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The Operator's Role in Successful Foodservice Management

What You Will Learn

- 1) Keys to Success in Foodservice Operations
- 2) Foodservice Operators' Essential Tasks
- 3) The Importance of Serving Food Safely
- 4) The Importance of Serving Nutritious Food

Operator's Brief

In this chapter, you will learn that those operating successful foodservice businesses are unique individuals. Unlike most other managers, they are responsible both for producing products and selling them to the end user (guests).

While success in a foodservice operation can be defined in various ways, the success of every foodservice operation depends on three key factors:

- 1) Serving high-quality products
- 2) Providing high-quality service
- 3) Generating optimal levels of operating profits

Serving high-quality products is not the same as selling expensive products. All foodservice operations, regardless of their menu prices, must provide their guests with high-quality products if they want those guests to return again and again.

While foodservice guests seek high-quality products, they also seek high-quality service. Whether an operation serves its guests from the window of a food truck or in the most luxurious of dining rooms, service levels must be

(Continued)

high. In this chapter, you will learn about factors that influence a foodservice operator's ability to provide guests with high-quality service. You will learn that both commercial (for-profit) and noncommercial (not-for-profit) foodservice operators must carefully manage their revenue and expenses to achieve their financial goals.

Foodservice operators must complete essential tasks if they are to be successful. These tasks include:

- ✓ Planning
- ✓ Organizing
- ✓ Directing and Leading
- ✓ Controlling
- ✓ Evaluating

In this chapter, you will learn why each of these tasks is critical.

Finally, you will learn that foodservice operators must provide guests with foods that are safe to eat and that are nutritious. Food safety is critical to an operation's success, and every operation is subject to regular governmental inspections to help ensure that menu items they sell are prepared and handled safely.

The nutritional value of food is important both for the health of guests and for an operation's ability to attract and retain them. Guests are increasingly concerned about the nutritional aspects of the foods they buy, and, in this chapter, you will learn what back-of-house and front-of-house staff must know and do to address these concerns.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Keys to Success in Foodservice Operations
 - Serving High-quality Products
 - Providing High-quality Service
 - Generating Optimal Levels of Operating Profits
- Foodservice Operators' Essential Tasks
 - Planning
 - Organizing
 - Directing and Leading
 - Controlling
 - Evaluating
- Serving Food Safely
- Serving Nutritious Food
 - Nutrition Essentials for Back-of-House Staff
 - Nutrition Essentials for Front-of-House Staff

Keys to Success in Foodservice Operations

Those who own or manage a foodservice operation want it to be successful. The definition of what constitutes a successful foodservice operation, however, varies widely. In some cases, success is measured by the number of guests served or the total amount of revenue an operation generates. For most commercial (for-profit) operations, success may be measured by both profits produced and an owner's return on their investment. In many other settings, a successful operation may mean one with minimized operating costs or one that optimizes the nutritional value of the meals it serves.

Regardless of the definition of success, those operating successful foodservice facilities must be very talented individuals. Unlike many other managers, foodservice operators must assume the professional role of both a manufacturer and a retailer. A foodservice operation is unique because all the functions of a product's sale from menu development (what items should be offered?) to guest service are often in the hands of the same individual.

Foodservice operators are responsible for securing raw materials, producing products, and selling them—all under the same roof. Few other managers are required to have the breadth of skills that effective foodservice operators must have. Since foodservice operators are in the service sector of business, many aspects of management are even more challenging for them than for their manufacturing or retailing management counterparts. The reason: a foodservice operator is one of the few types of managers who have contact with the ultimate consumer (their guests).

This is not true, for example, with the manager of a cell phone factory or an automobile production line. These individuals produce a product, but they do not sell it to the person who will actually use it. In a like manner, furniture or clothing store operators sell products to those who use them, but they normally have no role in producing the products they sell.

The face-to-face guest contact in the foodservice industry requires operators to assume the responsibility of standing behind their own work and the work of their staff, in a one-on-one situation with the ultimate consumer (the guests who purchase the products and services!). Doing so requires focused knowledge and skill, and this book provides an overview of the knowledge and skill areas required to successfully operate a foodservice business.

While there are different ways to define success in a foodservice operation, the ability to operate a successful foodservice business requires:

- 1) Serving high-quality products
- 2) Providing high-quality service
- 3) Generating optimal levels of operating profits

Serving High-quality Products

Successful foodservice operations must sell high-quality products. This is true whether the foodservice operation's guests pay high or modest prices for the products they purchase. Regardless of what they sell, foodservice operators face four very specific product-specific challenges. These challenges relate to:

- ✓ Quality
- ✓ Quantity
- ✓ Delivery method
- ✓ Value perception

Quality

Every foodservice operator's menu items must be made with wholesome food that is safe to eat. However, the quality of ingredients used to make menu items vary greatly, and meats, fruits, cheeses, coffee, wine, and other alcoholic beverage products provide just a few examples.

For example, the New York strip steak served in one steakhouse may be classified as USDA Prime, the highest quality ranking for beef that has been graded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). A competitor of that operation may serve New York strip steaks graded as USDA Choice, the second highest quality ranking. In this example, both operations may advertise that they sell New York strip steaks, but the quality of the steaks is not the same, nor is the purchase price the operator must pay to a meat supplier for the steaks.

As a result, it becomes a challenge for the operation serving the higher quality Prime steaks to indicate that higher menu prices must be charged because guests are served the highest possible quality of beef. Whether the menu items to be served are burgers, pizzas, or Prime steaks, the quality level of a foodservice operation's menu items must be consistent, and quality must be effectively communicated to guests.

Quantity

There are no legal requirements dictating the quantity of a menu item that must be served in a foodservice operation. A food operator might choose to serve a 3-, 4-, 5-, or 6-ounce hamburger patty. Similarly, an operation's "Fried Fish Basket" may include 1, 2, or 3 fried fish fillets of varying sizes. Soft drinks may be sold as small, medium, or large, with the drink's container size determined by the operator.

Since portion sizes vary, new guests frequently have little idea about the actual quantity of food they are buying when they place a food order. Detailed menu descriptions and photographs of food items can help. However, guests must be alerted to the quantity of food or beverage they will receive for the amount they will pay to be consistently satisfied with their purchases.

Delivery Method

Different foodservice operators offer identical products in identical portion sizes and yet, from their guest's perspectives, the products received are very different. For example, one operator may serve a 5-ounce cup of coffee made with a particular brand of ground coffee and served in a paper cup with a plastic lid and provided to guests as they go through the operation's drive-thru window.

Another operator may offer the same 5-ounce cup of coffee made with the same brand of coffee. However, it is served on a saucer in an elegant china cup in an exclusive up-scale dining room. In this example, both product quality and quantity are identical, yet due to the menu item's delivery, what each operation's guests receives is very different.

In addition to the menu items they desire, some guests will want their menu selections served in a particular way perhaps in a particular container, in a specific setting, or at a particular level of speed. In many locations, guests have numerous alternatives including **quick service restaurants (QSRs)**, fast casual restaurants, or fine-dining operations. When guests have these alternatives available, it can be a challenge to communicate to them how an operator's product offerings are differentiated from those of other operators.

Value Perception

All foodservice operators must provide their guests with good **value** for the products purchased. If they do not, guests are unlikely to be satisfied and will not return. The challenge for foodservice operators relative to value perception is to remember that, in any business transaction, value is determined by the buyer not by the seller.

For example, a foodservice operator may sincerely believe that a menu item's quality, quantity, and delivery method will provide good value to guests if it is sold for \$19.95. If, however, too few customers share that view of value, the operation will not consistently be able to sell the menu item.

Foodservice operators must also understand that providing good value to guests is not the same as providing low-selling prices. Guests may perceive excellent levels of value in both high-priced foodservice operations and in those that charge more modest prices. Alternatively, guests may pay very low prices for menu items and still feel they did not receive good value for the money they spent.

Key Term

Quick service restaurants (QSRs): Foodservice operations that typically have limited menus that often include a counter at which customers can order and pick up their food. Most QSRs also have one or more drive-thru lanes that allow customers to purchase menu items without leaving their vehicles. QSRs may also offer off-site delivery services for their menu items. Menu prices in QSRs are normally lower when compared to some other restaurant types.

Key Term

Value: The amount paid for a product or service compared to the buyer's view of what they receive in return.

Experienced operators know their customers assign the value of many foodservice products they purchase based on factors in addition to quality, quantity, and method of delivery. This means that communicating the true value of items sold can be extremely challenging.

To illustrate how the concept of value actually works, consider that, when service levels are identical, if a customer normally pays \$19.99 for a medium pizza, a larger pizza for the *same* price represents an increase in value. A smaller pizza for the same price represents a *decrease* in value. Similarly, a reduction in price from \$19.99 to \$16.99 for a medium pizza represents an increased value.

In most cases, buyers make their value judgments regarding the wisdom of a purchase based on their own personal assessment value. As a result, an important aspect of marketing foodservice products entails communicating to guests exactly “what they will get” and “why it is of value to them.” This becomes even more challenging because the foodservice industry, as part of the hospitality industry, is classified as a **service industry**, rather than a manufacturing industry.

Key Term

Service industry: A business segment that primarily provides services to its customers.

Foodservice operations prepare (manufacture) food and beverage items that are then served to their guests. Clearly, the steaks and glasses of wine served to guests in a fine-dining restaurant are products. The presentation of the steaks and wine, however, is clearly a service. Perhaps one reason foodservice operations are classified as members of the service industry relates to the importance of product *and* service quality to the guests’ perceptions of value. Also, it is true that the most successful foodservice operators understand that most guests perceive service quality to be *more* critical to the assessment of value delivered than is product quality.

Providing High-quality Service

Foodservice operators sell products, but they deliver services. In most cases, it is easier for foodservice operators to control the quality of the products they sell than to control the quality of the service levels they provide.

For example, a 16-ounce rib eye steak will always be larger than a 10-ounce rib eye. Priced properly, guests may perceive better value in the larger steak (such as when the selling cost per ounce is less for the larger steak). Similarly, French fries may be offered in small or large portion sizes. In both examples, the buyer can easily be told what they will be receiving for the prices they will be charged.

When a foodservice operation advertises that it offers quality service, good service, or quick service, however, these concepts may not be so easy to communicate

and consistently deliver. Consider, for example, that an operation's quality is affected by unique characteristics of service that include:

- ✓ Intangibility
- ✓ Inseparability
- ✓ Consistency
- ✓ Limited capacity

Intangibility

Foodservice customers buy products, and they receive services. The sale of a service provides an intangible benefit to a foodservice guest. It is intangible because, unlike a physical product, a service cannot be seen, tasted, felt, heard, or smelled before its purchase and delivery. In most cases, a service is actually a performance rather than a product. Since services are purchased in an intangible form, operators face unique challenges in communicating the benefits of services offered to those who will buy them.

Guests buying from a foodservice operation must put their faith in the operator that the service provided will be of high quality. Foodservice operators must justify this trust by consistently delivering service at a level that meets and even exceeds their guests' expectations.

Inseparability

Inseparability refers to the tendency of foodservice guests to equate the quality of service they receive with the actual person who provides it. As a result, a *rude* waitstaff member will likely be perceived by guests as providing poor service, while the *cheerful* waitstaff member will be perceived as providing good service. This is true even when the precise tasks performed by the two employees are similar or even identical.

This is the reason that so many foodservice operators hire those who will directly serve guests for their attitudes, rather than for their skills. These operators understand that the real job of a professional food server is to:

- ✓ Make guests feel welcome
- ✓ Make guests feel important
- ✓ Make guests feel special
- ✓ Make guests feel comfortable
- ✓ Show a genuine interest when guest expectations have not been met and corrective actions must be taken
- ✓ Correct any service shortcomings promptly and with a positive attitude

Consistency

Consistency in service can create challenges because service quality often depends on the individual who supplies it. Inconsistency when providing services is usually much greater than when providing products. For example, the customer at a sports bar will usually find that the quality of bottled beers of the same brand purchased while watching a game is identical. However, the skill level, appearance, amount of attention provided, and attitude of the beer's server can vary greatly, even during the same game.

In this example, potential differences in product delivery can have a direct effect on the quality of the customer's beer purchase experience. Due to the importance of consistency when providing hospitality goods and services, it follows that foodservice operators should pay a great deal of attention to their operation's **front-of-house staff** training and standardization efforts.

Key Term

Front-of-house staff: The employees of a foodservice operation whose duties routinely put them in direct contact with guests.

Limited Capacity

Regardless of their type, nearly all foodservice operations face limitations in their capacity. In front of the house (public areas), capacity may be limited by the number of seats in the dining room or the number of drive-thru lanes and windows available.

In the **back-of-house staff** areas (employee-only areas), capacity may be limited by the number of workers available or the production capability of an operation's preparation equipment. As a result, it may be easier to deliver high-quality service during times of lower ("average") capacity than when at full capacity. However, foodservice operators must, whenever possible, operate at full capacity because, unlike product inventory that can be held over from one day to the next, lost revenue from a seat remaining empty during a specific service period can never again be generated.

Key Term

Back-of-house staff: The employees of a foodservice operation whose duties do not routinely put them in direct contact with guests.

Since most foodservice operations face limited capacity, it is important that staff are assigned to work based on anticipated guest demand levels. It is true that many workers scheduled during slow times may cause an operation's labor-related costs to rise to unacceptable levels. However, too few workers available during busy times may cause an operation's service levels to suffer, even when service workers are well-trained and doing their best to assist guests.

Technology at Work

Experienced foodservice professionals know that server training for their employees is essential for ensuring guest satisfaction and for improving the professionalism of their operations' guest service teams.

In some foodservice operations, the amount of server training required may be extensive. This can be the case for fine dining operations with extensive menus and wine lists. In other operations, guest service training may consist primarily of providing employees with instructions for guest order taking and delivery using a drive-thru window. Every foodservice operation is unique, and so are its server training needs.

Regardless of the level of skills training required, however, foodservice operators have access to a wide variety of free-to-use server training programs. A large number of different entities now provide service-related training videos that can be helpful, and these videos can be easily accessed.

To examine the various types of server training videos that are free to use, go to YouTube. When you arrive at their site, enter "restaurant server training" in the search bar and review the results.

Generating Optimal Levels of Operating Profits

Whether it is a modest food truck, sub shop, or a fine-dining restaurant, every foodservice operation must manage to optimize its operating profits, and every foodservice operator must know and understand the components in the profit formula. That formula is:

$$\text{Revenue} - \text{Expenses} = \text{Profit}$$

When sales are made to guests, a foodservice operation receives revenue, and it also incurs the expenses required to generate the sales. Profit is the amount of money (if any!) that remains after all expenses have been paid. Since it is common in the foodservice industry, in this book the following terms will be used interchangeably: revenues and sales, expenses and costs, and profit and net income.

Key Term

Revenue: The term indicating the dollars taken in by a business within a defined time period. Also referred to as "sales."

Key Term

Expenses: The price paid to obtain the items required to operate a business. Also referred to as "costs."

Key Term

Profit: The dollars that remain after all a business's expenses have been paid. Also referred to as "Net income."

The profit formula holds true even for operators in the **nonprofit sector** of foodservice, and the key information presented in this book applies to all of them as well.

There are a number of names commonly used to identify nonprofit operations. These include noncommercial, institutional, contract feeding, on-site foodservices, and managed services. The number of nonprofit foodservice operations is vast and varied and includes food operations in:

- K–12 education
- Colleges
- Universities
- Hospitals
- Nursing homes
- Retirement centers
- Correctional facilities
- Military facilities
- Businesses
- Factories
- Private clubs
- Sporting arenas and stadiums
- National and State parks
- Transportation providers including airlines, trains, and cruise ships

The success of a commercial (for-profit) foodservice operation is most often determined by its sales volume (in dollars), and the resulting profits it generates. The success of nonprofit operations is often evaluated by participation rate (the number of people it serves). In all cases, however, revenue and expenses are just as important to nonprofit operators as they are to commercial operators. As a result, both commercial and nonprofit foodservice operators must attempt to optimize the difference between their revenue and their operating expenses if they are to be successful.

Key Term

Nonprofit sector (foodservice): Foodservice in an organization where generating food and beverage profits is not the organization's primary purpose. Also referred to as the "noncommercial" sector.

Find Out More

Many of the goals foodservice operators have for themselves and their businesses involve the effective control of operating costs and optimizing operating profits.

A close examination of the profit formula reveals that operators must pay attention to their revenue levels. Effective marketing, quality food and beverage products, and consistently outstanding service will all help to increase the size of this number. However, foodservice operators must also pay very close

attention to their expenses (costs). Unless costs are properly controlled, profit levels will not be optimized. As a result, all foodservice operators must become “experts” at cost control.

The effective control of costs in a foodservice operation requires extensive knowledge and skill in a variety of areas. While there are many publications addressing “Cost Control” in foodservice operations, one of the best and most up-to-date cost control resources available to foodservice operators is the book, *Cost Control in Foodservice Operations*, part of the Wiley “Foodservice Operations: The Essentials” series.

To learn more about the content and availability of this extremely valuable John Wiley-published book, enter “Wiley Cost Control in Foodservice Operations” in your favorite search engine and review the results.

What Would You Do? 1.1

“I can’t get her attention,” said Roberto. “I keep trying, but she isn’t looking over at us.”

Roberto and his co-worker Adrianna were having lunch at Oscar’s. Oscar’s was a restaurant popular for its soups and sandwiches served in a casual setting.

“I know you asked for a side of mayonnaise when you ordered your sandwich. She must’ve forgotten,” said Adrianna.

“I think you’re right,” said Roberto. “I didn’t notice it when she delivered our food. Now I’m not sure exactly what to do. She hasn’t checked back with us, and I don’t see her.”

“And your sandwich is getting cold,” observed Adrianna.

Assume you were the operator of the Oscar’s. What do you think will be Roberto’s assessment of the sandwich quality he received during his visit? How does service quality directly impact a customer’s view of product quality?

Foodservice Operators' Essential Tasks

To be successful, foodservice operators must effectively manage their businesses. What is **management**? A simple definition suggests that “*management is the process of using available resources to attain desired goals.*”

A special concern about an organization’s resources is that they are almost always limited, and few, if any, foodservice operators have all of their desired resources as they prioritize and pursue their goals.

Key Term

Management: The process of planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and evaluating the financial, physical, and human resources of an organization to reach its goals.

Examples of resources in a foodservice operation include money, facilities, equipment, employees, available time, and the work procedures that are in place. Other resources may include energy, inventories, and specialized items such as recipes and even specialized cooking techniques. Since resources are limited, however, foodservice operators must make good decisions about how they will be used.

There are numerous ways to view the principles of effective management. One good way is to consider the five primary functions that are essential to effectively managing any organization. These are shown in Figure 1.1.

Planning

This initial step in the management process addresses the creation of an operator's goals and objectives. This is the first step in the management process because it identifies precisely what a foodservice organization wants to achieve. It is important to use current and pertinent information and, when possible, participative input from staff members and guests who are affected by the plans. Plans must be flexible, and they must be implemented, evaluated, and changed when it is appropriate to do so.

Organizing

After objectives have been identified, an organization must ensure it has the funding, staff, equipment, and raw materials needed to achieve its objectives. These business **assets** must then be arranged (organized) in a way that optimizes the organization's ability to achieve its objectives.

Key Term

Asset (business): Property that is used in the operation of a business including money, real estate, buildings, inventories, and equipment.

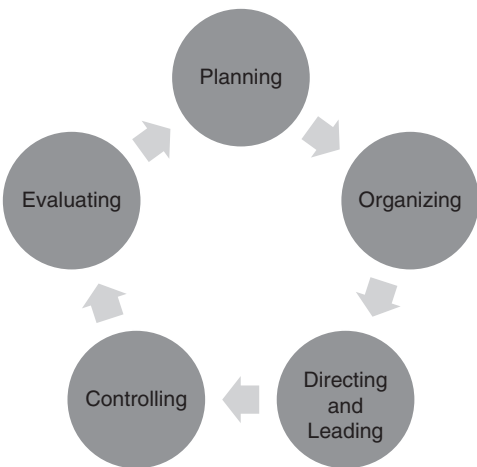


Figure 1.1 The Management Process

Directing and Leading

This important management function addresses the task of telling and showing all staff members exactly what is expected of them. When given clear directions, all staff members will know the important roles they will play in helping the organization achieve its objectives.

The best foodservice operators strive to be good leaders. While this is an easy goal to state, it is often much more difficult to achieve. What makes a good leader? While entire books (and bookshelves!) address this key question, a short list of effective leadership traits for foodservice operators includes:

- ✓ Using a good understanding of the operation's values and being able to translate these values into effective practices.
- ✓ Having an objective and measurable "picture" of the desired future of the operation.
- ✓ Helping others to develop the knowledge and skills needed to attain the operation's vision. This is done, in part, through effective employee selection, orientation, training and follow-up evaluation, and coaching activities.
- ✓ Developing a team of staff members who are committed to the operation's success.
- ✓ Achieving a reputation for quality that enables the foodservice operation to increasingly meet and exceed their guests' expectations.

Controlling

By continually assessing the work processes and procedures they have implemented, foodservice operators can better identify situations that might prevent their organizations from meeting objectives. In the foodservice industry, important processes that must be controlled include those activities related to purchasing, receiving, storing, preparing, and serving menu items, and later chapters in this book address each of these key tasks.

Evaluating

This final management activity requires that foodservice operators carefully assess their current performance and compare it to what has been planned or forecasted. This analysis helps to indicate where, if at all, corrective actions might reduce differences between planned for and actual financial results.

There are several steps involved in the evaluation process, and they can be summarized as:

- 1) Forecasting expected revenue and costs
- 2) Measuring actual operating results
- 3) Comparing expected and actual operating costs
- 4) Taking corrective actions as needed
- 5) Evaluating the effectiveness of the corrective actions

Each of these management functions requires foodservice operators to know and apply principles of effective management. As appropriate, these principles and the techniques required to put them into practice are addressed in the remaining chapters of this book.

Serving Food Safely

Serving high-quality menu items, providing service excellence, and optimizing profit levels are essential to the successful management of a foodservice operation. However, it is also essential to ensure the safety of the food items being served. These efforts affect those who serve them and those being served. This is not only the right thing to do, but it is also the legal thing to do.

All operations selling food to the public are subject to the requirements of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) **food code**.

States and municipalities are responsible for ensuring that foodservice operations follow their own jurisdictions' versions of the food code. The FDA's food code assists the food control jurisdictions at all levels of government. One way to do this is to provide these governmental agencies with sound technical and legal bases for regulating the retail and foodservice segment of various industries. Examples include restaurants and grocery stores and institutions such as nursing homes and hospitals. Local, state, tribal, and federal regulators use the *FDA Food Code* as a model to develop or update their own food safety rules and to be consistent with national food regulatory policy. One primary objective of the food code is to assist foodservice operators in avoiding cases of **foodborne illness**.

One key requirement in the FDA food code, of which every foodservice operator must be aware, is the designation of a **person-in-charge (PIC)**.

The PIC is the designated individual present at a food establishment or operation who has the

Key Term

Food Code (FDA): A model for best practices to ensure the safe handling of food in retail settings.

Key Term

Foodborne illness: Foodborne illness is caused by consuming contaminated food, beverages, or water infected with a variety of bacteria, parasites, viruses, and/or toxins and poisons. These pathogens can be acquired through person-to-person spread, animal contact, the environment, and recreational or drinking water.

Key Term

Person-in-charge (PIC): The owner of the business, or a designated person—such as a chef, kitchen manager, or employee who is present at the work site and has direct authority and supervision over employees who engage in the safe storage, preparation, display, and service of food.

overall responsibility for the operation at the time. They oversee food preparation, supplies, quality of service, food safety, regulations, and techniques to maintain a food-safe environment.

During mandated food safety (health) inspections, most states require at least one PIC to be on the premises during operating hours. This PIC must be able to demonstrate knowledge of foodborne illness prevention and other factors at the request of a **health inspector**.

While each state is free to determine how its food safety inspections take place, foodservice operators are typically subject to three different inspection types. These are:

- 1) Routine inspections
- 2) Re-inspections
- 3) Complaint inspections

Routine inspections are those periodic inspections that are performed as part of a jurisdiction's ongoing food safety system. Re-inspections are undertaken when a foodservice operation has committed violations of the food code that need correcting. Complaint inspections are performed in response to a complaint received by a member of the community.

Routine and complaint inspections are unannounced. This means that a foodservice operator is given no prior notice or prearranged time for the inspection to occur. Typically, if a re-inspection is required, the foodservice operation is given a specific date by which violations must be corrected, and this suggests a prearranged time for the revisit.

Depending upon the jurisdiction, after a health inspector has completed an inspection, the foodservice operation is given a score of satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or incomplete. A satisfactory score means there were no observed violations during the inspection or, if violations were observed, they were not significant enough to require correction before the next routine inspection. An unsatisfactory score means that the violations were significant enough to require correction before the next routine inspection. An incomplete inspection means that the inspector was interrupted in his or her work and had to leave before completing the inspection. In some jurisdictions, inspection scores (e.g. A, B, or C and the like, or a numerical "grade" of 1–100 score, or both) are given.

Two very important things foodservice operators must recognize about health inspection scores are that their PIC will accompany the inspector during the inspection and their scores are available to the public.

Key Term

Health inspector:

A professional responsible for ensuring compliance of sanitation codes required of businesses that are open to the public. This compliance is achieved through facility inspections that may be unannounced or occur as a result of a complaint.

During an inspection, a PIC must demonstrate the required level of knowledge to be in compliance with the food code. If, during a routine inspection, the inspector finds no critical violations of the food code, the requirement for manager knowledge is met. A second way to demonstrate sufficient food safety knowledge is to be certified by an approved certification entity. To become certified, the PIC must have taken an accredited manager certification course that includes passing a test.

The third way to demonstrate manager knowledge is by correctly responding to an inspector's questions about the operation. During a routine inspection, the safe food practices and procedures used by the establishment will be discussed by the PIC and the inspector. The PIC must be able to show a working knowledge of those areas of the food code that directly relate to the foodservice operation. In all cases, the PIC must be qualified, and it is the foodservice operator's responsibility to ensure that is the case. Failure to do so will automatically result in an unsatisfactory inspection score.

The second and an increasingly important factor of which foodservice operators must be aware is that their inspection scores become part of the **public record**. That means that, in most jurisdictions, the inspection scores must be posted on-site for public view, or a copy of the most recent inspection report(s) must be available for public review when requested.

It is important that foodservice operators recognize that, in the past, a poor health inspection report was rather easily manageable. For example, negative exposure resulting from a poor inspection score did not extend beyond lost sales for the day and perhaps reputational issues for those who observe or are sickened by a food safety violation. Today the situation for foodservice operators is very different.

In most cases, it will only be several hours before a poor inspection report is published on a government's website. This is immediately followed by its distribution on websites and blogs that automatically collect such information about restaurant inspections. Some guests even use their smartphones to photograph posted inspection scores and then post those scores on their own social media sites.

Sometimes local media including newspapers and televised news produce segments aimed at sharing health inspection scores. Generally, the shared scores are poor, and the media entity will likely use dramatic tactics to present information about the foodservice operation. Negative publicity such as this can be significantly detrimental to the successful operation of a foodservice facility, and it must be avoided. Ensuring that an operation's menu items are always prepared and served in a safe manner is imperative when the operation is operated successfully.

Key Term

Public record: Documents or other information that are not considered confidential, that generally pertain to the conduct of a government entity, and that can be viewed by the general population.

Find Out More

Every foodservice operator must ensure they serve food safely. This requires knowledge in many areas including all aspects of foodservice that can affect food safety including:

- 1) Foodborne microorganisms & allergens
- 2) Personal hygiene
- 3) Purchasing, receiving, and storage
- 4) Preparation, cooking, and serving
- 5) Facilities cleaning/sanitizing and pest management
- 6) Regulatory authorities and inspection

The National Restaurant Association's ServSafe® Food Safety training program is the most widely recognized and respected in the foodservice industry because it:

- ✓ Uses quality materials and exams created by foodservice and regulatory experts exclusively for the foodservice industry
- ✓ Reinvests proceeds from programs back into the industry
- ✓ Is accepted in all 50 states, making it ideal for single and multi-unit operations
- ✓ Is a single source, one-stop show for both food safety training and the certification examination
- ✓ Delivers up-to-date regulatory information
- ✓ Provides support from foodservice subject matter experts available to answer questions
- ✓ Offers flexible online, classroom, in-unit and one-on-one training and examination options

To learn more about this important operating aid and food safety training tool, enter "NRA ServSafe" in your favorite search engine and review the results.

Serving Nutritious Food

A foodservice operator need not be a **registered dietitian (RD)** to recognize that it is important to serve nutritious food.

Increasingly, foodservice guests make decisions about which operations to frequent based on personal nutritional and dietary concerns. As previously stated, all of a foodservice operator's

Key Term

Registered Dietitian (RD):

A health professional who has special training in diet and nutrition. RDs offer advice on nutrition and healthy eating habits to help people improve their health and well-being.

menu items must be made with wholesome food that is safe to consume, and the items served must be nutritious as well. Doing so requires a conscientious effort on the part of foodservice operators and their entire staff.

Nutritious food is prepared in a way that optimizes retention of the food's **nutrients**. The serving of nutritious food does not happen by accident. Rather, nutrition concerns must be addressed in a number of key areas including:

- ✓ Menu planning
- ✓ Menu design
- ✓ Purchasing
- ✓ Receiving and storage
- ✓ Menu item production and service

Experienced foodservice operators recognize that their guests are increasingly concerned about the nutritional value of the menu items they purchase. Many guests make their dining out decisions based on their nutrition-related perceptions of the operations they want to visit.

Some guests who have never visited or even heard about a foodservice operation may learn about its nutritious menu item alternatives and may want to visit the property. Increasingly prospective guests utilize the Internet to search for new dining out options. Increasingly as well, familiar names in the foodservice industry are placing a substantial amount of nutrition-related information on their websites. Some of this information is required by law for certain operators, but much of it is not.

For example, there is no requirement that foodservice operators indicate which of the food items they sell are made from **organic** food ingredients. Yet, for a variety of reasons, including the support of local agriculture, avoiding foods with pesticides, and supporting those producers who create products in ways that are good for the environment, an ever increasing number of guests will be interested in whether a foodservice operation serves organic products and will prefer to frequent those businesses who do.

Other examples of guests seeking products based on their perceptions of nutrient value include the increasing interest in plant-based

Key Term

Nutrient: A chemical compound such as protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamin, and/or minerals contained in foods that are used by the body to help it function and grow.

Key Term

Organic (food): the product of a farming system which avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that food products sold, labeled, or represented as organic in the United States must have at least 95% certified organic content.

milks (e.g. oat, almond, soy, and coconut milks) and the increased availability of plant-based meat substitutes.

Foodservice operators concerned with serving nutritious foods must direct their attention both to the products they buy and how these products are handled and prepared after they have been received. For example, a foodservice operation may advertise that it serves only organic vegetables. However, boiling and cooking some vegetables in high temperatures or in excessive amounts of water decrease their nutrient level. Water soluble vitamins like Vitamins C and B are often lost during these types of cooking methods. Minerals including potassium, phosphorus, calcium, magnesium, iron, and zinc may also be significantly reduced when improper cooking methods are used.

Serving nutritious foods to guests can be especially challenging to foodservice operators because not all guests have the same perception about what does and does not constitute nutritious food. To cite an example, many bakers make their crusts for fruit pies using lard. Lard and butter are both used in baked goods, but some properties of lard make it a favorite for many bakers. For example, the melting point of lard is lower than butter, so more air and steam are released during baking times. The result: greater leavening and a flakier texture in baked goods prepared with lard.

If a server is asked by a guest whether an operation's cherry pie crust was made with lard and the server responds with an enthusiastic "Yes!" the guest's reaction may be favorable because this guest knows a superior baked product will be prepared.

Other guests, however, may know lard is a hydrogenated fat (also called a trans-fat), and that consumption of trans-fats is linked to an increased possibility of heart diseases. These guests may decide *not* to buy the pie because it's crust was made with lard. In this case, a well-trained server may be able to suggest dessert alternatives to those guests.

Regardless of the ingredients used to make their foods, and the preparation methods utilized, all foodservice operators must recognize that **accuracy in menu laws** require that descriptions of the menu items they sell are truthful and accurate (see Chapter 6).

Nutrition Essentials for Back-of-House Staff

With some exceptions, back-of-house staff are those primarily involved with production of the menu items sold in a foodservice operation.

Key Term

Accuracy in menu laws:

Legislation that requires foodservice operations to truthfully, and accurately, represent the quality, quantity, nutritional value, and price of the menu items they sell.

Also known as "Truth-in-menu laws" and "Truth-in-dining laws."

Special nutritional concerns about which back-of-house staff must be aware (knowledgeable) include:

- 1) *Understanding the menu:* Production staff must be aware of menu items that meet the needs of guests with specialized nutritional concerns. Examples include knowing which menu items are gluten-free, low-fat, or low-sodium.
- 2) *Maintaining nutritional quality:* Production staff must be knowledgeable about the purchasing, storing, and production techniques required to maximize the nutritional content of the menu item being produced.
- 3) *Following standardized recipes:* A **standardized recipe** details the procedures used to prepare and serve each of an operation's food or beverage items. A standardized recipe ensures that each time guests order a menu item it has been prepared the same way with no preparation "short-cuts."

Key Term

Standardized recipe: The instructions needed to consistently prepare a specified quantity of food or drink at an expected quality level.

From a nutritional perspective, the information provided about a menu item will only be accurate if the recipe used to produce the item is carefully and consistently followed. Substitution of ingredients or changes in quantities of ingredients used to make an item, as well as variations in portion size will affect the nutritional content of that item. For that reason, it is essential that food production staff always carefully follow standardized recipes.

- 4) *Recognizing characteristics of quality ingredients:* Many of a foodservice operator's menu items are produced using perishable products that deteriorate during storage. As a result, it is especially important that back-of-house employees be trained adequately to recognize quality products and substandard products, so that the latter are not utilized when making menu items.
- 5) *Understanding the importance of serving size:* There is no requirement that a foodservice operation must serve a specific-sized portion of a menu item. However, nutritional information provided about a menu item will be based, in part, on the size of portion to be served. For that reason, it is important that food production personnel serve only portions of management-approved size and specified by the standardized recipe.

Nutrition Essentials for Front-of-House Staff

An operation's front-of-house staff may have a limited role in producing some menu items, but primarily they are responsible for the proper service of the menu

items sold. Service staff require nutritional knowledge and skills so they can be integrated into proper guest service. Special nutritional concerns about which front-of-house staff must be aware (knowledgeable) include

- 1) *Understanding the menu:* As is true with production personnel, service staff should learn basic ingredients and preparation methods for all the items they serve. Service staff should be able to provide basic nutrition-related information to guests who request it. For example, a fish dish listed on a menu may tell what type of fish it is, but health-conscious guests may want to know if the item is pan-fried, broiled, or sauteed. Servers must be able to provide this information.

To cite a second example, many guests are concerned about gluten in foods. Some are gluten intolerant or may have Celiac disease (an immune reaction to eating gluten which is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye.) For these guests, it is important that servers know gluten-free foods include:

- Most dairy products such as cheese, butter, and milk
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat and fish (although not breaded or battered)
- Potatoes
- Rice and rice noodles
- Gluten-free flours including rice, corn, soy, and potato flour

The nutrition-related knowledge required of foodservice servers will vary based on the operation in which they are employed. However, in all cases staff members serving the public will often be called upon to answer basic nutrition-related questions, and they must be prepared to do so.

- 2) *Making appropriate substitutions:* In some foodservice operations, guests may be able to modify standard menu items with reasonable requests that must be communicated by a server to the operation's production staff. For example, a breakfast guest who has ordered fried eggs, potatoes, and bacon may inquire about substituting fruit for the toast that normally comes with their breakfast selection. In situations such as this, servers must be instructed to respond to special substitution requests so guest service levels can be optimized.
- 3) *Making appropriate recommendations:* Proper menu design and menu item descriptions (see Chapter 6) can be extremely helpful in informing guests about some of the nutritional aspects of menu items sold. However, servers may be asked for recommendations about menu items that may be low-calorie, low-fat, or low sodium. A properly trained server should be able to make recommendations that accommodate their guests' preferences.

Technology at Work

Since 2018, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has mandated that consumers have easy access to calorie and nutrition information in certain chain establishments covered by the rule. For example, the menu labeling requirements apply to restaurants and similar retail food establishments that are part of a chain with 20 or more locations.

Covered establishments must disclose the number of calories contained in standard items on menus and menu boards. Businesses must also provide (upon request) the following written nutrition information for standard menu items: total calories; total fat; saturated fat; trans-fat; cholesterol; sodium; total carbohydrates; sugars; fiber; and protein. In addition, two statements must be displayed. Operators must indicate that this written information is available upon request. The second statement relates to daily calorie intake and must indicate that 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice, but calorie needs vary between individuals.

Even smaller foodservice operations that are not required to follow this mandate have found that their guests now ask them for information similar to that provided by chain operators. Guests increasingly demand more transparency in what they eat, how it is prepared, and the nutritional profile of the items they buy. In response, foodservice operators must adapt and showcase the healthy aspects of the items they sell.

Providing nutrition-related information can be challenging for small operators. However, nutrition label software (also known as nutritional analysis software) allows even small restaurants to provide their guests with key information about their menu items. A nutrition label software program can provide a complete breakdown of calorie content, fat, protein, and carbohydrates, among other information.

Nutrition label data is increasingly important for consumers on special diets, those with food allergies, or those looking to improve their health using food nutrition information. To learn more about the features and costs of utilizing these nutrition-information programs enter “nutrition label software for restaurants” in your favorite search engine and view the results.

This chapter addressed several key areas requirements for success in a foodservice operation. There can be different ways to measure the success of a foodservice operation for both commercial and noncommercial operators. However, recording and reporting data about their income and expenses are always a key component of success assessment.

Properly recording and reporting the financial results of a foodservice operation in a way that can be easily understood by others is such an important skill for foodservice operators. They want to be successful, and accounting and financial management principles needed to accomplish this are the topic of the next chapter.

What Would You Do? 1.2

“That’s the third customer today that left without buying anything,” said Isabella.

Isabella was talking to Mateo, the owner of The Tasty Bakery; a small bake-shop that specialized in premium-quality cakes, cookies, muffins, and pastries.

“Did they think our prices were too high?” asked Mateo.

“No, they didn’t seem to have any problem with the prices,” replied Isabella, “They wanted a dozen gluten-free chocolate chip cookies for an office party this afternoon. I told her the only gluten-free item we sold was our blueberry muffins. The other two customers who left without buying anything today were looking for gluten-free cookies as well. They didn’t seem mad, they just left without buying anything.”

Assume you were Mateo. How important do you think it would be for you to carefully monitor your customers’ requests for specialized items they want to buy from your shop but cannot purchase them? Do you think the customers who left without buying anything were more concerned about nutritional issues or the prices you charge for the items you sell?

Key Terms

Quick service	Profit	Health inspector
restaurants (QSRs)	Nonprofit sector	Public record
Value	(foodservice)	Registered Dietitian (RD)
Service industry	Management	Nutrient
Front-of-house staff	Asset (business)	Organic (food)
Back-of-house staff	Food Code (FDA)	Accuracy in menu laws
Revenue	Foodborne illness	Standardized recipe
Expenses	Person-in-charge (PIC)	

Operator's 10-Point Tactics for Success Checklist

Evaluate your need for, and the current status of, each of the following operational tactics. For those tactics you think are important, but not yet in place, develop an action plan for its implementation including who will be responsible for the tactic's completion and the target date by which it should be completed.

Tactic	Don't Agree (Not Done)	Agree (Done)	Agree (Not Done)	If Not Done	
				Who Is Responsible?	Target Completion Date
1) Operator recognizes that they are one of the few types of professional managers who are responsible both for producing a product and delivering it to its end-user (guests).	_____	_____	_____		
2) Operator understands the importance to success of serving high-quality products.	_____	_____	_____		
3) Operator understands the importance to success of providing guests with high-quality service.	_____	_____	_____		
4) Operator understands the importance to success of generating optimal levels of operating profits.	_____	_____	_____		
5) Operator recognizes that planning, organizing, directing and leading, controlling, and evaluating are essential tasks in the operation of a successful foodservice business.	_____	_____	_____		
6) Operator recognizes the important role played by the person-in-charge (PIC) in the successful operation of a foodservice business.	_____	_____	_____		

Tactic	Don't Agree (Not Done)	Agree (Done)	Agree (Not Done)	If Not Done	
				Who Is Responsible?	Target Completion Date
7) Operator can state the differences between the three types of health inspections to which their operations are subject.	_____	_____	_____		
8) Operator understands the importance to success of serving nutritious food.	_____	_____	_____		
9) Operator can identify key nutrition issues that relate to back-of-house staff.	_____	_____	_____		
10) Operator can identify key nutrition issues that relate to front-of-house staff.	_____	_____	_____		