

MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT
GUIDE

Class Purpose

This class teaches the importance of marketing school meals. From “on-the-line” to “online,” learn to market your program and put your best food forward.

Explore fundamental marketing concepts and considerations, zoom in on specific practices that can help to better market your program, and learn how customer service and team contribute to the marketing of your program.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Course Overview

This class teaches the importance of marketing school meals. From “on-the-line” to “online,” learn to market your program and put your best food forward. Explore fundamental marketing concepts and considerations, zoom in on specific practices that can help to better market your program, and learn how customer service and team contribute to the marketing of your program.

Acknowledgement Statement

You understand and acknowledge that

- the training you are about to receive does not cover the entire scope of the program and that
- you are responsible for knowing and understanding all handbooks, manuals, alerts, notices and guidance, as well as any other forms of communication that provide further guidance, clarification or instruction on operating the program.

Intended Audience

- Directors
- Managers
- Supervisors

Course Materials

- Participant Guide
- Pencils/Pens
- Paper pads
- Ideas (participant ideas)
- Your participation (the participants')
- Questions (participant questions)

Course Outline

- Module 1: Marketing Fundamentals
- Module 2: Lessons in Marketing
- Module 3: Marketing Relationships

The 4 P's of Marketing

Directions: Fill-in the blanks below.

1. _____ refers to tangible goods and services. It includes elements such as appearance, packaging, and ingredients used to make the product. Other product aspects include values that the customer assumes or expects such as customer service, safety and sanitation, fast service, and convenience. Sometimes you may offer added values and benefits with your product, such as nutrition education.
2. _____ refers to the actual price of your product and includes any discounts. You should always try to offer the best price possible and the best value for the price.
3. Make the cafeteria the _____ for students to unwind, enjoy themselves, and catch up with friends. Students can eat off campus, eat in the hallway, or never leave the classroom in some schools. Good food service marketing involves creating an appealing environment for customers.
4. _____ involves making the customer aware of what you offer. Communicating your products, their benefits, and your brand makes promotion one of the most important components of marketing. Products will not sell if customers do not know about them.

Making Positive Associations

Case Study – Can Branding Improve School Lunches?

Researchers found that branding apples with Elmo stickers doubled the rate at which elementary age students chose apples over cookies when given a choice between an unbranded cookie and an apple with an Elmo sticker on it. During the study, students were also given a choice between a branded cookie (with Elmo sticker) and an unbranded apple. The Elmo sticker had no effect on students taking more or less cookies over apples when both items were branded.

Article: <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1352169>

What do you think that the results of this study mean?

Marketing Plan

1. **Target Audience:** Who are you trying to sell to?
2. **Message:** What do you want your target audience to know about your product(s)? What does your audience need to know about your product in order to meet your goals? For example:
 - The cafeteria is a modern place to be.
 - CN makes tasty and delicious meals that look fresh.
 - CN cares about communicating to me the way I like to communicate (via text, social media, etc.)
3. **Goal:** What effect do you want the message to have on your audience?
 - For example, do you want to boost sales of new items or create greater brand loyalty?
4. **Strategies:** How will you reach your goals? Will your strategy make a difference?
 - For example, change your line set-up, start a social media webpage.
5. **Tasks:** What are the specific “to-dos” for your strategy?
 - For example, schedule training, buy items, and photograph before and after pictures.
6. **Budget:** What will is cost you to implement your strategies? Can you afford that? How will you get support and stakeholder buy-in?
7. **Timeline:** How long will it take you to implement your marketing plan (from creating it to evaluating it)? What are the milestones throughout the process? Is your timeline realistic?
8. **Evaluation:** How will you measure the effectiveness of the plan? How will you show your results to others?

Marketing Tips

1. Align your message with your target audience.
2. Deliver your content in a format that appeals to your target audience.
3. Schedule your marketing campaign to take place at the time of year that will give you the biggest boost, and fit within your operational schedule.
4. Create a realistic timeline for your marketing campaign. Include time for developing ideas, analyzing costs, creative development, production, staff training, and implementation.
5. Use marketing and popular culture to your advantage and engage customers in things that they probably already know.

Activity: Marketing Plan

Directions: Choose a scenario and fill in the remaining marketing plan. Choose only one strategy. The timeline should span only one semester.

Scenario #1:

- **Target Audience:** K-2nd graders
- **Message:** Fruits and vegetables are fun and tasty.
- **Goal:** Decrease food waste of fruits and vegetables.
- **Strategies:**
- **Tasks:**
- **Budget:**
- **Timeline:**
- **Evaluation:**

Scenario #2:

- **Target Audience:** 6-8th graders
- **Message:** School meals are fresh and made-to-order.
- **Goal:** Increase participation school-wide.
- **Strategies:**
- **Tasks:**
- **Budget:**
- **Timeline:**
- **Evaluation:**

Scenario #3:

- **Target Audience:** 9-12th graders
- **Message:** The cafeteria is a cool place for me to hang out with my friends.
- **Goal:** Increase the number of students that visit the cafeteria daily and increase participation school-wide.
- **Strategies**
- **Tasks:**
- **Budget:**
- **Timeline:**
- **Evaluation:**

SWOT

S.W.O.T. stands for:

- S _____: Characteristics that provide the organization with clear advantages
W _____: Characteristics that can create disadvantages for the organization
O _____: Possibilities that the organization should leverage
T _____: Troubling factors that may cause problems for the organization if not addressed

But why S.W.O.T.?

Understanding the S.W.O.T. of your program puts you in a position to succeed. While understanding your SWOT is not in itself an action, it can help you identify the issues or problems you need to address and set goals to address them.

Activity: S.W.O.T. Scenario

Scenario: The Child Nutrition Department at Broccoli ISD, recently renovated the Broccoli High School cafeteria (an open campus) to provide students with attractive café style seating, including a mix of small tables and booths, long community style tables, and long bar tables with barstools. In addition, the renovation included new phone charging stations placed at convenient locations, modern chairs, tables, and stools, and a new smoothie café featuring tasty, smoothies and healthy grab-and-go items (all reimbursable).

The renovation was driven by the goal to increase meal participation on the open campus but, so far, participation has not increased.

While the school website receives a lot of traffic and the school maintains an active social media page, neither the website nor the social media page feature Child Nutrition information beyond meal price and menu information.

Administrators at Broccoli ISD are starting to wonder “Why did we spend money renovating the cafeteria?”

- **Identify the S.W.O.T. for Broccoli ISD/high school.**
- **Write 2-3 goals to address the problem.**

Quality Scorecards

Sample

Quality Scorecard for Fresh Fruits and Fresh Fruit Menu Items				
Date _____ Name of Menu Item _____				
Proudly Prepared By _____				
Quality Scored By _____				
<p>Directions: When the food is ready to serve, use this Quality Scorecard to evaluate the quality. Mark YES when the food meets the standard and NO when it does not. Mark NA (Not Applicable) when a specific quality standard does not apply to the food being evaluated. Use the COMMENTS section to explain why a food does not meet a standard.</p> <p><i>Remember, if a food does not meet the quality standards, it should not be placed on the service line.</i></p>				
Quality Standard	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
<p>Appearance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Color is typical of the ripe fruit(s) ▪ Color is fresh (not marred by discoloration from oxidation) ▪ Fruit pieces are similar in size ▪ Fruit pieces are intact ▪ Garnish is edible and appropriate for the dish 				
<p>Texture or Consistency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fruit is at the peak of ripeness ▪ All pieces of the fruit have the same texture 				
<p>Flavor and Seasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fruits have a pleasing, slightly sweet, ripe flavor ▪ If seasonings have been used, they are detectable but not overpowering ▪ Seasonings enhance the fruit flavor ▪ If a dressing or sauce is used, it complements the fruit (mild, not overpowering) 				
<p>Service Temperature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chilled - 34° - 38° F 				

Activity: Quality Scorecards

Directions: Fill in the quality standards for pizza. **Hint:** What makes the pizza good quality?

Quality Scorecard for Pizza				
Date _____		Name of Menu Item _____		
Proudly Prepared By _____				
Quality Scored By _____				
<p>Directions: When the food is ready to serve, use this Quality Scorecard to evaluate the quality. Mark YES when the food meets the standard and NO when it does not. Mark NA (Not Applicable) when a specific quality standard does not apply to the food being evaluated. Use the COMMENTS section to explain why a food does not meet a standard.</p> <p><i>Remember, if a food does not meet the quality standards, it should not be placed on the service line.</i></p>				
Quality Standard	YES	NO	NA	COMMENTS
Appearance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪ 				
Texture or Consistency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪ 				
Flavor and Seasoning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪ 				
Service Temperature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 				

5 Tips for Promoting Target Foods

1. Be #1

- Why it

works: _____

2. Strength in Numbers

- Why it

works: _____

3. Be Visible

- Why it

works: _____

4. Talk it Up!

- Why it

works: _____

5. Give Foods Friends!

- Why it

works: _____



Tip #1: Be #1**Case Study: The “They Got Me” Effect**

In many cases restaurants/retailers make a promotional item available for a period of time. Customers view the promotion as they walk through the door. As the customer stands in line, the customer is enticed by a banner for the same promotional item. When the customer looks at the menu board, the first thing they see is the same promotional item.

The customer already has an 11% advantage if it's the first thing they see which may be a small number in retrospect but if it's the first thing the customer's views.

How likely is the customer to inquire about purchasing the item?

Activity: Rename the Menu

Directions: Choose two menus and rewrite the menu item names to make them more appealing to your customers.

Menu 1

Spaghetti with Meat Sauce
Green Beans
Peaches
Breadstick
1% White Milk
No-Fat Flavored Milk

Menu 2

Chicken Taco
Tossed Salad w/Tortilla Strips
Pinto Beans
Orange Slices
1% White Milk
No-fat Chocolate Milk

Menu 3

Cheeseburger
Lettuce/Tomato
Sweet Potato Fries
Carrot/Celery Sticks
Pineapple
1% White Milk
No-Fat Strawberry Milk

Menu 4

Cheese Pizza
Broccoli
Mixed Fruit
Fruit Juice
1% White Milk
No-Fat Flavored Milk

Social Media Don'ts

- Don't spam:** Remember that everyone can see what you post unless you restrict access so be careful about how you approach sharing.
- Don't neglect your account:** Do not just open an account and never use it. Keep your customers in the loop.
- Don't connect with everyone:** Just because someone follows you, doesn't mean you have to follow them back. Think of it as who you surround yourself with in real life and whether it fits the direction of your brand.
- Don't neglect liking your own post:** Of course, you can like your post, you posted it! Encourage employees to share and like the material as employees can be used as brand ambassadors.
- Don't delete negative comments:** Acknowledging the problem not only can make a customer happy, but prevent you from a public relations disaster later. This also shows that you are proactive in resolving the issues to make the customers happy.

Food Photography Tips

- CROP your photos, don't zoom
- Pick items with LESS PACKAGING
- Showcase COLOR
- Make it SHAREABLE on social media

Resource: For more, on food photography, visit the "Food Photography Basics" guide on the MENU Module training page of SquareMeals.org.

Sharing Best Practice: Get Support

Case Study: Using a CN Mascot

The Clear Creek ISD Child Nutrition Program created "Scoop," the mascot, to increase students' interest in healthy meal choices (shown in the PPT photo). Younger students identify with "Scoop" and enjoy seeing him on cafeteria signage, as well as taking their picture with him during cafeteria tours.

Sharing Best Practice: Make it Special

Bright Idea: Kids Get Cookin' Promotion

Students of Marketing ISD,

Submit a written recipe along with a photo or drawn picture of your recipe for judging. Recipes should be submitted to the Cafeteria Manager at your campus no later than Wednesday, January 31st.

The district will select three Grand Prize winners: one K-5 winner, one 6-8 winner, and one 9-12 winner. Winners will be announced on the District and Child Nutrition website on Wednesday, February 28th.

Selected recipes may be modified to fit dietary guidelines and regulations. See links below for entry forms.

For more information contact the Child Nutrition Office at 123-456-7890.

How do you think allowing students the chance to create a recipe that will be featured on the school menu make them feel? Do you think that they will want to try that recipe and others?

Customer Expectations

Fun Facts: Customer Satisfaction

- Studies show that more than 80 percent of customers who did not return to a business were unhappy with the indifferent or rude attitude of employees.
- A customer is four times more likely to switch to a competitor if the problem is service-related than price- or product-related.
- For every one customer complaint, 26 other unhappy customers remain silent.
- 96% of unhappy customers do not make a complaint; however, 91% (of the unhappy customers) will simply leave and never come back.
- A dissatisfied customer will tell between 9-15 people about their experience. Around 13% of dissatisfied customers tell more than 20 people about their experience.
- Happy customers, who get their issue resolved, only tell about 4-6 people.
- The customer's perception of how they are treated makes up 70% of a customer's perceived buying experience.
- It takes 12 positive experiences to make up for one unresolved negative experience.

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel – Maya Angelou

Customer Service: A Magical Experience

Case Study: Customer Service, a Magical Experience

Employees at Walt Disney World, in Florida, are put through a comprehensive customer service training program. The employees see themselves as being “on stage.” They are instructed to make guests happy while they experience Disney World.

Even though jobs rotate from day to day, one person must always stand inside Cinderella’s Castle to answer questions. One employee counted the number of times she answered the question, “Where is the restroom?” in one day. In one day, the employee answered the question 85 times. By the end of the day, she wanted to say, “Can’t you see the sign, dummy?” However, the employee remembered that in training she learned, “it may be the millionth time you’ve heard the question, but it is the FIRST time the customer has asked it.”

Take Away: Treat each customer who visits you as if he or she is the first customer of the day. Treat customers as if you have never heard their situation before. Customers make unique (to them) requests and each customer deserves your best customer service

Think about the repeat questions you hear in the cafeteria: How much money do I have on my account? What’s for lunch today? Is this extra? Do I have to take fruit/vegetables?

Activity: Your Customer’s Experience

What comments do your students make as they pass through the serving line?

What comments do students hear you and your staff make as they pass through the line?

Training “Dos” and “Do Nots”

Training “Do Nots”	Training “Dos”
Do not consider annual required trainings, the end all be all of training.	Do seek out relevant and timely trainings that teach staff real, applicable skills.
Do not ask staff to watch bad online trainings that seem ineffective.	Do research other options for training, and when good training is not available online, offer training in person.
Do not offer training as an afterthought... your staff will notice.	Do work with staff to determine an annual or biannual training plan. When you do offer training, make sure that you are prepared!
Do not default to PowerPoint presentations for training.	Do offer engaging, hands-on trainings that transfer knowledge and teach skills.
Do not expect staff to attend training and take care of all of their normal responsibilities.	Do make time for staff to attend training by finding others to do their work or scheduling training outside of normal work hours.

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(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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