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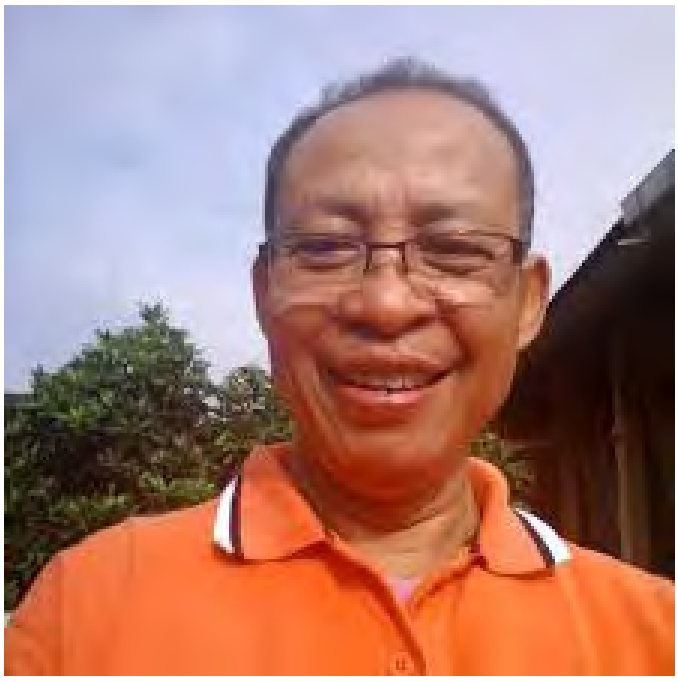
SPHM – F&B SERVICE CONTROL POINTS



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F&B Service Control Points

Food Service Control Points Manual

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Food Service Control Points

Food service operations are broken into a series of control points. The control points follow the flow of goods from the supplier or vendor to service to the guests. As a food service manager you must understand how each control points works as well as how it relates to the other control points of the operation. The analogy of "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link" applies here. For example, an operation can have the best and most talented cooks or chefs in town, but there menu is outdated and does not appeal to its target market the operation most likely fail.

Topics

This module is divided into 8 topics. To complete this Module successfully, please complete the topics in the order shown below:

1. Menu Planning
2. Purchasing /Ordering
3. Receiving
4. Storage
5. Issuing
6. Preparation
7. Cooking
8. Serving

Menu Planning

The Menu Planning Control Point

Menu planning is the first control point in the food service system.

The menu is a listing of the items the foodservice operation has for sale. Without a menu the customer will not know what their options are for goods to purchase. While, a properly designed menu serves as both a sales and marketing tool for the foodservice operation. It can increase sales and increase the customer check average, because whenever a menu is presented to a customer, a sales transaction begins. The food service operation's menu creates an image of the establishment. Therefore, the appearance of the menu should be in harmony with the image the food service establishment wants to project. The image may be elegant, business like, fun, ethnic, or trendy, depending on what the target markets desire.

Customers are influenced by visual cues provided by the menu, such as readability, physical design, layout, artwork, and type styles. As with other communication tools, "It's not just what you say, it's how you say it that counts."; For example, fast-food or quick service restaurants offer a limited number of menu items but they sell these items in large quantities. Since their customers are served at a common sales counter, separate menus are not needed. Customers are familiar with the standardized menu offerings, so long, elaborate descriptions are not needed. They would only slow down the customer's decision-making process. Fast-food restaurants simply post names and prices of their products near the sales counters. Enlarged color photographs of the menu items show their color and texture and, thus, may contribute to increased sales. (However, it is imperative that the items served look exactly like the pictures; otherwise decreased satisfaction may be the result.) The overall effect is to convey simplicity, speed, and a limited selection of products prepared the same way at every unit.

On the other hand, an independently owned specialty restaurant catering to wealthy, sophisticated diners would have an altogether different menu. First, the number of menu items would probably be much greater. To project an image of elegance, the traditional table service restaurant might have a menu as large as a book with detailed descriptions of its wide range of food products. Such a restaurant recognizes that its customers enjoy the opportunity of endless possibilities normally afforded by an extensive menu. Also, since this establishment's customers are seeking a leisurely and pleasurable dining experience, the time it takes them to peruse the voluminous menu is no problem.

To draw attention to daily specials and highlight signature items of the operation, some restaurants have found it useful to box these items on the menu. Another way to increase sales of featured items is to write the menu items (possibly with prices) on a chalkboard near the entrance. One restaurateur whose establishment specializes in fresh seafood uses a chalkboard to list the flight arrival times of the jet-fresh catch of the day. While this approach sacrifices a degree of elegance, it offers convincing evidence of the freshness and variety of the operation's offerings.

Generally, dynamic or changing menus are preferable to static or unchanging menus. However, menu variability depends on the seasonal availability of raw ingredients, the number and kind of courses offered, the potential for using leftovers and local ingredients, the preferences of the community, the operation's image, and the desires of its target markets.

Another element distinguishes the menu of an elegant restaurant from that of a fast-food restaurant: prices. In some cases, prices are omitted from extensive menus due to seasonal fluctuations in the ingredients. For example, fresh lobster or seafood is often listed a market price due to the daily fluctuations in price. In such cases, the management assumes either that money is no object or that, if it is, the customer will inquire about current prices. When setting menu prices, it is important to remember that today's sophisticated diner is searching for the best price-value relationship. If an operation's prices far exceed the perceived value of its menu items, this can decrease customer satisfaction and negatively affect repeat business.

Besides showing customers the operation's plan for satisfying their expectations, a menu serves another purpose: it functions as a plan for the entire food service system. The success of the menu planning activity has a direct influence on the success of the other basic operating activities. When a menu is initially planned, the resources under the control of the food service manager must be carefully considered. Personnel, equipment, inventory, and facilities all have an impact on menu planning.

Menu Planning Staffing

The operation's employees are important to the success of its menu. Before management begins menu planning, the skill levels of cooking and service personnel must be assessed. It may be helpful to consider the cooking staff and service staff separately, although their functions are intimately related in actual operations.

The cooks, also known as the production staff, is challenged to produce the menu items. This production takes place within the confines of the kitchen or the back of the house. In planning the operation's menu, the objective is to avoid overloading any one person or work station in the kitchen. A well-planned menu features items that the operation's kitchen personnel can consistently produce while maintaining the operation's quality, cost, and sanitation standards.

Management should be realistic in determining what can be accomplished with the existing staff. A poorly conceived menu increases the food cost, adds to the labor cost, and destroys the quality control system while serving to drive away customers. However, these problems can be avoided by organizing the menu planning function on the basis of the available food products and personnel considerations.

The service staff transfers the menu items from the production staff and kitchen to the customers. In order to properly serve customers, the server should be ready to answer their questions. For example, servers should know what items are on the menu, the portion sizes offered, how the items are prepared, and the prices. Even if the menu contains all of this information, the server can provide a personal touch by answering customers' questions directly. Servers should also know the meaning of all terms used on the menu so they can explain them to any customers who are puzzled. This is particularly true if the menu includes ethnic foods, since these items may be unfamiliar to the average customer.

Again, staff training is critical. In addition to thoroughly training new servers, some managers call a five- to ten-minute line up meeting with service staff members before each meal period. These brief meetings are informal training sessions, in that (a) they give the chef and the manager an opportunity to explain daily specials, and they give the servers an opportunity to sample portions of new menu items and ask questions.

Like the skill levels of production personnel, the skills of the service staff must be considered in menu planning. This is particularly true if management is considering menu items to be prepared in the front of the house, by the service staff, such as tossed salads and desserts. Whether the operation uses tableside preparation or the more common plate- style service depends, in part, on the image it is seeking. However, once the decision is made, the service staff requires training in the serving skills dictated by the menu.

Suppliers are another personnel component to consider when planning a menu. Although suppliers are not, strictly speaking, under the manager's control, these people can contribute to the success of the

business. Particularly at the menu planning control point, their input and suggestions can be used to make the business more profitable while enhancing the customer's satisfaction. For example, suppliers can offer preparation and merchandising suggestions for various menu items. The excellent food service companies utilize their suppliers as sources of creative ideas, market trend information, new promotion ideas, and informal competitive analyses as well as purveyors of food, beverage, and non-food items.

Equipment

Any food service establishment must make a sizable investment in food service equipment before it can open for business. Naturally, the amount and type of production and service equipment owned by the business determines what items it can produce and, therefore, what it places on the menu. It is imperative to select equipment based on capacity, skill levels of employees, energy and maintenance costs, and initial purchase price.

The addition of a new menu item may require that the business purchase new production equipment. Such additions should not be made without an analysis of product flow and personnel movement. With this analysis management should anticipate where cross-traffic may create safety and sanitation concerns as well as bottlenecks in production.

A dramatically modified menu can have a devastating effect on the system if proper equipment is not available to prepare the new menu items. For example, the addition of banquet service to a traditional food service operation must be carefully weighed in light of the additional constraints banquets place on menu planning and equipment. For example, if a hotel is planning to serve a banquet for 800, all of the food items cannot be dished for all 800 guests immediately prior to service. Therefore, extra hot-holding and cold storage equipment is essential. Also, the hotel should limit its banquet menu to items which can safely withstand the extra handling and holding times involved.

Inventory

A menu is a listing of the items the operation is offering for sale, whereas the inventory is the sum total of items the operation has purchased. The menu helps to create a demand for the finished food items produced from inventory. The customer's order is a purchase decision which results in a depletion of the goods on hand. Eventually, the operation must replenish the inventory, if it is to continue offering the

items customers are buying. It is important to keep detailed records on the relative popularity of every menu item.

The menu directly affects the establishment's purchasing, receiving, and storing requirements. The size of storage areas needed for raw ingredients and finished menu items depends on the menu. One of the primary advantages of a limited menu is that it reduces storage area requirements.

In the past, food service managers attempted to achieve diversify on their menus. Often, this was accomplished by the addition of many new menu items. Since most items were made from scratch, the number and variety of raw ingredients was correspondingly increased.

Now there is a trend toward cross-utilization of menu items. That is, simplification is being sought for the sake of operational efficiency. This strategy frequently results in a limited menu. Alternatively, the operation can offer several menu items which use the same raw ingredients. The objective of this cross-utilization is to prepare and serve as many menu item selections as possible with a limited number of raw ingredients. When the menu is carefully planned to ensure a balance of menu selections in each category, the result of these new strategies can be a streamlining of purchasing, receiving, and storing functions.

Today, as in the past, food service managers are searching for new menu item alternatives. However, the proliferation of high quality convenience foods has made it easier for food service operations to offer new items without having to buy additional raw ingredients or elaborate equipment. High quality convenience products can be purchased in semi-prepared or fully prepared forms. Because they have built-in labor, they also reduce in-house labor requirements. Of course, convenience food products usually have a higher AP (as purchased) price than the raw ingredients from which they are made.

It is always best to base initial menu plans on the needs and desires of the target markets. However, several other factors may influence the menu selection. Among these factors are: the recommended storage conditions (time and temperature); personnel skill levels; the product's availability and seasonality; the stability of quality and price levels; and the operation's ability to purchase, prepare, and serve the menu item in a safe and sanitary way.

Menu Planning and Facilities

The facilities, both indoor and outdoor, affect the image of a food service establishment. The layout and design of the facilities are also important considerations in menu planning, because they establish the physical limits within which food preparation and service takes place.

From the standpoint of menu planning, the kitchen and dining room facilities are a critical resource of the business. The facilities must be adequate for the purchasing, receiving, storing, issuing, preparing, cooking, holding, and serving of every item on the menu. Thus, a major change in menu may necessitate remodeling of the physical facilities. By the same token, a change in the facilities used by a food service business may force a revision of its menu. This mutual influence can be illustrated by

Menu Planning and Change

To take another example, a hotel may decide to add room service to its offerings to generate more revenue and profits. Again, the size and layout of the facility has an impact on the success of the effort. For example, the kitchen may produce a beautiful and tasty eggs Benedict entree for breakfast, but by the time room service delivers the order to the farthest wing of guestrooms, the product is cold and unappealing. Therefore, room service menus must be limited to those items that can be successfully and safely delivered to the customer.

Yet another problem is created when an overly ambitious hotel sales force convinces meeting planners that special entrees or desserts will add a touch of elegance and class to their banquets. These salespeople have not thought about the limitations of the hotel's production and service facilities. Again, an outdoor barbecue for 500 people in the hotel's gardens may sound like an exciting, fun affair; but if the kitchen or service staff cannot deliver the products, customer satisfaction will not be achieved.

In all of these examples, the unfortunate results could be prevented by structuring the operation's offerings around what the physical facilities can realistically handle. By now it should be clear that menu planning is a complex process, but menu planning is more successful when the establishment's resources are taken into consideration. Because conditions change, a food service operation's menu must change also. Menu changes are modified by both external and internal factors.

External modifiers

Include consumer demands, economic factors, the competition, supply levels, and industry trends. Consumer demands are perhaps the most important factor to consider in changing a menu. Management should first decide which potential markets it wants to attract with the modified menu. Then the proposed menu change must be evaluated in light of the negative and/or positive effects it may have on the current clientele.

Economic factors include the cost of ingredients and the potential profitability of new menu items. Menu items offered by the competition may dictate choices to offer or not offer. For example, a hotel food service located next to a restaurant offering the best Oriental food in town may elect not to serve Oriental cuisine. Supply levels relate the price to the quality and quantity of the proposed menu items. Supply levels are highly variable for some seasonal raw ingredients such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Industry trends are general observations about how the industry is responding to new demands. At present, the overall trends relate to a more sophisticated average customer who is searching for the best price-value relationship.

Internal modifiers which may result in a proposed menu change are the facility's meal pattern, concept and theme, operational system, and menu mix. The typical meal pattern is breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Management must decide if existing meal periods should be continued or altered. The target markets' expectations have a direct influence on this decision. Any change must fit with the establishment's concept and theme. An establishment's image may also rule out certain foods which do not blend with its theme and decor.

Menu changes are also modified by the establishment's operational system. For example, if extensive new equipment purchases are crucial to the successful production and service of the menu item, the change may be too costly. On the other hand, the change may raise both food and labor costs to unacceptable levels. Or, in some cases, the skill levels of production and service personnel may not be adequate to successfully produce and present the new menu item. The operation's existing menu has a certain overall combination or mix of items. This menu mix will be affected by any change in individual items. All of these modifiers should be evaluated before menu changes are finalized and implemented.

Finally, truth-in-menu is another menu planning consideration that is growing in importance. Above all,

accurate descriptions of raw ingredients and finished menu items are essential. The correct quality or grade of food products must be stated. Care must be exercised when US Department of Agriculture (USDA) grades are printed on the menu; A choice sirloin steak; listed on the menu implies that the meat is USDA Choice grade. A product billed as Fresh Lake Pacific Snapper should indeed be fresh from the Pacific. Other representations of points of origin must be accurate.

The size, weight, or portion advertised on the menu also must be accurate. For meat items, it is generally accepted that the weight listed is the precooked weight. A bowl of soup should contain more than a cup of soup. Descriptions like &;extra tall ; drinks or ;extra large ; salads can open the door to possible complaints from customers. All you can eat implies that the customer is entitled to have exactly that. Fresh products are not frozen, canned, or preserved in any way. Canned green beans are not frozen, and frozen grapefruit juice is not fresh.

Other truth-in-menu violations may occur. The preparation technique (e.g., sautéed in butter) must be accurate. If an additional charge will be assessed for extras (e.g., Roquefort dressing, substitutions, coffee refills), that must be clearly stated on the menu. Any pictures used to visually display a food product should be accurate. Dietary or nutritional claims must be precise, if used. ;Low calorie ; is vague because it implies that the product is lower in calories but it doesn't specify what the product is being compared to. Oral descriptions by servers are important merchandising aids. Their phrases should correctly describe the menu selections.

Summary

The menu is an important component of food service operations. It serves as a marketing tool, determines inventory, storage space required, skill level and number of cooking staff and service, equipment levels and types. Care must be taken when the menu is developed and modified to make sure the operation can handle the new additions to the menu.

Every aspect of the operation contributes to or detracts from its success. Dirty, worn, soiled, out-of-date, and unattractive menus indicate management's lack of concern for the establishment's image in the minds of its customers. Because they create a negative first impression, these menus should be eliminated from stock. Someone should be in charge of reviewing the condition of all menus before the meal period begins.

Ordering / Purchasing

The Ordering / Purchasing Control Point

Once menu planning is completed, the Ordering / Purchasing control point is the next logical step to be addressed. In fact, the menu determines the ingredients to be purchased, the variety of products needed, and the relative amounts. One of the major objectives of Ordering / Purchasing is to obtain the right quality and quantity of items at the right price from the right supplier. The goals are to maintain quality and value, strengthen the establishment's competitive position, and minimize the investment in inventory.

More than any other basic operating activity, Ordering / Purchasing relates to cost and quality controls. In fact, most food service businesses spend 30-50% of their total sales revenue on product Ordering / Purchasing. Therefore, cost avoidance in Ordering / Purchasing has the potential to translate directly to the operation's bottom line. Conversely, the failure to properly control food costs can have a more devastating effect than overspending in most other cost categories. It is not surprising that the primary concern of many operators is their food cost. As costs increase, this concern grows. Rising food costs often force management to reexamine the operation's Ordering / Purchasing needs.

In addition to the menu, several other factors dictate Ordering / Purchasing needs. First, the forecasted sales volume is an estimate of how much business there will be in the facility on a given day. The operation's standardized recipes can be used to work backward from the number of servings to the amounts of ingredients needed. If there is a weight loss during processing (as when ribs of beef are roasted), the raw ingredient amounts must be increased accordingly.

Certain external factors also affect Ordering / Purchasing needs. The size and frequency of orders is affected by how much lead time the supplier requires before a delivery can be made. Also, the facility's location relative to the supplier may affect quantities purchased. For example, a steakhouse located high in the mountains or in a rural area probably receives less frequent deliveries than a steakhouse in a downtown metropolitan area. Since the steakhouse located downtown obtains more frequent deliveries, the quantities ordered at any given time tend to be smaller. Assuming the two steakhouses do the same amount of business, the steakhouse in the metropolitan area will have less money tied up in inventory.

Of course, quantity (of food ordered or money spent) is not the only concern. Quality and

sanitation standards must also be considered in Ordering / Purchasing. A poor quality or unsanitary product is never a bargain, no matter how inexpensive it is.

The factors affecting Ordering / Purchasing needs are directly related to the functions of the Ordering / Purchasing control point.

The Ordering / Purchasing functions are:

1. Establishing and maintaining an adequate supply of food and nonfood products
2. Minimizing the operation's investment in inventory –
3. Maintaining the operation's quality, sanitation, and cost standards
4. Maintaining the operation's competitive position
5. Buying the product, not the deal

Each of these objectives of Ordering / Purchasing will be discussed as they relate to the four resources: personnel, equipment, inventory, and facilities.

Ordering / Purchasing and Personnel

A number of people have responsibilities related to the Ordering / Purchasing control point. However, Ordering / Purchasing itself is a management function. It must be done by the manager or delegated to a key subordinate (e.g., assistant manager, food and beverage director, executive chef, or steward) . In any case, one person must be designated as the establishment's buyer.

The buyer is responsible for the operation's Ordering / Purchasing control point. Hotels often have a full-time Ordering / Purchasing agent. In large hotels, the Ordering / Purchasing department consists of more than one person and is responsible for all food and nonfood buying. Of course, not all operations can afford a full-time buyer. Smaller facilities and independent restaurants use the manager or a key assistant as a part-time buyer.

To be successful, the buyer must possess many skills. Broadly speaking, the skills of a buyer can be categorized as managerial, technical and other. Managerial skills are necessary because the buyer is a part of the operation's management team. Therefore, the buyer must be able to plan, analyze, influence, control, and see the operation as a whole. A buyer must understand the establishment's present position and its short-term and long-term goals. This knowledge assists the buyer in carrying out Ordering / Purchasing activities according to management's overall plan.

Technical skills are necessary because they enable the buyer to do a more efficient job. New information is constantly becoming available on food marketing, packaging, distribution, and

product yields. Beside textbooks, the operation's suppliers, trade journals, and industry associations are good sources of this technical information. The buyer's level of technical expertise also depends upon his or her knowledge of the operation's quality, sanitation, and cost standards and of which products meet these standards. A certain amount of Ordering / Purchasing experience may be necessary to develop technical skills.

Other characteristics the buyer should have are good interpersonal skills and high ethical standards. Interpersonal skills are critical because the buyer must be a communicator. This individual regularly interacts with other department heads, employees in the Ordering / Purchasing department, and management. The buyer's communication skills are also important when working with suppliers. Ethical standards may be difficult to specify, but certainly honesty and trustworthiness are two important considerations. A buyer frequently faces temptations in the form of personal rebates and under-the-table, kickbacks. It is management's responsibility to spot-check how the business is handling the Ordering / Purchasing functions to keep its honest buyer honest. Unannounced checks provide a stimulus for the buyer to avoid compromising the establishment's sanitation, quality, and cost standards.

To perform well, buyers must accomplish the five functions of Ordering / Purchasing. Although the amount of time devoted to Ordering / Purchasing may vary with the facility's size, all five functions are addressed by a well-planned Ordering / Purchasing control point. First, buyers are responsible for maintaining adequate inventory levels. The objective is to reduce or eliminate stock outs which inconvenience production personnel and disappoint customers.

The buyer should also minimize the operation's dollar investment in inventory for two reasons. Excessive inventories promote spoilage and potential contamination of products. In addition, excessive inventories tie up dollars in an asset that does not earn interest. Thus, buyers must maintain an optimum level of food and nonfood supplies.

Buyers are additionally responsible for conducting negotiations with the operation's suppliers. The negotiations typically cover the AP (as purchased) price, quantities to be purchased, delivery schedules, and other supplier services. An intimate knowledge of the establishment's standards and its product needs is necessary if the buyer is to obtain acceptable products. The buyer must communicate quality, sanitation, and cost standards to suppliers. Also, buyers should keep suppliers informed of ways in which the suppliers can improve their services to the operation.

Furthermore, good relationships with suppliers guarantee that the buyer will get the best value each supplier can offer. To maintain the operation's competitive position, buyers should

continually try to improve their performance. Of course, suppliers cannot always fill orders promptly. Some wise buyers have circumvented this problem by establishing a reciprocal relationship with competitors. Thus, when a competitor is temporarily out of a needed product, they lend the competitor the product from their own stock until the competitor's order is shipped in. The advantage to the lending business is that the next time it is out of a product, the buyer can call on the competitor and request a temporary loan.

Although they are not, strictly speaking, under the control of the operation's management, suppliers are another human component of the Ordering / Purchasing function. The role of suppliers has changed significantly in recent years. In the past, suppliers often had a specialty such as produce, meat, or coffee, and they sold a limited number of these products. Other supplier specialists were dairy, bakery, paper, sanitary and cleaning supplies, or ethnic food distributors. Each specialist was geared to buy, store, and sell a certain category of food products or supplies.

By the early 1970s, the supplier's role had evolved into the full-line or one-stop shopping distributor. Today, this trend in food service distribution continues and is called the master distributor concept. Now, many of the full-line distributors carry from 5,000 to 10,000 different products. One master distributor may be able to satisfy 90 to 100% of an operation's Ordering / Purchasing needs. Many businesses are currently Ordering / Purchasing most of their requirements from a small number of full-line distributors who sell meat, produce, fresh fish, groceries, canned foods, frozen foods, cleaning supplies, paper products, flowers for the table, utensils, and kitchen equipment. Larger operations may still buy a few specialty items (e.g., exotic fruits and vegetables, dairy products) from a specialist. However, a full-line distributor can probably satisfy all the Ordering / Purchasing needs of a small business.

This one-stop Ordering / Purchasing arrangement increases product consistency and provides Ordering / Purchasing leverage for the facility, while it builds one's trust in the operation and gives management more time for planning, organizing, training, and public relations. Furthermore, master distributors often provide services that a specialist cannot give. These services include menu consulting, employee training programs, seminars, and presentations. - These advantages make it likely that-the master distributor concept will increase in popularity.

Regardless of a whether a specialist or full-line distributor is used, the establishment should periodically evaluate its supplier(s) based on the following criteria:

1. Sanitation policies,
2. Size and services
3. Staff and labor relations
4. Ordering / Purchasing power and financial position
5. Products and prices –
6. Reputation

The size of the distributing company relates to its ability to meet the operation's needs. Supplier services include arranging delivery schedules according to the food service operation's preferences. This can eliminate overcrowding of the food service storage areas while simultaneously avoiding stock-outs. Also, most suppliers are willing to carry unusual items as a special service to the operation if these items are needed on a regular basis. Other services such as menu planning assistance, employee training, and seminars have already been mentioned.

Management often forms an impression of a distributing company based on its sales and delivery personnel. Buyers prefer to work with knowledgeable salespeople who know their products and help the buyer become familiar with product alternatives that will meet the operation's needs. Also, the supplier's salesperson can provide valuable market information. The laws of supply and demand still govern the marketplace. For example, if the distributor learns that California is experiencing heavy rains, its sales representatives should inform the operation's buyer that the price of California lettuce will be higher in approximately six weeks. Similarly, as new produce items come into season, the supplier should keep the establishment abreast of changing market conditions. Also, the salesperson should keep the establishment informed of promotional discounts offered by processors and manufacturers.

Delivery personnel also represent the supplier. Their appearance, attitude, and courteous contribute to the impression formed b the operation. In addition, labor relations factors, such as the supplier's ability to create a team spirit among the company's employees, should be considered.

The Ordering / Purchasing power and financial position of the supplier are important. High volume distributors buy in larger quantities, so the unit cost is much less. Thus, a portion of the savings can be passed on to the food service business. A supplier that is on sure financial grounds is more likely to give the operation a fair value for its food and nonfood product dollars.

Naturally, products and prices are a critical evaluation point for suppliers. Products should meet the establishment's stated specifications, Distributors offering greater product variety are able to serve more types of food service businesses. Suppliers are obligated to charge a competitive price. When buyers evaluate distributors on the basis of price, it is essential that they compare

like items. In many cases, the edible-portion EP price is more important than the as purchased price because the EP price takes into account the product's yield.

The reputation of a distributor relates to the supplier's reliability, consistency, and predictability. The food service operation should select suppliers who stand behind their products and services. It is a good idea to ask for references from the local health department and restaurant and hotel associations before deciding which supplier(s) will receive the operation's business. In one sense, suppliers are partners in the food service business because they have a stake in its success. Buyers and suppliers can work together to satisfy the desires of the operation's target markets.

Ordering / Purchasing Specifications

Many functions of the food service operation can be delayed or and Inventory stopped entirely if the necessary quantity and quality of inventory is not available. The Ordering / Purchasing department plays a major role in the flow of products through the food service facility. Many areas of the operation interact with the Ordering / Purchasing department.

Therefore it is essential that the Ordering / Purchasing of inventory be properly handled. The overall goal of Ordering / Purchasing is to obtain the necessary food and nonfood items in the correct quality and quantity at a reasonable price. To reach this goal, buyers have many tools at their disposal. The first tool is a set of standard purchase specifications.

Standard purchase specifications precisely define the quality, quantity, and other relevant characteristics required in products purchased by the establishment. Standard purchase specifications are communication tools. They require management to define exactly what is needed. They eliminate confusion on the part of suppliers, and they facilitate the bidding process. These specifications may be developed by a management team consisting of a food and beverage director, executive chef, buyer, and other end users. While it might take this team some time to develop standard purchase specifications for all the products normally purchased by the operation, the results are well worth the investment of time. Once they are developed, the specifications can be used over and over again for new suppliers, for planning menu changes, and for quality control.

Quality is defined through the use of government grades or packer's brand names. For example, the fancy, or government grade indicates a certain quality level in fruits and vegetables. On the

other hand, the quality of Heinz tomato ketchup, Swift's Premium ham, and Minor's beef base are implied by their packer's brand names. Quantity may be defined by the number of units per container, box, or case. Where container sizes are standardized, the size of the container may be specified (for example, #10 cans). Other descriptions contained in a standard purchase specification tell the supplier exactly what kind of product is desired.

Standard purchase specifications are only useful if they accurately reflect the individual needs of the operation. Although several specification manuals such as The Meat Buyer's Guide and NIFDA Canned Foods Manual are available, the general specifications in these references should be tailored to the needs of the individual operation. In-house kitchen or performance tests can be used to alter general specifications to fit the establishment's needs. Also, market conditions which affect availability may modify the establishment's specifications. Ultimately, standard purchase specifications for each product must be based on the intended use of the product.

In smaller businesses, the amount purchased is must less than in larger operations, so the method of Ordering / Purchasing is frequently less formal. Written-specifications, bids, and negotiations are not utilized in the informal form of purchasing. Specifications are given, prices are quoted, and negotiations are conducted either in person or by telephone. While this method is less exact, it is simple and it saves time for the small operator. Perhaps more than any other control point, the Ordering / Purchasing activity is in a constant state of flux. Conditions change from season to season, from week to week, and in some cases, overnight.

Ordering / Purchasing and Change

Successful managers realize that their Ordering / Purchasing specifications are not cast in concrete. Ordering / Purchasing patterns must be altered when conditions change. However, before a change is undertaken, it is important to systematically predict and evaluate its impact on the operation's sanitation, quality, and cost standards. Ordering / Purchasing can be risky if menu planning is haphazard. Success objectives of Ordering / Purchasing are not clearly understood. However, the risks can be reduced if the buyer arms himself or herself with knowledge about the operation's policies and procedures as well as food needs.

Knowledge of food production methods is critical to the success of the Ordering / Purchasing control point. A buyer must know the yield of a raw ingredient in order to calculate its EP (edible

portion) cost. The buyer should also know how to modify the AP (as purchased) cost based on how the product is prepared and served.

Knowledge of Ordering / Purchasing procedures must be a high priority if the buyer is to achieve success. A planned, organized system-complete with written product specifications, purchase orders, and product evaluation forms-increases the buyer's control. By carefully reviewing issuing records, the buyer can establish par stocks (minimum quantities) for each item the facility should have on hand. This helps to eliminate costly stock-outs. The winning businesses know that they cannot negotiate either price or quality when they practice last-minute buying.

Knowledge of suppliers and competitors completes the Ordering / Purchasing success formula. Suppliers can be a valuable source of market information. They can assist the operation in the solution of yield, sanitation, quality, and cost problems. Winning food service businesses only deal with honest suppliers. Successful operations are not afraid to develop a reciprocal supply loan relationship with competitors because, in the end, it can be beneficial to them to do so.

In the final analysis, excellent businesses know the difference between control and controls. Control is the overall objective or goal management is striving to reach, whereas controls are the devices, tools, procedures, and policies used to reach the goal. Excellent managers are in control because they have set up a system to integrate sanitation, quality, and cost controls.

Summary

The menu, which details the operation's product offerings, is the blueprint for the success of a food service establishment. The menu influences the other control points in the food service system. Menu planning must be geared to the resources under a manager's control. The trend today is toward limited menus and cross-utilization of raw ingredients.

Ordering / Purchasing needs are dictated by a careful analysis of the menu and its standard recipes. Ordering / Purchasing pattems evolve as market trends, sources of supply, and customer needs change. Successful Ordering / Purchasing is the rule rather than the exception when the establishment's representatives arm themselves with knowledge. Control of the quality, sanitation, and cost of purchases is possible when a set of controls is systematically utilized.

Receiving

The Receiving Control Point

The receiving function is critical because at this control point ownership of the products is transferred from the supplier or vendor to the operation.

Receiving comes into focus after the menu has been planned and the products dictated by the menu have been purchased. The objectives of the receiving function include inspecting deliveries to evaluate the quality and determine the Quantity of the products, checking prices, and arriving at an accept or reject decision. In reality, receiving practices range from carefully checking each item delivered to allowing the supplier's truck driver to put the order away and the manager simply signing the invoice. However, from a control standpoint, the former method is certainly preferable to the latter one.

A carefully planned menu and skillful purchasing are useless if the operation accepts inferior products. Conversely, good receiving techniques can maximize the results of the other control points. Receiving success requires competent personnel, proper equipment, adequate receiving facilities, established receiving hours, and several types of receiving control forms.

Receiving and Personnel

The number of persons working at the receiving control point varies among food service operations. The major determining factor is the size of the operation and its annual sales volume. In a relatively small operation, the manager or the assistant manager is usually in charge of receiving. In a larger operation, one full-time or two part-time people typically handle the receiving function, and the person in charge of receiving may be called a receiving clerk, steward, or storeroom person. This individual usually reports either to the food controller, the assistant manager, or the food and beverage manager.

Regardless of how many individuals are assigned to the receiving function, the general requirements are the same:

1. Familiarity with the necessary forms, tools, and equipment
2. Literacy
3. Quality judgment
4. Product knowledge
5. Sanitation judgment
6. Personal integrity, precision, and accuracy
7. Willingness to protect the interests of the organization
8. Ability to coordinate the needs of the operation's departments with the supplies being delivered

The person in charge of receiving should be able to effectively use all equipment, facilities, and forms required at this control point. (More will be said about these tools in later sections.)

Because of the volume of written information used at this control point, the operation's receiver must be able to read and write. Among other things, the receiver must be able to check the actual products delivered against the written purchase specifications and written purchase orders. The receiver should know acceptable product quality characteristics based on the operation's standard purchase specifications. A knowledge of product grades, weight ranges, and fat trim factors is crucial to the success of receiving. In addition, the receiver should be able to assess packaging conditions. Furthermore, the receiver must be able to judge the sanitary condition of the products and the delivery vehicle.

The receiver should be a person who demonstrates honesty and attention to detail. The receiver's integrity ensures that the establishment's standards, policies, and procedures will not be compromised. The receiver must be someone who takes this important job seriously. Negligence or inaccuracy on the part of the receiver does financial damage to the business.

Clearly, the receiver must be someone who is committed to protecting the interests of the operation. While food production experience is invaluable in the receiver, this does not imply that any kitchen worker in the operation is qualified to perform the receiving function. Only selected and trained employees should be permitted to receive food and nonfood products. A facility that allows the janitor, dishwasher, or bus-person to do its receiving is opening the door for trouble. These individuals are not in a position to recognize product problems nor what to do about them.

A properly trained receiver, on the other hand, knows what to do when there is a problem with

product deliveries. The receiver uses his or her clout with the supplier to point out problems to the delivery person and see that they are corrected. In this respect, the receiving function is even more important than the purchasing function because as soon as the receiver signs the invoice, the merchandise is legally accepted and is no longer the responsibility of the supplier. Thereafter, any problems with the products are the operation's problems.

Finally, the person in charge of receiving needs cooperation from other departments in the food service establishment or hotel. The receiver must coordinate supply requisitions from the departments with the delivery schedules of suppliers. Ideally, receiving should take place during slow periods in the operation's daily business cycle. This is particularly important when the receiver is also the chef, assistant manager, or manager. During rush periods, these individuals have other duties and responsibilities. By scheduling deliveries during slow periods, the receiver's undivided attention can be given to the receiving duties.

Receiving and Inventory

Before they become inventory items, all product deliveries must be verified. This verification is a two step process. First, the supplier's invoice is checked-against the establishment's purchase order and standard purchase specifications. The supplier's invoice is a document detailing the products being delivered to the facility and the corresponding prices. (In some cases, it also shows products which are back ordered or not yet available for delivery.) Since the supplier uses the sum of invoices to calculate the bill, each invoice must be verified for accuracy.

At the second step, when the order is delivered, the products themselves should be checked against the supplier's invoice. Any products invoiced on the basis of weight should be weighed using an accurate scale. To determine the net weight of the products, they should be removed from their packing containers or the weight of the containers should be subtracted from the gross weight. Different cuts of meat which are delivered together must be weighed separately because of varying per pound prices. Any products delivered on the basis of count should be counted before they are accepted. If more than one container of the same product is delivered, a spot-check of random containers to verify the count may be sufficient.

In some cases, the invoice may need to be modified because the products are spoiled, do not meet the establishment's specifications, or the wrong quantity has been delivered. A request for a credit memo is used by the operation to state the reasons why the products are unacceptable and to ask the supplier to credit the invoice. The supplier should then issue a credit memo to adjust

the account. This form helps to ensure that the food service establishment is charged only for the products that conform to its standards.

If a thorough inspection of every product delivery seems to be unnecessarily complex or time-consuming, it isn't. The food service business can only gain from a policy of consistent inspection. It keeps honest suppliers honest and discourages dishonest suppliers from dealing with the operation.

Storing new inventory items in the proper order can preserve product quality and food safety. The most perishable items (i.e., frozen products) should be placed in storage first. Next, refrigerated meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, and produce should be rapidly stored. Finally, the least perishable items (staple foods and nonfood supplies) should be stored. Adhering to this order minimizes product deterioration and loss of quality. At the moment the delivery is accepted, the safety of the food becomes the responsibility of the food service establishment. The receiver should strive to keep the time elapsed between acceptance and

Receiving and Facilities

Proper receiving facilities are essential to the attainment of the establishment's sanitation, quality, and cost standards at the receiving control point. Receiving facilities include inside and outside areas surrounding the loading dock, the back door, and the receiving office.

Costs are easier to control when the receiving facilities are equipped with the necessary tools and work surfaces. A work table or desk is essential for record keeping and administrative responsibilities. Additional table space should be available for opening product containers during inspection of deliveries. Adequate floor space is necessary so that orders do not pile up in the receiving area. Overcrowding in the delivery area results in safety and sanitation hazards.

Some establishments receive products in the same way they have done it for years. They never bother to reevaluate the function to identify areas for possible improvement. As a result, these operations are not maximizing their utilization of resources at the receiving control point. There is no room for negligence, waste, or error in receiving. Evidence of any of these problems may suggest the need for reevaluation of the receiving function.

Because the control points are all interrelated, receiving should also be reevaluated when menu planning or purchasing activities are changed. For example, if a small operation changes its

menu, and business improves dramatically, perhaps the operation's increased sales volume would justify hiring a full-time receiving person. The operation's orders can only be checked in properly if the receiver has enough time and the correct tools.

Management should make periodic checks of the receiving function to evaluate how effectively the operation is handling this control point. Regardless of the size of the business, the more consistent and routine the receiving function becomes, the fewer problems there will be. As with all the other control points, an evaluation of the costs versus the benefits indicates the degree to which more sophisticated controls are required. What takes place at the back door can make or break a business. Invoices are checked against the purchase order and specifications. The quality and condition of each delivered item is examined. A request for a credit memo is used for any damaged or spoiled products.

Perishable products are carefully checked by weight and/or count. Canned and staple items are also spot-checked. When the invoice is signed, the establishment is committed to payment. All of these procedures take time, but they increase the probability of success. The attitude of the receiver is important to the success of the business. If the receiver is thorough and honest, suppliers are much more likely to follow the operation's specifications. Receiving is an important part of the establishment's overall strategy for success.

Storage

The Storing Control Point

Food must be stored at the operation in between the time it is received and the time it is put into production. The goal of the operation is to maintain enough stock on an item so they do not run out between deliveries. Deciding which level of each item is a tricky matter. If the operation orders too much of an item they risk deterioration of the product and tying up too much money while they wait to sell the item and get a return on their investment, while if they order too little they run the risk of running out and disappointing guests.

The storage area has its goal of protecting the food service operation's food and non-food purchases until they are needed to serve the guests. To maximize income, profits, and customer satisfaction spoilage and contamination must be minimized. Also, these assets must be protected from theft, pilferage, and unauthorized use.

The key to proper food storage is knowing how items should be stored having facilities and equipment to keep the products in optimal condition while maintaining the proper inventory levels. Keep in mind most food products do not improve in quality while in storage.

The storing function is a weak link in the cost control system of some food service establishments. Many operations experience large losses due to contamination, spoilage, and deterioration of their food products. These losses are usually due to the fact that no one is in charge of monitoring the storage areas. Care must be taken that inventory is rotated to reduce the possibility of spoilage. Although a small business may not be able to justify hiring a storeroom person on a full-time basis, responsibility for the storage areas must be given to one dependable employee (e.g., chef or assistant manager). The establishment's investment in food and nonfood products is too large to be left un-managed.

The responsibilities of the storeroom person vary with the operation and the dollar value of its inventory. (Recall that inventory ties up money but does not earn interest for the business.) In smaller operations, the storeroom person often has other responsibilities such as receiving, issuing, and/or production. Splitting time between these responsibilities need not be a problem if the proper routines are being followed at each of the other control point.

The functions of the storeroom person are:

1. To conduct frequent, careful inspections of product storage areas in the facility
2. To discard food which is contaminated or spoiled
3. To reduce financial losses due to theft and pilferage
4. To monitor rates of usage of each product
5. Notify foodservice personnel of items nearing expiration dates
6. To record inventory dollar amounts using the perpetual inventory and/or physical inventory system

The purpose of the storeroom person's inspections is to ensure that the operation's quality and safety standards are being maintained. Proper care of inventory items contributes to the cost control program also.

Waste in the form of spoilage and decreased product quality increases the &cost of goods sold& expense and decreases profitability. By preserving food properly the storeroom person makes a major contribution to the operation's bottom-line performance.

Unfortunately, thefts and pilferage are not uncommon in the food service industry. However, the establishment of inventory controls can make these losses easier to detect. Security precautions must be taken throughout the operation, and storage areas are no exception. Key and lock control and the establishment of an audit trail are examples of security measures at the storing control point.

There are several good reasons for monitoring product usage rates. First, the information gained in this process can help the purchasing agent to establish par stocks and automatic re-order points, thus minimizing stock-outs. Second, surplus products which are not being used up fast enough can be brought to the attention of the production department. Then these dead inventory items can be worked into production before they spoil, causing the operation's food cost to increase.

Every food service business must keep proper inventory records for accounting and tax purposes.

Storing and Equipment

Equipment is an important consideration in each of the three areas of storage: and refrigerated, and frozen. Storage temperatures in all three of these areas must be monitored with thermometers. A thermometer should be placed in the warmest part of each storage area in a location where it is easily readable. The warmest area in a refrigerator or freezer can usually be found near the door.

Storing and Inventory

Generally, the larger the inventory dollar value, the more difficult is to achieve control of the storing function. While too small an inventory can lead to frequent stock-outs, an excessively large inventory can cause a number of problems. Most food products, including frozen items, experience a loss of volume and quality if stored too long.

Pilferage and spoilage losses tend to increase in direct proportion to the amount of inventory on hand. When employees see a large quantity of products in stock, they may be tempted to steal, figuring that one less will not be noticed. Large inventory amounts encourage waste. Food preparation employees are not as likely to conserve food products that are obviously overstocked.

In light of these problems, managers may wonder how to achieve an optimum inventory level, thus avoiding shortages and overstocking. If sales are properly forecasted, purchasing is more accurate and inventory is easier to control. But suppose an establishment finds it necessary to maintain a large inventory, perhaps due to infrequent supplier deliveries and a high level of sales. Is a detailed security system necessary for every product in stock? Such a system might require a considerably larger storeroom staff, and might actually end up costing more than the losses from thefts, spoilage, and contamination.

Realistically, the dollar value of food products dictates the minimal amount of inventory control necessary to guarantee security. Foods can be compared by price per unit of weight or volume. On this basis, it is clear that relatively few food products have a high dollar value per unit of measure (pound, kilogram, quart, liter, etc.). On the average, less than 20% of the total items in a food service operation's inventory account for over 80% of the total dollar value of the food

inventory. Therefore, the operation's inventory control measures should focus on these high cost items.

A physical inventory is an actual count of what is on the shelves. It must be taken each time an income statement is prepared. The physical inventory must be precise and accurate since it is used to calculate the operation's cost of goods sold and food cost percentage.

A perpetual inventory continuously records what is in storage at any given time. As products are added to or removed from storage, the balance is adjusted. At all times, the amount on the shelves should agree exactly with the balance figure on the form. Although the perpetual inventory system requires more record keeping, it offers several advantages. If filled out accurately, the perpetual inventory form provides tight control over food products. Also, unlike the physical inventory method, the perpetual inventory system is always up to date throughout the month. Furthermore, the close monitoring involved in this system prevents food spoilage from progressing uncontrolled in storage areas.

Since most operations have a shortage of personnel resources, the perpetual inventory system is mainly used for expensive menu items such as meat, fish, shellfish, specialty foods, expensive spices and alcoholic beverages. Using the perpetual inventory system for costly items tells employees that these items are being watched.

Another important inventory management technique for preventing spoilage is the rotation of food supplies on a first-in-first out (FIFO) basis. Keeping records on all spoiled food products helps management identify areas for improvement and helps the accounting department maintain accurate values for inventory. During the physical inventory process, management can check each storage area to be sure that the FIFO system is being used. The food production supervisor (usually the chef or assistant manager) should also make a daily FIFO check.

Good housekeeping in dry storage not only reduces contamination, it also reduces fire hazards. The light sources in storage areas should be sufficient to provide adequate illumination for reading product labels. Refrigerated storage areas are designed to maintain food products temperatures of 45'For less. Refrigerators and freezers require visible thermometers so that temperatures can be checked at least four times per day-. Refrigerated storage areas are used to prolong the shelf life of perishable foods so the FIFO system is indispensable.

Frozen storage areas are similar to refrigerated areas except the temperature maximum is O'F . Storage freezers require visible thermometers which should be checked four times each day. Unsafe temperatures or faulty thermometers are to be reported to the food. production supervisor

immediately. Most food service operations do not have commercial freezing equipment. Instead most freezers in food service operations are designed to keep already frozen foods frozen. Storage freezers do not freeze foods rapidly but only relatively slowly. It is important to guard against freezer burn (dehydration) or quality deterioration during freezer storage. Careful wrapping of food products is a deterrent to dehydration and quality loss. The food production supervisor should personally inspect each storage area on a daily basis to be sure the operation's food and beverage assets are being protected.

Management's role at the storing control point is twofold: (1) establish the standards and procedures to be followed, and (2) periodically perform a follow-up check to be certain that the standards are being upheld. It is difficult for some employees to break or change old habits which may be counterproductive. However, if they are expected to care about and uphold standards, it must be apparent to them that management cares about the standards enough to enforce them.

A change in storing procedures is necessary when any of the other three control points which precede it are altered. For example, storage area requirements may change drastically when the operation changes from an all-scratch preparation kitchen to the use of convenience foods. More refrigerated and frozen storage areas may be necessary, particularly in an older establishment where refrigerated and frozen storage space may already be inadequate. Product quality and costs are negatively affected if operational decisions are made without considering the resources of the storing control point.

Issuing

The Issuing Control Point

Issuing is more prevalent in food service operations where more than one outlet uses a food storage area. Such as in a hotel where the coffee shop, banquets and the fine dining restaurant all share a central dining room and a storeroom. As it would be impractical for each of the food and beverage operations to have their own storeroom. A formal issuing process is needed so each area can be properly charged for the food items they use. The is crucial so an accurate food cost can be maintained for each area. As the manager of any of the outlets in an operation you would want an accurate costing of the food you used and not have it mixed with the other outlets that you share a storeroom,

In small operations, those with only one food outlet, formal issuing may be eliminated entirely. In such cases, all purchases are regarded as direct purchases and charged to the single food outlet.. Supplies are charged directly to the department or unit in which they are used. This accounting transfer occurs even though the products are held in a central storage area. The direct purchase system eliminates the critical from a cost control standpoint because it is where the food products change departments. The objective of issuing is to ensure proper authorization for the transfer of food products to production department(s) of the operation. The issuing function should be designed to guarantee that only authorized personnel order and receive products from the facility's storage areas. A properly designed issuing system also aids in the calculation of the daily food cost.

Although this system is simple and less time-consuming, it does not provide as much control as the formal system described in the section below.

Issuing and Personnel

In a formal issuing system the person in charge of the storeroom checks to determine that each order has been properly authorized, removes product storage tags, and proceeds to fill the order. The storeroom person then costs out each item ordered and totals the costs. A copy of the completed requisition is sent to the operation's accounting office along with any storage tags removed from the items. This system prevents personnel from helping themselves to whatever they want, whenever they want it.

While putting orders together, the storeroom person should note any items in short supply and direct this information to the operation's buyer so the items can be reordered. Careful inspection of written requests for inventory items and accuracy are important during product issuing. In some establishments, the storeroom person not only assembles the order for a department, but also delivers it to that area. Prearranged issuing times for each department can eliminate confusion and enable the storeroom person to work more efficiently.

Generally, the same kinds of equipment are used during the receiving and issuing of inventory. Products issued on the basis of weight should be weighed before they are released to the production department. Calculators are useful to determine the dollar amount of each department's order and the total of all issues for the day. Handcarts and dollies are used to transport the products from storage facilities to production areas.

Requisitions are the backbone of a successful issuing control point. Written and orders are required from a department before any products are released. The requisition forms may be sequentially numbered and/or color-coded by department for control purposes. Putting requisitions in writing provides documentation and, therefore, greater control. The need for documentation exists whenever a product is transferred from one area of responsibility to another. In this case, the products are transferred from storage to production. Usually a supply of products sufficient for one day or one meal period is issued to each department.

Issues should be properly costed This facilitates the calculation of daily food cost and reminds employees to think of inventory as money. Requisitions must be subtracted from perpetual inventory records to maintain accuracy. Daily issues help establish usage rates and reorder points.

When products are issued, the FIFO [first in - first out] system must be followed. Proper stock rotation minimizes spoilage, contamination, and loss of product quality. The order in which products are assembled for issuing is the reverse of the order in which they are stored. That is, the least perishable items are taken from storage first and the most perishable products last. This minimizes possible contamination and maintains product temperature control. The food production manager (chef or assistant manager) should be notified if perishable products are nearing the end of their shelf life.

Storeroom facilities should not be left unattended if the issuing control system is to remain intact. For maximum security, storeroom facilities should be kept locked with access limited to the

storeroom person and the manager. Staff needs to be organized and request the items they need for the day rather than running in and out of the storage areas all day. Restricting unauthorized access to storage areas helps to eliminate losses due to thefts and pilferage.

It is management's responsibility to establish policies and standards for issuing. Although some operations do not find it necessary to use a formalized issuing system, managers who view their inventory as a form of money realize the importance of carefully controlling the issuing function. It is management's job to follow up on the issuing control point to determine that standards are being maintained.

Summary

Requisition forms are used to control the issuing function. Inventory items can only be issued to employees with properly authorized requisition forms. At this control point, products are changing departments, and documentation for cost control is critical.

Preparation

The Preparation Control Point

One of the biggest changes taking place in commercial food service is the increased use of convenience or pre-prepared food items. The more pre-prepared food items an operation uses the more it can reduce its labor staff as well as prep areas. The quality of many of the new convenience food items approaches the quality of many 'made from scratch' food items.

Food is purchased in many different forms or degrees of readiness in a food service operation. Many items need to be prepared before they are ready to cook or directly serve to guests. One of the biggest changes in food service in the last 5-10 years is the degree of preparation or process many food items receive at the manufacturer. Much of this increased processing is due to the increased labor costs and labor shortages in many areas. It is know possible for food service operations to eliminate certain jobs due to the increased processing of food items reducing the amount of processing they have to do at the operations level.

The preparing function in a food service operation is also crucial to quality control. During preparation, products begin to be converted from their purchased state to the form in which they will be served to the customer. Mistakes made in food preparation mav be irreversible. If poorly prepared items are served, they are likely to decrease the customer's satisfaction; if they are thrown out, this waste adds to the operation's costs.

It is difficult to prescribe hard and fast rules for the preparing control point because there are so many different types of food service busineses, each with different procedures and objectives. Therefore, general principles which are applicable to most operations are presented in t sections which follow.

Preparing and Personnel

The skill levels of preparation personnel vary from operation to operation and from position to position.

Besides being clean and properly dressed, it is important that food preparation employees be accurate. Accuracy reduces waste and losses resulting from improper ingredient handling, weighing, and measuring. The accuracy with which ingredients are prepared can also have a significant impact on the quality of the end product.

Mise en place is critical to the success of preparation and cooking. This French term, which means, put in place, suggests that before preparation begins, all ingredients should be assembled in the work area. Organizing in advance reduces errors and speeds up the actual preparation process

Preparing may take place in any department in the kitchen. The salad or pantry department is usually responsible for bulk salad, appetizer, and seafood preparation as well as the source of canapés, hors d'oeuvres, salads, and other cold food presentations.

Preparing and Equipment

Equipment needed for preparation is based on the menu. If a menu change is anticipated, additional preparation or cooking equipment may have to be purchased. If a specialized piece of equipment is needed to prepare one new menu item, the cost of adding the equipment must be weighed against the profits it will generate.

The amount of preparation equipment an operation has in its kitchen directly relates with the number of food items it prepares from scratch compared to the number of items it purchases prepared or partially prepared. In the last 5 or so years there has been a big growth in the availability in quality convenience food items. The level of quality of a convenience product must be evaluated by management. A convenience product should never be purchased unless its qualitv is equal to or better than a similar product prepared in house. Second, because convenience products offer a predetermined yield, they have an easy-to-calculate portion cost. Third, convenience products can reduce waste. Fourth, convenience products can help reduce the number of and skill level of the preparation staff.

In some cases, convenience food products may reduce handling and storage costs. In other cases, storage costs increase because the products must be stored in a refrigerator or freezer. Therefore, each product must be evaluated individually. Finally, convenience food products facilitate menu expansion. These products can often be used in a variety of applications and menu items with

little additional effort. The scratch versus convenience decision must be carefully evaluated before management decides to add or to rule out convenience food products.

Food products are changed physically and/or chemically during preparation and cooking. The objective is to enhance the food quality while protecting the safety of the food and controlling waste. The yield of a raw product is influenced by the grade, weight, and quality of the ingredients. Preparing and cooking must be done correctly to provide safe products and maximum yields.

A standard recipe is a written procedure for the production of a given quantity of a food item. It lists the exact quantity of each ingredient to be used, the sequential order in which ingredients are put together, cooking times and temperatures, and the equipment necessary to produce the finished product. Using standard recipes is essential to achieving consistency in product quality, sanitation, and cost. Standard recipes permit the operator to precisely determine the cost per portion of finished menu items.

Standard recipes should not be cast in concrete. They should be changed if conditions in the environment or resource levels change. Standard recipes merely provide a minimum level of acceptance. They can be used to train preparation personnel. If the production manager or the employees can improve the results by changing the recipes, these changes should be documented by revising the standard recipes so the changes will be known to all who use them. New recipes copied from magazines or supplied by other establishments must be adapted to the needs of the operation, its personnel, and its customers.

Once a standard recipe has been developed for each menu item, the cost per portion or standard recipe cost can be calculated. Knowing the cost per portion is essential if the menu items are to be accurately priced. A product cost analysis form is used to calculate the cost per portion. The ingredients and amount used for a menu item can be entered directly from the standard recipe form. Costs are derived from invoices and should be updated whenever there is a significant change in the cost of any raw ingredient. The standard recipe cost is calculated by dividing the total product cost by the yield (number of servings).

Preparing and Facilities

Preparation facilities vary in size and layout with the type of operation and its menu. However, every kitchen is divided into a series of work centers in which somewhat related products are produced. In some kitchens, certain work centers are in separate rooms (e.g., salad and dessert department, a la carte preparation). In smaller kitchens, all preparation may take place in one room without any obvious divisions between work areas. Nevertheless, the arrangement of equipment in the room provides a clue to the location of the various work centers.

Preparation facilities should be designed to efficiently move products from the issuing control point to the cooking control point. This avoids both congestion and delay. A minimum of handling and transfers is also desirable from a sanitation standpoint. Adequate equipment, work tables, lighting, and ventilation must be present in the preparation area to enable food preparation employees to work efficiently. It may be possible to concentrate food preparation in fewer areas to raise staff productivity levels.

To determine the layout of the preparation facilities, management must determine how much preparation will be done in each area. For example, suppose management is considering the preparation of fresh fruits and vegetables. Relevant questions might include these: Will all products be prepared in a single area or will preparation take place in a number of areas? Will the products be washed, peeled, chopped, or diced in the areas? Or will the fresh fruits and vegetables simply be cleaned and weighed? Who will be responsible for preparation in the areas?

All of these questions lead to answers regarding the type and extent of fruit and vegetable preparation facilities. The answers to these questions also influence equipment needs in the area. Perhaps in some work centers most of the products can be prepared with time-saving mechanical equipment rather than by hand. With careful planning, essential equipment for an area can be made available while unneeded equipment can be eliminated.

Preparing and Change

Changes in the preparing function occur daily in the food service industry. These changes are due to continually evolving customer demands and modifications in the food processing, manufacturing, and distribution systems. Many of these changes force food service managers to reevaluate their preparing control point.

Preparation activities that used to be essential in every food service business are no longer critical today. For example, in the past every operation cleaned, peeled, and trimmed fresh vegetables in-house. Today, many distributors sell already cleaned and trimmed produce.

More often than not, today's operations buy pre-portioned meat products. Some are even purchasing fully cooked and ready-to-slice roasts for sandwiches and other menu items. The proliferation of high-quality frozen convenience dough's and bread products has minimized the need for a full-scale in-house bake shop in modern operations.

Jn the past, most food service establishments prepared their own stock from bones and vegetable products. Today, the simmering stockpot is considered a relic of the past in all but a few establishments. The availability of several high-quality natural food bases eliminates the need for the traditional stockpot. These convenience products reduce waste and spoilage while lowering the sanitation risks of the simmering Stockpot.

Preparing and Success

Excellent operations maintain cost, quality, and sanitation standards at the food preparation control point. Managers of successful businesses realize that planning prevents poor performance. These individuals have developed standards for preparation because, at this control point, there are many variables to control.

Preparing requires a coordination of departments, product flow, and personnel flow. The objective is to not overburden or under-utilize resources. Use of a master food production planning worksheet helps systematize the preparing control point. Standard recipes help to ensure that menu items will be prepared in a safe and sanitary manner. These written procedures also provide consistency for cost and quality control.

Successful operations use preparation equipment and facilities to maximize the productivity of production personnel. If equipment is designed and located correctly, the probability of success is increased. The winners continually reevaluate their preparation practices and standards. Thev are not afraid to try new products and procedures which are consistent with the establishment's standards.

Cooking

The Cooking Control Point

Cooking is simply the addition of heat to food products. There are many different ways to cook food items; baking, roasting, frying, to name a few. The make-up of the food item and the desired results dictates the cooking method.

Cooking, with many foods, is necessary to increase the digestibility of many food products. Cooking also changes the components and chemical make-up of food items. Proteins, fats, and carbohydrates in cooked foods are frequently easier to digest than the same nutrients in raw products. Unfortunately, cooking can also reduce the nutritional value of food products by destroying some of the vitamins they contain. In general, shorter cooking times help retain more vitamins.

Cooking alters the form, flavor, color, texture, and appearance of food products. These chemical and physical changes increase both the acceptability and palatability of food products. Strict time-temperature controls ' combined with standardized production techniques, can enhance food quality and increase customer enjoyment of cooked menu

Cooking and Personnel

Many of the personnel considerations discussed under the preparation control point also apply to cooking. Personnel at the cooking control point are responsible for cooked-to-order appetizers, entrees, side dishes, and desserts. The number of people involved in the cooking control point depends on the extent of the menu and the volume of business done by the establishment.

Above all, accuracy is an important component of the cooking control point. Cooks and chefs are expected to follow the operation's Standard Recipes. The master food production planning worksheet outlines what is to be requisitioned and cooked for each meal period. Standard recipes must be followed exactly, including ingredient amounts, cooking times, and cooking temperatures.

In many food service establishments, production and service personnel are frequently at odds with each other. At times it almost seems that these two departments deliberately create roadblocks for each other. The atmosphere of hostility which results is not conducive to achieving the goals of the operation. Management must care enough to take an active role in

improving the situation by encouraging production and service personnel to work together and cooperate. Some managers have found that one way to reduce the chronic complaints of the kitchen staff is to have them trade jobs with servers one day each week or each month. In this way, each person begins to appreciate the complexities of the other's job.

Food service equipment is an investment that must be regularly cleaned and maintained to prolong its useful life, to reduce repair and energy costs, to elicit proper care by employees, and to protect food products. For these reasons, the descriptions of equipment include requirements for cleaning and sanitizing. However, manufacturers' instructions should be followed if they are available. Also, equipment cleaning procedures are available from several manufacturers of cleaning and sanitizing compounds.

Cooking and Facilities

Careful planning of production facilities reduces safety hazards and sanitation risks while creating a more efficient operation overall. Facilities planning begins with the menu, because its content determines what is to be cooked and, therefore, the types of facilities needed. The number of meals to be served also has an impact on facilities design. The allocation of work areas and storage space is directly affected by the food being prepared and cooked. Distances between work stations are a critical consideration. The goal is to avoid traffic jams of people and products. On the other hand, having large distances between work areas may reduce traffic jams but it does not conserve space. A balance must be reached in order to maximize the return on the operation's investment in facilities. Management must review national, state, and local codes and ordinances before any decisions are made regarding facilities design. These codes cover lighting, ventilation, sanitation, and construction requirements.

Energy usage is another important consideration in facilities design. Well-planned facilities equipped with energy-efficient equipment can save the operation countless dollars in the form of lower energy bills.

Equipment and facilities do not last forever, but cleaning and preventive maintenance will prolong their useful life. Ease of cleaning and maintenance is an important consideration in the selection of wall, floor, and ceiling materials for the food production work centers.

Change affects the cooking control point in much the same way that it affects the other basic operating activities. That is, standards for cooking may need to be re-evaluated if conditions change. For example, if the operation switches to the use of more convenience food products, this will change production requirements.

Another example of change is seen in some American establishments that are adding ethnic foods to their menus in response to customer demands. This change in menu has an impact on the operation's control points and resources. In terms of purchasing, Italian, Mexican, and Oriental menu items can be prepared using less expensive raw ingredients. However, these raw ingredients and the special spices used in ethnic foods may be decidedly different from any the operation's purchasing personnel are familiar with. Therefore, new guidelines for the purchase of these items may be needed. Similarly, some guidelines for preserving these new inventory items may be needed by storeroom personnel. And preparing and cooking techniques for ethnic foods often differ from some of the more traditional menu items. Therefore, production personnel may require special training.

Adding ethnic foods to the menu may affect other resource needs. For example, the operation needs the right equipment and facilities to make these menu items easy to produce. Without the right equipment and facilities, the production of ethnic foods can be time-consuming, tiring, and even dangerous. Steam equipment is often required for the production of ethnic foods. Specialty equipment (e.g., woks, Chinese barbecue ranges, taco ranges, and semiautomatic pasta cookers) may also be required. In light of all these implications, managers are advised to evaluate the effects of a change on the operation's resources and control points before the change is implemented.

The Service of Food

Serving Control Point

The serving function is critical from a cost control standpoint because menu items change departments. It also has an essential impact on the level of guest satisfaction. This activity may enhance or detract from the quality of food products. Manv factors affect the quality of service in a food service operation. They include the communication and cooperation between kitchen and dining room personnel, the flow of products, -the menu, the design and layout of the kitchen and dining room, and the style of service. Standards of service vary greatly with the type of establishment. Management is responsible for standardizing ordering procedures, abbreviations, serving procedures, sanitation practices, and personnel requirements. As with the other control points, the serving function requires sanitation, quality, and cost controls.

Food service assumes many forms today. Besides the traditional forms of table service found in lodging and food service operations, other types of service are becoming more popular in hospitality establishments. Each type of service requires slightly different standards. For example, special functions and banquets are served differently than cooked-to-order meals. Also, when food products are prepared and transported to a catered event off the premises, product holding becomes a critical control point. Similarly, hotel room service can be both profitable and safe if designed with sanitation considerations in mind. Temporary food service (e.g., outdoor functions) and mobile food service (e.g., pushcarts) also require standards for safe food service.

Traditional Table Service

This section focuses on traditional table service, as found in establishments other than fast-food restaurants. However, some of the standards presented in this section are also applicable to other types of food service establishments.

Serving and Personnel

'The term ;server may be used to refer to any person directly involved in the service of food or beverages. The server is responsible for serving the customers. Many operations use either

waiters or waitresses exclusively. The image and size of the establishment generally determine whether other positions are included in the service function.

In most cases, the positions of host or maitre d' (sometimes assisted by a captain of service), busperson, and cashier are needed in addition to servers. The host or hostess greets and seats customers and supervises dining room personnel. In some large or formal dining rooms, a maitre d' supervises service and is assisted by a captain. The busperson assists the server in the functions of setting up clean tables and clearing soiled tableware. A cashier is frequently assigned the responsibility of handling all cash and noncash payments from customers.

The number of employees at the serving control point is influenced by several variables. First, the size of the business affects personnel requirements. In general, establishments that are relatively large in size and sales volume require more people in the serving control point. Second, the hours of service have an influence on the number of servers needed. Third, the operation's menu affects personnel requirements, as well as the standards of service. For example, a menu with tableside preparation of salads, entrees, and desserts requires more servers than a menu with more self-service on the part of customers. Fourth, the skill level of servers influences the personnel requirements. All of these variables should be evaluated when determining the number of personnel needed at the serving control point.

Characteristics of Good Servers. Although the skill level and capability of servers vary according to the needs of the operation, several characteristics are desirable in all servers.

The server is, *first and foremost*, public relations agent for the establishment. The server spends more time with the customer than any other employee of the operation. Therefore, a genuine desire to please customers must be reflected in the server's work.

Second, the personality of the server is important to the serving function. A genial person is more likely to succeed than an argumentative individual.

Third, it is critical that servers be dedicated to their work and interested in improving their work performance. When a server does not care, customers can sense this apathy.

Fourth, initiative on the part of servers is important. Most managers prefer to have employees that are self-starters and do not have to be told what to do every moment.

Fifth, servers must be honest to protect the operation's security and cost control systems. Honest

servers charge correct prices for all food and beverage products served. They do not waste the establishment's resources because they recognize that these resources are alternative forms of money.

Sixth, servers must be dependable workers. Absenteeism puts a strain on those servers who do show up for work, so a good attendance record is important. Dependable servers come to work on time. Supervisors depend on servers to prepare themselves and their stations for service before service begins, to follow the supervisor's directions and suggestions, to restock stations near the end of the work shift, and to complete closing duties before leaving. Finally, I al in servers, as well as other personnel, is critical to the success of the business. Loyalty embraces pride, adherence to the establishment's standards and procedures, and a willingness to cooperate with other personnel.

All of these characteristics contribute to a person's aptitude for serving. Aptitude is simply the capacity to learn. It may be difficult to assess a person's aptitude for serving during an employment interview. A person's ability to learn might be indicated by the highest level of education the person has completed. Generally, applicants with a high school diploma or the equivalent are preferred. However, some managers 'judge the aptitude of newly hired employees by how well they respond to the demands of the job. These managers should not assume, however, that a new server who is not performing satisfactorily lacks aptitude. In many cases, service employees simply need to be properly trained in order to realize their potential.

Besides traits such as confidence, calmness, and alertness, some professional skills are desirable in servers. Professional skills add to the efficiency of the staff and may increase customer satisfaction. These skills, which often improve with experience, judgement, dexterity speed and carefulness. A server's dexterity, or ease in using his or her hands improves with practice. Dexterity is related to manual work methods. In light of the tremendous number and variety of duties a server performs in the course of a single shift, it is clear that increased manual skills and improved work methods are crucial to the operation and its customers alike.

While speed is essential, carefulness in the performance of service duties must never be sacrificed. Professional servers achieve a balance between speed and carefulness, while amateurs try to work rapidly and become careless. Carelessness in service raises the sanitation and safety risks. Carelessness may be evident in any service activity from writing orders to handling equipment to following directions from the supervisor.

Before Food Is Served.

The server is responsible for several duties before the customer arrives. The tables, linens, and chairs in the dining area should be checked for cleanliness. The tabletop setup including flatware, dishes, and cups must be correct. Menus should be inspected daily to determine their condition. Any unacceptable menus should be discarded. If daily specials are offered, the servers should be made aware of the specials, their ingredients, preparation methods, and selling prices. If clipons are used to advertise daily specials, they should be on the menus.

Side work is the server's preparation before customers arrive and closing duties after customers leave. Side work is all of the other duties a server performs besides waiting on the customer. (More information about side work will be presented in the next section.)

Once the customer is seated, the server should approach the table promptly with a friendly smile, greeting, and introduction. It is important that the server have a genuine interest in customers. Some servers view customers are nothing more than an interruption in their day and treat them accordingly Most of these customers never complain or tell management that they have been treated shabbily. However, these customers do express their dissatisfaction with the second-rate service. They simply never return to that establishment. The attitude and actions of a server are indications of that person's interest (or lack of interest) in the most important person in the establishment, the customer.

Prompt attention from the server is an essential component of good service. Customers expect their presence to be acknowledged soon after they are seated. If the server is busy at the moment, it is acceptable for the server to stop briefly at the table and explain that he or she will be back as soon as possible. When customers are seated and left waiting with no acknowledgment by the server for 5 minutes, this wasted time may seem more like 20 or 30 minutes to the customers. This is important when serving customers, both for personal and monetary reasons. Courteous personnel not only make the dining experience more enjoyable for customers, but they also make more money in tips.

Customers often ask servers additional information about the operation, its menu, and its methods of food preparation. Most of the time, customer questions are triggered by the menu. For example, customers mav ask how menu items are prepared. Are they fresh or frozen? What brand is used? Where does the operation buy these products, and I what is their geographical

point of origin? How long w III it take the kitchen to prepare this entree? Servers are expected to answer the customers' questions or, if thev are not sure, to obtain the answers from the food production department or the manager. It is important that customers be given correct answers to their questions; servers should not simply guess. Truth-in-menu requirements dictate that all information provided to customers be factual.

The order is then placed with the kitchen using standard ordering procedures and abbreviations. The order may be placed orally, in writing, or by entering it into a computer terminal that simultaneously prints out the order in the kitchen. The kitchen processes orders in the sequence in which they are placed by servers.

In some operations, an expeditor acts as a communication link between the kitchen and the dining room staff. The expeditor who calls orders to the various stations in the kitchen, thus minimizing communication problems between the kitchen and the dining room. The expeditor also aids in quality control by checking finished food products before they are delivered to the customer.

Timing of orders is critical to the rapid flow of products from the kitchen to the dining room.

When an order is assembled at the pickup point, the server's tray should be carefully loaded to reduce the likelihood of accidents. Time and money are wasted when food is dropped or otherwise rendered unservable; production personnel have to begin all over again. Some operations require servers to participate in part of the production and portioning of orders for their customers. For example, servers may be responsible for portioning beverages or soups, adding dressings to salads, cutting and/or portioning desserts, garnishing plates, and obtaining food accompaniments such as sauces. In these cases, servers must be taught to follow the establishment's sanitation and portioning standards at all times.

After Food Is Served.

Once the food is served, the server should check back with the table to see if the customers need any additional items. Prompt and proper removal of dirty dishes, refilling of water glasses, and emptying of ashtrays are essential for good service. When all the customers at a table have finished eating, a properly totaled guest check should be presented. If the server is required to take the customers' money and guest check to the cashier, this should be done promptly. Then, the server should thank the customers and invite them back.

After the customers leave, the table should be cleared and reset with clean tabletop items. This may be done by the server or a bus person. In either case, the person's hands must be washed after handling soiled tableware and before resetting the table with clean items. After the table is reset, the server should check to be sure that the chairs are clean and properly arranged for the next customer.

Occasionally a server may have to handle a customer complaint. The complaint mav stem from customer dissatisfaction with the food, beverages, prices, or service. But how should a complaint resulting from unmet customer expectations in other areas be handled?

Quality Considerations.

Service and production personnel should be trained to recognize acceptable quality levels in food products. Servers often perform the final quality control check for finished menu items immediately before they are served to customers. The operation's quality standards should be maintained at all times. It is the manager's responsibility to set quality standards for all products. Without tasting food, its quality can be judged on the basis of appearance, texture and consistency, and temperature.

Appearance.

Appearance components of quality vary with the product. The customer's overall impression is formed based on color, spacing, neatness, and garnishing of the food items being presented. Appearance is an important aspect of quality, because the old adage "customers eat first with their eyes" is still true today. For example, fruits and baked products that are served moist are more tempting than dried out products. The appearance of foods should always match the pictures of the items on the menu.

Color is a component of quality when judging soups, sauces, and beverages. A bright yellow, artificial-looking chicken gravy is unappealing to most customers. Golden brown bakery products have good eye appeal. Casseroles are more appealing when they are evenly browned. Fruits, vegetables, seafoods, meats, and poultry products should possess a natural color.

The size and shape of food products contribute to their appearance. Broken, misshapen, or ragged vegetables destroy the appearance of the entire plate of food. Portion sizes should fit the plate so food items are not crowded on the plate or hanging over the edge.

The neatness of the food presentation makes a statement about the establishment's standards. Food in liquid form should not spill or run over the edges of tableware. If two foods with sauces are to be served at the same time, one should be served in a side dish. Similarly, if a food has a runny sauce, it should be served in a side dish. Gamishes are artistic touches which complete the picture "painted" with food on a plate. Some garnishes (e.g., parsley, spiced apple rings, orange wedges) are overused to the point of being ignored by customers. Several up-scale establishments use a variety of in-season fresh fruit garnishes that are relatively low in cost and are not labor-intensive. For example, melon wedges, strawberries, kiwi fruit and mango slices are interesting and edible.

Texture and consistency. These are also important components of food quality. Dried out breads and rolls, broken breadsticks and crackers, wilted or discolored salads, lumpy gravies and puddings, and runny custards are examples of poor food quality. Several operations display photographs of standard food presentations in the pickup area in the kitchen. Servers and production personnel can easily refer to these photographs when questions arise. Product temperature. Temperature contributes to the overall quali of food products. As previously noted, hot foods (e.g., cooked cereals, soups, appetizers, entrees, beverages, vegetables, desserts) should b served on heated tableware. Cold foods (e.g., appetizers, dry cereals, salads, entrees, beverages, desserts) should be served on chilled table ware. When assembling orders, the server should first gather room temperature products, then chilled foods, and finally hot foods.

Serving and Success

Success in the serving control point depends on standards. Standards for each style of service used should be established and monitored by management. The standards for service vary greatly depending on the menu, the location (dining room versus room service), the skill level of personnel, and the expectations of customers.

Excellent food service and lodging operations realize the importance of timing at the serving control point. Winning managers continually reevaluate their service system. The system evolves as the operation's resources change and as customers become more sophisticated. Winning businesses design their service standards to meet or exceed customer expectations. Each time the service style changes, the techniques of service are reevaluated and upgraded.

Summary

The purpose of the serving control point is to deliver food products from the production department to the customer in a way that is safe and satisfying. Resource levels influence the success of service. Personnel skill levels dictate the style(s) of service an operation can use successfully. The equipment used during service depends on the style of service. Equipment should be cleaned, maintained, and stored so as to prevent contamination.

Control of the display and service of food inventory during service is critical. The last opportunity to assess product quality is immediately before the menu item is served to the customer. Facilities must be clean and maintained in good repair. A pleasant environment enhances the customer's enjoyment of the entire dining experience.

Several styles of service are used to deliver food to customers. The options for table service include plate service, tableside preparation, family-style, and platter service. Each style has its advantages and disadvantages from the standpoint of sanitation. Regardless of the type of service used, two goals must be given priority: protection of the product and customer satisfaction.