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MENU PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The menu is the most important marketing tool of every restaurant and hotel because it is the first contact of the guest with the product offer.

All food offered in our menus at the Hotel will reflect the flair and creativity of our chefs, and will be market oriented, with fresh seasonal products used whenever possible. Like every product on the market which is successful, a menu must also go through the planning, development and implementation process. All decisions are to be discussed between the outlet Sous Chef and the Restaurant Manager.

PLANNING:

The first step in every menu is the planning stage, which consists of the following components:

- **Time Frame:** Based on the overall menu schedule, a decision is taken as to the date when the new menu will be implemented and using the critical path format, the dates for every major task are set.
- **Market Survey:** This is achieved by evaluating change customer preferences in The Hotel food & beverage outlets, and undertaking competitor restaurant analysis. Food trends are also evaluated through the use of culinary magazines it is important to note that food preferences and trends are, like fashion, continuously changing and The Hotel should aim to keep abreast of these dynamic changes.
- **Competitor Analysis:** Competitor analysis must be undertaken in order to find out what The direct competitors are doing. Each competitor analysis will generate new ideas for The Hotel food & beverage outlets and provide further market direction to enable The Hotel to better cater to its customer needs. Care must be taken however, to avoid copying the competitor whilst also maintaining The Hotel already established unique outlet concepts.. All competitor analysis requires careful evaluation as not everything the competitor is doing can be successful in our operation and may not even be commercially viable. Each evaluation should be a learning process, as it will either give ideas on how to do something better or how NOT to do it.
- **Menu Analysis:** Before new dishes are selected and old menu items removed, the sales history of the previous menu must be retrieved from the menu engineering reports. The Menu engineering will give the exact number of dishes sold over a fixed period of time, allowing a popularity comparison. Some dishes on the menu will be very popular with customers and can become signature dishes for the restaurant, hence, these dishes will be incorporated in the new menu. The dishes which show very slow sales will be replaced in the next menu. As a general rule, 35% of the total dishes are replaced in every new menu. Menu prices are analyzed and new price strategy is proposed and presented to the Executive Chef and Executive Sous Chef for their review. All ideas and suggestions from the kitchen and service employees are collected and evaluated for possible inclusion in the new menu. All customer preferences and requests must also be collected and included, if possible, in the new menu..
- **Use of seasonal products in the menu:** The Purchasing Department can provide a listing all the food products in season.

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DEVELOPMENT

All of the information gained during the planning stage is collected and then evaluated. Prior to making a decision the following points must be taken into consideration:

- **Trends:** Be careful to use only food trends which are in line with overall restaurant concept, which will result in the retention of the present customers and solicit new business.
- **Seasonal Food Products:** Seasonal food products, which are in season for the whole menu period, should be selected. In selecting the seasonal products, consideration must be given to the price.
- **Menu Content :** Based on the menu analysis, food trends, pricing strategy and availability of seasonal foods, a decision is then made with Executive Sous Chef and Assistant Food & Beverage manager as to which existing menu dishes will be kept and those which will be replaced. All new dishes to be included in the menu are selected by analyzing employee suggestions, customer requests and most importantly, by reading culinary magazine which evaluate market needs and the competition. Price is a contributing factor when deciding the menu content. If the dish is too expensive The Hotel will out price itself in the market which could result in a change of target market orientation. The first menu draft is then submitted to the Executive Chef and Food & Beverage Manager for their perusal.
- **Food Testing:** A request is then made to the purchasing Department for any required food samples needed for the new dishes. Once the provisional menu is decided upon, the new dishes and trailed. The dishes are then be presented to the Executive Chef for the final evaluation of presentation and taste. It is very important to have an open minded approach to implementing new menus and be willing to adjust the recipes better results.
- **Final Menu:** Once the dishes have been tested, approved by the Executive Chef and Food & Beverage Manager, and found to be appropriate for the market, the final menu will be sent to the printers for processing.
- **Recipe and Picture Preparation:** Recipes must be completed for all dishes. Prior to costing these dishes, they need to have been tested at least three (3) times for accuracies. Menu picture taking will be completed at the same time as the menu item tasting. New codes system must be assigned for all new conversion recipes. All recipes must be input into the check system. Recipes pictures will assure a consistency in taste and presentation.
- **Prices:** Once all recipes are finalized the Executive Chef will finalized the prices for all dishes. If dishes are too expensive, they will need to be adjusted to adhere to the restaurants' pricing policy.

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IMPLEMENTATION

Once the menu is completed several important tasks must be undertaken in order to ensure a successful implementation.

- **Employee Training :** Employees need to be provided with a complete set of recipes, and a complete set of pictures which will be displayed on the menu picture board. A training schedule for kitchen employees and service employees should then be drafted. Proper training is the key to a successful new menu implementation.
- **Food Requirements :** A product specification addition/deletion log for all new products which are not in stock in the The Hotel must be completed and submitted to the Executive Chef for approval, before sending to the Purchasing Department. A product recipes addition/ deletion form for the commissary kitchen the needs to be completed for all new requirements which are not in the Production kitchens then needs to be completed for all new requirements which are not in the Production Kitchen requirements and submitted to the Executive Chef for approval before sending to the Commissary Kitchen. A meeting then needs to be arranged with the Commissary Chef and the Executive Pastry / Bakery Chef to review the requirements for the new menu.
- **Menu Codes :** The restaurant manager should then be provided with all the recipe codes of all the dishes included in the new menu to enable him/her to input these codes into the micros system.
- **Mise en place :** Prepare the Mise en place list for all of the dishes, establish parstock levels, assign refrigerator space and up date all the picture boards in the kitchen.