hardee's is amazing and wouldn't be possible without the teammembers of Region 5! The team "Shared the Love" with local banks, police, sheriffdepartments, businesses, schools, and radio stations.

Big Shout out to our amazing team! Patience (Beardstown), Jessica (Chatham), Don(Jefferson), Lisa (Virden), Lynn (Petersburg), William (Carlinville), Lewis (Wabash) and Nora (Hillsboro).



### FRANCHISEE NEWS

### Happy 10-year Anniversary to store #1502992 in Bucyrus, OH!

General Manager, Courtney and Regional VP, Jen Paisley made sure the crew was celebrated for all their hard work. They even had a special recognition for those team members who have been with the store since the store opened its doors for the first time!







### Thank You, Team Clearlake!

A big thank you to General Manager, Bo and Team Clearlake (store #1505757) for feeding breakfast to all the service men and women this morning after returning home from deployment in Africa.

The men and women were very appreciative to get a hot "Hardee's" breakfast!

Bo, you have always amazed us with your self-lessness and giving heart! Thank you for all you do!



### FRANCHISEE NEWS

### Hardee's of SWMO Doctor's Day Stories

A big thank you to General Manager, Bo and Team Clearlake (store #1505757) for feeding breakfast to all the service men and women this morning after returning home from deployment in Africa.

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Mrs. June has been with Ascension via Christy for 53 years! She is turning 85 in April!





#### MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATES

by Jerry Allsbrook, Co-Chair

The IHFA Marketing Committee and CKE Marketing Leadership Team met at the IHFA Board meeting in Charleston, SC. on April 25-27.

We had an encouraging new product review at a local franchise-owned Hardee's with CKE R&D Team to discuss marketing calendar event options. Several of these cravable winners will be market tested and become system events later in 2023 and 2024.

Beginning with the W5/Summer Marketing Season on June 28/SE and later on July 26/MW, the Hardee's system will launch the Optimized Menu For both dayparts. CKE and franchise owners reviewed core and local favorites to finalize menu selections that will provide consistency thru the DMA and feature our primary equities: Made From Scratch Biscuits, Hand Breaded Chicken and Charbroiled 100% Angus Beef Burgers. This menu simplification process will also improve QSCV and Hospitality for our brand. Our goal is to become "The Best Restaurant in the Neighborhood," as we improve guest service with speed, accuracy, served with a smile and thank you.

W5/Summer will also be the introduction of our new brand positioning and advertising campaign. "Goodness in the Making" is our new advertising campaign message to feature Hardee's premium quality food made by hand with MFS Buttermilk Biscuits and HB Chicken Tenders plus Charbroiled 100% Angus Burgers. All video and audio advertising on each media platform will be focusing on Hardee's cravable taste. We will also have everyday value options available across both dayparts to promote affordability and grow transactions as the economy begins to slow and make it an even tougher market share battle in QSR.

W5/Summer is also the new media strategy launch by our new media agency of record: Camelot. Our new media plans for all DMA's are more balanced across multiple platforms like TV, CTV, OTT, social, digital, Google, You Tube, radio, outdoor, print. The target is the heavy fast food user and Hardee's loyalists. CKE will also continue to upgrade our APP & My Rewards Loyalty program with new features to grow sales and traffic with our E-Commerce investments. The digital platforms are a huge source of sales that generate high average check and incremental profits.

The IHFA is committed to building a results-oriented business partnership with the CKE Marketing Team that will move us forward Together.

On May 17th CEO Max Wetzel announced that CMO Tana Davila is leaving the company. CKE has an extensive new CMO search underway.

Our 2023 plan is to have a high sense of urgency by conducting monthly ZOOM video conferences with CKE Marketing to achieve "First Downs" by measuring results and fast track Incremental progress to build short and long-term profit-

Our next IHFA Board & Marketing Committee meeting will be June 12-14 at CKE Support center in Franklin, TN.

#### **PURPOSE**

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To communicate the franchise owners voice and influence key marketing, advertising and media decisions that enhance the Hardee's brand.

#### **Members**

=======

Jack Kemp – Chair Mick Cato Jerry Allsbrook - Chair Jon Munger Buddy Brown Nick Shurgot

\_\_\_\_\_

#### IHFA '23 Priorities & First Downs

#1 Create differentiated Hardee's voice with consistent Bold Advertising and Brand Positioning

#2 Increase sales with transactions to build Four-Wall Profitability & Cash Flow

#3 Well Tested Marketing Calendar supporting Dual dayparts & Hi-Lo/Affordability events

Menu management via Optimization + other Ops and Spend Smart simplification programs

Media communication plans that reach core Hardee's #5 and Heavy QSR target

#6 HNAF Management to maximize media reach and frequency across all markets & efficient production cost

#7 Build E-Commerce business (App, My Rewards Loyalty, 3PD, etc.) to double digit revenue generator

"There is really only ONE valid definition of business purpose, To create a New Customer" Peter Drucker

The IHFA Marketing Committee looks forward to serving you in 2023. Please feel free to contact any of our members to share your insights to build our business.

The IHFA Marketing Committee looks forward to serving you in 2023. Please feel free to contact any of our members to share your insights to build our business.





### **STAR IT COMMITTEE UPDATE**

by Bob Larimer, Co-Chair

The Benefits of AI Ordering: Enhancing Efficiency and Customer Experience at Hardee's Drive-Thru

#### **Introduction:**

In recent months, Hardee's has embraced the power of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to revolutionize the ordering process at their drive-thru. This innovative approach has brought numerous advantages for both employees and customers, creating a win-win situation. Let's explore the benefits of AI ordering from an employee's perspective.

#### **Improved Order Accuracy:**

With AI ordering systems, employees can bid farewell to the days of misheard or incorrectly entered orders. AI technology accurately transcribes and processes customer requests, reducing errors and ensuring greater order accuracy. This not only improves customer satisfaction but also saves time by minimizing order corrections and remakes.

#### **Enhanced Speed and Efficiency:**

AI ordering expedites the entire process, allowing employees to serve customers faster and more efficiently. The system streamlines order placement, payment processing, and fulfillment, resulting in reduced wait times for customers. Employees can focus on preparing orders promptly, without the need to manually process and enter each item.

#### **Personalized Recommendations:**

AI algorithms can analyze customer preferences, order history, and other relevant data to offer personalized recommendations. AI can leverage this feature to suggest addons or combo options that complement customers' chosen items. By enhancing the upselling potential, AI ordering helps increase sales and overall revenue.

#### **Reduced Order Errors:**

By eliminating manual order entry, AI systems significantly reduce the chances of human error. Employees can rely on the technology to accurately input customers' choices and preferences, minimizing mistakes such as missing items or incorrect customization. This enhances the overall quality of service and ensures a seamless experience for customers.

#### Advanced Analytics and Insights:

AI ordering systems provide valuable data and analytics that can be leveraged to optimize operations. Employees can access detailed reports on order volume, peak hours, popular items, and customer preferences. This information empowers managers and staff to make data-driven decisions, such as adjusting staffing levels, modifying menu offerings, or launching targeted promotions.

#### **Conclusion:**

AI ordering in Hardee's drive-thru brings a multitude of advantages from an employee's perspective. It improves order accuracy, enhances speed and efficiency, provides personalized recommendations, reduces errors, and offers valuable insights through advanced analytics. By embracing AI technology, Hardee's enables its employees to deliver exceptional service and elevate the customer experience to new heights while increasing sales potential.

If you enjoyed the above article, I must confess that I did not write the words. I asked ChatGPT (an AI opensource engine https://chat.openai.com/) to write the article for me. I just typed "Write me a short article from a Hardee's employee's perspective about the benefits of AI ordering in drive-thru". In seconds the article was created, and I just copied and pasted into this document. It shows the power of AI and the ability for AI to quickly understand complex questions and input.

Most of what the AI tool wrote was very accurate in what other franchisees that are testing AI ordering at drive-thru are experiencing. Most have reported increases in upsells for combos, improved order accuracy, and the upselling of desserts. Some franchisees have even experienced labor cost reductions in certain areas and scenarios. The only downside has been longer ordering times, but this is being worked on by all AI ordering vendors.

CKE has negotiated with three different AI ordering vendors to give the franchisees an option for which vendor will work for them. The three vendors are Open City https://www.opencity.co , Presto https://presto.com/drive-thru/, and Valyant https://valyant.ai/ . Each vendor has integrations built with the two approved POS systems (Xenial and ParBrink) and are installed in several Carl's and Hardee's locations. At the bottom of this article is the vendor list and pricing. AI ordering is an expensive option, but it can ROI if implemented into the right location. The only requirements are a digital headset system (such as the 3M G5 headset, HME 6200 headset, or the HME NEXEO|HDX™ AIO headsets and a 3MB or above internet connection. The vendor can tell you if your headset is compatible.

The Order Confirmation Board currently does not work with the AI ordering technology, but CKE and the IT Committee are working with the vendors to integrate with the OCBs. This will further improve order accuracy and speed of service for the guest and operations.



More information about AI ordering at the drive-thru and contacts for the three vendors will be coming from CKE shortly. If you want to get connected with a franchisee that is utilizing AI ordering please contact Bob Larimer bo-

blarimer@boddienoell.com or Cameron Miller csmiller@ starcorpus.com and we can get you connected with the right individual to discuss their experience with the technology.

### Al - Drive-thru order taking via artificial intelligence

Vendors	Install Fee	Location Fee (Paid Up Front Yr)	Location Fee (Paid Monthly)	Other Fees (Paid Monthly)	Notes
Presto	\$2500 Flat *\$695 Double Lane	\$1519 Fast Start (6/30) \$1599 Single Lane +\$750 Double Lane	\$1595 Fast Start (6/30) \$1685 Single Lane +\$750 Double Lane		Up to 1000 locations
Valyant	\$2500 EOS or Nexeo \$3500 XT1, G5 or Attune II	N/A	\$1200	N/A	Up to 500 locations
Open City	\$1950 Flat \$150 Activation Fee	\$1500 Fast Start (6/1) \$1689 Tier 1 \$2534 Tier 2 "2 Year Req	\$2217 Tier 1 \$3325 Tier 2	\$29 Menu Maintenance	Up to 500 locations Tier 1 = 1-7K Trans p/m Tier 2 = 7-10K Trans p/m



### 2023 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS













































#### HR COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Kathy Trusch Co-Chair

The HR Committee has three key objectives for supporting our Franchisees in 2023.

- 1. Work closely with CKE to Improve Star University
- 2. Test the Restaurant General Manager Training Program
- 3. Work closely with CKE to obtain resources to assist with the training and development of our people.

We are committed to providing resources to improve the selection, retention and development of people and to build sales and improve our restaurant operations. We are currently providing feedback to CKE to make sure the training products and HR products CKE produces are an improved solution for our restaurants. We are working with CKE to ensure the content is user friendly for our restaurant General Managers.

- CKE launched Star University on a new platform (Cornerstone) in 2022 which created multiple challenges for our restaurants. The processes were more difficult and there was not a proper launching process to educate franchisees on the changes. The HR Committee shared multiple concerns with CKE's HR and Training teams. In January 2023, Lisa Holloway (LHolloway@ CKR.com) Director, Global Learning and Development and Zack Donovan (ZDonovan@CKR.com) the Sr, LMS Analyst joined CKE. Lisa and Zack have experience with the Cornerstone Platform, and they are working with the HR Committee members to improve the system and make it easier to navigate for our restaurant General Managers. We had a very productive meeting in Franklin, with Lisa and Zack and Andrew. We provided a list of many challenges and we created recommended solutions to improve Star University. Afterwards, Lisa was involved in multiple meetings with Cornerstone, and other third-party resources and an action plan was created and is in place to improve Star University. Some of the minor corrections were completed in house. CKE is using a third party to create and integrate new improved solutions. It is my understanding that some major items will be corrected by the end of June. We will continue to meet and discuss this project frequently as we work together to improve Star University. You should receive further communications on the improvements when some of the major items are completed this summer. Meanwhile, we will continue to communicate with Lisa and her team to provide input and additional improvements. If you have any specific questions or issues with Star University, please contact Lisa or Zack. If I can assist in any way, please let me
- Restaurant General Manager Training Program In 2022, the HR Committee worked closely for several weeks with CKE's Learning and Development Team to provide input and content to help them create a new Restaurant General Manager Training Program. A test was conducted in some Hardee's restaurants, and we provided feedback and solutions to improve the material. In the first quarter of 2023, we reviewed all the recommended changes and agreed that the training content was ready to test with a larger group of restaurants. In April, CKE launched a new Beta Test (RGM LIT Beta 2.0), which several restaurants are participating in. After the test is completed and proper adjustments are made, CKE plans to launch this before the end of the year. Many franchisees do not have resources for training a new General Manager and we are excited about this. HR Committee Member, Paula Miller with Star Corp is working closely and providing feedback to CKEs Learning and Development team. We will keep you posted as this project continues.
- CKE's Global Learning and Development Team designed a fundamental Leadership series which includes three "Virtual' Leadership Leaning Lab sessions. Each session is 2.5 hours via zoom.

Session 1-Being an Influential Leader.

Session 2-Building a Culture of Accountability.

Session 3-Developing Performance.

These programs are designed for above restaurant leaders and individuals who lead and mentor other restaurant General Managers. CKE will be providing Train the Trainer programs and some virtual programs for franchisees to participate in the future.

Hiring season is upon us. You can obtain recruiting material from Self Opportunity's website at: https://www.postmy.jobs/ihfa/

They will customize and add your logo and specific restaurant locations and send the link to you so you can have your local printer produce this material. CKE has a discount rate with Kinkos. This will save shipping costs (which is cheaper than the cost of some recruiting material).

Please let me know if I can be of assistance. (kathytrusch@boddieneoll.com).



#### **OPERATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATES**

by Sam Sunger, Co-Chair

The restaurant industry rarely sits still, it is constantly evolving, innovating, and changing at every possible twist and turn. The Hardee's brand is certainly feeling the pressure of that consistent change. Operationally, innovation and an evolution of the business can be a welcomed sight because it means we are improving to make the experience better for our guests and our teams.

Despite all the changes happening at CKE, from a CEO and CMO change to the rollout of an Optimized Menu, the Ops committee remains committed to the three pillars of Simplicity, Technology and Inspiration. We are happy to report, there has been progress made in all three pillars.

Simplicity: The rollout of the Optimized Menu is upon us and the Ops Committee, in conjunction with the Marketing Committee has maintained our seat at the table to ensure a smooth rollout later this summer. In collaboration with CKE, we feel confident that the transition to this menu will be smooth but more importantly, it sets up our team for success, by streamlining our burger lineup and allowing for a more prominent spot on our menus for the core products that make Hardee's unique and craveable.

Technology: The Ops Committee, led by Dave Bowar and Mick Cato has brought numerous equipment options to CKE that are either in test or will be in test soon that we feel will improve the team member experience and drive efficiencies so we can deliver a higher guest experience. Additionally, various members of the Ops Committee and

Franchisee community have been testing AI order taking at the DT with great success. The committee will continue to collaborate with CKE with our sights set on implementing these various technologies later this year.

Inspiration: The drive for innovations in the kitchen and a simpler menu is centered around the premise that we have great people but they cannot do it alone and they cannot do it all. These various initiatives were moved to the top of the priority list with the sole focus of; how do we make it easier on our people? Additionally, the HR and Ops committee continue to work together to ensure the improvement and evolution of Star U. A Learning Management System must be simple and engaging in order to be effective and while Star U needs improvement, we are aggressively pursuing that improvement and hope to see some of those new features later this year.

This business is truly about people, it is about relationships, trust and working together toward a common goal. The Ops committee and CKE leadership have been in constant contact since Chris' arrival last fall and the addition of Tony D'Amico has only improved upon that communication. We will continue to strive for efficient operational tactics as well as a seat at the table within each discipline so we can drive real collaborative and holistic improvement for each of your businesses. As Mayo Boddie always said, in order to be successful, we must be able to take care of guests on both sides of the counter, we have not forgotten that and we will continue to fight because our sales depend on it.



Don't forget to renew your membership by Friday, June 30





The 7th annual Chip-In for Veterans Charity Golf Classic was held in Charleston, SC on April 24th and 25th. During the event, the Stand Up and Play Foundation was honored to be able to grant two Paramobiles thru funds raised.

On April 24th, the first paramobile was awarded to George Thompson, a Marine Corps Veteran and a survivor of the Beirut Bombing. George plans to use his paramobile to not only to golf but also to be able hunt and fish from a standing

position. Additionally, the paramobile's standing frame will allow him to do standing therapy to help him regain strength after a stroke.

Meanwhile, on April 25th, a second paramobile was granted to the

PGA HOPE Myrtle Beach Program for the use of the Veterans in the Grand Strand of South Carolina golf therapy program. Angel Diaz, a PGA professional and retired Navy Veteran who served for 22 years, is the lead instructor for PGA HOPE Myrtle Beach as well as the Director of Project Golf.





The Stand Up and Play Foundation is forever grateful for the friendship, sponsorship, and continued support. Hardee's Stars for Heroes and the

Chip In for Veterans Golf tournaments have changed the lives of countless veterans through the provision of equipment and Golf-therapy programs provided by Stand up and Play foundation.



### COMPREHENSIVE & COMPETITIVE FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

for members of the Independent Hardee's Franchisee Association

An independent investment bank that offers financial and transactional advisory services to franchisors and franchisees in the restaurant, retail and service industries







This is the 9th year of USA Cares partnership with the Stars for Heroes program. This amazing partnership has resulted in more than \$4.5 million raised, impacting thousands of military members, veterans and their families during a critical time. I am certain, this effort has kept families together, allowed children to remain in their homes with their parents, helped to employ numerous veterans who were unemployed, and reduced an unknown number of veteran suicides.

While preventing homelessness and food insecurity are in the forefront of our actions, we have heard it loud and clear from groups like the VA, VFW, American Legion, and other large nonprofits, our actions at the moment that could result in eviction or foreclosure is one of the most critical moments in a person's life. Without the help from USA Cares, the probability of suicide as an option increases exponentially!

Regardless of our good will, without the funds needed to intervene, we can do nothing. The Stars for Heroes program saves lives! I cannot thank everyone involved for your assistance. From the employees in the stores triggering this action by asking the customers to purchase a star, to the franchise owners and CKE team who market and support this effort, together we have saved lives.

When the national news outlets contacted us prior to 4th of July asking us to share a story on air about how USA Cares is impacting military/veteran families in crisis, we knew this needed to be about a team effort; we knew this needed to be about our Stars for Heroes partnership. Together we are stronger - together we have saved lives.

Thank you to all involved and allowing us to make a difference for our veterans.

Trace Chesser President/CEO USA Cares











REQUESTS THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE FOR OUR ANNUAL



BENEFITING POST-9/11 MILITARY VETERANS, SERVICE MEMBERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES.

FEATURING KEYNOTE
JULIE BENTZ

MAJOR GENERAL, US ARMY, RETIRED





TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES SCAN THE OR CODE 5:30 PM COCKTAILS 7 PM PROGRAM BEGINS

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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