ENTRY-LEVEL COMPETENCIES FOR COMMERCIAL FOODSERVICE MANAGERS: PRACTITIONERS' ASSESSMENT

by

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INTRODUCTION

In many professional organizations there is a recognizable trend toward the delineation of competencies for persons entering the field from an educational program. Competency has been defined as the minimum knowledge, skills, affective behavior, and judgment which an individual is certified to possess on a set of criteria and level of expectation (1).

Search of the literature did not disclose any competency statements developed specifically for educational programs in preparation for commercial foodservice management. The closest comparable competency statements were those evolved by Loyd and Vaden (2) for administrative dietitians.

The three principal routes by which people enter commercial foodservice management are through the ranks (3), family ownership (4), or career education (5). According to Landmark (5), industry, faced with a shortage of competent managers, must stress career education to train future managers. Lukowski et al. (6) stated that education can help develop a mature thinking graduate who understands what the job requires and can analyze the work situation for improvements when conditions, people, and changes are timely.

The major concept of this research evolved from the comments by Gale and Pol (7) that the first step in planning educational programs is the development of statements that describe competencies required for successful functioning in a position. Such statements could be developed from a panel of experts or a sample of practitioners in the field (7).

In the current study the administrative competency statements from the Loyd and Vaden study (2), with appropriate modifications and several additions, were submitted to recognized leaders in the commercial foodservice industry. The purpose of the study was to develop competency statements for entry into commercial foodservice management based upon the considered opinions of experienced managers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Restaurant Industry

National Restaurant Association

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) is the professional organization representing restaurateurs. Founded in 1919 (8), the non-profit organization developed because of the belief that a group could solve common trade problems with greater ease than could an individual. The 1979-80 NRA Directory (8) contains a list of approximately 19,500 members. The stated purposes of the organization include:

- To maintain a high standard of integrity and efficiency in the conduct of the restaurant business
- To foster and promote a feeling of fraternity and good will among its members to advance on broad equitable lines the welfare of the restaurant industry
- To maintain our chosen vocation among the respected professions and industries
- To oppose improper methods and unethical standards inimical to the right conduct of business that honorable and fair competition may prevent
- To promote harmonious relations with allied industries in order that food products can be sold to consumers at the lowest cost
- To assist in the enactment and enforcement of local, state, and federal pure food and sanitation laws
- To disseminate useful information and inspire members to educate themselves in the scientific and practical features of their business
- To encourage participation of its members in community and civic activities
- To hold annually, when practicable, in conjunction with its convention as an educational feature, an exposition or exhibition of equipment, supplies, and so forth, necessary in conducting the restaurant business

- To direct leadership in national affairs pertaining to the restaurant industry and act as a spokesman for state and local restaurant associations authorizing the National to represent them in federal matters (8).

The membership distribution of the National Restaurant Association is worldwide. The definition of a restaurant according to the NRA is "any establishment or unit thereof which has as its object the preparation, serving or selling of meals or meal items to the general public or any segment thereof." Due to this broad definition, members of the NRA represent atmosphere restaurants, fast food units, drive-ins, food vending operations, and meal services in hotels and motels, hospitals, schools, factories, and offices. Memberships can be held by educators and students in related educational programs and also companies commercially related to restaurants. The NRA publishes three newsletters, "NRA News," "NRA Washington Report," and "NRA Foodservice Trends," which inform members of current events in the industry (8).

Current Status

The restaurant industry is one of the most diversified in America today. The size of the industry is shown by the fact that in 1978 the total United States foodservice market reached 104.3 billion dollars in sales, and the top 400 companies have reached sales of 49.1 billion dollars in the year 1978 with an 8 per cent real growth in that year (9).

McLamore (10) indicated in 1975 that large corporations are taking over franchise operations. The acquisition of franchises by large companies was continuing in 1978 when PepsiCo took over Pizza Hut, General Mills bought Casa Gallardo, and W.R. Grace bought Gilbert/Robinson. Conglomerates are much in evidence as indicated by PepsiCo, which owns Pizza Hut and Taco Bell, and Pillsbury, which owns Burger King, Steak and

Ale, Green Giant, La Chateau, Hoffman House, Henrici's and Poppin Fresh Pie Shop restaurants (9).

The two largest growing franchises in 1978 were Wendy's Hamburger chain and Godfather's Pizza Inc. There are more than twenty franchises with over 1,000 foodservice units of which six achieved that size in 1978 (9).

The industry in 1978 experienced a marked increase in costs. Food costs increased 10 per cent in 1978, labor cost increases were only moderate, and energy costs skyrocketed. To compensate for the increase in labor costs which in most cases was the increase in minimum wage, and the increased food costs, menu prices were increased. To alleviate the rising cost of energy, the industry is using more energy saving equipment and instituting more energy conservation training programs (9).

The income dollar generated by restaurants in 1977 was due to 78.6 cents in food sales, 20.3 cents in beverage sales, and 1.1 cents in other services. In 1977 restaurants spent 34 cents of the dollar for cost of merchandise sold, 32 cents on payroll and related expenses, 16.4 cents for direct operating expenses, 6.9 cents for occupation costs, others costs 3.6 cents, and net income before taxes was only 7.2 cents of the dollar (9).

The restaurant industry has never defined its operations by types. Powers (11) began to develop some guidelines in his article on foodservice in the next decade. He developed sixteen classifications for restaurant operations. In the CREST (Chain Restaurant Eating-Out Share Trends) studies (12), the restaurant industry was classified into six classifications: Fast Food/Drive-In, Family Type, Take Out, Cafeteria, Coffee Shop and Atmosphere/Speciality. The CREST survey is designed to

identify expenditures and behavior in the commercial segment of the foodservice industry (13).

Future Directions

Powers (11) theorized that in the restaurant industry in the future more new and economical foods will be added to menus and the median income of all restaurant employees will continue to increase. Powers forecast a rapidly growing need for commercial foodservice managers and stated that educational programs are the best means for meeting this requirement.

McLamore (10) suggested that the future of the restaurant industry will encompass an increase in various types of speciality restaurants and an upgrading of the fast food concept. The growth of the industry will be affected by the movement of young couples with children to the suburbs and the increased number of women working outside the home. The takeover of franchise operations by large corporations was also cited as affecting the future of the industry.

An article in the Newsweek issue of October 3, 1977 (14) was devoted to the increased eating out habits of Americans. Among the reasons given for the increase were that Americans have more disposable income and leisure time than ever before, the gap between restaurant prices and home prepared meals has narrowed, and the increase in divorces has produced more single people with a tendency to eat out frequently. The key to running a successful restaurant, whether fast food or haute cuisine, according to Newsweek was standardization of the menu and training of employees.

Roseman (15) postulated a booming growth for the restaurant industry in the 1980's which will be due to an increase in the number of women in the workforce, people living alone, persons with high incomes, and young

people. Problems facing the industry will be increased costs in food, labor, and energy, governmental regulations, and competition by supermarkets for the food dollar. The restaurant of the future according to Roseman will include more truthful menus, increased nutritional information on the menu, and better employee training procedures.

Trott (16) believed the increase in foodservice growth will be only temporary. Factors such as a reduction in the eighteen to thirty-four year age group market segment will decrease eating out expenditures. The increase of women working will be only 1 per cent from 1980 to 1990 according to a Bureau of Census report cited by Trott. The increase in per capita income by the individual will lead to an increased tax lien causing a decrease after tax income.

Hospitality Education Programs

Development and Needs

A survey conducted by the National Restaurant Association and the National Institute for the Foodservice Industry (NRA/NIFI) in 1977 indicated there were sixty-eight baccalaureate programs related to commercial foodservice management offered in the United States (17). According to Landmark (5), the industry, faced with a shortage of competent managers, must look toward career education to train future managers. He concluded that career educational programs appear to be the principal answer to the problem of developing a human resource pool for the present and future needs of the industry (5).

Landmark cited the routes to follow in developing a successful career education program as:

1. Preparation for successful working careers shall be a key objective of all education

2. Every teacher in every course that has career relevance will emphasize the contribution that subject matter can make to a successful career

3. "Hands-on" occupationally oriented experiences will be utilized as a method of teaching and motivating the learning of abstract academic content

4. Preparation for careers will encompass the mutual importance of work attitudes, human relation skills, orientation to the nature of the workaday world, exposure to alternative career choices, and the acquisition of actual job skills

5. Learning will not be reserved for the classroom but learning environments for career education will also be identified in the home, the community, and employing establishments

6. Career education is a basic and pervasive approach to all education, but it in no way conflicts with other legitimate education objectives such as citizenship, culture, family responsibility, and basic education (5).

Riggs (4), in her study of 2,200 randomly selected Institutions' readers, found that most commercial managers had experience in other fields before deciding on a career in commercial foodservice. She also found that 17 per cent of commercial managers had entered the family business. Riggs stated that education was increasing in all segments of the foodservice industry.

Prentiss (3) compared characteristics of ten public school foodservice administrators and ten commercial foodservice managers, all in Florida. The commercial managers reached present positions by moving up through an organization. In contrast, school foodservice administrators had a college education and were hired at their present level. Although the roles were somewhat similar, each of the categories favored the particular type of preparation which they had experienced. The resemblance of roles led to the conclusion that the educational preparation of prospective administrators could be similar.

Type of Educational Programs

Curriculum Content. Lukowski et al. (6) studied the views of educators and industry leaders on the type of curriculum which should be prescribed for a commercial foodservice management program. The result of the survey was that the educators and industry leaders believed that coursework should include approximately one-half hotel and restaurant administration and one-half general business with a modicum of liberal arts. Education cannot prepare a student for all the contingencies one will meet on the job. Lukowski et al. stated further that education can help "develop a mature thinking and acting graduate who understands what his job requires and who can analyze his work situation for improvements when conditions, people, and changes are timely." Higher education can give students the human skills needed on the job. They concluded students should be encouraged to develop communication, human relations, analytical and problem solving skills and, in addition, the intrinsic traits of creativity, inspiration and motivation.

Sapienza (18) surveyed Nevada hotel executives to determine the subject matter considered most desirable for foodservice positions. The consensus was that Food and Beverage Purchasing, Human Relations in Innkeeping, Food Production, Service of Food, Labor Management, and Food and Beverage Management were valuable courses. Courses rated neither valuable nor worthless were Club Management and International Wines. In Sapienza's ranking of courses from the survey, Labor Management Relations, Food and Beverage Purchasing, and Food and Beverage Management rated as the top three courses for future foodservice managers.

In 1975, Rehkopf (19) described the graduate student program offered by Cornell University which was estimated to have one hundred students

by 1976-77. The program was instituted in May of 1973 and concludes with a Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.) degree. There are three routes that graduate students at Cornell can follow. Track I is offered to students without a hotel or restaurant management degree. Students are required to take prerequisite undergraduate courses in the first year and graduate courses in the second. Track II is for students who received an undergraduate degree in foodservice management from other universities. Track III is for students who have an appropriate bachelor's degree from Cornell. Students in Track II and III programs take fewer courses than those in Track I. The Cornell program was instituted because there was a lack of graduate programs in foodservice management, and many students who change educational emphasis did not desire another bachelor's degree. Rehkopf believed that graduate study fills a need for future managers and provides educators for hotel and restaurant management programs (19).

Varner (20) stated that education can benefit the prospective manager by giving a thorough knowledge of food, helping set realistic goals, and encouraging commitment to the restaurant industry. He foresaw a greater need for more communication between students and people in the industry.

Powers (21) stated that the systems approach to foodservice management is the best way to operate a foodservice. This approach considers the organization as a whole rather than by individual parts. Through educational programs, the systems approach can be taught to prospective managers.

Pizam and Lewis (22) conducted a survey to ascertain the career success and satisfaction of 350 alumni of the University of Massachusetts program in hotel, restaurant, and travel administration. A section of the survey was devoted to the opinions graduates held of their educational

programs. Responses (N = 151) indicated the belief that the managerial abilities most enhanced by education were the ability to communicate effectively, plan and organize one's own work, and understand people. The managerial attributes considered least enhanced by education were the ability to adapt to and capitalize on change, produce original ideas and innovative approaches, and obtain satisfaction and self-fulfillment from work. The subjects rated most valuable were hospitality personnel management, general management, hospitality law, and foodservice management.

Combination of Didactic and Practical. Blomstrom (23) stated that work experience during the college years should not only be thought of as a requirement for graduation, but also as an important ingredient for the student's future career. Blomstrom is the director of the Restaurant Management program at Michigan State University where the program is too large to incorporate work experience in the curriculum. Students are encouraged to gain work experience during the summer months.

Vallen (24) discussed the hotel-restaurant administration education program offered at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Students must complete 800 hours of work experience in local establishments without academic credit and an unsalaried internship with three to six hours of credit. The internship is divided into serving the customer (front of the house), production of food (back of the house), and small hotel operations. The internship program at UNLV is in partnership with the Nevada Resorts Association.

McCleray (25) emphasized the need for on-premise education in hotel and restaurant management. McCleray explained that students can learn better by the theory and related practice rather than totally in the

classroom. During job practice, students learn what will be expected of them and will gain experience in employee supervision. Brymer's statements (26) were in complete accord with those of McCleray in stressing the need for hospitality students to have concurrent experience in industry.

Entry Level Competencies

Definitions of Competencies

Competency, according to Gale and Pol (7), is the quality of being functionally adequate in performing tasks and assuming the role of a specified position with the requisite knowledge, ability, capability, skill, judgments, attitudes, and values. Bell (1) defined competency as the minimum knowledge, skills, affective behavior and judgment which an individual is certified to possess on a set of criteria and level of expectations.

Becker (27) described the following six components of competency: knowledge is a cognitive awareness, understanding is in-depth cognitive and/or affective comprehension, skill is the ability to perform a task or job, value is a norm or standard which is a psychologically integrated belief, attitude is a feeling or mood, and interest is an underlying motivation, continuing desire, psychological orientation. Butler (28) stated that competency is the ability to do well something worthwhile; the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed to carry out properly an activity important to success in one's personal or professional life; the ability to meet or surpass prevailing standards of adequacy for a particular activity.

Acquisition of Competency

Gale and Pol (7) stated that competency is acquired, by gaining familiarity and understanding of and the ability to apply certain specified skills, knowledge, judgment, attitudes and values. They purported that the process of attaining competency is a spiraling, progressive one. The processes of understanding, familiarity, and application are totally dependent upon each other. An increase in familiarity will lead to an increased understanding, which leads to an increase in the ability to apply. They concluded that as familiarity, understanding, and application reach higher levels of proficiency the degree of competency also increases, as does the area of competency (7).

Bell (1) stated that competency in a chosen field can be acquired through education. Competency-based programs focus on the needs and accomplishments of students, because the emphasis is placed on objectives and personalization. Hart (29) defined entry-level competencies as those which the individual should be able to perform independently, as well as those which require guidance from a specialist, at least in the first position or job. The position paper on the administrative dietitian published by The American Dietetic Association (30) included the following description of the responsibility of the entry level dietitian in foodservice management:

> At the entry level to the profession, the primary responsibility of the administrative dietitian is to utilize technical skills competently within an established frame of reference of policies and standard operating procedures. At this level, the dietitian should be knowledgable about the current theories of motivation and should utilize this knowledge in the further development of human skills. Since the first level of management provides the greatest number of human interactions, there is ample opportunity to test human skills and, with appropriate counseling, to improve these skills. The entry level dietitian in foodservice management should also have an understanding of the conceptual skills

required at the higher levels of management and should be given the opportunity to develop competence in these skills (30).

The managerial skills used in the position paper were defined by Katz (31). He described technical skill as an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one involving methods, processes, procedures, or techniques. Human skill was defined as the executive's ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he/she leads. Conceptual skill was described as the ability to see the enterprise as a whole, recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another and how changes in any one part affects all others.

Loyd and Vaden (2) studied the competencies needed for the entry-level dietitian in both administrative and clinical practice. The Loyd instrument (32) was based upon statements by Caggulia (33). Separate instruments were devised and sent to practitioners in each of the two categories of practice. The respondents rated the competencies expected of entry-level dietitians on two separate scales: "essentiality" and "degree of supervision." Fourteen of the essential competencies for administrative entry level practitioners were classified as involving primarily technical skills, for example, "monitors production and service," "prepares reports," and "plans food production." Competencies based on human skills included such items as "supervises personnel effectively" and "delegates." Generally, those competencies which were rated as essential were regarded as areas of performance in which limited supervision was needed.

The competencies necessary in menu planning for administrative dietitians were discussed by Morales et al. (34). Five basic competencies were

drawn from studies by Cagguila (33) and Loyd and Vaden (2). Through a five stage process, subcompetencies and descriptors were developed for each competency by a selected group of dietetic practitioners and educators. The competencies, subcompetencies, and descriptors were submitted to practitioners for rating on two separate scales: "time consideration" and "importance." The data were evaluated according to levels of practice of the respondents: five years or less, six to fifteen years, and over fifteen years. There were no significant differences among the three levels of practice on the importance scores of the competency statements. Time consideration scores, however, differed significantly among the levels of practice for all competency statements. The more experienced practitioners regarded the activities in the competency statements as requiring more frequent time consideration than did the less experienced group. Morales et al. (34) concluded that future research of this type should be undertaken in all areas of dietetic practice, permitting a better definition of the entry-level competencies for dietitians.