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Abstract

Recreational food service is a newly-identified industry segment. It represents over 3 percent of the total industry and has its own specific competency requirements, in addition to core food service management competency needs. The education, training, and development needs for professionals in this industry segment have not as yet been ascertained. This article is an effort to establish a benchmark for future research in this area.

Competencies of a Recreational Food Service Manager

by
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Recreational food service is a newly-identified industry segment. It represents over 3 percent of the total industry and has its own specific competency requirements, in addition to core food service management competency needs. The education, training, and development needs for professionals in this industry segment have not as yet been ascertained. This article is an effort to establish a benchmark for future research in this area.

The National Institute for the Foodservice Industry (NIFI) prepared a study in 1987 for the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association (IFMA) which identified the food service industry as being composed of 12 distinct and separate segments. Each segment was analyzed providing a specific identification, market profile, description of changes taking place within that segment, and identification of how individual facilities make their purchasing decisions. These 12 segments, now regarded by suppliers of products and equipment to the food service industry as different markets, requiring different sales and marketing techniques, and separate identities, are as follows:

- full-service restaurants
- quick service restaurants
- health care food service
- elementary and secondary school food service
- college and university food service
- hotel/motel/resort food service
- military and correctional food service
- transportation food service
- business and industry food service
- retail and convenience grocery food service
- recreational food service
- contract food service/vending

The 1990 Restaurant Growth Index (RGI) published by *Restaurant Business* magazine notes that gross annual sales for

the food service industry in 1989 was $263 billion and that it had a nominal growth of 5.6 percent and a real growth of 1.1 percent over 1988. The survey further forecasts annual sales to achieve $376 billion by 1995 as a result of a 6.1 percent nominal growth rate and a 2 percent real growth rate during that period.[1]

Within the detail of the RGI survey (under the rubric of "leisure"), recreational food service as an industry segment is reported to have achieved $7.4 billion in 1989, representing 2.8 percent of the total industry sales. Its growth rate over 1988 was 8.3 percent nominal and 3.5 percent real. The RGI forecast to 1995 projects an increase in recfoods' percentage of food service sales to 3.1 percent of industry total, with an average of 6.3 percent nominal growth and 2 percent real growth over the five-year period. Table 1 is a summary of the RGI survey.

The 1990 Technomic Forecast and Outlook study prepared for (IFMA) provided data indicating that "Recreation concessions are anticipated to be a big winner in 1991....and will post a 3 percent real jump in sales."[2] This corroborates the findings of the RGI study.

A 1989 Delphi study prepared by Mickey Warner identified 60 individual skill and knowledge items as required competencies of a recreational food service manager.[3] Appendix A is a complete list of those 60 items. The Delphi technique is a set procedure to elicit and define the opinions of a group of people. The process addresses a series of questionnaires to persons considered knowledgeable in a given field to achieve consensus of their opinions.

The study ascertained the degree of importance of the 60 listed items by the following priorities: highest priority, above average priority, average priority, below average priority, and lowest priority. Study findings suggested that of the 60 listed items, eight were ranked as highest priority, 29 ranked as above average priority, and 23 as average priority. None were ranked as below average or lowest priority.

Of the eight ranked as highest priority, four were knowledge competencies and four were skill competencies. Of the 29 ranked as above average priority, 13 were knowledge competencies and 16 were skill competencies. Of the 23 ranked as average priority, 10 were knowledge competencies and 13 were skill competencies.

Boyatzis developed a cluster system to identify competencies of managers.[4] This was a six-cluster description detailing goal and action management, leadership, human resource management, direction of subordinates, focus on others, and specialized knowledge. Table 2 is a summary of priority ratings in accordance with the Boyatzis model.

A review of the summary indicates that 60 percent of the listed competencies can be classed as specialized knowledge items. This is an indication of the need for specialized curriculum at the academic level and specialized training and development within industry activity. Those surveyed were unified in viewing the area of specialized knowledge as the primary priority, human resources development as the second highest priority, and leadership/goal and action management as the third highest priorities.

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Table 1
Food Service Industry Summary

	1989 Sales ($MM)	1989 vs 1988 % Sales Growth Nominal Real		1990 Sales ($MM)	1990 vs 1989 % Sales Growth Nominal Real		1995 Sales ($MM)	1990 1995 % Comp. rate Nominal Real	
Total Market	262,898	5.6	1.1	279,127	6.2	1.7	375,988	6.1	2.0
Commercial/contract/vending	231,512	8.3	1.1	246,395	6.4	1.8	336,365	6.4	2.1
Institutional/self operated	28,442	4.3	1.0	29,638	4.2	0.9	35,628	3.8	0.8
Military	2,944	4.1	(0.5)	3,094	5.1	0.5	3,995	5.2	1.0
Major market segments									
Eating and drinking places	160,649	5.1	0.5	170,816	6.3	1.7	233,336	6.4	2.1
Eating places	149,628	5.2	0.6	159,230	6.4	1.7	218,745	6.6	2.3
• Limited menu	71,931	8.0	3.3	77,497	7.7	3.0	110,360	7.3	3.0
• Full menu	71,241	2.4	(2.1)	74,891	5.1	0.5	99,105	5.8	1.5
Retail	13,916	7.5	2.8	14,843	6.7	1.9	19,771	3.9	1.6
Hotel/motel	14,135	6.2	1.5	15,081	6.7	2.0	19,924	5.7	1.5
Leisure	7,364	8.3	3.5	7,933	7.7	3.0	11,296	7.3	3.0
Business and industry	16,238	7.3	2.5	17,238	6.2	1.5	23,379	6.3	2.0
Health care	10,907	4.0	1.6	11,351	4.1	0.5	13,317	3.2	1.0
Student	15,159	3.8	0.6	15,731	3.8	0.5	18,660	3.5	0.5
Vending	15,281	7.4	2.7	16,222	6.2	1.5	22,001	6.3	2.0
Airline	3,889	7.2	2.5	4,189	7.7	3.0	6,567	9.4	5.0

Source: *Restaurant Business* magazine, Restaurant Growth Index, 1990.

Table 2
Summary of Priority Rating Categories
by Clusters in Accordance with Boyatzis Model

Cluster	Highest Priority		Above Average		Average Priority		Total	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1. Goal and action management	1	12.5	3	10.4	2	8.7	6	10.0
2. Leadership	1	12.5	5	17.2	0	0.0	6	10.0
3. Human resource management	0	0.0	7	24.1	0	0.0	7	24.1
4. Direction of subordinates	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5. Focus on others	0	0.0	2	6.9	3	13.0	5	8.3
6. Specialized knowledge	6	75.0	12	41.1	18	78.3	36	60.0
Totals	8	100.0	29	100.0	23	100.0	60	100.0

As a result of the study, the following four basic conclusions were reached:

• There is a core of specialized knowledge and skill requirements of a food service manager with additional requirements for a recreational food service manager.

• There is a need for training and development and academic curriculum in core specialized knowledge and skill requirements.

• Substantial evidence exists that the professional recreational food service manager requires a high degree of knowledge and skill in planning, cost control, human resources, and communications as they relate to concessions, vending, catering, and other specialized areas of responsibility.

• There is a need for schools of hospitality management, HRI schools, and other similar institutions to address the issues of segmentation of the food service industry, and its academic and training and development needs, into separate disciplines.

Recreational Food Service Has Separate Identity

A 1982 study described recreational food service as a distinct and separate segment of food service management, with four primary and six secondary areas corresponding to the "leisure" identity of the 1990 RGI report, the "recreational concessions" identity of the 1990 Technomic Forecast and Outlook study, and the NIFI report prepared for IFMA,[5] as follows:

- **Primary areas:**
  1. stadiums, coliseums, arenas
  2. amusement parks and attractions
  3. pari-mutuel facilities
  4. convention centers

- **Secondary areas:**
  1. fairs and expositions
  2. theaters
  3. county, state, and federal parks
  4. zoos, museums, and planetariums
  5. bowling alleys and skating rinks
  6. other miscellaneous areas

Historically food service has been viewed as culinary arts, a trade. It has been regarded by other professionals as a trade, rather than as management.

Management, as a profession, had similar beginnings. Although prior to the industrial revolution merchants, bankers, and businessmen in general were regarded as tradesmen and not professionals, in recent years management has received academic recognition and professional status. Drucker states:[6]

The emergence of management in this century may have been a pivotal event in history. It signaled a major transformation of society into a pluralistic society of institutions, of which managements are the effective organs.

In the past 30 years, food service management has emerged from its early beginnings and become an accepted profession. To paraphrase Drucker, food service is now a pluralistic society of industry segments in which managements are the effective organs.

A 1985 study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported 6,204,000 workers in the food service industry.[7] This equated to 6 percent of the total U.S. labor force. In that report BLS forecast a growth to 9,221,000 by the year 1995, with a shortfall of 900,000 workers. The 1995 forecast projected that 500,000 jobs would be management positions, with an additional 900,000 supervisory positions. It is clear from a review of these forecasts that food service, as a management practice, has emerged. Recreational food service management, as a segment of food service management, has also emerged.

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Study Uses National Sample of Professionals

This study, with its focus on competencies for a recreational food service manager, sought a national sample of leading professionals representing a variety of areas of recfoods management. Based on a review of previous Delphi studies, it was decided to use a panel of 30 to 50 individuals, with as broad a spectrum as possible.

A list of 22 executives representing major corporations active in recreational food service management was compiled; included were 15 company or division presidents, three division vice presidents, three directors of operations, and one industry trade association executive. Each was sent a letter asking him or her to nominate five individuals regarded as industry experts. The definition of an expert provided was five or more years as a general manager of a major facility and/or five years as an executive responsible for multiple operations, an individual regarded by peers as expert in his or her work, and an ethical and professional person. A 100 percent response rate from this inquiry was received.

Of the potential 110 nominees, 84 different individuals were named; 50 received two or more nominations as an industry expert. These 50 multiple nominees were selected as the proposed panel. No random selection was made.

Each nominee was sent a letter discussing the proposed study, its purpose, the criteria for selecting a panel of industry experts, and the individuals nominated as experts. Each was provided a fact sheet requesting data regarding personal background and a request to accept participation as a panel member. A 100 percent response was received, with 40 of the 50 (80 percent) accepting; the remaining 10 declined for personal or business reasons.

A profile of the accepting panels reveals the following information.

• **15 percent were vice presidents:** This is a position usually responsible for the operation of 30 to 40 individual locations with annual sales volume of $40-50 million, and up to 14,000 full and part-time employees.

• **20 percent were regional general managers:** This is a position usually responsible for 4 to 8 individual locations with annual sales volume of $20-30 million, and up to 3,000 full and part-time employees.

• **55 percent were general managers:** This is a position usually responsible for one multi-faceted recreational food service complex with sales volume up to $10 million, and up to 1,500 full and part-time employees.
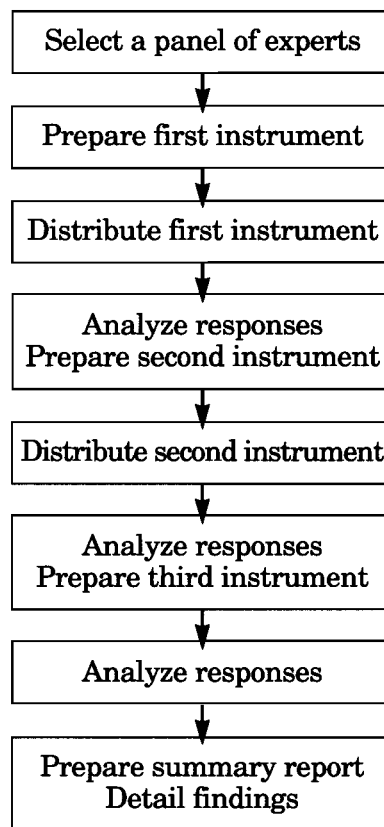
The profile indicates that the average panel member had 17 years of industry experience and some college education. Over 82 percent held either a two-year, four-year, or advanced degree. The majority (67.5 percent) held a bachelor's degree; of the 12.5 percent without a college degree, several held high management positions, including vice president.

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Classical Delphi Design is Used

The framework for the study was designed applying classical Delphi, using multiple rounds of questionnaires to elicit expert opinion in an effort to achieve consensus, with the researcher interpreting data between rounds and returning a following questionnaire to panel members.

In Delphi, an original instrument is often developed by the researcher. Subsequent instruments are developed based on responses and researcher interpretation of the data from the original instrument. The design of this Delphi provided for three rounds of questionnaires. Round One was designed to establish a competency list of items to be reviewed. Rounds Two and Three were designed to establish consensus (or lack of it) regarding the relative importance (priority rating) of the listed items. Figure 1 details the design of the research method.

Figure 1
Design of the Research Method

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Select a panel of experts │
└─────────────┬───────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Prepare first instrument  │
└─────────────┬───────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Distribute first instrument│
└─────────────┬───────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Analyze responses      │
│   Prepare second instrument │
└─────────────┬───────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Distribute second instrument│
└─────────────┬───────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Analyze responses      │
│   Prepare third instrument  │
└─────────────┬───────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Analyze responses      │
└─────────────┬───────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    Prepare summary report   │
│       Detail findings       │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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• **Round One Instrument:** The Round One instrument addressed the basic issue of the panel's perception of functions and duty areas of a recreational food service manager. Of the 40 panelists, 30 responded to the initial request and the remaining 10 responded to a follow up letter. Total response rate was 100 percent.

Responses were evaluated by the researcher; duplicate statements were discarded, others clarified, and a list of 17 function areas identified. Each of these function areas was analyzed in accordance with standard job analysis concepts. A resulting 60 competencies in the form of 30 skill statements and 30 knowledge statements was developed. It was recognized that the 17 functions and resulting 60 competency statements may not be exclusive of those required for a recfoods manager.

• **Round Two Instrument:** The 60 competencies would be used by the panel as the basis for establishing priorities to be used as a second-round instrument and distributed to the panel. A listing of these 60 competencies is shown as Appendix A of this report.

Panelists were asked to quantify their view of each listed item as a priority requirement for competency, using a five-point Likert scale with 5 listed as the highest priority, 4 as above average, 3 as average, 2 as below average, and 1 as lowest.

In total, 39 panelists responded to the initial and follow-up request for Round Two (97.5 percent). The researcher prepared a summary of responses indicating means, standard deviations, and a rank order of each for the listed items. The results were used to prepare the Round Three instrument.

• **Round Three Instrument:** The Round Three instrument was distributed to the remaining panelists along with a detail of consensus on each item, including the rating either as part of consensus or outside of consensus. They were asked to reconsider areas where they were not in consensus and either join in consensus, or give their reasons for not doing so. Space was provided for a dissenting opinion.

In total, 35 of the remaining 39 panelists responded to the initial and follow-up request (89.7 percent). The response rate for the three rounds was 35 of the original 40 (87.5 percent). The findings of the Third Round questionnaire were used to prepare a summary report.

Priorities Include Competencies, Management
The study findings detailed that eight of the listed items were rated highest priority by the panel; 29 were rated above average priority and the remaining 23 were rated as average priority. The eight highest priority ratings were as follows:

• ability to develop and implement cost control systems for food and beverage operations

• skilled at the management of concessions food and beverage operations

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- knowledge of food and beverage cost control systems and procedures

- knowledge of menu planning, purchasing specifications, and buying procedures for food and beverage operations

- knowledge of event planning procedures for a concessions operation

- ability to communicate effectively with clients, subordinates, and public agencies

- ability to take action to solve problems, overcome obstacles, and achieve goals

- knowledge of food service sanitation practices and procedures

A review of these eight highest priority items indicates that two are solely related to the concessions industry. Of the remaining six, four are competencies common to all food service management and two are management skills relating to communications and problem solving.

The 29 above average priority rated items were as follows:

- ability to implement cost control systems for concessions and vending operations

- knowledge of the basic principles of management

- skill at event planning

- knowledge of cost control systems for concessions and vending management

- understanding of the basic fundamentals of employee training and development

- knowledge of novelty/souvenir cost control systems and procedures

- ability to implement training programs for hourly and supervisory personnel

- skill at labor negotiations

- knowledge of the principles of leadership and motivational theories

- skill at performance evaluation of subordinate personnel

- knowledge of time management

- skill at the use of interpersonal management skills

- skill at the techniques of purchasing

- understanding of the principles of interpersonal skills management

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- understanding of the concepts and techniques of goal setting
- knowledge of job and task analysis for employee development and training use
- ability to articulate ideas, principles, and policies both orally and in writing
- knowledge of performance evaluation methods and procedures
- ability to develop and implement cost control systems for program, novelty, and souvenir operations
- ability to establish operating goals for a recreational food service operation
- knowledge of interviewing and hiring procedures
- skill at financial planning
- ability to work effectively with groups
- understanding of catering management
- knowledge of the principles of financial planning
- skill at the management of catering services
- knowledge of the theory of management style
- understanding of food service equipment layout and design
- ability to prepare and present oral and written presentations to groups

Of these 29 competencies, eight are specialized areas of recreational food service management. Seven relate to various areas of concessions and vending cost control, event planning, and the novelty/souvenir operation; 10 relate to basic management skills and knowledge such as human resource management, interpersonal management skills, communications skills, etc. Nine competencies relate to other general management knowledge and skills, and two relate specifically to financial planning competencies.

Of the remaining 33 competencies, which were listed as average priority, three relate strictly to recreational food service management; six are general food service management competencies, and 27 relate to other general management competencies such as accounting, business law, labor relations, and the use of personal computers.

Recreational food service has a history dating back over 100 years. One of the original management companies, the Harry M. Stevens Corp., has been in business since 1897, and is still family-owned and operated. Another, the Sportservice Corp., has been in business over 80 years. It, too, is still family-owned and operated. Both of these organizations are considered leaders in the industry.

Food service as a bona fide management discipline is relatively

new. Since its origin as part of the Cornell School of Hotel Technology in 1922, the industry has emerged to its present status. A 1982 survey by NIFI identified 343 junior colleges and technical schools and 114 four-year colleges in 46 states offering a variety of credentials upon graduation or curriculum completion.

The early approach of Cornell and other universities addressing the needs of the hotel industry with food service as a sub-segment of that industry is no longer valid. The more recently emerged schools of hospitality management that address the disciplines of hotel, food service, and travel as separate disciplines are more to the point.

Still to be addressed are the issues of specialized segments within food service as an industry. Recreational food service is one such segment. This is the challenge facing both today's educator and industry professionals.

References

[1] Restaurant Growth Index, *Restaurant Business,* (Sept. 20, 1990), p. 84.

[2] *1991 Forecast and Outlook,* Proprietary Report prepared for International Foodservice Manufacturers Association, Chicago, (November 1990), p. 4.

[3] Mickey Warner, *Recreational Foodservice Management: A Delphi Study of Needed Competencies.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida International University, Miami, FL, 1990, pp. 171-174.

[4] R.E. Boyatzis, *The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance,* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1982), p. 230.

[5] *Restaurant Growth Index, op. cit.,* p. 84; *1991 Forecast and Outlook, op. cit.,* p. 4; National Institute for the Foodservice Industry, *Foodservice: A segmented industry,* (Chicago, IL: International Foodservice Manufacturers Association, 1987), p. 3.

[6] P. F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices,* (New York, Harper and Row, 1974), p. 1.

[7] Bureau of Labor Statistics study, *Nation's Restaurant News,* (June 17,1985), p. 1.

Appendix A
Managerial Competencies

Knowledge competencies
1. knowledge of the principles of financial planning
2. understanding of the concepts and techniques of goal setting
3. knowledge of the basic fundamentals of accounting
4. understanding of the principles of cost accounting
5. knowledge of food service sanitation practices
6. understanding of food service equipment layout and design
7. understanding of governmental organizational structures at the city, county, and state levels
8. knowledge of event planning procedures for a concessions operation
9. understanding of catering management
10. understanding of off premises catering operations
11. knowledge of labor law and trade union practices
12. knowledge of menu planning, purchase specifications, and buying procedures for food and beverage operations
13. knowledge of novelty and souvenir manufacture and distribution
14. knowledge of personal computer operation
15. knowledge of the basic principles of personnel management
16. knowledge of job and task analysis for employee development and training use
17. knowledge of interviewing and hiring procedures

18. knowledge of business law
19. understanding of marketing and public relations concepts
20. understanding of the basic fundamentals of employee training and development
21. knowledge of performance evaluation methods and procedures
22. knowledge of the principles of leadership and motivational theories
23. knowledge of the theory of management style
24. understanding of the principles of interpersonal skills management
25. knowledge of time management
26. knowledge of food and beverage cost control systems and procedures
27. knowledge of novelty and souvenir cost control procedures
28. knowledge of food service preparation techniques (culinary arts)
29. understanding of the principles and use of break-even analysis
30. knowledge of cost control systems for concessions and vending operations

Skill competencies
31. ability to establish operating goals for a concessions operation
32. skilled at financial planning
33. skilled at the practice of food service sanitation
34. skilled at the management of concessions food and beverage operations
35. skilled at the management of vending services
36. skilled at event planning
37. skilled at kitchen management
38. skilled at the management of catering operations
39. skilled at dining room management
40. skilled at program/novelty/souvenir management
41. skilled at the techniques of purchasing
42. skilled at the operation of a personal computer
43. ability to utilize spreadsheets (such as Lotus 1-2-3) on a personal computer
44. ability to develop and implement training programs for hourly and supervisory personnel
45. ability to develop and implement a public relations program
46. skilled at performance evaluation of subordinate personnel
47. skilled at the use of interpersonal management techniques
48. ability to develop and implement cost control systems for food and beverage operations
49. ability to develop and implement cost control systems for concessions and vending operations
50. ability to develop and implement cost control systems for program, novelty and souvenir operations
51. skilled at the use of break-even analysis and profit volume charting
52. ability to develop and implement a sales and marketing program for catering operations
53. skilled at labor negotiations
54. ability to prepare and present effective oral and written presentations to groups
55. skilled at food service equipment layout and design preparation
56. ability to articulate ideas, principles, and policies both orally and in writing
57. ability to communicate effectively with clients, subordinates, and public agencies
58. ability to work effectively with groups
59. ability to use a PC for planning, forecasting, and cost control purposes
60. ability to take action to solve problems, overcome obstacles, and achieve goals