

Critical Foodservice Concepts

Forecasting:

Using historical data and current trends to estimate the events and outcomes of the future through planning and decision making.

A properly running foodservice operation must use forecasting to predict:

- How many customers to expect

- How much food to order

- How much food to prepare

- How many labor hours are required to complete all necessary tasks

A foodservice manager must use historical data to forecast their predictions based on current market and environmental conditions. For example, a foodservice manager would have to consider that the cost of food has risen because of increased fuel costs and it's the holiday season. Historically attendance has dropped by as much as 30% at this particular dining center over the holidays. Therefore, they must change to their menu to food items they can afford, as well as decrease the amount of food purchased and prepared due to there being fewer customers during this time of year.

Standardized Recipes:

A standardized recipe is a recipe for a menu item that has pre-determined specific ingredients in specific amounts, where the food is prepared and produced in a specific way - the same way every time, with no variations or substitutions in ingredients or their amounts.

Standardized recipes are critical to an operation to consistently provide the same quantity and quality of food items. Standardized recipes are required for proper ordering, effective forecasting and consistency of product. Recipe standardization requires repeat testing, but more importantly, it requires people sticking to the recipe. If people do not stick to the recipe, stock levels of food items will not be maintained and your operation will run out of ingredients and your budget will be blown because you're having to buy things that you would have had.

The justification for standardized recipes is:

- Uniform quality / consistency of menu items

- Uniform quantity of menu items

- Increase in productivity

- Maintains or increases customer satisfaction

- Saves money by controlling over-production and misuse of ingredient inventory

- Makes menu costing easier

Production Schedule:

The production schedule (or production sheet) works in tandem with the standardized recipes. It is the sequence of events required by the production staff that outlines the times assigned and quantities of each food item that is to be produced.

Put simply - it is a document that says who does what, when they do it, and how much of it they do. For example, the production sheet for the dessert cook would have the amount of pies they need to bake off, when they need to do it, how many slices they need to be cut in to (number of servings needed), and any instructions such as thawing and time/temperature requirements. Often included in this is the next day prep: the number of pies this dessert cook needs to pull out of the freezer to bake off tomorrow.

The production schedule is an invaluable tool for maintaining effective control over inventory and employee productivity. It helps maintain consistency and accuracy. And because there are specific times built into it, it ensures the proper flow of the kitchen and production staff.

Sample Production Schedule

Name	Menu Item	Quantity	Actual yield	Instructions	Time	Left over	Cleaning Assignment
Roger	Mashed potatoes	25 lb	22.5 lb	Boil in tilt skillet. Mix with mixer	Start at 3:00pm	Place in cook's cooler	Tilt skillet Mixer Blender Mop cook's area
Linda	Broccoli florets	25 lb	21 lb	Steam in steamer #1. Batch cook 5lb at a time	First batch to be ready 4:45pm	Should have none left over	Steamer Cook's fridge Microwave

Need-based ordering:

Before placing a food order, the cook or manager must look at current inventory levels of all food and supplies. The food and supply order cannot be done from a chair unless the person doing the ordering knows exactly what is and is not on the shelves.

The person doing the ordering must:

First: Use the production sheets and menus together to determine what is needed

Second: Inventory the operation to see what is already on hand

Third: Exclude any items that are needed for the current menu or ordering cycle

Fourth: Place the order for whatever is needed that is not already in the operation

An accurate and cost-effective order cannot be done from behind a desk.

Order Guide:

An order guide is often a large document that has all of the food items that you typically have on your shelves. This is a particularly handy tool if you use a broadline distributor such as a Sysco or a US Foodservice where the ordering is based on item code numbers - and those numbers change frequently. The order guide should be set up the way your stock in your storerooms and coolers is set up so that you can use it to do inventory (in a smooth, linear fashion) before doing your order.

The order guide should have the item description (ex. 4 oz boneless chix brst), specifications and pack size (40 / 4 oz), the broadline distributor's item ID number (8351278), and any other information you need ("From meat guy"). The order guide will help maintain consistency in ordering of your food items (same chicken breast every time) and can help with forecasting as you can look back across your order guide and see how much you've been ordering and compare that to how much you think you should order.

Sample Order Guide

Item	Case size	Item #	From	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Chix , bnls brst	40 / 4oz	123456	Sysco	2	2				
Beef, top round	25#	67891	Mike's Meats	1	2				
Salmon patty	10# cs / 3oz	134679	Sysco	2					