Converting a bakery from non-kosher to kosher.

Step One—Planning

The success of all kosher supervision is to be found in the planning. The more planning that is done in advance, the smoother both the initial change over to kosher and the subsequent kosher operation. Since very often a business must close down for a day or more during the change over, it is in everyone’s interests that all details are worked out in advance. Some examples of the preparatory work include walk-throughs, visual inspections, a work flow chart, and clearly defining the roles of management and the mashgichim in advance.

Since management will want to go back into operation as soon as everything is made kosher, it is important that all ingredient issues be clarified. All treif or non-hechshered ingredients must be eliminated from the premises. All the necessary equipment to be koshered and everything new, as well as the procedures for using them, must be understood, agreed upon, and in, ready for operation after the change-over is completed.

Step Two—Cleaning, and Making Kosher

Everything to be made kosher needs to be totally clean. Conversely anything that cannot be totally cleaned cannot be made kosher. It is much easier to make equipment kosher which is “eino ben yomo” i.e. not used for 24 hours. Though it is possible to bypass the 24 hour waiting period by introducing a D’var pagum such as lye or caustic soda, it adds an unnecessary complexity in making a bakery kosher. (It is often necessary in facilities like hotels that weren’t and won’t be kosher, and will not shut down for 24 hours, to use a D`var Pagum.)

I. Convection Ovens

A. Remove all oven racks.
B. Remove fan housing/covering from back of oven.
C. Spray abrasive cleaner, e.g. Dow Easy Off, on entire oven, walls, oven floor and fan
assembly, and all parts of the door and the door crease if there is any dirt there.
D. Spray the doors, including the glass.
E. If back plate cannot be removed, then thoroughly spray the cleaner over and inside the entire fan assembly.
F. After all the areas are covered with cleaner; heat oven to 300 degrees for about 20 minutes.
G. Wash the oven with a long handled brush, using cold water and soap, removing all the loose dirt. Take care not to short electrical parts of the oven. Use the help of the plant engineer or the appliance manufacturer when disassembling equipment.
H. Reapply cleaner to areas that have a great build up of dirt. Steel wool and scrapers may be required. (It is wise to supervise this work and leave the elbow grease to others, but it is equally important to be dressed for messy work as you may need to get in close to properly measure the effectiveness of the cleaning.)
I. Baked on dirt and grease must be removed before you can begin to make everything kosher as it is considered to be ein. (Ein is considered food and not pegam and will cause problems with reicha, i.e. smell imparting taste, and bittul i.e. nullification.)
J. After all dirt has been removed and a visual check has been made, the oven should be turned up to the highest possible setting for one and a half hours with the fan blowing.

2. Oven Racks and Grates

A. The easiest way to make the racks or grates kosher, is to place them on the stove top. (In the past they have been koshered with a blow torch which has often caused warping.)
B. Wrap the entire stove top with a double layer of foil wrap covering over the entire stovetop with the foil. The shiny side should be facing down in the direction of the stovetop. This causes maximum heat.
C. Set the burners on a low flame.
D. Tightly seal the foil wrap onto and all around the stovetop.
E. Raise burners to highest setting.
F. With long metal pliers, carefully check if libun has been accomplished. If metal is glowing with a red color, then it has been accomplished.
G. After half an hour, carefully and from a distance, remove foil and allow to cool down. Then return racks to the now kosher oven.

II. Regular Ovens

The procedure is the same as above except for the doors. In a regular oven the door is sometimes used to hold pans or trays, resulting in spillage on the door. Therefore, a libun chamur with a blowtorch may be needed. Another alternative is a thorough cleaning of the ein, followed by libun kal. (The required heating would be kash nisraf mebachutz). Closing the oven and heating up to 500 degrees Fahrenheit for an hour and a half will suffice.
III. Rotating Oven, Baker’s Oven

Follow same procedure as for convection oven above.

IV. Pizza Oven

If food has indirect contact with the oven, i.e., pizzas are on a tray, then follow the procedure for convection ovens.

If pizza ovens have direct contact with food (or ovens above that have direct contact, i.e., breads or cakes cooked directly on the oven floor, which is not likely but possible) then the procedure is as follows: (First verify with the manufacturer of the stove, if possible, that the stove can handle the procedure below.)

A. Disconnect all gas lines, and remove and clean any heat probe sensors.
B. A flat blanket of charcoals should be spread over the entire surface of the oven floor.
C. Ignite coals.
D. When all coals are burning, allow to continue for 10 minutes.
E. If the oven begins to buckle, extinguish coals and the oven cannot be koshered.

V. Flat Top and Grate Stoves

A. Clean thoroughly to avoid grease fire.
B. Cover the entire top surface with many layers of foil (at least 3 to 5 layers), shiny side down and raise heat to the highest level.
C. After half an hour check carefully if the fire has caused libun by looking for glowing red color.

VI. Pots and Pans, Mixing Bowls, Serving Pieces, Sinks.

A. If pots are used on the stove to cook ingredients, the pots should be scoured clean, and left 24 hours. Then the pot and the lid should either be immersed into a larger pot of rolling boiling water, (Ma`ala reticha), or the pot should be filled with water and brought to a boil. The lid should be immersed, either in whole or in rotating sections into the pot, and then hot rocks should be dropped into the pot causing the boiling water to overflow and make kosher the outside of the pot.

B. Mixing bowls or serving pieces that receive or touch hot food but are never put directly onto the stove can be koshered with an irui. First clean and wait 24 hours as above; then pour rolling boiling water over the bowl. If using another vessel to pour the boiling water over the bowls, make sure it is or has already been made kosher. When immersing the other vessel for more water, allow it to stay a few seconds to maintain the rolling boil.

If only cold items were used, then a thorough cleaning is enough.

C. All surfaces to be made kosher must be clean and dry. Therefore a stainless steel
sink to be made kosher that has more then one part must have the bottom section made kosher first, while working your way upwards. Thus we are assured that all the kashering was done from the direct water of the irui. Porcelain sinks cannot be made kosher.

VII. Pans

A. Baking pans are invariably so badly soiled that a full cleaning is virtually impossible. Therefore, we do not recommend attempting to make them kosher. Rather they should be replaced and where necessary, marked for dairy or parve in a way that will not easily be baked off or smudged.

VIII. Blenders

A. If they are only used for cold, cleaning them well is sufficient. If used with hot foods or charif all parts should be removed and koshered with hagalah.

IX. Food Processors and Knives

A. If the processor was used with treif, then kosher with hagalah.  
B. Knives, if made of one piece, are made kosher with hagalah.  
If knives have two parts they can only be made kosher if they are made of metal and soldered together. If knives have often been used regularly with fire, then a libun chamoor is required.

X. Working Stations

If nothing hot is used here, the area need only be cleaned.  
If hot ingredients are brought to the table, it should be cleaned and after 24 hours, irui should be done over the surface. If the tabletops are made of wood, sand off the top layer until completely smooth. 
Smooth non-cracked Formica counters can be cleaned with an irui. 
If dairy and parve are present, designate separate dairy and parve areas or use a board or pre cut metal cover when using the non dominant type (probably dairy).

XI. Display area

If hot foods directly from the oven are placed on display pans, then they must be made kosher by irui, assuming they are of material able to be made kosher. In most bakeries, the food placed on the display pans have already cooled, in which case a thorough cleaning will suffice.
Setting up kosher operation

A. Dairy *Parve* Separation
After making the bakery kosher, the next concern is how to separate the dairy from the *parve*. It is preferable to have an all parve bakery as this simplifies the time needed to supervise and removes many of the potential problems. Where this is not possible, have all dairy utensils clearly marked and stored in a separate and away area. Have a dedicated preparation area or a cover as listed above. (Section X).

If there is a lot of dairy, have two ovens, one dedicated to dairy. If this is impractical, schedule all the *parve* baking first and then, after all the *parve* is finished, bake off the dairy.

Never put the dairy products directly on the oven floor and always have the dairy pans sitting on dairy trays in case of spillage. After the dairy is finished, allow the oven to continue to bake for another 15 minutes empty. If any dairy should spill and remain in the oven it must be removed before *parve* baking can resume.

After coming out of the oven, dairy should be stored on dairy trays which are clearly marked in a way that will remain marked, after being in the hot oven. Trays should be regularly checked to make sure the markings are still in tact.

B. Taking Challah
If the bakery is even in part Jewishly owned, the requirement of *hafrashat challah* exists. If dough is made that uses about three and one half pounds of flour, *hafrasha* is necessary, and at four and a half pounds a beracha is required.

The *mashgiach*, if available should take challah every day. Since the *mashgiach* is not likely to be in the bakery all the time, let alone once every day, a system to assure challah is taken needs to be in place. If the Jewish owner is trustworthy and capable, he or she can be trained to make the *beracha* and take a little dough and bake it off. They can date it and leave it for the *mashgiach* to come and verify. One baked little ball is needed for each day’s dough and if more then one grain is used, there needs to be *challah* taken from each batch. That is, if wheat and rye doughs are both made and the requisite amount of flour is used of each, *challah* will have to be taken from both.

If this system is not practical or the Jewish personnel are not willing, able, or trustworthy, then there is an ingenious system devised by the O.U. that enables you to take care of *challah* from your office. (This system is described below).

C. Display and Packaging
*Parve* should be the “default” on all baked goods, and dairy should be displayed in a separate area and clearly marked.

Whether or not bread should be made dairy is a subject of much controversy. If you permit it, the bread should have some form of marking or design on it that would stand out as dairy once outside its wrappings.

It is a good idea to have dairy stickers, and when dairy pastries are boxed for the customer, a sticker indicating that the products are dairy should be placed on the box. This enables third party users to know when something is dairy.
Shabbat and Passover issues

A. Non-Jewish Owner
Regarding bakeries owned by a corporation or non-Jews, Shabbat and Pesach issues are not of concern, though a sign should be displayed on Passover that the products are chametz and should not be purchased by Jewish consumers.

B. Jewish Owner: Shabbat
Ideally we would want a Jewish owned bakery to be closed on Shabbat. If that is not possible, it is possible to supervise a non shomer shabbat bakery by endorsing the product and not the bakery. The food is kosher, and even the food made on Shabbat would be permissible to eat beginning Saturday night after enough time has passed that it could have been made after Shabbat.
It is also possible to arrange to have the owner sell the store every Friday afternoon and buy it back every Saturday night. The RA has such a document available.

C. Jewish Owner: Passover
The chametz needs to be sold. For maarit eyin if nothing else, it is advisable to close a kosher chametz bakery for Passover. Sometimes this is impossible because the bakery may have many commercial accounts for 365 days a year. If so, the store needs to be properly sold to a gentile before the time for the end of eating chametz erev pesach, and this should be prominently posted in the store as well as a note next to the teudah, that the bakery is chametz and no food may be eaten during Passover.

D. Tevilat Kelim.
The issues of ritual tooma related to avoda zara are currently being researched by the Law Committee and a broader decision will be reached on our position relating to all areas of tooma in modern life.

As such I defer to the subsequent rulings on the need for tevilat kelim in a bakery until the papers are written and voted on. In any case, whether the equipment needs to be immersed or not, the product of non-immersed equipment is still kosher.

Taking Challah From Your Office *
(1) The Overview
We set up a supply of matzot that are subject to the requirement of having hafrashat challah, but the hafrasha has not yet been done. These matzot are tavul l'challah, i.e. need to have challah taken. The amount of matzah should suffice for at least a year, factoring one gram of a matzah becoming the challah for each daily dough at the plant. The boxes of matzot should be open and placed in a suitable unobtrusive area in the bakery, near the machinery that makes the batter. Since we don't separate from the grain of one year for the grain of another, prior to Rosh Hashana, the year should be
marked on the box of matzah. When the new matzot are produced, the new supply of matzot needing challah to be taken, should be purchased for the plant. This usually occurs in July and August. For several months, supplies of the old and new are likely to be intermingled, so the old season matzot should remain in place, and around November, the mashgiach should remove and burn the old season matzot. When first bringing the matzot into the plant, the mashgiach will separate challah for the batters in the plant that day. Subsequently, the Rabbi, in his office, should separate challah on a daily basis, using the verbal formula below. The formula states that each time a new batch of dough is prepared, another gram from the matzah becomes the challah. The foundation to separate challah from dough that has not yet been kneaded, is Yoreh De‘ah 327:2).

The permission of the Jewish owners to separate challah on their behalf must be done in a clear and overt manner. Before establishing the first matzah, the owner’s authorization must be obtained. The matzah can only work for dough made of the same grain. So if more than one type of batter is being made, there needs to be appropriate matzot in the right volume made of the same grains. If this proves impossible to find, then a large wafer of dough can be baked from the other hard-to-find grain. The shelf life of that wafer will be reasonably long, and the challah will be separated from the batters of that grain, a gram at a time from the wafer.

(2) The Procedure

The following is the exact procedure to be followed: 1) The open boxes of matzah which are tavul l’challah should be placed in the room, near where the mixing is done. They may be covered but they must be unsealed. (The amount of matzah is determined by the number of different doughs made in a day. 2) Written and oral authorization to the Rav Hamachshir should be given by the Jewish owner to separate challah on the owner’s behalf at all times. A kinyan should be made at the time the authorization form is signed. Re-authorization should be made from time to time. 3) When the container of matzah is in place, initially the mashgiach should say,

“One fifth of a gram of matzah in a square shape from the first matzah in this box in the upper right-hand corner of the matzah facing me, should become challah on behalf of the next lishah that takes place for belilah avah (thick heavy batter) at the time when that lishah takes place or on behalf of the next baking for belilah rakah (soft thin liquidy batter) when that baking is completed whichever comes first. And one fifth of a gram of matzah uniformly distributed around the part of the matzah already designated as challah should become challah on behalf of each succeeding lishah or baking, at the time of such lishah or baking as above.”

Every morning thereafter the mashgiach in his office should say:

“Each time a lishah will be made at - PLANT NAME - at -PLANT LOCATION - until the next time this nusach is said, then from the boxes of matzah in the mixing room set
aside for hafrashast challah,** one fifth of a gram of that matzah uniformly distributed around the matzah already designated partially as challah should become challah on behalf of those lishot which are belilah avah at the time when that lishah takes place, and on behalf of the items baked from a belilah rakah when the baking is completed***

And if the matzah used until now is all used up for hafrashat challah purposes, the next matzah behind it should become challah in the same fashion. Namely, first one fifth of a gram in a square shape from the matzah’s upper right hand corner, directly behind the first area designated as challah in the matzah used until now, should become challah etc.”

* I wish to thank the O.U. for their generous cooperation in sharing their field manuals and other publications with me.

**From June 1-Oct 30, add the following words in brackets. (“and from the same year as the flour in the lisha”)

(Every year at the beginning of June, a new production of Matzah which is tovul l’challah should be placed in all bakeries alongside of the old box until Oct 30 when the old box should be removed and burned.)

***If other grains besides wheat are being used at the bakery, and additional matzot of that grain are in the bakery in a separate box, then at the end of the last declaration, the following words in brackets should be added. (“from each min on its own min”)
Glossary of terms

*avoda zara*
Idolatry

*belila avah*
A thick batter like bread dough

*belila raka*
A liquidy batter that can only have *challah* taken after it is baked

*ben yomo*
Literally “of the day” (e.g., a pot used within the previous twenty-four hours.)

*bittul*
Nullification of a foreign taste by a ratio of sixty to one

*charif*
Sharp food, which when used with a knife acts as the agent to transfer the taste of the item cut, into the knife even though no heat is present.

*d'var pagum*
Food taste absorbed into a pot after twenty-four hours is considered stale (*pagum*), and does not have the status of food, which needs a sixty to one ratio for nullification. Immersing the pot into boiling water suffices to remove the *pagum*. When it is inconvenient to wait twenty-four hours one can boil water in the pot and add a caustic substance that is absorbed into the pot and renders the fresh absorbed taste into, *pagum*.

*ein*
An actual piece of food that needs to be removed before the process of making the item kosher can begin, as opposed to a remnant taste.

*eino ben yomo*
Not ben yomo (twenty-four hours or more have passed since the pot was last used)

*hafrashat challah*
Taking off a measure of dough and burning it in compliance of the Biblical commandment to give “*challah*” to the priest

*hagalah*
Making an object kosher by placing it in boiling water
Irui
Pouring boiled water onto an item to be made kosher.

kash nisraf mibachutz
Hot enough to char a straw placed upon it.

kinyan
A method of acquiring property

libun chamoor
Making a utensil kosher by heating it directly in fire until it becomes red hot.

libun kal
Making a utensil kosher by heating it directly in fire until it becomes hot enough to char a straw placed upon it.

lishah
Dough batter

min
Kind (different doughs can be made from barley, rye or wheat)

ma’ala reticha
A rolling boil

maarit eyin
How it would appear to an outsider

reicha
Aroma. (e.g. a cheese cake and a parve bread in the oven together. The dairy aroma of the cheesecake will enter the bread and may make it dairy)

tavul l’challah
A bread product needing hafrashat challah but it has not yet been taken

tevilat kelim
Immersing vessels that had previously been owned by gentiles, in a mikvah