

School Nutrition Programs

THE EXPERIENCE

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July 2015



School Lunch Knowledge

- Started in school food service in 1978
- Continued my SFS career until 2004 when I left the school food service private sector
- The lost years
- MDE – 2009 to present
- Total SFS Experience – 32 years, about 120 districts, total FS experience 42 years starting as a dishwasher



What Makes a Great Food Service Experience for You?



**4 Years Outside of
School Food Service**
Business and Industry Cafeterias
Some of the Clients
Steelcase
Meijer's
Haworth
General Motors
Amway
Kellogg's
Stryker



**Business vs School
Cafeterias**

Not as much difference as you may think:
Hot Foods Hot
Cold Foods Cold
Provide Value for Dollars Spent
Food Presented Attractively
Pleasant Service
Keeping Customers and Clients Happy



Start of the Experience



Customers picked up in a private, first class jet



The Steelcase Experience

- Customers fed 5 Star food enroute to destination
- Customers picked up at airport in a spotlessly clean, professional van
- Walk into an impressive headquarters building greeted by company executives and staff
- Shown what the company can do for the customers
- Meals are first class, 5 star food
- Back into the van back to airport, back in jet to home airport



Howard, we don't have jets, we have yellow school buses!

- Ideally, the spotless jet would be replaced by spotless buses with friendly but firm driver
- ...and the school would be a new, clean state of the art building with friendly, kind and supportive administrators and teachers welcoming students to school
-and the food would be 5 star quality....
-but we can't control those things, yet, you can still create an Experience!!!



When Does Your Customer's Experience Begin?

- Way before you are sliding that first tray to them
- Menus should be attractive with details on the food items offered and how many items they can have
- The menu should take into consideration color, taste and texture (what's wrong with a menu of spaghetti with meat sauce, applesauce and cole slaw?)
- Food of appropriate quality needs to be purchased for the advertised menu



Marketing

- Summer months will be a great time to develop a marketing plan for all buildings in your district
- Plan special events/menus for the various holidays and events like NSLP Week, SBP Week, Homecoming, etc
- Let PTO groups and school board know you are willing to meet with them regarding the food service program
- Make sure all equipment is in working condition
- Train staff on a regular basis especially at the beginning of a new school year

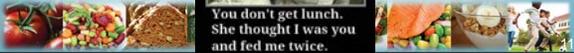


Marketing Page 2

- Meet with Food Service Committees at your school and RESIST being defensive
 - I have found getting your largest critics on these committees is very productive in the long run
 - Whenever possible, agree to at least one criticism or suggestion – you will be a hero with credibility
 - Dealing with unhappy customers at different levels



You don't get lunch.
She thought I was you
and fed me twice.



The "Live" Experience Begins

- Where do you think this begins?
- What should students see, hear, and smell as the experience begins?
- What "tone" does your food service operation give to others?



The “Live” Experience

- The serving line should not be a sea of stainless steel
- Floors, walls, serving line fascia, all serving surfaces, should be clean
- Food, including the food on the menu and food used to decorate the line are some of the best ways to present an attractive serving line.
- Don't run out of food

You can get black or white pans which can help make the colors “pop” even more



The “Live” Experience Continues

- Student walks into serving area which is clean and free of clutter including floors and serving line and kitchen area that is in view
- Signage is available, looks professional, to help students know what is available that day.
- First contact with FS staff is with a smile, calling student by name
- Food is not preplated so far in advance that food is allowed to get cold (and OVS is followed)
- Cashier is friendly with student customers



Choices

- Offering your students choices is critical (you like choices, too, don't you?)
- Make sure menus and choices complement each other
- Special ethnic, religious, vegetarian, etc menu items are not required in the NSLP but providing food item choices that are desired by your student population is good customer service



Present Food Attractively

- Do not leave foil or film covering part of pan
- Garnish entrée items when possible
- Use batch cookery as much as possible for quality and presentation
- Avoid stacking sandwiches
- Look at your serving line from your customers perspective
- Pan risers tilt the food toward your customers
- Ask yourself, would you pay to buy your school meals?

ON THE MENU TODAY,



Present Food Attractively

- The serving line should not be used as a storage room
- Fresh fruit should be served in attractive containers, hopefully, not with stainless steel
- Use static clings, item cards, and other methods of identifying the food items being offered
- Unlike picture to the right, mix different colored fresh fruits (although the display is cool)
- Most cafeterias are not arranged this way but I always preferred having the hot foods served last so the food stays warm until the student eats it



Students, Children, Kids..... CUSTOMERS!!

- If possible, place the “friendly” staff members in positions that will have direct contact with our customers
- Customers are NOT always right but it usually is not worth the fight to prove it
- When you respond to a students question, would you want to be answered in the same manner at a restaurant?



Smarter Lunchrooms

- Smarter Lunchrooms addresses many of the issues of "The Experience"
- Using the Checklist as a guide, even if you don't "do it all", even taking a few ideas will make a difference
- Smarter Lunchrooms is designed to improve the nutrient content of school meals and the presentation/marketing of those meals
- Smarter Lunchroom techniques can be used for breakfast as well



Questions

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