

Catering industry | marketing essay



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Catering Industry is a very wide industry, it has been categorised in different food outlets which are based on the nature of the demand, availability of place, availability of raw material and size of the organization. The catering industry has got different natures of outlets and catering can be organized at customer's place. The following are some of the catering establishments:

1. 1. Restaurant:

The major known food outlet is a restaurant. A restaurant can be a part of the hotel or can be stand alone. A restaurant is an establishment that serves the customers with prepared food and beverages to order, to be consumed on the premises. The term restaurant includes a diversity of different venues and a diversity of styles of cuisines. Different Restaurants have got their own quality or nature of work. A restaurant can be a speciality restaurant or multi-cuisine, Fast food or may have got other nature. Typically a hotel, where the food items are provided for the convenience of the residents and for the hotel to maximize their potential revenue, such restaurants are often open to non-residents also (Lundburg D. E. 1985).

1. 2. Transport Catering:

Transport Catering is the second widest class if catering. After restaurants, Transport catering is the catering which caters for most of the customers. Transport catering includes an airline catering, Railway catering, Ship catering etc. Serving the food and beverages to passengers, before, during and after a journey on trains, aircraft and ships and in buses or private vehicles is called as transport catering. Different transport caterings have got different nature. Sometimes transport catering services are to be offered to the general public who lives near to the surrounding of the service

provider. The major forms of modern day transport catering are airline-catering, railways catering, ship catering and surface catering in coaches or buses which operate on long distance routes (Lawson F., 1994).

1. 2. 1. Airline Catering:

Airline catering is the most expensive and important catering segment.

Airline catering includes to provide food and beverages to the customer who are travelling by aircraft and restaurants situated in the airport area. In new era latest airports have a variety of food and beverage outlets to cater to the increasing number of air passengers. Catering to passengers en route is normally contracted out to a flight catering unit of a reputed hotel or to a catering contractor or to the catering unit operated by the airline itself as an independent entity (Jones P., 1995).

1. 2. 2. Railway Catering:

Another segment of the transport catering is railway catering. It is basically includes; catering to railway passengers at the time of running journey as well as during halts at different railway stations is called railway catering.

Long journey, especially travelling by train for long distances is sometimes exhausting; consequently a regular supply of variety of different refreshment (Food and Beverages) choices facilitates to make the journey less monotonous. On-board meal services are also provided on long distance trains (Kocher E M., 1960).

1. 2. 3. Ship Catering:

This is once again another segment of the transport catering. Catering to the cargo crew and ship passengers is called Ship Catering. It includes providing

the excellent services to both the internal customers and external customers. All the royal ships have kitchens and different kind of the restaurants on board these restaurants serves both A la Carte and Table D'hôte menus. The quality of service and facilities offered depends on the class of the ship and the price the passengers are willing to pay. There are cruises to suit every pocket. They range from room service and cocktail bars to speciality dining restaurants (International Labour Office, 1946).

1. 3. Surface Catering:

Surface Catering is stated to the catering outlets; which caters to passengers travelling by surface transport such as buses and private vehicles. This kind of the organizations are generally situated near to the bus terminals or may be near to the highways. There are different criteria for the entrepreneurship for these organizations, these establishments are owned by government or could be owned by the private owners. There is positive growth has been noticed in a survey by the United Kingdom government for this kind of the organizations. Of late there has been a growing popularity of Punjabi style eateries called dhabas on the highways (Banerjee S. C., 2000).

2. Types of Catering:

Catering Industry is one of the major industries worldwide. The catering industry has segmented in to different- different diminutive sub industries but there are two major types of catering “ On premises” and “ Off premises” catering. These two types of caterings can be stated as large scale and small scale catering. On-premise catering for any function includes banquet, reception, or event that is held on the premise of the organization or provision that is organize or supporting the function.

On-premise catering is totally different from off-premise catering, in the off premise catering; function takes place in a secluded location, such as a customer's home, in the garden, in any event, or may be in the parking area, and the staff, food, and decor must be transported to the secluded location. In the off premise catering most of the times food is prepared in the central kitchen or may be in the main kitchen and after preparation this food is delivered to the different outlets that is client's location. Part or all of the production of food may be executed or finished at the location of the event (Buttle F., 1996).

There are different statements about the categorizations of the catering industry. Catering can also be divided in other segments as public catering and corporate / business catering. Social or public catering includes such events as weddings, bar and get together, high school meeting, birthday parties, and charity events or may be sports related events. Business catering includes such events as association conventions and meetings, civic or community meetings, corporate sales or stockholder meetings, recognition banquets, new product commencing, training camps may be educational or work, provider and consumer meeting, service awards banquets, and entertaining in hospitality collection (Buttle F., 1996).

2. 1. On-Premise Catering:

As On premise catering is the most important catering because, basically in the On premise catering all the arrangement of the services and function done by the organizations itself. For example, a caterer within a food and beverage organization will prepare and cater all of the needs of the customer without taking any food or services out of the competence of the

organization. In United Kingdom there are many catering organizations have particular rooms on-premise to give the services to the private-party function. A big catering organization could have a layout specially designed and separated in more than one dining room and attached to a centralized industrial food production kitchen. These different dining rooms may be available at the same time to maintain the operations in the outlet and for stipulation and brim over seating. In addition, these dinning rooms can be used and rented for the private party such as wedding, get together or birthday party celebration and may require their own specialized service and menu options. Other examples of on-premise catering include hospital catering, school, college catering (Shock P. J. et al. 2001).

2. 2. Off Premises Catering:

Off Premise catering is the segment of the catering; in which service is provided to the customer outside of the organization which may be away from the base catering unit. There is one instance of a food production facility which is a self-supporting commissary kitchen unit used exclusively for the preparation of meal which is to be delivered at other places. Other examples of production facilities include, but are not limited to, hotel, restaurant, and club kitchens. In most cases there is no existing kitchen facility at the location where the food is served. Caterers provide single-event foodservice, but not all caterers are created equal. Off Premise Catering is basically separated as three different categories:

Party Food Caterers:

Party Food caterers basically supply the food and drink items for a particular event. Party food caterers believe in the last minute preparation, they leave

semi cooked food and leave any last-minute preparation, plus service and cleanup, to others.

Hot Buffet Caterers:

It is basically called as distance cooking in which hot buffet caterers provide hot foods to the pre arranged function, that are delivered from their commissaries in insulated containers. Hot Buffet Caterers sometimes send their contracted staff for serving the food and take the extra charges from the contractor.

Full-Service Caterers:

Full service caterers believe in both of the menus, A la Carte and Table D'hôte menu. They also arrange contracted staff for serving food at the event, and all the necessary catering concern utensils and equipments which are chinaware, different glasses for different uses, crockery, cutleries, tables and seating, tents, and so on. They can arrange for other services, like interior and music, as well. In brief, a full-service caterer can plan and execute an entire event, not just the food for it. (Shock P. J. et al. 2001).

There are some other sub-divisions of catering industry which are as follows:

2. 3. Outdoor Catering:

Outdoor catering is the division of the catering industry. Basically outdoor catering comprises the stipulation of food and beverages away from home and indoor catering establishments. Venue for the outdoor catering may be different as per the customer's choice. In new era most of the 5 star hotels, restaurants and different catering organizations trying to fulfil this growing demand. There are choices in the menu and set up for the event could be

different depend on the customer's willing to spend money. Outdoor catering includes catering for functions such as weddings; get together parties, birthday parties and conventions.

2. 4. Retail Store Catering:

In the United Kingdom market some big retail stores, are facilitating the additional facilities apart of their primary business. These stores keep the facility of dining. Basically retail store catering develops when large departmental stores wants to facilitate their customers by provide food and beverages in the stores. These stores treat their customers as a part of their retailing perception. It is not convenient for the customers to take a break from shopping, to have some food and drinks at a different location and it can consume customer's valuable time as well. Thus provoke the need for some sort of a dining facility in the retail store itself. This style of catering is becoming more popular and varied nowadays (Nystrom P H., 2009).

2. 5. Club Catering:

Club Catering is basically to facilitates the club members in terms of Food and Beverage. This type of catering includes a limited numbers of the consumers basically who are a part of the club. Here are some instances of clubs for people with similar interests are turf clubs, golf clubs, cricket clubs etc. In these kinds of clubs; quality of the food and beverages tend to be high and the services provides is good standard. With in the high quality of environment prices of the menu keep really low as compared to the big catering organizations. Night clubs are generally located in big cities that have a high class population. They offer entertainment with good food and expensive drinks (Loader G., 1974).

2. 6. Welfare Catering:

The Welfare Catering is basically the service of the food and beverages to the peoples as the communal responsibility determined by the acknowledge authority. This grew out of the welfare state concept, prevalent in western countries. The Welfare Catering includes providing food and beverages in the hospitals, Government schools, colleges, the armed forces and prisons (Loader G., 1974).

2. 7. Industrial Catering:

The Industrial Catering is the provision of service of food and beverages to the people who are working in industries and factories at highly subsidised rates. The criteria of service of industrial catering is quiet different depends on the nature of the organization. It is based on the assumption that better fed employees at concessional rates are happy and more productive. In the organizations where number of employees is really high may be undertaken by the management itself, or a contract can be established with the professional caterers. Depending on the choice of the menu suggested by the management, catering contractors undertake to feed the workforce for a fixed period of time at a predetermined price (Coates D. S., 1971).

2. 8. Leisure-Linked Catering:

This type of catering refers to the provision of food and beverages to people engaged in ‘rest and recreation’ activities. Basically this type of catering includes the selling of food and beverages, refreshments through different cut outs and stands at theme parks, big exhibitions, photo galleries or entertainment places such as live theatres and cinema halls and so on. As the leisure and tourism spreading widely, the increase in the availability of

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leisure time and big payouts by employers for leisure activities has made it a very profitable form of catering (Heyward P., 2002).

3. Menu:

For the Catering Industry a menu is the list of dishes which are ready for service or available food or beverage items for the customers to select from. The food items which are available for the customers to choose from are divided in to different categories. This depends on the time of meal taken or the particular event. The assemblage of a menu is the most important part of a caterer's work. Menu Planning considered as an art which can be obtained by the time spending, experience and study. The menu is a link between the customer and the catering organization. A menu for an organization should be carefully considered and then planned by the establishment's professionals, namely the food and beverage manager, the executive chef, and the food and beverage controller (Cousins J., 2002).

The word menu came in consideration dates back to 1718, but the provision of planning and developing such a food and beverages list is much older. In the early times, the *escriteau* (bill of fare) or menu of traditional meals was displayed on one of the wall with the instruction for the kitchen staff to follow the order in which dishes to be served. In the old era it is said that, menus were maintained as a big glossary with different sections covering a diversity of dishes. As time passed the lengthy single copy menu became smaller but increased in number allowing a number of copies placed in table increased. Depending on the establishment and the occasion, the menu may be plain or artistic in its presentation (Davis B et al., 1998).

3. 1 Types of Menu:

In a restaurant, there are two different types of menus which are differentiated by the manner in which they are served and priced. A menu may be a la carte or table d'hôte.

3. 1. 1. A La Carte Menu:

An “ A La Carte Menu”, is a multiple choice menu, with each dish priced separately. If a guest wishes to place an order, an a la carte is offered, from which one can choose the items one wants to eat. Traditionally, the original menus that offered consumers choices were prepared on a small chalkboard, a la carte in French; so foods chosen from a bill of fare are described as à la carte, “ according to the board.” In an a la carte menu all items are cooked to order including the sauces that are made with wine, cream or mustard. Depending on the dish chosen by the guest, the cooking time will vary. It is necessary to inform the guests about the time the preparation might take. An extensive a la carte menu is impressive but involves a huge amount of mise-en-place.

3. 1. 2. Table D'hôte

Table d'hôte is a French phrase which literally means “ host's table”. It is used to indicate a fixed menu where multi-course meals with limited choices are charged at a fixed price. Such a menu may also be called prix fixe (“ fixed price”). It usually includes three or five courses meal available at a fixed price. It is also referred to as a fixed menu. Because the menu is set, the cutlery on the table may also already be set for all of the courses, with the first course cutlery on the outside, working in towards the plate as the courses progress. In olden days, when the inns or dining establishments

offering a limited choice in the menu was not preferred by the guests, they started offering an a la carte menu for guests to select the type of food they wanted to eat. Fixed menus or table d'hote menus are still used in various forms such as buffet menus, conference packages and on special occasions. A table d'hote menu comprises a complete meal at a predetermined price. It is sometimes printed on a menu card or as in the case of banquets, it is agreed upon by the host of the party. A banquet style of fixed menu has more elaborate choices ranging from the soup to the dessert. For the banquets, the hosts invariably fix or select the menu in consultation with the hotel staff in advance. Most of the banquet food served in India is normally of Indian food. For this, a printed format offering a choice of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes is prepared, from which the guests make their choice. Western style fixed menus normally provide the choice of a starter or soup, a main course, and finally a dessert. In each course there could be a choice of dishes to suit the tastes of individual guests. Table d'hote menus should be well planned and balanced. As the guest is not given a chance to plan his own meal, the meal should be interesting, without any similarity in the colour and taste of the courses as well as being palatable, delicious and well presented. If the main course is heavy, then the first course should be lighter, and act as an appetite stimulant for the courses to follow. Dishes that are heavy and hard to digest should be avoided. The colour, varieties of ingredients used, and the garnishes should, if possible, be different for each course. Fixed menus are prevalent in transport catering which include air, rail, and sea passengers. The guests have a variety of fixed or table d'hote menus, with virtually no choice offered to the passengers (except the first

class air passengers). Cruise liners may have elaborate fixed menus with multiple choices built into each course.

4. Menu Formats:

Menus are also presented in different formats. Menus are not always printed on heavy paper and handed to the customer. Another popular format is the tabletop menu. This type of menu is oftentimes referred to as a table-top display or a table tent. It is used primarily to promote your money makers. The problem seems to be that guests don't usually read them. Or, if they do, they usually read them after they have given their orders to the server (John A. Drysdale, 1997)

There is also the menu board or chalkboard. Think of this as a tabletop menu on steroids. A menu board is necessary if you operate a quick service facility and may also be required if you have a separate take-out area in your full-service restaurant. The chalkboard is popular in restaurants that wish to convey a European image. Like the typical table tent, though, guests usually don't read them completely until after they put in their orders. Some restaurants offer verbal menus. Many properties have their servers recite the food specials of the day at tableside. We prefer a printed menu insert instead of the time-consuming speech. Guests are usually chatting away and aren't always eager to sit still long enough to hear the full spiel. Restaurants that offer interactive menus allow guests to mix and match their orders. For instance, in some Italian restaurants guests can select the type of pasta they want, the type of sauce, and so on (Lewis, 2002).

You also might see this with some “bingo” catering menus. These menus have several lists of food and beverage items. Eventually he or she ends up with a personalized menu for the event. Some restaurants use wireless technology (WIFI) to display their wine lists. Sometimes a computer terminal is installed at each table. Or the floor manager brings a laptop to the table. Guests can interact, for example, by entering their desired entrees into the system and waiting for the computer to make wine suggestions. Another format is the chef’s menu. This is the one you spring on people who don’t want to see a menu (Lewis, 2002).

They say, “Let the chef order for me.” There are three ways to go: You can ask the customer to give you some advance notice about what he or she wants, and then have those things ready upon arrival; you let the guest decide, or you can select items from your current menu(s). A third alternative is for you to put something unique together, something that doesn’t appear on the regular menu(s). A potential downside of options 1 and 3 is you have to price them quickly; you need to know your numbers, as the bookkeeper may not be around. And you would need to know if you have enough food items and the right wines to pair with them, or if you have to make a special run to the vendor in order to get what you need Jack (Lewis, 2002).

5. Menu Planning:

Menu is the statement of food and beverage items available or provided by food establishments primarily based on consumer demand and designed to achieve organizational objectives. It represents the focal point around which components of food service systems are based. The menu is designed

carefully what the outlet wants to cater for, keeping in mind the type of clientele. The main advantage of a well-planned menu is that it leads to consumer satisfaction. It also helps to motivate the employees for a responsible and successful service. A successful menu depends upon composition-the right combination of foods, prepared perfectly, to the entire satisfaction of the customer. So claimed Antonin Careme (1784-1833), the French chef who is considered the founder of classical cuisine. Menu is a document that controls and directs an outlet's operations and is considered the prime selling instrument of the restaurant (Johns P., 1988).

Menu planning is the back bone of the catering industry. Menu planning gives the basic idea of the activities which are to be done for operation in any catering premises. This operation in the establishment means front office operation and back office operation. Menu planning in an organization depends on so many different factors which results different activities in the organization. Menu planning starts with the nature of the organization means it may be a restaurant or out door catering. So the nature of the work decides the clientele in the organization, their choices availability of the food raw material (Lockwood A., 1994).

5. 1. Points to be considered while planning the menu:

When planning the food and beverage for any event, it's important for event planners to consider several “ not-so-obvious” catering menu planning items to help ensure a successful program. Consider the following when planning your menu:

5. 1. 1. Knowledge of the Guest Profile:

A menu planning Manager / Executive must have good knowledge about the Guest profile of the organization. What is the profile of the guests being invited to the event? For example, most business people attend many events throughout the year, and the phrase “ rubber chicken circuit” is common among political, business and fundraising circles (and others). To prevent your event from having this description, consider the following:

The professional level of your guest.

The frequency your guest attends similar events.

The location where guests reside.

The ethnic background of your guests.

5. 1. 2. Knowledge of the Guest’s preference:

For good menu planning and good customer service it is really important to understand the profile of the guest, this allows the event planner to begin considering what menu options to offer. These are some of the points which can help an event manager to serve the best food and service to the guest.

Points are as follows:

Old age people don’t like more spicy food so it is really good to serve them mild spicy food.

Attendees concerned about health may prefer more seafood and vegetables options.

Younger or middle-aged guests may prefer spicier, more adventurous meals.

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The idea here is to consider what your guests will enjoy the most based on the type of event you are planning.

5. 1. 3. Provide Menu Choices:

Anyone planning an event should offer several choices so that all guests will be pleased with what's available. Some general guidelines:

Offer at least two choices of entrees (three is better).

Offer three or more salad dressing options.

Serve all condiments on the side.

Offer two dessert options: one very indulgent, one healthy.

5. 1. 4. Incorporate Seasonal and Fresh Items:

When selecting the menu, the time of year should play a large factor in determining food and beverage. Take into consideration which items are in season for spring or winter menus. Another important factor is to consider the region or location of the event and popular food items from the area.

Incorporate fresh seafood or regionally grown produce.

5. 1. 5. Select a Menu that Fits the Event Schedule

Sometimes the clock will be the greatest guide to determining Table d'hote menu for an event. Some examples:

Box lunches are best if you have 30 minutes or on the go.

Plated meals usually requires at least 1. 5 hours.

Buffets may be finished in about 1 hour.

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Cocktail receptions require a minimum of 1 hour before dinner.

Working breakfasts or lunches should incorporate menu items that can hold up for longer periods of time than others.

5. 1. 6. Anticipate Special Needs

Before any event, it is critical for an event planner to find out if any of the guests have a special need so that the catering manager can address those needs prior to the event. Considerations include:

Food allergies

Religious requirements

Dietary restrictions

5. 1. 7. Allow for a Comfortable Room Setup

Choose the appropriate room layout that supports your event objectives. If you're serving a meal, the tables will be filled with used dishes and glassware, in addition to binders, notepads and pens. That's why it's important to choose the best room setup, and allow space for people to move. Examples:

Boardroom setup should be for a maximum of 15 guests.

U-shape and rectangle table layout to promote discussion.

Class room style is great for a presentation.

Banquet style promotes small group discussions.

Regardless of the setup, allow for people to spread out. Tip: Setup for 8 in a 10 person banquet table.

5. 1. 8. Create Ethnic or Regional Menus

I'm a huge fan of planning events that have ethnic-specific themes. This allows an event planner and the executive chef to work together to bring region-specific and international foods into your event, and this will definitely please guests. Common ethnic catering includes the following:

Asian/Chinese/Japanese

French

German

Greek

Italian

Mexican

Middle Eastern

5. 1. 9. Consider the Final Presentation of Food and Beverage

We eat with our eyes and our nose before tasting it. Whether it's served plated or buffet, a catered meal should visually colorful and fragrant.

Therefore, the presentation of food should make your guests want to eat it.

This means linens and decorations that complement the theme of the meal.

If it doesn't look good and smell good, your guests will not be happy.

Importance of menu planning:

Good planning can make a huge difference!

The menu influences almost every aspect of the food service operation, from what foods are purchased and how they are prepared, to whether or not meals are popular with the children (Lillicrap D. Et al. 2006).

When planning the food and beverage for any event, it's important for event planners to consider several “not-so-obvious” catering menu planning items to help ensure a successful program.

Menu planning is basically includes the preferences of guests and the preferences of the owner as well like what the owner can spend and what kind of margin he is looking for. According to Dennis L. 1999, we can include some of the points during the Menu Planning consideration:

Know the Guest profile

Know the guest's preferences

Provide Menu choice

Incorporate seasonal and fresh items

Select a menu that fits the event schedule

Anticipates special needs

Allow for a comfortable room setup

Create Ethnic or Regional menu

Consider the final presentation of food and beverage

Principles of menu planning:

Basic Principles

Cold and warm dishes are listed separately.

Appetizers, soups, seafood and main courses are listed in separate groups.

In every group the lighter dishes are listed before the richer ones.

Salads should be highlighted.

If offered, low-calorie foods should be specially indicated, and the number of calories should be stated.

If foods are prepared with organically grown ingredients, this fact should be highlighted to the discriminating customer.

Every dish should be described clearly and simply, in an appetizing way, without being too flowery.

House specialties and seasonal items should correspond to the season and should change accordingly. Use a clip-on menu or special insert to attract attention to them.

The dessert selection should be listed on a separate attractive card. The menu should inform the guests that such a card is available.

The numbering of menu items can save time and confusion, especially with many of the new computerized cash registers. Numbering, however, discourages communication between guests and the service staff and thus

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does not help promote sales. For an easy compromise, place one numbered menu at the register or where orders are relayed to the kitchen so that one can punch in the guest's order by number; the guest, however, orders the actual foods with words, not numbers.

According to Larry, 1999 the five basic menu planning principles are:

1. Strive for balance.
2. Emphasize variety.
3. Add contrast.
4. Think about color.
5. Consider eye appeal.

In many cases, especially in restaurants, serving haute cuisine, the part or table d'hote menu is beautifully handwritten to emphasize the traditional character of the restaurant. In less fancy restaurants, a modern variant that is similar but simpler is often used: the blackboard, on which are written recommendations concerning the day's specialties. In general, however, the table d'hote or a part menu, which changes daily or cyclically, is prepared in-house (on a typewriter or computer) and duplicated as necessa