

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

HCM 303



**Food Service and
Professionalism
Module 1**

HCM303 Food Service and Professionalism Module I

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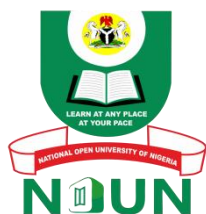
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Module I

Unit I Introduction to Food Service and Profession

1.0 Introduction

You are welcome to this particular unit on Food Service and Professionalism.

This course consists of 11 units involving food service to the guest as it affects the hospitality organisations. The course covers service industry especially those in the profit sector of the hospitality organisations such as hotels, club houses, pubs, fast food restaurants etc. This is to expose you to the various service procedures and all that is involved to render qualitative service to the guests at a profit.

This course, Food Service and Professionalism, examines and explains the meaning of food service as it relates to the hospitality organisations. It discusses briefly the importance of professionalism in the food service sectors and analyses the rationale behind food service operation in the processes of food operation. It goes further to itemise the various organisations that render food service operation, their characteristics and challenges.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the meaning of food service and professionalism.
- explain the importance of rendering food service operation in the hospitality industry
- learn to know the various sectors that deal with food service operation in the hospitality industry.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Characteristics of Hospitality Industry

In defining hospitality industry, the historical background and development of the industry are described. Prior to identifying the current size and scale of the industry in the mid 1990s, different service organizations were identified and their roles discussed. This led into an explanation of what is meant by food service operation and what trends have influenced the design of food service operation in the hospitality industry.

The hospitality industry is identified by its output of products which satisfy need for accommodation, food, and beverages. These are the essential core products of the industry. There are other products such as: conference and recreational facilities etc.

A hospitality marketer combines these 3 core products to meet the demand of customers. These products are enhanced and made more attractive to satisfy the demands of specific

sources of custom. The environment and atmosphere can be of equal importance to the 3 core products in attracting customers and providing satisfaction. Hospitality industry is otherwise known as a service industry. This covers all firms or a company whose final output is intangible or ephemeral commodity whose final commodities are not material goods. The benefits of service products cannot be stored for instance. The benefit is an experience.

Food service operations cover the following areas: Hotel Restaurant, Coffee shop, Specialty restaurant, Room service, restaurant, coffee shop and Snack Bar.

Food service management operations involve menu planning, developing the product specifications and arranging the purchasing contracts. Food production and presentation involve also gallery, design, development of service procedures and equipment logistics.

This unit also explains the meaning of food service and professionalism. In order to describe, discuss and analyze food service and professionalism, it is necessary first to define the industry. This is not as simple as it might be thought. Different sources, such as government agencies, market intelligence consultants and other experts use different criteria for defining the industry. A good starting point is the standard Industry Classification since it is the official government source of data about the industry.

The Standard Industrial Classification attempted to provide statistical records of industrial growth and activity. It defined the hotel and catering industry, under the 1968 classification, as 'Establishments (whether or not licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors) providing meals, light refreshments, drink or accommodation'. The classification was subsequently revised in 1980. That the hospitality industry comprises of divisions made up of groups of economic activity. Within each division, individual industries are known as classes which are then subdivided into sectors. Sectors can further be subdivided by the activities performed. The hospitality industry is therefore classified according to sectors and service rendered.

3.1.1 Foodservice Organization in Relation to the Hotel industry

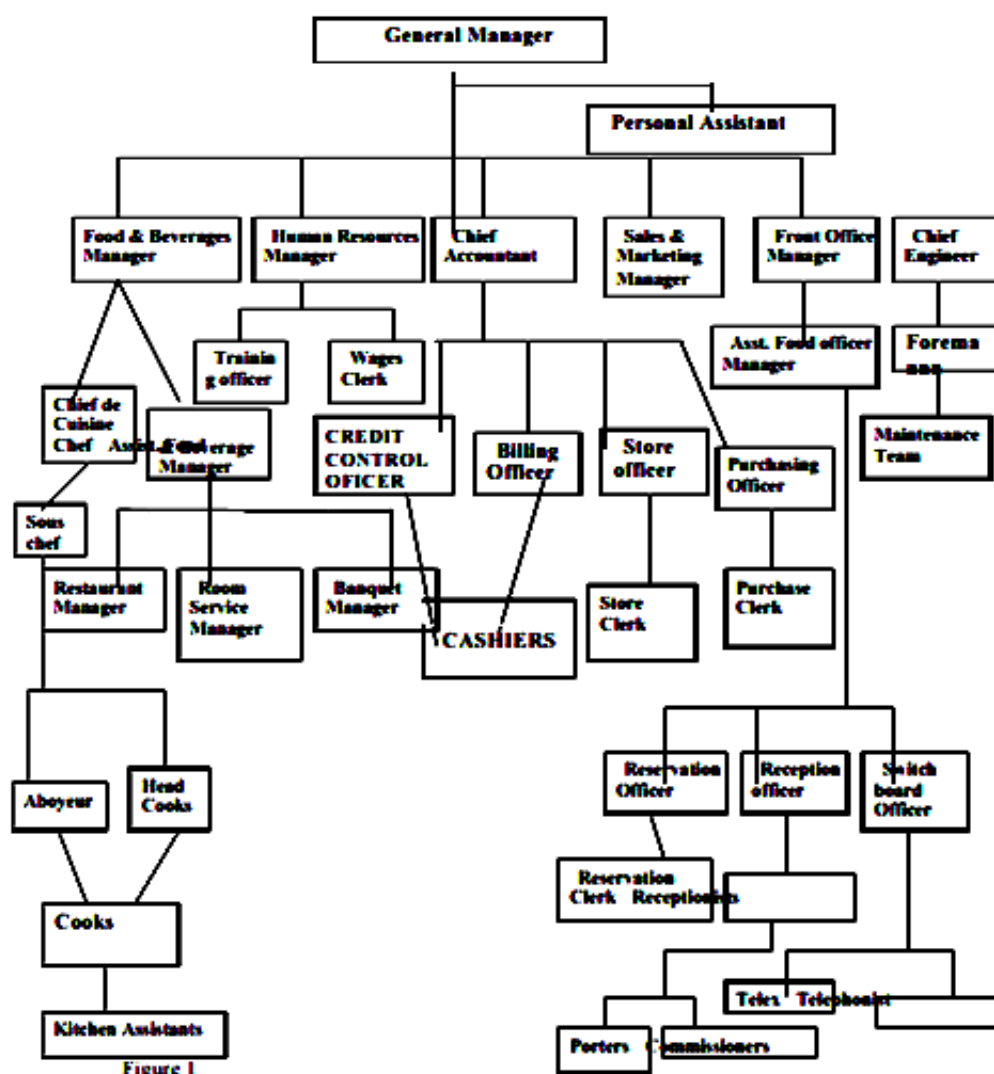
The internal organization of food service in a hotel will depend upon the size, style and turnover of the unit, which as we have seen can vary quite widely from one hotel to another. It will also be greatly influenced by the management policy of the hotel company's directors. In a small hotel, the director may well also be the manager and the management structure may be relatively simple. In effect, control and direction is in the hands of one person, with supervising staff reporting directly to that person. In a big hotel the management structure is more complex and various grades of managers and supervisors can be identified. Within such a hierarchy, the role of food and beverage managers varies widely, and in many hotels, he or she will have two distinct functions.

In some hotels, the manager will be responsible for carrying out, rather than instigating, policies with regard to the provision of food and drink. This will cover all aspects of food service-monitoring suppliers and food stuffs received, monitoring standards of cuisine and service, staffing the restaurants and bars, promoting food and drink sales, liaising with the customers themselves, appraising costs and turnover and most importantly, ensuring that a satisfactory gross profit margin is maintained. In this respect, a food and beverage manager is no different from managers in other sectors of the catering industry.

As a member of the management team, the food and beverage manager will be placed on call, usually during a day or evening shift, to be responsible for all the activities of the hotel's operations. In addition to routine duty management tasks such as checking security, supervising staff, guest complaints and so on. Thus, a food and beverage manager in a hotel needs knowledge and skills to succeed. At the same time, within the larger hotels, he or she is supported by other staff such as personnel and training managers.

The food and beverage manager in a hotel is very much a part of the management team within the hotel; in industrial and institutional catering, the manager is usually in sole charge of the unit.

3.1.2 Organization Chart of a 4 or 5 star hotel



3.2 Origin of Food Service Operation

Provision of food service dates back to the 19th C. when overnight accommodation was first introduced. An overnight guest would require breakfast in the morning and possibly lunch or dinner. This resulted in extension of historical hotel's services and the demand for room- service crept in to satisfy guest need or indulgence.

In many respect the difficulty in analyzing this sector lies in the origin of restaurants. Before the second world war the most common route for restaurateurs was to acquire a place when acting as a head waiter elsewhere and then to set up their own shingle'. Then restaurant tend to be owned and operated by individuals and individualist. There is no neat formula for opening and operating a successful establishment. However, some firms have deliberately set out to create a chain of units which depends for their success on mass appeal, so that two groups of restaurant can be identified, namely popular catering units and speciality restaurants. The restaurant sector has also been significantly influenced by ideas developed in the USA. This can refer to the introduction of US cuisine (hamburger fried chickens or exotic ice creams) and its significant influence over the last twenty years on the British foodservice operations.

Food service is one of the components that make up the hospitality products. Food service allies with drinks to constitute an essential ancillary service in the hospitality industry and enhances revenue generation in order to offset some fixed costs of the hotel and other facilities. Compared to other products namely; accommodation and beverages, food service is more technical and complex. It is time- consuming, labour intensive and not very profitable. By the nature of food provision, in other to keep abreast with the time the product must be periodically reviewed and developed in line with customer preferences.

Food service in the hospitality industry is concerned with provision of food ready for immediate consumption excluding the retail and food manufacturing. Food service is provision of processed food for consumption and the reason may be to satisfy need, indulgence or pleasure. Food consumption can be made in various environments such as: home, beach, restaurant, room-service, on the train or canteen etc. Provision of Food service can be to satisfy need for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Aside from the basic service period, food service is also done on specified occasions like cocktail parties, conferences, banquets or other functions. The three main meals afore-mentioned can be augmented by morning coffee, afternoon tea, bed time tea as these ones are usually accompanied with snacks.

Guest satisfaction from food is assessed by the quality of the product and service rendered. Food service in the hotel industry can be divided into four areas such as: Restaurants, Banqueting, Room service and Bar / Lounge though the major part of food sales comes from the restaurant. In the light of stiff competition and increased guest expectations, it has become difficult to satisfy customer demands. Most food service companies place emphasis on professionalism, display food and dress their staff attractively to stimulate purchases. Many companies use market research and introduction of new products to entice customs.

Food service organisations need to offer high degree of service sophistication compared with others. Workers face challenges because guests are not always predictable. Some customers eat out due to poor service. This might result in dwindling sales that bring about

high labour cost. The management has to adopt strategy for customers' retention and sales increase on continuous basis.

However, food service marketing would be discussed in the 9th unit.

Self-Assessment Exercise

How would you define food service in relation to the hospitality industry?

3.3 Food Service Typology

This part of unit I focuses on different segments of food service operation. Food service was originally likened to rendering service to family members. It is now clear that the term 'food service' covers many different kinds of organisations. For the purpose of this study, we shall use the word typology to assist us in describing them. Food service organisations will be classified into two major segments. The first, commercial typology suggests the profit-making sectors and the second one, non-commercial typology is the second one which suggests that the businesses are operated on breakeven basis.

3.3.1 Commercial Typology

The commercial typology comprises of profit-oriented companies which must strive to provide food sales attractively to customers and sell at a profit. These include: Restaurants, Hotels with food services, Pubs, Fast-food outlets, Snack bar, Motel with food services, Taverns, Commercial cafeterias, Family restaurant, Steakhouses, Social caterers, Mobile caterers, Outdoor catering, Clubs, Vending machine companies, Buffets, In – transit feeding operations, Contract feeding service operations in factories, Office buildings, Schools, Sports centers, Recreation or Health care facilities.

a) Restaurant

A restaurant can be defined as a place where meals may be bought and eaten.

Restaurant typology is a process of classifying the different restaurant types using different criteria such as: the menu, service style and price. Other factors considered are the innovations and sophistication of the system adopted. Restaurant classification was first developed in the US A. Five types of restaurants have been proposed using menu characteristics and operational features viz:

- Quick service offering - low price, speed and consistency
- Mid-scale restaurants - based around menu choice, value and comfort
- Moderate up-scale – delivering ambience, flexibility and
- Upscale outlets - deliver experience, style and ambience
- Business distinctive menu -strategic focus and operational imperatives

A hotel may have one or more restaurants depending on the size, location and level of patronage. The restaurant caters for the hotel guests and general public. Due to increased patronage, many restaurants are springing up especially, snack bar, take- away and eat- in restaurants. Fast food grew up to satisfy the need for a high value, quick service meals.

A restaurant is run by the restaurant manager. Some of the responsibilities of the restaurant manager include:-

- Meeting and exceeding guest expectations
- Recruiting, training and development of employees
- Setting and maintaining quality standards
- Presenting and forecasting sales and preparing budget
- Marketing

Food service in the hotels goes beyond the restaurant. It includes room service, conference, banquet and bar operations.

b) Room service

Room service, otherwise known as 'in-room dining' is service to hotel guest in the rooms such as eating experience of food brought to the room. Room service is not exactly the same as restaurant service. Some challenges of food service are as follows:

- Dealing with guest order in time e. g. early morning breakfast
- Meeting up customers many complaints
- Forecasting demand
- High overhead costs
- Marketing room service products

The hotel room service runs for between 16 and 24 hours a day. Room service is very necessary to satisfy guest needs but it is not completely profitable. The importance of speedy and accurate communication in room service cannot be overemphasised as this makes the guest happy. The staff in the room service must be well- trained and competent. They must be polite, effective and courteous in the use of telephone. Through training they must become sales persons and make suggestive selling. This will consequently increase the average guest checks and patronage.

The challenges facing room service are many. One of them is forecasting and how to meet the demands of the guests. Room service manager uses house count and guest mix to forecast demand. These forecasts would include the number of covers expected for each meal i.e. breakfast, lunch or dinner as well as the number of delegates attending a conference or convention can substantially reduce the number of room service breakfast orders. Demands for room service fluctuate between weekdays and weekends. Some hotels especially those at the city centres attract families who order room service at various times while guests in holiday resort hotels are more relaxed and less likely to require twenty hours room service.

Room service needs to be carefully planned especially in the area of staffing to ensure maximum efficiency. The room service menu also requires careful planning. The food must be well presented and have longevity. Part of the room service menu could be selected from restaurant menu to avoid too much additional preparation. Value for money is important as too high price can discourage guest from ordering. The level of service and menu prices will vary from hotel to hotel. Some have butler service for all guest rooms without additional charge; this has become the trademark of the hotel.

In a well organised setting, organisational challenge of room service management consists of mis en place, arranging everything like the trays, cutlery etc in correct place and ready for action.

Room service ordering systems are in two ways. It is either by telephone or by doorknob hangers for breakfast orders. The room service head waiter or order taker takes the order and writes the bill, gives one copy to the kitchen and one to the waiters. During the quiet period, the room service waiters set up the trays and carts. To avoid late delivery of service, big hotels use elevators particularly during the peak periods. Some hotels avoid the costs of operating room service by providing vending machines on every floor which gives the guests a wider selection of food at lower costs without waiting.

c) Airlines

Competitive factor has become a major factor in the food service sector both in profit and non- profit sectors, more especially in the former. One important point about food service on the aircraft is that the food must look appealing, tasty, and be fit for the limited space available. Food that needs to be served hot must be able to rethermalize well on the plate. Food must be served on time and correctly.

Food service in the air is different from food service on the land like restaurant, room service etc. Food is produced in large quantities for service and consumption within specific times. Airlines may either produce food from their own factory close to airport or service provided by a contractor. The food and beverage are served packaged on the plane by the flight attendants to the passengers.

d) Outdoor Catering

Outdoor catering covers food, drinks, confectionery, snacks etc. Like other catering functions, it must be planned in detail for successful operation. The team in charge must be pro-active, decisive, smart, have team spirit, quick thinking; and the leader must be able to command effectively. Most of the staff are casual.

The organisation must be thorough to avoid mistakes. Any items not packed on the transport have to be gone without and could be detrimental to the function and result in inefficiency and loss of repeat business. The following points must be considered in planning outdoor catering:

- Types and Date of Function
- Site and Distance from the depot with transport arrangement.
- Commodity to purchase
- Staff required
- Layout of site
- No of people to attend
- Availability of water, gas, electricity, refuse disposal
- Spending power of the people.
- Provision of mobile unit for cold and hot food.
- Time allowed for setting and dismantling

e) Automatic vending machine

Vending machine came into effective operation in the 1950s about 82 different goods and services can be vended by machines but only 3 of them are related to hotel and catering. Vending machines are flexibility, accessibility, easily controlled and labour saving. If well maintained, it can provide services for 24hrs. They are unmanned except service maintained and computer staff.

Vending machines are found in cafeteria, hospitals, offices, factories, hotel corridors, schools, student common rooms, clubs, pubs, etc. The types of machine will depend on product to be vended. Disadvantages: It lacks personal contact hence can be vandalised. Where speed is needed several machines would be required and it will be cost ineffective.

f) Commercial Institutional Catering

The colleges, universities and student unions offer a variety of managed services that meet the needs of a diverse student body. Among the services offered are cafeteria food-service, branded quick-service restaurants and take-out food service.

The cafeteria foodservice operation is often the “happening” place in the student union where students meet to socialize as well as to eat and drink. The cafeteria is generally open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Depending on the volume of business, the cafeteria may be closed during the vacation periods and weekends. The cafeteria menu may or may not be the same as the residence foodservice facility. Offering a menu with a good price value is crucial to the successful operation of a campus cafeteria.

g) Take –away fast food:

Home delivery is a development from a takeaway, instead of customers having to visit the shop in person; all they need to do is telephone their order and the meal will be delivered to their home. Drive- ins have been slow to develop in the UK, partly due to its different climate and car park necessity.

However, in the countries that experience favourable weather almost all the year round, eat- in fast food owners are making brisk business. Convenience stores provide self food and drink facility in retail outlet, while food course operate several catering concepts in one location, sharing the seating capacity. They are found at rail, air terminals and in shopping malls.

h) Meals on the wheel: It was the first type of home delivery food service.

Food is delivered well- packaged at the correct temp with adequate nutritional value and portion size especially to the elderly or the sick. Time required for delivery usually is normally 30 minutes. Example is Pizza. Dietary needed of consumers are considered during preparation or service such as: those who require low salt, low sugar, sugar free or ethnic origin such as halal etc.

3.3.2 Non-Commercial Typology

The non-commercial typology is also referred to as the welfare sector. Their function is to maximise customers' satisfaction within the constraint of the budget. As they work hard to present acceptable quality products or services to the customers their reward is the professional reputation of the team of staff and management. It is however expected of them to breakeven.

The following types of operations are generally classified as non profit oriented in the food service organisations:- Employee feeding operations, Public schools elementary/secondary food service, College food services, Hospitals, community centers, Camp, Public institutions, Adult communities, Military facilities, Religious facilities, Extended care facilities such as Health care services or Prisons.

Industrial

The customers are always eating once a day on the premises or on daily basis as long as they report for duty. The method of service will be described in unit 6

Institutional food service

Many concerns currently face school foodservice. One major challenge is to balance sell ability with good nutrition. Innovation and taste, as well as healthfulness, were the main criteria used to evaluate the winning entry e.g. turkey taco salad, sausage pizza bagel, and stuffed potatoes. Chefs have to work with the Food service manager to develop healthful recipes and menus with increased appeal but without an increase in cost.

College and University food service operations are complex and diverse. Among the various constituents of foodservice management are halls of residence, cafeterias, student unions, faculty clubs, convenience stores, administrative catering, and outside catering. On-campus dining is a challenge for foodservice managers because the clientele lives on campus and eats most of its meals at the campus dining facility.

School catering

The students are fed three times a day at specified times. The volume is consistent which makes it easier to predict the number of meals and portion size to cater for. It is easier to plan, organise, produce and serve meals. Weekend is less busy than week days. College foodservice operations now offer a variety of meal plans for students.

Under the old board plan, when students paid one fee for all meals each day, whether they ate them or not, the foodservice operator literally made a profit from the students who did not actually eat the meals they had paid for. More typically now, students match their payments to the number of meals eaten: Monday-Friday, breakfast, lunch, dinner only. Prepaid credit cards that allow student to use the card at any campus outlet and have the value of the food and beverage items deducted from his or her credit balance.

Health care foodservice

Health care food service operations are remarkably complex because of the necessity of meeting the diverse needs of a delicate clientele. Health care managed services are provided to hospital patients, long-term care and assisted-living residents, visitors, and employees. The service is given by tray, cafeteria, dinning room, coffee shop, catering or vending.

The challenge of health care managed services is to provide special meal requirements to patients with very specific dietary requirements.

In contrast, several hospitals are entering the pizza-delivery business. They hook up phone and fax ordering lines, and they hire part-time employees to deliver pizzas made on the premises. Patients' meals now feature "comfort foods," based on the concept that the simpler the food is better. However, the resurgence of meat loaf, pot pies, meat and potatoes, and tuna salad, which contributes to customer satisfaction, and make them feel at home and comfortable.

4.0 Conclusion

The meaning of food service relative to the hospitality industry has been discussed. The two major typologies of the food service sector that is: commercial and non – commercial were also described. The merits and challenges of the examples given were also discussed.

5.0 Summary

This unit treated the introduction of the Food Service and Professionalism in the hospitality industry. The several facets of the hospitality industry were taken into consideration. Now that the background has been laid, we shall be discussing Purchasing, Selection and Storage of the food service items in the second unit.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe the two major typologies of the food service organisations with their characteristics?

7.0 Reference/Further Reading

Buttle, F. (1986). Hotel and Food Service Marketing: A Managerial Approach. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, East Sussex.

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Unit 2 Purchasing, Selection and Storage of Food Service Items

1.0 Introduction

Two main 'back-of-the-house' facilities, the kitchen and the stores serve the hotel food and beverage sales facilities – restaurants, bars, room service and functions. A major distinction in kitchen facilities in hotels arises from the extent to which they are centralized and serve all the food outlets of the hotel where there is more than one, or whether separate kitchens are provided to serve each restaurant, room service and functions. The scale and diversity of the food operation usually the main determining factors but much depends on the operating preferences and philosophies of hotel management.

The technical considerations of various food production arrangements, their organization and methods are outside the scope of this work. You are advised to consult the numerous texts, which deal with the subject, several of which are listed at the end of this unit.

Food commodities enter into meals and refreshments served in different stages from their purchase to their sale respectively in altered form or the same to the customer.

Food operation may be viewed as a cycle, which consists of several stages viz-a-viz: Purchasing, Selecting, Receiving, Storing and Issuing before the final stage of preparing prior to Selling. The stages represent a clear sequence through which food passes according to the size and diversity of the food service typology from the supplier to the customer.

These processes are described in this unit as the food cycles.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the importance of purchasing in the running a food service business
- understand the various stages of food cycles.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Food Cycles

Activities of food cycles which include purchasing, receiving, storing, issuing and food preparation before service normally take place at the back of the house. One of the most important aspects to running a successful food service operation is having a strong back of the house operation, particularly in the store and kitchen. Effective storage conditions to be ensured throughout especially for the fresh produce since poor storage can affect the quality and taste of product life. Some food items e. g. fruits, vegetables fish and meat should be used quickly because they have short shelf life.

Purchase of fish, meat and fresh produce are perhaps the most difficult purchasing task faced by the hospitality industry. The importance of adequate storage conditions cannot be overemphasized.

3.1.1 How Purchasing is done in the hospitality industry?

Purchasing is the beginning of the food cycle. In a large hotel, one person has a designated responsibility for food purchases – a purchasing officer, the food and beverage manager or one of the assistant managers in a medium-size hotel while in the smaller hotel purchasing may be undertaken by the owner/manager or chef.

The items used by the Food service organizations are of two major types viz:- consumable and non- consumable. The consumable items can be perishable and non- perishable foods.

Non- consumables items are generally known to be capital intensive. This will be discussed further in the next unit.

The purchasing of food commodities calls for skill and knowledge especially when buying fresh or natural food products, several variations within the same product line can appear daily.

The purchasing function extends from identifying best sources of supply, making arrangements with suppliers and placing orders, to close liaison with the kitchen and other user departments regarding requirements, yield and quality, and with the accounts department regarding payment. For foods bought in large enough quantities, purchasing is greatly facilitated by standard purchase specifications, which define quality, size and other features of the required items.

Purchasing for food service operation involves procuring the products and services that are needed in order to serve the guests. The purchasing system is set up to determine the following:

- Standards for each item (product specification)
- Systems that minimize effort, control wastage and pilferage.
- The amount of each item that should be on hand
- Who will do the buying and keep up the purchasing system
- Who will be in charge of receiving, storage and issuing of items

It is desirable for the food service organisations to establish standards for each product, called purchase specification. When ordering meat, for example the cut, weight, size, percentage of fat content and number of days aged are all factors specified by the purchaser. Purchase specification will be discussed in this unit.

3.2 Purchasing Specification

3.2.1 Selection

The supplier usually specifies the quality levels of food items desired. The buyer normally carries out these specifications, as much as possible. Usually consider one or more of the following selection factors when determining the quality standards as well as the preferred supplier:

- The intended use must be ascertained as this could save money in the long run.
- All items should be very attractive and a premium price paid for the best appearance.
- The brand must be indicated in a particular packing process and the consistency should be a hallmark of packers' brand.
- The brand name must be registered with the state's department of agriculture or the standard food organisation.

3.2.2 Job Order Procedures

Commercial foodservice typologies that are part of a chain or group may have the menu items and order specifications determined at the corporate office.

This saves the manager from having to order individually, specialists at the corporate office cannot only develop the menu but also the specifications for the ingredients are determined to ensure consistency. Both chain and independent foodservice operators use similar pre-purchase functions:

- Plan menus
- Determine quality and quantity needed to produce menus
- Determine inventory stock levels
- Identify items to purchase by subtracting stock levels from the quantity required

A purchase order comes as a result of the product specification. A purchase order is an order to purchase a certain quantity of item at a specific price. Many food service operators develop purchase orders for items they need on a regular basis. These are sent to suppliers for quotations and samples are sent in for products evaluation. For example canned items have varying amounts of liquid. Normally, it is the drained weight of the products that matters to the company. After comparing samples from several vendors, the operator can choose the supplier that best suits the needs.

3.3 Source of Purchase

Patterns will change as a business grows but initially all shopping will probably be done as the orders come in. Gradually, as orders increase in regularity and size, it will make sense to bulk buy basics such as flour, sugar, tinned foods, cooking fat and oils.

The choice of outlet is fairly wide. To start with, it is probably best to use a combination of supermarkets, cash and carries and small local shops. Supermarkets offer very competitive prices for branded goods in standard domestic package sizes. A number offer their own

brands which will be a little bit cheaper than the well-known brands, but the quality must be carefully tested before buying the stocks. However, supermarket fruit and vegetables are generally more expensive than those in the specialist greengrocers and quality may not be so good.

3.3.1 Cash and Carry

Cash and carries can be excellent as they sell goods in larger catering sizes as well as domestic packs. They are also better geared to shoppers buying in quantity: their trolleys are heavy duty to take large loads, pay out desks have large conveyor belt to ease the unloading and loading of trolleys, and car park are conveniently placed so shoppers merely wheel their trolleys out of the building to the car or van.

Cash and carries run their own special offer promotions like supermarkets and, provided storage space is not a problem, large savings can be made on these. Remember, however, to compare their prices for all goods carefully with the local supermarket prices. The name 'cash and carry' implies substantial discounts, but often price can be the same as, if not higher than, those in the high Street supermarkets. Another point to bear in mind is that cash and carries normally sited on the outskirts of town or in the country and it may be more cost effective to buy in the High Street than to spend an hour longer making a round trip to the cash and carry.

3.3.2 Local Shops

While their prices tend to be higher, there are occasions when it makes more sense to buy from small or local shops. For instance, if an order comes in at very short notice for a small lunch or dinner party the following day, it can be better to save time and pop round the corner to the shops rather than drive to the supermarket. Similarly, if a function falls just after a bank / public holiday, some of the perishable ingredients, such as cream probably have to be bought from local shop at the last moment there won't be time to shop anywhere else.

3.3.3 Market

Markets are good place to shop where for small business, medium and large firm will probably find it worthwhile to buy from the whole sale markets. Local markets are geared to the housewife and are open normal shopping hours though some may only open for half a day or on certain days of the week. The ranges of goods available differ widely – some markets sell only fruit and vegetables while others deal with dairy produce, meat, and fish as well. The large wholesale markets open in the small hours and are usually closed by midday. In large cities, they may specialize in a particular type of produce.

It will be important to weigh up the merits of the large discounts that can be obtained from these markets against the cost of detailing two or three members of staff to different market at anti-social hour of the morning. Unlike super-markets, there is no overall quality control. It is therefore vital to do a good deal of research and shop only from stalls whose quality can be relied upon. It pays dividends to build up a good relationship with the stallholders you use, letting them know that, while you are happy to buy from them

exclusively, you will have no hesitation in switching should quality drop or prices rise unreasonably.

3.3.4 Wholesalers

An alternative to markets is to buy direct from wholesalers or, if turnover warrants it, direct from the manufacturer. In these circumstances, the supplier will normally insist on some assurance that orders will not only be large but also frequent. They will probably want some proof of the company's creditworthiness and financial standing, too, if goods are bought on account.

In turn, you will want assurance that your orders will receive prompt attention and that the delivery service is flexible enough to meet to your needs. If delivery is available on a daily basis, there are obviously no problems, but if it is weekly or larger, purchasing flexibility is lost. On the plus side, orders can be placed at short notice by phone; goods will be delivered to the door in a week or so if credit is given.

3.4 Other Purchasing factors

Cash flow will be a strong influence on a firm's purchasing policy. New business which has to lay out money in a variety of directions to get themselves going will obviously have a restricted amount of money to spend on food stocks. Gradually, as more orders come in more funds can be allocated to bulk purchasing, thus reducing the unit cost of dishes.

Established companies will be familiar with the pattern of their cash flow and should be able to use this information to their best advantage. There will, however always be certain times of the year when cash flow is tighter than usual. For instance, August and January (for some advanced countries) while (January and December for some developing countries) are quiet months in trade and this will be reflected in reduced receipts a month or two later. It is worth reiterating the importance of establishing right from the start what payment terms to adopt. Once the policy has been set, clients should be made aware of the terms and controls set up to ensure that no payments get over-looked.

If accounts are not settled on time, profits start to dwindle. Invoices should be sent out promptly and chased up as soon as payment becomes overdue.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe the purchasing procedure in the hospitality industry.

3.4.1 Receiving

When placing an order, the food service operator specifies the day and time for example, (Friday, 10.00 am to 12:00 noon) for the delivery to be made. This prevents deliveries from being made at inconvenient times. Receiving entails ensuring that the company is being supplied with extra quantity of the order at the agreed price and its transfer to stores or directly to the user departments. Receiving takes place by a comparison of delivery notes against orders and by a physical inspection of the deliveries. Receiving is a point of control in the food service operation. The purpose of receiving is to ensure that quality, quantity and price are exactly as ordered.

The quantity and quality relate to the order specification and the standardized recipe. Depending on the typology of food service sector and the company's policy, some perishable items are issued directly to the kitchen and most of the non-perishable items go into storage.

In large hotels there is often a receiving clerk; otherwise receiving may be the responsibility of the storeman. In smaller hotels it may be undertaken by the chef as the principal staff from the user department.

3.4.2 Storing /Issuing

Although purchasing and storage are two different areas of activity, they are closely related and it is therefore sensible to look at them together. A shortage of space will restrict purchasing power. On the other hand, the storage facilities may be dictated by the firm's purchasing policy. It may be decided the larger premises with more storage should be found so that the company undertake greater bulk purchasing.

Shelf life is an important consideration when planning your purchasing policy. Modern technology has increased the life of numerous products with developments in preserving, canning and freezing techniques, but even so, there is a limit to the length of time any food can be stored. Retail goods have 'use by' dates marked on them. Catering packs and goods from wholesalers may not indicate this information, in which case you phone or write to the manufacturers asking what the shelf life is. Being aware of the life of foods is not only a guard against food poisoning, it is also a means of minimizing stock wastage, which in turn means profit levels are more likely to be maintained.

Food that is in season for only a short while should be bought in bulk while prices are low provided, of course, that adequate storage facilities are available and that there is a demand for the goods. Soft fruits and vegetables are obvious examples, but there will also be fluctuations in meat and fish prices which are worth capitalizing on. If you are not sure of the freezer life of any goods, there are numerous freezer books which give detailed information on this point.

Whenever a firm buys its supplies, it is vitally important that the person responsible for purchasing is experienced and competent in this field. If your company is to trade profitably you must be sure that it is buying the right quality goods at the right price and at the right time, otherwise your profits will disappear down the drain in wasted food and unnecessary expenditure.

Control of the stores is often a problem. Records must be kept of all items going in or out of the stores. If more than one person has access to the stores, it is difficult to know where to attach responsibility in case of losses. Establishing system that minimizes effort, wastage and theft may be done by computer or manually. However, computerizing a system does not merely make it theft- proof. Instead, employing honest workers is a top priority in order to prevent temptation.

Items should only be issued from the store on an authorized requisition signed by the appropriate person. In private organisations, a restaurateur who has been in business for many years may issue items to the kitchen on a daily basis. No inventory is kept in the

production area. There is no auxiliary store like in the housekeeping department. To some, this is considered to be the role of control department.

Storing and issuing consist of maintaining an adequate stock of food for the day-to-day requirements of the hotel, without loss through spoilage and pilferage and without capital being tied up unnecessarily through overstocking. It also involves issues of food to user departments. According to the size of the organisation and its requirements, food stores may be subdivided, and there may be one or more storemen responsible for them.

Issues to the kitchen and other user departments are normally made at set times in the day against authorized requisitions. Periodical stocking-taking takes place to ascertain the value of stocks held in order to determine the food costs for a given period and stock values for accounts purposes. Stock taking helps to detect and prevent wastage through spoilage, overstocking and loss of items.

All items that enter the stores should have a date stamp and are rotated using the FIFO; 'first-in, first-out' system, instead of LIFO. LIFO, 'last-in, first-out' is not recommended to prevent spoilage through overstocking or long aged stocks. First-in, First-out is a simple but effective system of ensuring stock rotation. The first items brought in are issued first. This is achieved by placing the most recent purchase, in rotation, behind previous purchases. Failure to do this results in spoilage.

Food and beverage stores in hotels are three basic types:

- food stores, usually sub-divided into dry stores, perishable stores, cold rooms;
- beverage stores or 'cellar';
- linen, china, glass and silver stores

Storage arrangements in the food service organisations vary. In some, the dry stores are the general stores of the hotel in which non-perishable foods, cleaning materials, stationery for guest supplies are kept. The cellar is often used for storing not only minerals, beers, wines and spirits, but also cigars, cigarettes, and tobacco. Sometimes the cellar is confined to wines, which call for special storage conditions, and other drinks are stored separately in the dry stores (Beverages service & storage is not within the scope of this programme) Table linen, cloth napkins used by the Food and beverage department are kept in the store attached in the user department with china, glass, and silver.

An effective system establishes a stock level that must be on hand at all times. This is called a par stock. If the stock on hand falls below a specified reorder point, the computer system automatically records a predetermined quantity of the item.

The amount of space that is needed for storage will obviously be related to the size of the business and the turnover, but whether a business is large or small, storage space is an expensive commodity. It is, therefore, very important to make the most effective use of the existing space, even if this means a capital outlay to purchase additional shelving and storage units. It is also vital to check storage cost on a regular basis. Increase in rent, rates, electricity, gas and salaries are edging the cost up all the time and if this increase is not taken into account, a firm cannot hope to get its general costing accurate nor achieve its planned profit levels.

As the business grows, storage space will need to be increased. This expansion should be carefully planned and calculated if it is to be cost effective.

3.4.3 Stock control procedure

In large store-rooms, shelving and floor stresses have to be calculated to make sure they will bear the maximum loading. There must be sufficient space between shelving and storage unit for wheeling trolleys and loading goods. Fridges and freezers should be on wheels so that they can be moved easily for cleaning. Shelving cupboards should be designed for thorough and easy cleaning. Plans will need to be made for foods that have to be stored separately. Cooked and raw meats, for example, should never be stored in the same units. Pungent foods such as fish, cheese and herbs should be stored separately so that they do not taint other items. There must be adequate ventilation and temperature controls, possibly with booster cooling facilities for hot weather. Stock will need to be dated and stored systematically to ensure that the oldest is always used first. Stock control system should be set up to make recording a simple procedure, and a security system established to guard against pilfering.

You should also institute a pest control regime of regular cleaning. Health officers from your local authority may have to inspect your premises from time to time and, if they are not satisfied with hygiene standards, they will insist on alteration being made.

4.0 Conclusion

Precautions must be taking in planning purchasing and storage policies. This will help in having a far better chance of building up a sound and healthy business.

5.0 Summary

The importance of purchasing, selecting, receiving, issuing and storage to the hospitality industry has been exhaustively treated in this unit.

This next unit discusses the environmental factors that can affect the food service sector.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What are the objectives of storage management?
2. Explain the significance of LIFO & FIFO in store management?

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Unit 3 Environmental Analysis: Factors Affecting Food Service Operation

1.0 Introduction

To be successful, a service organisation concept should be created with guest in mind. The service industry provides a social gathering place where employees, guests, management meet and get the adrenaline flowing in positive ways. Hospitality business is exiting and challenging. With the right location, atmosphere and correct service, it is possible to attract the market and make a good return on investment.

The challenge is to create a restaurant concept and bring it into being. A concept that fits a definite market, a concept better suited to its market than that presented by competing restaurants. Every restaurant represents a concept and projects a total impression or an image. The image appeals to concern market casual, formal, children, adults, ethnic and so on. The concepts should fit the location and reach out to its target market. The concept, location, menu and décor should intertwine.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- understand why the environmental factors are important in the food service sector
- understand what it takes to have a successful food service experience.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Location

The hospitality concept must fit the location and the location must fit the concept. The location should appeal to the large market (expected guests). Other things being equal, prime location costs more, so operations must either charge more for their service or drive sufficient volume to keep the rent/lease costs to between five and eight percent of sales. Location has different interpretations to different businesses. Some catering outfits and restaurants are sited in prime location. Few are hidden in remote scenic areas. Location could be the major strength of some that are in particular attractive locations and as a result adopted the charming names to reflect the characteristics of the location such as: Hill Top restaurant, Beach Dunes eat-in & take away, Riverside café etc.

Design is gradually replacing Location in the 21st Century. The success of a hotel now depends on how it is designed and its look. (This will be discussed further in the last unit).

Food service market concept can be influenced by a mix of some other factors such as: the size of the business, type of guests, standard or quality of service/menu, location price to charge, management style etc.

This is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

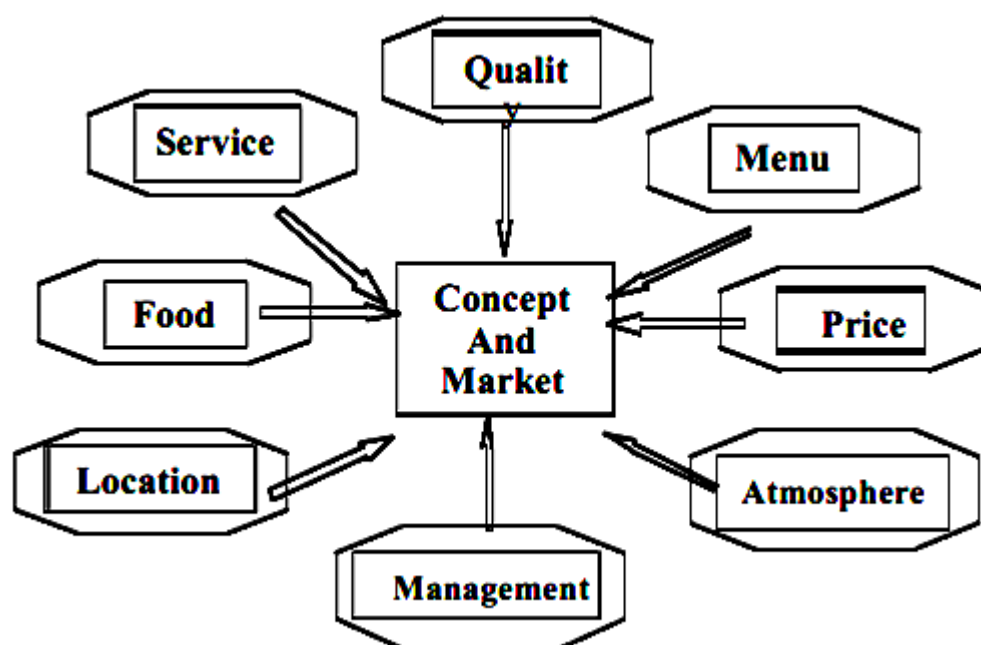


Figure 2

3.2 Atmosphere & Appearance

The atmosphere created by the service industry has both immediate conscious and subconscious effects on guests. The immediate conscious effect is how guests react to the ambience on entering the place – or even more importantly as an element in the decision-making process used in selecting a restaurant. Is it noisy? Are the tables too close? The subconscious is affected by mood, lighting, furnishings, and music; these play an important role in leaving a subtle impression on guests.

Restaurant guests are placing a greater emphasis on atmospherics and the design used to create a special atmosphere. Back in the 1970s, the majority of restaurants were quite plain. Today, atmospherics are built with the restaurant concept, which has an immediate impact on customers.

Perhaps the most moderate atmospheric restaurants are those with a theme. The theme will use colour, sound, lighting, décor texture and visual stimulation to create special effects for patrons. The chain restaurants with the highest rating atmosphere are Planet Hollywood, Hard Rock Café and Chart House restaurants.

The main aspects which make up the physical environment and atmosphere of the restaurants and other eateries can be summarized as:

- Cleanliness of environment and seating layout;
- Hygiene;
- Size and shape of the room;
- Décor;
- Acoustics;
- Equipment and Furniture;

3.2.1 Cleanliness of environment and seating layout

As most restaurants and food outlets have direct access onto the street and have a great deal of human traffic and out of them, they collect a lot of dirt and dust. The operator must ensure that floor and wall surfaces are cleaned regularly and fittings such as pictures, prints and lights are dusted properly.

At this point one might reasonably presume that the next factor that influences the customer's environment of a meal will be that indefinable factor-atmosphere. Ask anyone why they go to a particular restaurant and they will probably say one of the three things – they like the food; it is good value for money; or they like the 'atmosphere'. But, if you ask someone to explain what 'atmosphere' is, they are not usually able to define what they mean. They may say that they like the surroundings because it is decent, that the place smells nice, that the seats are comfortable, they like the music played there, the other customers or some other aspect of the operation, but usually they will not be very clear about it. This is because so many of the factors that contribute towards creating an atmosphere are received by the customer on a subconscious level. So rather than talk about atmosphere alone, we will look at other factors stated below that make up the atmosphere in some detail.

3.2.2 Hygiene

In the USA, the preoccupation with hygiene was developed sooner than in Britain. But with the influx of people in the hospitality- style operations, some ideas about cleanliness have been introduced. As we shall see, disposables, which are probably the most hygienic means of serving food, have become more acceptable in the next one or two units. The awareness of hygiene is having positive effect on eating out. Already there is a growing movement towards the banning of cigarette smoking in public places and many places, including cinemas, canteens and public transport have segregated areas for smokers and non-smokers particularly in the developed world.

Whether justified or not, Britain does not have a very good reputation for cleanliness. Tourists from abroad find our streets, parks, buses and public buildings dirty and litter-strewn in comparison with their own countries, and this attitude is extended towards the hotels and restaurants. The caterer is aware that cleanliness and hygiene are selling points and that the regulations laid down are only a minimum standard to be met. Poor hygiene is usually low on the list of the complaints.

3.2.3 Size and Shape of the room

This factor will certainly affect the atmosphere of the eating environment by creating feelings of intimacy or spaciousness. The operation can affect people's reactions to the room by careful use of colour patterns and lighting unless the restaurant is purpose built. Operators may have to resort to employing the skills of the interior designer to modify establishments where the ceiling is too high or too low, the room is too narrow, too small or whatever. Many high-street sites, are designed with shops in mind and therefore tend to be long and narrow, the use of mirrors help to create an illusion of width if it has to be converted to a restaurant.

3.2.4 Décor

Interior design is obviously important to a restaurant's success. The response of an individual to atmosphere is personal and the individual's reaction to any combination of the decor (which influence atmosphere) can only be determined or controlled by rudimentary principles. The problem lies in the essential paradox that customers need to feel 'at home' in their surroundings, without feeling that they are at home. Thus the décor of a food service area must be different without undermining the sense of security of customers. It should provoke feelings of pleasure and relaxation rather than tension and anxiety. Complaints about décor have decreased over the years. The décor must also play an integral parting the whole surroundings, whereas if customers are paying a lot for a meal, then they will expect posh surroundings, whereas if customers want a quick, cheap meal, then they will expect functional rather than desperation décor. Recently, interior design has been seen as an important feature of a restaurant concept.

3.2.5 Acoustics

Restaurant is a noisy place. They would lose business if care was not taken to reduce the level of noise. In fact, reducing the level of noise and movement has to be the first step taken by restaurateurs who want to upgrade their premise. Modern design which tends to have many surfaces for walls, few fabrics, wooden outlined floors. Metal furniture and fixtures however seem to run counter this argument because they are noisy. The most important point to note with regard to levels of acceptable noise is that age group rather than social class is the determining factor, young people being able and willing to accept much higher levels.

There are three contributory factors to noise in a restaurant (apart from outside or extraneous noise that presumably could be avoided if necessary).

- a) **Voices:** Customers need to communicate with each other and with the staff. Therefore the general level of noise should not exceed that which makes ordinary conversation impossible. Obviously, the more people in the room, the more noise there is, but as one can hardly request customers to talk more quietly, the caterer must reduce the general level of noise by reducing the input from the two other factors.
Operational Fasting and Serving food, there is also noise caused by movement. Same floor surfaces are much noisier than others, for instance, tile as opposite to carpeting. In addition, the décor can contribute. Carpeting and curtains can reduce noise, while a textile wall fabric made in France called murk silence was credited with adducting noise from an adjacent room by up to a reasonable degree. It was observed that if premises are carpeted, the electricity heating bill can be reduced by 12 percent, according to research conducted in Japan'.
- b) **Music:** Most experts agree that music has a direct and strong effect on the customer's mood. It is used in many different environments; extensively in restaurants or hotels to speed up the flow of people, as 'music while you work' as background music. It can achieve many things for caterers so long as they are aware of one essential point – that background music is forced upon the customer whether they like it or not and if they do not like it then the restaurant loses customers. Otherwise, music may be used to create an environment of bustle until the restaurant fills up and then be turned down to allow for conversation. It can reinforce the particular image of the restaurant by playing

appropriate music: rock music in Café, and chamber music in the hotel etc. It has even been suggested that music can be used to overcome customers' prevailing moods of depression on a wet, rainy day by playing bright and cheerful tunes. A balance of light pop, film themes, musicals and any music that will have lasting popularity is recommended.

3.3 Equipment/Furniture

Essentially there are three areas of concern to boost the foodservice operation: staff, equipment and environment.

Customers will notice if equipment is not clean since it is literally put under their very noses. All table appointments, cutlery, crockery and so forth, must be clean and polished and not defective in any way, for instance, cups chipped, plates cracked or forks bent. Furniture too must be well maintained.

Some customers will insist on sitting so that they are facing into the room, partly so that they have something other than a wall to look at and partly because they feel more secure with a wall behind them. Finally, according to research by the Council for Industrial Design, women seem to have different sitting habits to men. Men prefer can sit upright for longer periods without suffering the same amount of fatigue as women. Obviously it is impractical to have two sorts of chairs, but if a restaurant wishes to encourage people to linger over their meal, it must provide chairs with areas

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Prime location is an important factor to consider in opening a restaurant.
2. What are the points that can influence the decision of a location?

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit we have discussed the importance of environmental factors on location in the hospitality organisations with particular reference to the food service sector. You have seen how the environmental factors can promote business, encourage repeat performance and attract new customers. The impact of atmospheric condition on environment was discussed in conjunction with seating layout, hygiene, acoustics, equipment /furniture. All these put together appropriately will bring up a befitting environment and complement the size and shape of the room.

5.0 Summary

This unit has examined how the concept of a food service sector is affected by the environmental analysis and we have been able to consider many factors. In Unit 4, measuring service quality in the hospitality industry will be discussed

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Customers talk about atmosphere when they think of the choice of restaurant. What are the other factors that make up the atmosphere? Discuss in some detail.

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Unit 4 Measuring Service Quality in the Hospitality Industry

1.0 Introduction

Services in the hospitality organisations are taking an increasing importance both domestically and internationally. In today's changing global environment, many businesses are facing intensifying competition and rapid deregulation, and in order to achieve competitive advantage and efficiency, business have to seek profitable ways to differentiate themselves.

Recent years have seen a proliferation of work on service quality and customer satisfaction. These two phenomena are closely related.

Researchers have extensively investigated the nature of service quality or satisfaction and the relationship between the two. There has been considerable research into the concept of service quality with many theories being espoused and consistent basis remain frustratingly elusive to many service providers.

This unit therefore aims to allow you to develop the ability to critically analyse criteria relevant to operational management in the hospitality industry, to develop operational management skills expertise in a range of food service situations, examine and evaluate the use of resources in contemporary service systems.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Have the understanding of what factors constitute good service quality in the food service sector

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Service/Staff Attitude

The management of hospitality services has become very demanding and complex. The tastes of guests have become so varied as their cultural backgrounds and exposures. Only the experienced hand can meet up such demands with satisfactory service delivery.

Customers are neither familiar with, nor care for the problems of providing service. They are only concerned that the service has to meet their expectation. If they are in a hurry then they will go to fast-food outlets that will provide a speedy meal. Customers who are out to impress go to a sophisticated restaurant providing gueridon or full- silver service. There are many differing styles of service each tailored to meet the particular needs of a certain type of client expectation. (Styles of service will be discussed in detail in another unit)

The sophistication of service and number of courses reflect the cost and value for money as much as an attitude but there is no doubt that the customers who are not used to full silver service or gueridon work feel uncomfortable in those situation where it is provided. ere are about four or five types of eating establishments can be summarized as follows:-

- general café'
- fish and chip
- hamburger bar
- bacon-and-egg specialty restaurant
- snack and sandwich bar.'

Whilst the way this is expressed is somewhat condescending in practice this mix of restaurants types is precisely what we find today at motorway service areas. The expectations of some customers are much higher, with regards to the range of restaurants now available the variety of product range, and the improved standards reflected in fast-food and roadside catering compared with the popular catering outlets. There does appear to be a trend for customers to complain more than in the past. This is not necessarily because they have more to complain about, but they are becoming less reluctant to do so. The male customers particularly frequently complain about slow and poor service. The time taken to serve customers topped the list of complaints.

Complaints about service are not as serious as cases of rude staff and / or rushed for attentive service.

Most foodservice operations do encourage staff to wear a uniform as part of their overall image, identification and smartness. Fast-food outlets and standard hotel restaurants are a good example of this. However staff will be expected to be smart and clean. People tend to ascribe cleanliness to particular aspects of appearance – clothes, which they expect to be well-pressed and stain free; hair, which should be clean and looked after well; nails, which should be clean and manicured; and body odour, which should be neutral, i.e. neither sweaty nor overly perfumed.

3.2 Presentation of food

The expression 'looks good enough to eat' has not become a cliché, by chance. Food has to look good on the plate. This is a factor that all the major catering firms are aware of. They spend a great deal of time and effort in ensuring that their organisations sell products that look good. A key feature of restaurant food in the 1990s was the development of plate service so that the food is served exactly as the chef designed it. Other properties that facilitate the presentation of food are as follows:

3.2.1 Aroma

The second thing that will affect customers' reaction to the food, even before they eat it, is the smell. For example: Dining out in an Indian restaurant or buying fish and chips would not be the same without their own particular aroma. Some operators even exploit this factor by ensuring that the ventilation leads out onto the street in order to attract customers. Although this may be effective for fresh bread shops and doughnut houses, not all cooking smells and desirable. While eating food, much of the sensation is derived from the olfactory

center of the nasal cavity, without which most of what we eat and drink would lack its subtlety. In drinking a vintage wine or a good brandy, much of the enjoyment is derived from its 'nose' and the same can be said of other gastronomic experiences.

Although people do eat for reasons other than simply to satisfy their hunger, food is what still the heart of the experience is. It is extremely unlikely that we can change the consumer ideas about food. The customer will likely choose from the menu those dishes that are most appealing. All the various sensory impressions or sensations such as odour, taste, texture and variety complete the gastronomic experience throughout life. The successful caterer is the one who ensures that appearance, aroma, taste, texture and temperature are all just as the customer expects them to be.

3.2.2 Taste

The taste buds of the tongue are only able to detect four basic layouts. These are sweet, sour, salt and bitter. It is the many variations of these four that combine to create the unique flavour of a particular food. For the consumers the combination of flavours is quite important and can be used to good effect in various dishes: sweet and sour pork, lamb with mint sauce, and so on on relevant to the sequence of dishes since generally sweet items are left until the end of a meal lest they upset the palate.

3.2.3 Texture

There are many textures of food namely; rough or smooth, hard or soft, fluid or solid, dry or moist, and tough or tender. The consistency and shape properties of food are experienced by pressure and movement receptors in the mouth. It is these that signal our dislike of food that is rubbery, slimy or tough and a customer's choice of a rare, medium or well-done steak is partly derived from the influence of texture upon the palate.

3.2.4 Temperature

Customers enjoy the variety that temperature can add to a meal, either a piping-hot stew or a cold ice cream for instance. Wealthy Victorians ate sorbet in the middle of their long banquets in order to refresh their jaded palates as the citrus-based ice was refreshing. Temperature not only provides variety, it affects flavour too. The sweetness of a dish is accentuated when served hot, while the saltiness of a soup is reduced at a high temperature.

Self-Assessment Exercise

What is the significance of food presentation in measuring service quality?

3.3 Exceeding customer expectations

3.3.1 The need for Quality service

The concept of service quality has been adopted as a strategic issue by many managers and been the subject of an increasing amount of academic and practitioner literature. The need to understand and measure service quality is related with the growing recognition that is

more profitable to retain satisfied customers than continually seeking to recruit new customers to replace lapsed ones.

However, the large and continuous increase in the service business has created a keen competition in the hotel industry and has forced hotel owners and managers to search ways to differentiate themselves and gain a competition advantage. It was suggested that what service providers should do in order to achieve economic success is to deliver high service quality. In other words high service quality is what separates the industry leaders to all the rest and results in the economic growth of their companies.

It is notable to mention that even though marketers have started realizing the importance of quality during the last two decades a definition of quality does not exist. On the contrary, marketers and researchers have approached the concept by different perspectives. Quality defined as “conformance to specifications” or quality is “meeting or exceeding customers’ expectations. Quality is becoming a big issue for the hospitality industry.

However, organizations that deliver service quality are more likely to enjoy high profitability for the managers of the organizations and how this may be achieved is dependant on the nature of service quality.

3.3.2 What is Service Quality?

The concept of service quality however is very complex, to analyse this, it is essential to define separately the concepts of service and quality, to identify their characteristics and dimensions, and finally to describe the existent instruments for measuring service quality.

Service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything.

Consequently activities such as, renting a hotel room, eating in a restaurant, visiting the doctor or using the public transportation, can all be described as services provided by different sectors of the economy. Additionally, services have three main characteristics, which differentiate them from goods on how they are produced, consumed, and evaluated. Services are intangible, meaning that they are considered to be performances and not objects, heterogeneous, meaning that they may differ from time to time or among different suppliers, and finally the production and consumption process of services are inseparable.

Quality as a concept may be applied both to the service as well as to the goods sector. However, as it has been already mentioned these two sectors differ one from another and therefore one should distinguish service quality from quality in the goods sector.

Quality can also be said to be meeting or exceeding customers’ expectations. This constitutes one of the dominant quality definitions and has widely focused their interest exclusively on the concept of service quality.

The perceived quality service can be defined by comparing the performances that customers experience after receiving a service, and the expectations from service quality are:

Technical Quality, which represents the outcome that a consumer receives after his interaction with the service industry:

Functional Quality, which represents the process needed in order for the customer to experience the technical quality.

It can therefore be said that corporate image constitutes service quality dimension that derives from customers' perceptions of the service industry and depends on both technical and functional quality.

Tangible: (RRAE) this refers to the physical products of the service company such as materials and equipment. Reliability refers to the ability of the service company to deliver to its customers the promised service accurately.

Responsiveness involves the willingness of the personnel to assist customers and deliver them the desirable service. Assurance represents the ability of the employees to inspire confidence and trust in customers through their knowledge and courtesy. Empathy refers to the willingness of the employees to show personal attention to each one of their customers.

Service quality can be approached in different perspectives such as: the dimensions of physical quality, interaction quality and corporate quality.

It should be noted that customers evaluate service quality in the restaurant by measuring the expectations and evaluations of the customers in the restaurant.

The introduction of the service quality model, SERVQUAL revolutionized the discipline of service marketing. The service gap concept examined the existence of service gaps on the service provider's side, these gaps can impede the delivery of service that customers perceive to be of high quality.

Another approach, which is DINESERV, has helped to bring to light that the use of revised DINESERV model was to measure the gap between expectations and evaluations of customers in the service industry.

Due to high standard of service required of this course, you are expected to learn various types of services. You will have further study on this in units 5 under the topic, 'classification of service' at different functions.

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit, we have discussed the different service methods and how service methods can be measured. We have seen that measuring service quality will have positive impact on guest response to the products and the level of patronage. Other factors to consider in assessing service delivery to customers like staff attitude, food presentation were also discussed.

5.0 Summary

- It has been revealed that to achieve customer satisfaction, high quality service that exceeds customer expectation must be achieved.
- The need to classify service for successful business in the food service sector cannot be over- emphasised. This topic will be discussed in the next unit.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe characteristics of the service industry as compared with the manufacturing industry.

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