Marketing

Key Terms:

Competitors: food service competitors in the surrounding area. Customers compare school food with the same food items sold by competitors.

Customers: the students, faculty and staff, and sometimes parents and other community members.

Host: A person or group who receives and entertains guests.

Marketing: Everything a school food service operation does to promote the program.

Use Product, Price, Place and Promotion to Help the Child Nutrition Program Better Serve Its Customers

Product, price, place, and promotion are called the “4 P’s of Marketing.” When the consumers are aware of your product, price, and place in their lives, you can compete and win! Use the successful promotion strategies of your most successful competitors.

These are the 4 P’s of Marketing:

1. Product – Focus on the variety of your foods and how healthy they are;

2. Price – Use every opportunity you can to show value for price;

3. Place – Make sure you have an attractive cafeteria that is inviting to your customers; and,

4. Promotion – Use creative ideas to promote your program.

4P’s Checklist

This checklist tells what the 4 P’s are all about. Use it when you begin to plan your marketing strategy. You should check each item as you include it in your marketing plan. Refer to this checklist during the school year to ensure that you are working your plan.

Product

_____ 1. Offer at least 4 fruits/vegetables.

_____ 2. Offer a choice of main dishes.

_____ 3. Provide nutritional information about foods.
4. Provide information on how healthy your school food is compared to competitors’ foods.

5. Prepare food that tastes good.

**Price**

1. Help students and parents see value for price.

2. Encourage students to select and eat all five food items.

**Place**

1. Have the cafeteria look like a place where students would want to eat.

2. Treat students like customers.

3. Encourage employees to look neat and have happy faces.

4. Make sure the service line moves to prevent long lines of waiting students.

**Promotion**

1. Use flyers or posters that have eye appeal.

2. Use words and pictures that students like.

3. Use coupons and contests.

4. Place garnishes on the service line.

5. Write menus to sound like they will taste good.

6. Listen to the customers’ suggestions.

7. Host one special event each month.

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**Creative Ideas for Marketing the Child Nutrition Program**

**Menu Ideas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April: Easter</th>
<th>November: Beverly Hillbillies Day</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheese Bunny (Cheese-Egg Melt)</td>
<td>Jethro’s Special – Spaghetti/Meatballs or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage Patch Coleslaw with</td>
<td>Ellie Mae’s Special – Spaghetti/Lean</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chopped Carrots
Creamy Cottontails: Pudding with Whipped Topping, Coconut, and a Jelly Bean on top
Rabbit Juice (Milk)

Sausage
Granny’s Hot Buttered Garlic Bread
Country Garden Salad
Rosy Red Apple
Hillbilly Drink (Milk)

January: Super Bowl Day

Hero Touchdown (Chili/Breadstick)
Field Goal (Tossed Salad)
Half-time Snack (Mixed Fruit)
Thirst Quencher (Milk)

May: Indy 500

Pit Stop Drink: Orange Juice
Speedway Special: Pizza with Cheese
Stick Shifts: Celery and Carrot Sticks
Winner’s Lap (Milk)

Themes and Events

February
American Heart Month
National Dental Health Month
Black History Month
National Cherry Month
Potato Lovers’ Month
Groundhog Day (2)
National Inventor Day (6)
Boy Scouts of America Day (8)
Abraham Lincoln Birthday (12)
St. Valentine Day (14)
Anniversary of First American in Space (20)
George Washington Birthday (22)
Mardi Gras (Week before Ash Wednesday)

March
National Nutrition Month
National Peanut Month
International Women’s Day (8)
Johnny Appleseed Day (11)
Albert Einstein Birthday (14)
St. Patrick Day (17)
Camp Fire Founders’ Day (17)
National Agriculture Day (3rd Wednesday)
First Day of Spring (20)
Harry Houdini Birthday (24)
National School Breakfast Week


Steps for a Successful Special Event:

1. About six weeks ahead of time, meet with your Child Nutrition Director to discuss the special event or promotion. **You and your director should discuss your ideas for Items 2-9 below.**

2. Plan your menu and order the food that you will need. Be sure to make up names for the menu items that will go with the special event.

3. Involve your employees and help them get excited about the event. Get the support of
the principal and teachers at your school. Include them in your event.

4. Contact your school district media person to ask that they share information about the special event with the local media – newspaper, radio, and television. Always follow school policies about contacting people outside of your school.

5. If you are going to use new recipes, test them in 25 portion amounts. Get feedback from your customers.

6. Plan where and how you will display your promotional materials. Be sure to use materials that have eye appeal. Using “hand-scratched, crossed out, or torn” materials may turn off your customers.

7. Make sure your cafeteria and all employees are in tip-top shape for the day of the big Event. The special event should be fun for you and your employees, too. Have fun!

8. After the promotion, thank those who helped you make it a success.

9. After the promotion, decide how you will make the next special event even better. See what ideas you can develop. Then, you might get ideas from your director, your employees, the principal and school staff, and the students.