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## **SAFETY VALUE IN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY AS AN ETHICAL QUALITY**

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Preliminary communication

Ethical responsibilities are crucial in restaurant products and services development. Foodservices products must avoid characteristics that can cause harm and safety hazards for their clients. They have to add to the food products features, which mean elimination of any potential safety hazards. This is ethical quality creation. Serving safe food is not an option. It is an obligatory value, which clients must receive. On the other hand hotels and restaurants gain negative publicity, which destroys their business after guests' poisoning or infection.

The foodservice operations have to establish positive and supportive attitude toward food safety. This attitude should be based on up-to-date knowledge of the regulations affecting the restaurant and foodservice industry.

In regard to marketing food safety, restaurants and hotels have to show to their customers that managers and employees know and follow safety rules. Employees' appearance has to reflect concern for food safety.

The foodservice industry has adopted a practice approach to food safety, that is, an approach that seeks to prevent problems before they occur rather than waiting until a problem has occurred and implementing a solution to remedy it. The system promotes self-inspection and is cost-effective for the foodservice operators. The HACCP system follows the flow of food through the food establishment and identifies each point where contamination might cause the food became unsafe.

Key words: quality, food, services, foodservice operation, production, HACCP.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Consumer's satisfactions and business access are closely associated with the quality of products and services. The higher quality means the greater and better consumers needs satisfaction.

Quality represents a whole of features and characteristics of products and services meeting certain consumer's means. Customers transform their needs into a serial of expectations and countering the products and services offered. If the restaurant answers or even exceeds the expectations, the customers feel satisfied because they have received quality. If the restaurant wouldn't answer the expectations, there would

have exist a gap between the customers expectations and products and services characteristics, and this means that no quality is providing.

The features and characteristics which contain the consumer's experience of meal consumptions in a restaurant are numerous and various. A part of them come from the product itself, a part from the service provided and a part from the environment (touchable or untouchable product elements).

Quality means establishment of standards. That means that in the organization all the employees and managers have to insist on providing quality.

Today, in the frame of known quality models it is oriented not only toward consumers expectations but also, to the products characteristics in the form of extra value, not expected by the customer.

Quality today means a way to reach a competing advantage. Beside, quality positively influences the profit. The food and beverages service operators known as successful and quality providers as can preserve higher prices and again keep being popular. Long-termly, the advantage obtains by the quality results in business success.

To provide quality means to keep loyal customers, who use food and beverages permanently, long time period, and also they are positive media promotion.

Quality costs could be preventive cost and cost for failure elimination.

Preventive costs should provide employee education for quality and failure prevention and working. While, failure elimination cost could be cost for check and inspection and cost for elimination cost for failures already done. Inspection cost should provide identification of failures before these affect customers. While, failure elimination costs are realized for sanitation and elimination of a defect existing before. They can be divided into external and internal cost for failures elimination. Internal costs are that providing failure elimination before they reach the customers. External failure elimination costs are realized when business failures are not identified before they reach the customers. External failure elimination costs are much more serious than internal because, long-termly the solution of problems already reaching customers is nearly always late.

## 1. ETHICAL QUALITY IN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Social or ethical quality is quality of trust<sup>1</sup>. Namely, modern customers are increasingly characterized as highly informed about nutritive value of groceries and they are medico-hygienic correctitude, as a type of culture in their nutrition, as a result of the dynamic development of food industry and gastronomic offer in eminent countries. This implies need of adequate offer and food quality as an element of the restaurant product whole. "Food and beverages have to fulfill quality formatives, medico-hygienic correctitude, organoleptic features, economically approved and accessible for different consumer's categories." This to be realized, different and prominent professional experiences in institutions of science should be appreciated and practice; modern trends in food production should be accepted, in the process of its preparation and service in food service operation. For ex.: McDonald's french fries were proclaiming to be the best in the world. One of the reasons for their great popularity was the way of their preparation in beef fat with spice added. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Kotler P., Bowen J., Makens J., *Marketing for Hospitality & Tourism*, Prentice Hall, 1996, p. 356.

when the public was informed that fats of animal origin were damageable McDonald's change the content of the oil for frying. Or in 70's the chemical antioxidant was broadly used in reference to preserve salads fresh and potatoes white. Antioxidance enabled restaurants to produce attractive products for consumers, but these products could have long-term negative influence on consumer's health. Because of that, food service operations have to consider the ethic responsibility in food product preparation and avoid potential damageable characteristics and unsafely for guests – consumers.

Food production sector, including food service production represents a complex methods working structure implementing different technology. No matter what specific nature is the food production and reproduction unit, the food producers are responsible for quality and correctitude of food they are produce. To response these requirements food producers developed programs for quality assurance suitable for their food production organizations.

Satisfactory and permanent level of menu items quality in the food production organization can be achieved by introducing standards for the product (menu items) and with a permanent check in critical control points. These points include: use of adequate ingredients (raw-materials) in menu component production and there right measures; reproduction technique, timing and temperature in production; use of suitable appliances, equipment; product component parts during different phases of production (preparation of menu-components); sanitary facilities; formatives; and other factors which are to be satisfied for certain products. Every product has to have its own standard i.e. every menu-item has to have its own special standard.

Constituted control and procedures are to be so specific and detail as the standard is. For ex. the recipes for menu item preparation have to go into details so fare as through them critical control points should be identified, necessary for insured safe food offer. Standards present constituted rules (or regulations) for contrasting quality measures, quantity value and other product factories in respect to food, there are factors like for ex. color, volume, form, consistence, sediment, succulents etc. i.e. all attributes influencing product quality. As we stated before, every product has to have its own standard. Often, standards are different with different organizations. But also they can differ in the frame of the same organization. For ex. menu item normative can be different for adult consumers and children. Regulations to be followed and confirmed depend on menu item number which is produced and served. For ex. fast food restaurant with a limited standard menu and limited beverages list will have several product standards in contrast to a full service restaurant, which changes menu items by day or seasons and will have much more standards.

Menu items standards are often constituted in preparations, cooking recipes, representing a sort of memo book for standard factors.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOOD SAFETY AND EMPLOYEE FOOD SAFETY TRAINING**

A successful manager in a food service production is expected to work not only for making great profit but also for consumers health benefit. Very important manager's responsibility in food service production is following the inspection preventing diseases caused by the sanitary-hygienic improper food.

One of the most important tasks to achieve and maintain regular sanitary hygienic safety in food service production for managers is education and practice as well as the whole staff control involved in production. Food service production managers who have not understood the influence of sanitary-hygienic measures upon the product quality and cost decrease, as well as consumer's satisfaction permanently produce losses and bad reputation. The responsibility for sanitary-hygienic safe products is mutual for both managers and the rest of the staff.

Most frequent factors leading to consumer diseases caused by sanitary-hygienic improper food consumption are:

1. Insufficient and irregular food cooling that makes food be too long in the dangerous temperature zone. This enables harmful bacteria to grow to the level dangerous for people health.
2. Insufficient thermal food treatment. If the food is not threaded in sufficiently high temperature it stays in the dangerous zone, so harmful bacteria are freely growing.
3. Ill employees infect with bad personal hygiene. They can leave dangerous bacteria in food that can be brought to customers who have consumed it.
4. Food prepared a day or more before consumption. If the food was prepared in advance and was kept before serving it could cost bacteria development. Another problem with food prepared with this way is it reheating-cooling-reheating. With every food phase in the dangerous temperature zone it is becoming more and more suitable for contamination.
5. Contaminated fresh materials added to the cooked food ready for consumption. Food that is to be served without heating mustn't be mixed with fresh ingredients. With this practice a potential problem is appearing: if the fresh food is contaminated with harmful bacteria and then added to the prepared food, bacteria are allowed to grow because the food is not heated to the needed temperature to destroy them.
6. Keeping the food too long in the dangerous temperature zone. Keeping food (especially perishable) in room temperature make ideal conditions for bacteria development. The increasing temperature in the phase of cooking is magnifying the risk.
7. Cross contamination of fresh and cooked food. Production food staff must be careful to prevent the mix of this kind of food. Equipment surface must be clean when passing from one food to another, minimizing the bacteria transfer or cross contamination. For ex. a knife used for cutting raw meat (not cooked) and kept in room temperature, must be washed before use for cutting vegetable that is eatable raw.

The knowledge and awareness of these factors activate managers against potential problems and enabled them to protect better their guest.

Employee training is an important factor in every operation's financial statement. At first glance, training appears costly. The manager, of course, must evaluate every facet of the business for cost and might wonder how training will affect the bottom line. It is true that food safety training might require the services of professional trainers and the selection and use of training materials to reinforce safe practices, such as videos, slides, books and CD-ROMs. However, staff training will

have a positive return on investment in the long run. Benefits from food safety training include:<sup>2</sup>

- **Avoid the costs associated with a food borne-illness outbreak.** These costs may include legal fees and medical bills.
- **Preventing the loss of revenue and reputation in incurred when an establishment is forced to close due to a food born illness outbreak.**
- **Improving employee morale and reducing turnover.** Most employees want to do their jobs right and expect to receive training, which helps instil employee confidence.
- **Increasing customer satisfaction.** When customers see an establishment is committed to serving safe food, satisfaction will be higher.

In order for training program to be effective, employees must see that the commitment to food safety comes from the top down. Management should lead by example. If managers show a commitment to food safety by behaviour and attitude, employees are likely to follow.

Instructors and training material need to be selected. Instructors should be knowledgeable, must have the ability to teach others and must have good communication skills. Training materials must be accurate, appropriate and attractive. A master training schedule should be developed to schedule around training priorities and to show commitment to training.

The evaluation process is important because inform about providing the participants with the knowledge and skills needed to do their job. To evaluate the training program, the manager must carefully judge the trainee's performance against learning objectives.

Evaluation should always be based on the training objectives. There are several ways in which objectives can be measured. Most commonly, objectives are measured through written and oral tests. Test results can help a manager determine if a trainee needs to review the content. Objectives can also be measured by evaluating an employee while he or she performs a task or skill required by the objectives. Evaluation works best when a combination of written and performance – based tests are used.

### 3. FOOD SAFETY PROGRAMS

Sanitation and safety in a foodservice operation are the responsibility of every person working in the establishment. Sanitation and safety regulations established by local, state, and national bodies must be enforced constantly by management. Proper sanitation and safety, however, do not just happened because a government agency has established appropriated standards; rather, they are maid to happen by the concerned and committed personnel of a foodservice.

Proper sanitation results in healthful, clean, and wholesome food, in orderly environment, and pleasant working conditions. Personnel as part of the working environment must also be clean and healthy if sanitary conditions are to be maintained. The term *safety* refers to freedom from risk of accident, injury, or other harm. Clearly, safety and sanitation are related, since unsanitary food can be unsafe and lead to illness.

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<sup>2</sup> ServSafe, Second Edition, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, USA, 2002, p. 14-2.

It is best to consider them separately, however, because the basic factors associated with them differ.

An establishment should have an effective, proactive program based on preventing food safety hazards before they occur. A reactive program that corrects a problem after it has occurred is not an effective system. The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) program, is a proactive comprehensive, science based, food safety system that allows operators to continuously monitor their establishments and reduce the risk of food born illness.

The key to the HACCP system is the emphases on how food flows through the operations. This flow of food is the path food takes from receiving and storage through preparation and cooking, holding, serving, cooling, and reheating. An establishments HACCP plan identifies the points in the operation at which the contamination or growth of micro organisms can occur. Control procedures can than be implemented based on the hazards identified at those points.

HACCP must be built on a solid foundation of prerequisite programs. These programs protect food from contamination, minimize microbial growth, and ensure the proper functioning of equipment maintenance and the selection of suppliers.

While a generic HACCP plan can serve as a useful guide, each facility must develop a plan addressing its own unique conditions. The plan should be specific to the facility, its menu, customers, equipment, processes and operations. An effective HACCP plan will be based on the seven basic principles:

- **Conduct a hazard analysis.** Identifying and assess potential hazards in the serve food.
- **Determine critical control points (CCP).** Points in the flow of food essential to preventing, eliminating, or reducing a food safety hazard. If this is the last point at which this hazard can controlled before the food is served, then it is a CCP.
- **Establish critical limit.** For each CCP, minimum and maximum limits are needed that must be met to prevent, eliminate, or reduce the hazard to an acceptable limit.
- **Establish monitoring procedures.** Once limits have been established, we need the ways for checking them to make sure they are met.
- **Identify corrective actions.** The operation have to determine what will do if the critical limit is not met.
- **Verify that the system works.** Determination of the plan working as intended.
- **Establish procedures for record keeping and documentation.** Documentation will include time-temperature logs, calibration records, corrective actions, etc.

In the content of these principles we can identify key steps. For ex.: key steps which we have to follow in hazard analysis are:

- Identifying of potential food hazards. That mean we have to identify any food that may become contaminated if handled incorrectly at any step in its flow through the establishment, or that may allow the growth of harmful micro organisms.

- Determine where hazards can occur in the flow of food. For each item on the list of potentially hazardous food, we have to each step in its flow through the establishment. This might include receiving, storage, preparation, cooking, holding, service, cooling and reheating.
- Grouping of the food by how it is processed in the establishment. The most common groups include: Food prepared and served without cooking (salads, raw oysters, cheeses and sandwich meats), Food prepared and cooked for immediate service (hamburgers, scrambled eggs, hot sandwiches), Food prepared, cooked, held, cooled, reheated and served (soups, sauces etc.)
- Identifying customers. This is particularly important if the customers are very young or elderly, or people who are ill or immunocompromised.

## CONCLUSION

Quality represents a whole of features and characteristics of products and services meeting certain consumer's means. Customers transform their needs into a serial of expectations and countering the products and services offered. If the restaurant answers or even exceeds the expectations, the customers feel satisfied because they have received quality. If the restaurant wouldn't answer the expectations, there would have exist a gap between the customers expectations and products and services characteristics, and this means that no quality is providing.

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