

Effective Marketing Strategies

The kids are your customers! Make sure employees have a positive attitude. Greeting children with a smile can make a huge impact on the success of your school lunch programs. Work with staff to learn the children by name. Make each child feel special. Remember, you want the kids to keep coming back!

Target your customers. Make an effort to find out what children like and dislike. Create a student advisory group to help you accomplish this goal. These children can taste test food, make suggestions, and help you to plan your menu.

Make your menus eye-catching. Menus are a great way to promote your nutrition program. Ask children to draw pictures with a “what school lunch means to me” theme. Post winners on the menu. Use catchy names for food items. Be creative and make your menu colorful.

Advertise the fact that school meals are a healthy choice. Ask a dietitian to talk to school classes and clubs. Educate children on the importance of healthy nutrition and accomplishing the goals they set for themselves. Ask children to write a goal and show healthy choices that will help them reach their goals. Post nutrition facts on the menus. Parents read the menus and they too should know that school lunch is a healthy choice for their children.

Work as a team. It is important to include many groups and organizations in your school lunch promotion. Talk to the Parent-Teacher Organizations about your healthy school lunch program and the services you provide. Provide teachers with nutrition activities for children to work on; ask the principal to announce school lunch promotions on the morning announcements; work with Physical Education teachers to promote the need for good nutrition while playing

sports; ask children to spread the word about the “cool” and healthy school lunch choice.

Make the most of special promotions. Promotions can be a single event or a series of events. Choose a theme and be creative. Advertise your theme and ask parents to come join in the fun. You may even choose to provide “giveaways” during your promotion to help increase participation. Take a look at the “Incentives and Rewards” page for more ideas.

Take pride in your work. When you and your employees take pride in your work it will show and reflect a positive attitude about your foodservice department towards the students.

Create an ambiance. Set the mood in your service line and cafeteria. Make the environment a positive one that enhances happy eating. Use round tables to make dining at school more like dining at a restaurant and change the settings often to reflect a holiday or special occasion.