



Take Food Safety to the Next Level


With recent food safety scares, many restaurants have started to put additional focus on their food safety programs. While there are certain standards required by local health code, restaurants are looking to take their programs to the next level.

According to RestaurantOwner.com columnist Susan Dickson, one of the key steps to implementing a successful food safety program is to establish an effective record keeping system. This includes not only recording temperature readings, but also recording everything else that goes on in the kitchen - from personnel issues to potential hazards and corrective action taken. Collecting this information and routinely reviewing it will help you identify problem areas as well as create more consistency and quality in your final product.

Creating a detailed record-keeping system can also help to get your staff engaged and give them a sense of ownership in your food

safety program. According to Lacie Thrall at FoodHandler Inc., involving your staff in the record-keeping process serves as a daily reminder of the steps needed for safe food handling and preparation. Your staff may start to notice weak links in your food safety program and offer suggestions on how they can improve the process.

Use the information you collect to drive your pre-shift meetings. Set aside a few minutes in each meeting to highlight safe product handling and serving techniques. Use the time to demonstrate proper procedures and allow your staff to practice before they start their shift.

While detailed record keeping and analysis can appear to be a lot of work for something that is not currently a problem, putting a system in place can help you ward off potential problems and show your commitment to food safety to both your staff and your guests. 

Have You Been Naughty Or Nice?

(How About Your Customers?)

By Michael Attias

We all want to be recognized for good deeds. Last winter, my daughter Jordyn and I went out to dinner on a blistering cold evening. After dinner, I let her stand in the lobby while I went out to warm up the car and then drove up front to get her.


On the way out, an older woman was trying to get out of the car and seemed to be having some difficulty. Instinctively, I held out my hand to help her.

When we got home, I overheard Jordyn tell her mom what I had done. Though the good deed was not done for the benefit of my daughter, it made me feel even better knowing my daughter was impacted by such a valuable lesson.

One of my coaching members, Cindy Martinez with Logan Farms, has been able to tie the good deeds of members of her community into good will and new customers. She pays someone to

scour the local papers and identify people that have done good deeds for the community. This ranges from recipients of Volunteer of the Year awards, business people that may have gone above and beyond for the community or local heroes.

This person then writes a handwritten note on Cindy's behalf recognizing the good deed. They include an "I Was Caught Being Good!" coin (from Oriental Trading Company) inviting them in to her restaurant for a free meal in exchange for the coin. The coins cost less than three cents a piece.

I know this promotion takes a little more effort than just running an ad in your local paper or putting a coupon in a co-op mailer. You will not stand out from the crowd serving reheated TV dinners or relying on "me-too" advertising. The goodwill and good customers you get from this promotion is worth the effort. 


Training Tip

If you have unseasoned servers struggling to control their sections, give them a method to control their madness. The best way to manage being "in the weeds" is to stay out of them in the first place. Teach your servers how to avoid the weeds using this simple approach:

Observe. Keep a constant eye on your section. Scan the faces of your guests. Do they need anything?

Anticipate. When approaching newly seated guests, anticipate their needs by asking: "Can I get you something to drink — some juice, coffee, tea? We have a wide selection of juices, everything from cranberry to orange." Make suggestions before guests have to ask.

Prioritize. Which tables need attention first? Second? Third? Acknowledge new customers first. They can be anxious. Other priorities include guests who have a problem, guests who just received their food, and guests who are ready to pay.

Act. Don't just react. Control your section before it controls you. 

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