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THE FOODSERVICE MANAGER

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ABSTRACT

The following is a personal viewpoint of the needs, growth, and opportunity for qualified foodservice managers in the leisure industry and the training, skills and attitudes that the employer will be looking for.

This dissertation is not to be viewed as having any scientific validity; it may, in fact, contradict some of the philosophies that are espoused at institutions of higher learning and probably reflects many prejudices.

It is, as previously stated, a personal viewpoint, molded by six years of intensive involvement with the recruitment, training, and performance of foodservice managers in private enterprise.

THE FOODSERVICE MANAGER

INTRODUCTION

If the readership of this publication and article are involved with the recreation, athletic and leisure industry, why is this article addressing foodservice managers? Perhaps I can answer that question with another question. Have you ever seen a sports stadium, theme park, lodge, hotel, racetrack, public park or other recreational facility where food was not an important feature of the facility?

Foodservice sales, along with souvenirs are probably the largest revenue producer of the facility. Even at an amusement park with 12 to 13 dollar admission charges, spending for food and merchandise accounts for over 50% of gross profits.

The operations director, likewise, must have an in-depth knowledge of foodservice management, as he has ultimate responsibility for the total facility.

OPPORTUNITIES

The demand for good people in the foodservice industry has been steadily increasing over the years. Manpower economists say about 250,000 new people must enter the industry each year to meet its acute need for personnel.

Foodservice is the NUMBER 1 employer in the retail field, employing nearly five million people. In 1979, about 37 per cent of the consumer's food dollar was spent on food away from home, compared to 33 per cent in 1970 and 25 per cent in 1955. By the year 2000, it is estimated that consumers will spend 50 per cent of their food dollars in foodservice establishments.

Americans spend more of their disposable income on meals outside the home than on medical services, new cars, education, home entertainment or appliances.

All these factors point to nearly unlimited opportunities for management talent. Over half (52%) of those holding managerial jobs in foodservice are women; well above the 23% of the total work force. Minorities in managerial foodservice positions are about 11% compared to 5% in all industries.

QUALIFICATIONS

As in all fields, the most important qualification for foodservice management is the personal desire to succeed.

Personal attributes required include good work habits, intelligence, ambition and good physical and mental health.

Good work habits include punctuality, taking pride in appearance and dress and having a businesslike attitude.

Intelligence and ambition are character traits that must be solidly based and probably cannot be learned in an academic setting.

Good health is important because food service work can be demanding as meal times are rush times and the pressure is always on. The individual must be able to take the peak workloads and pressure, which require good physical condition and a healthy mental outlook.

EDUCATION

The business world abounds with stories of the entrepreneur or executive who rose from poverty and lack of formal education to pinnacles of success. The same is true of foodservice managers and executives. A college degree is not a requirement for entry, promotion or success. But, the more formal education, experience, and problem solving ability one has, the greater the odds are in his favor. Education and training should emphasize good written communications skills and a solid understanding of accounting principles.

Why accounting? A typical recreational foodservice operation doing \$500,000 in annual sales will involve \$125,000 in cost of food and another \$125,000 in cost of labor and probably \$10,000 net profit. The manager, just by trimming 1% off either food cost or labor cost can increase profit by 12%. He needs to know how to analyze the financial data to accomplish this.

A college degree or other formal education exhibits perseverance, solid work and study habits and problem solving ability--assets which can never be depreciated. Required? No! Important? Absolutely!

SUMMARY

Foodservice is an important segment of the leisure and recreational industry and opportunities in this segment are almost unlimited. Graduating students should be encouraged to enter foodservice management by working in public restaurants or chain restaurants to gain the everyday working knowledge of managerial requirements. Then with some solid management experience they can offer significant value to a recreational foodservice program.

COMMENTS

As an individual increases personal responsibility, he/she tends to rely upon his/her own experiences as a decision base instead of those of experts. Non-experts are continuously helping to make decisions in our society. Information is the key to solving problems of a personal and organizational nature. The basis of effective information use is a directed experience, sharing of the data, and help with interpretation and assimilation.