New Managers’ Training Series:
Marketing School Meals

Overview of Marketing Strategies for Child Nutrition

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You have worked hard to plan and serve quality meals and you know they are the best in town — for nutritional value as well as taste. How can you be sure your customers know that, too?

You need to market your school nutrition program.
AGENDA

- What is Marketing?
- Marketing Goals
- The Role of Marketing in School Nutrition
- Improving the Total Meal Service Experience
- Increasing Participation
- “Staying On Budget”
- Customer Service
- Responding to Negative Feedback
- Questions?
WHAT IS MARKETING?

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?
WHAT IS MARKETING?

• The purest definition of marketing is “any actions a company takes to attract an audience to the company's product or services through high-quality messaging.” But it's not just about advertising and promoting. It’s about aligning what you offer to meet the needs of your intended audiences.

• By offering the right product, at the right time, at the right value, and to the right audience you achieve the ultimate objective for marketing professionals.
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

• Marketing helps you create a positive image of your program and allows you to influence students’ choices to eat the meals you prepare.

• Properly communicating current and future improvements will improve visibility and educate the community.

• Marketing is also your greatest tool for increasing ADP—average daily participation—and growing your school meal program.
Marketing a school nutrition program is unique. While professional marketers spend enormous resources on identifying their potential audience and what their objective is, school nutrition professionals already have an identified target audience and a clear objective to increase program participation numbers by appealing to that known audience.
MARKETING GOALS

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?
MARKETING GOALS

1. INCREASE AWARENESS
   Increase awareness of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

2. IMPROVE PERCEPTION
   Improve the perception of your School Nutrition Program or change the foods you offer

3. IMPROVE QUALITY
   Improve the nutritional quality of meals

4. INCREASE PARTICIPATION
   Increase student and teacher participation by removing any possible barriers

5. IMPROVE CULTURE
   Improve the shared set of values, beliefs, and ideas that influence every aspect of your program
ROLE OF MARKETING IN SCHOOL NUTRITION
WHO IS THE CUSTOMER?

• Every child that comes through the door of the school - large or small, strong or weak, happy or unhappy, sick or well, regardless of age, sex, race or culture – is a potential customer of the school nutrition program.

• The GOAL is to SERVE ALL CHILDREN.
WHY ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS IMPORTANT?

• In your school marketing mix, the customer drives the entire marketing plan.

• Your school nutrition program has many internal and external customers. Another way to think of customers is as stakeholders: people or organizations with an interest in your program.

• The student is the primary customer, while the other stakeholders are considered secondary customers. The main focus of school nutrition is to meet the dietary needs of each student customer during the school day.
CUSTOMER-FOCUSED MARKETING

Traditional marketing models included: Product, Price, Promotion, and Placement. However, this model does not emphasize the customer. Today, marketing has shifted to focus on the customer or, rather, the relationship with the customer. The fifth P, People, has been added to the SN Marketing Model.
## The Five P’s of Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PRODUCT</strong></th>
<th><strong>PRICE</strong></th>
<th><strong>PROMOTION</strong></th>
<th><strong>PLACEMENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>PEOPLE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refers to a product or service; in school nutrition, it is not just the foods, but how they are served.</td>
<td>This not only includes the actual price, but the perceived value in comparison to price.</td>
<td>Communicates the benefit and availability of products and services. This includes events, taste-testing, newsletters, posting menus online, etc.</td>
<td>Making sure your product or service is in the right place at the right time. This includes grab-and-go kiosks, fast, convenient service, etc.</td>
<td>Building and maintaining positive relationships is dependent upon outstanding customer service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When marketing your school nutrition programs, be sure to:

- Serve delicious food that your students actually want to eat
- Follow the USDA Meal Pattern for School Breakfast Meals
- Do not exceed your weekly or monthly budget
IMPROVING MEAL SERVICE

IMPROVING THE TOTAL MEAL SERVICE EXPERIENCE
WAYS TO IMPROVE THE TOTAL MEAL SERVICE EXPERIENCE

• Provide More Daily Options for Students
  • Daily Salad Bar
  • Daily Fruit Bar
  • Daily Yogurt Bar

• Create More Appealing Serving Lines
  • Add More Color
  • Add More Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
  • Add More Variety of Foods

• Add New Menu Options/Entrees
  • Pasta Bar
  • Taco Bar
  • A la Carte Meal Options
MORE DAILY OPTIONS/BETTER LINES
MORE DAILY OPTIONS/BETTER LINES
SAMPLE SCHOOL BREAKFAST MEALS
SAMPLE SCHOOL BREAKFAST MEALS
MORE DAILY OPTIONS/BETTER LINES
SAMPLE SCHOOL LUNCH MEALS
NEW MENU ITEMS

- Philly Cheesesteak
- Chicken Parmesan
- Buffalo Chicken Dip
USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MARKETING TOOL

- Outreach marketing has dramatically changed over the past few years. Today, you have the advantage of being able to utilize social media to reach your target audiences. You can increase your participation by reaching the RIGHHT people, at the RIGHT time to promote your program, and social media is an effective way to begin.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
TIPS FOR TAKING SOCIAL MEDIA PHOTOS

- Clean your camera lens.
- Check your lighting.
- Use the rule of thirds.
- Take photos horizontally, not vertically.
- Don’t use the zoom feature.
- Tap on your subject.
- Shoot from different angles.
- Use a simple but creative background.
- Take candid shots.
- Use editing tools.
INCREASING SCHOOL BREAKFAST PARTICIPATION

• Distribute student surveys to learn about student preferences
• Offer Universal School Breakfast
• Use Alternative School Breakfast Models:
  ➢ Breakfast in the Classroom
  ➢ Grab-N-Go Meals
  ➢ Second Chance Breakfast
  ➢ Breakfast Vending
Benefits of Eating Breakfast at School

- Higher Nutrient Intake
- Energy for Mental and Physical Activities
- Fewer Visits to the School Nurse
- Increased Test Scores
- Improved Behavior
- Contributes to Positive Learning Environment
- Decreased Absences
OTHER WAYS TO MARKET YOUR PROGRAM AND INCREASE PARTICIPATION

• Pay attention to how food is packaged
• Offer students wide variety of condiments
• Be willing to participate in important Child Nutrition Initiatives and Grant Programs:
  • National School Lunch Week
  • School Breakfast Week
  • Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
  • Farm to School Program
• Create contests in which students can become involved in the menu planning or marketing process.
• Offer more grab-and-go options
• Test new products with students
• Limit choices to popular items
### USDA MEAL PATTERN

#### Offer vs Serve

**BREAKFAST**
- Take at least 3
- One must be a fruit

**LUNCH**
- Take 3–5
- One must be a fruit or veggie

#### Meal Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal Pattern</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grades K-5</td>
<td>Grades 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits (cups)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables (cups)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark green</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legumes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starchy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grains&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt; (oz eq)</td>
<td>7-10 (1)</td>
<td>8-10 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt; (cups)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week

- **Min-max calories (kcal)**
  - 350-500
  - 400-550
  - 450-600
  - 550-650
  - 600-700
  - 750-850

- **Saturated fat (% of total calories)**
  - < 10
  - < 10
  - < 10
  - < 10
  - < 10

- **Sodium (mg)**
  - ≤ 430
  - ≤ 470
  - ≤ 500
  - ≤ 640
  - ≤ 710
  - ≤ 740

- Nutrition label must specify zero grams of trans fat per serving.

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6/11/2023
SUMMARY OF CHANGES

MILK
Schools and child care providers may offer flavored, low-fat milk (1%) in addition to unflavored, low-fat milk and flavored or unflavored nonfat milk.

SODIUM
The weekly sodium limit for school lunch and breakfast will remain at the current level, known as Target 1, for school year 2022-2023. For school lunch only, the limit will decrease marginally (10%) in school year 2023-2024 to put schools on an achievable path toward long-term sodium reduction, which will be addressed in future rulemaking.

WHOLE GRAINS
At least 80% of the grains served in school lunch and breakfast per week must be whole grain rich (containing at least 50% whole grains).
Some ways in which School Nutrition Managers can ensure that they are “staying on budget” is by:

- Implement Offer vs. Serve
- Serve students the correct portion sizes
- Utilize forecasting to determine meals offered
- Using simple math to determine amount of food needed
- Sell a la carte items to offset costs
- Ensure that pricing is set at a reasonable amount
- Utilize labor hours wisely
- Keep an accurate inventory
- Complete production records each day and use for forecasting purposes
- Ensure that adult meals follow the 9-12 Meal Pattern
- Utilize leftovers when possible
- Ensure that equipment is properly cleaned and maintained
CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Providing excellent customer service means going the extra mile in making sure a customer is happy and satisfied with a company's products or services. It also involves providing service to a customer in a timely, pleasant manner.

- It involves what you do, the way you do it, and all the people that are touched by your action. It is the total experience in the school nutrition program.
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- Results from the total customer experience in the school nutrition program including:
  - The food received,
  - The environment, and
  - The interaction with the CNP staff

- The service may have a greater impact on the satisfaction than the food.
COMPANY CULTURE

- Company culture is how you live out your brand values inside your company. In other words, your employees demonstrate culture in how they think, act and show up to work every day. Essentially, culture is the heartbeat of your brand.
A company’s culture is a combination of its vision, values, work environment, and internal behavior. It is the personality of your company.

A company’s culture is responsible for:
- How employees feel about the company.
- The way it functions.
- What message it gives to its customers.
- Why it stands out.
- How your company is perceived.
- And its reputation.

Ways to Build a Strong Company Culture:
- Start with a strong foundation
- Hire the right people
- Create your vision and establish goals
- Take care of your employees
- Retain good people
- Lead by example
RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

- As with any communications, you can expect some negative feedback. If this occurs, don’t begin an online dialogue. If needed, you can discuss issues with individuals offline by contacting them personally.

- Here are eight easy steps you can follow to make sure you ace your negative review responses.

  01 — Don’t rush to react
  02 — Be appreciative
  03 — Be genuine
  04 — Summarize the feedback
  05 — Take action
  06 — Seek additional feedback
  07 — Receive feedback with a growth mindset
  08 — Empathize with the feedback giver

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https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/social-media-marketing-snp
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*This language was added pursuant to the May 5, 2022, USDA memorandum. However, the inclusion and applicability of this language is currently under challenge in the matter of The State of Tennessee, et al. v. USDA, et al., Case No. 3:22-cv-00257, and may be subject to change.
https://forms.office.com/r/qNWUSDDzkc