

CHAPTER II

MENU

2.1. MENU **HISTORY**

The word menu comes from the French word that means "a detailed list". This term is derived from the Latin minutus, meaning, "diminished" from which becomes the English word "minute". Based on this arise the assumption that menu is "a small, detailed list".

Instead of "menu" some may use the term "bill of fare". A "bill" is an itemized list and "fare" means food, so we can say the term means "an itemized list of foods". This works out to be pretty much the same thing as "menu".

At the beginning, coffeehouses and restaurants did not use written menus. Instead the waiter and waitress recited available items from memory. Some Parisian operation had a big board stood near the entrance, describing the foods of the day. The maitre d'hotel stood near the board and as the guests arrived, described the various offerings to them and took their orders.

2.2. PURPOSE OF THE MENU

The purpose of the menu is basically to inform the guests of what is available and the price, if any, and also to inform workers of what is to be produced. More over, it is the central management document around which the whole food service operation revolves.

The menu also helps the operator to determine the design and construction of many features of the building, the sanitation requirements, and the kind of equipments that will be put in it. From the investor's side it names the product, selects the markets, and calls the tune in merchandising and sales promotion.

Once a menu has developed, a number of management factors are known. Cost set up, type and number of personnel required are indicated, as well as what foods and equipment should be purchased. Also known are the basics of when and how items should be prepared and served. The menu will even influence cost control, record keeping and accounting.

2.3. MENU PLANNING FACTORS

Using the analogy that restaurants are like theaters, the menu is the playbill or program. The cooks and servers are the actors and the decor is the stage set.

The menu and menu planning are " front and center " in the restaurant business. Guests come to restaurants for a pleasure dining experience and the menu is one important ingredient in this experience. The many considerations in menu planning attest to the complexities of the restaurant business.

A menu should be planned sufficiently in advance of actual production and service to allow time for the delivery of items, to schedule the required labor, and to print the menu. Some have to be planned six or more months in advanced of use but others can be planned a day in advance. Operational needs will dictate how far in advanced of use new menus should be prepared.

Considerations in menu planning include:

- > Number of menus
- > Types of menus
- > Needs and desires of patrons
- > Capability of cooks
- > Equipment capacity and layout
- > Consistency and availability of menu ingredients
- > Price and pricing strategy (cost and profitability)
- > Nutritional value
- > Contribution theory
- > Accuracy in menu
- > The actual menu items
- > Menu analysis
- > Standardized recipes
- > Food cost percentage

2.3.1. Number of menus

A certain number of menus are needed by every single operation. This menu needs will differ with differing types of enterprises. The patrons of an operation will surely affect the menu. For example, a truck stop will have a different kind of menu that needed by its patrons to take out operation.

The numbers of menu needed by a full-service restaurant will usually be greater than the number needed by a fast food restaurant. Institutional menus must be prepared with the knowledge that patrons will eat most of their meals at the facility and may be there for a long time.

The operation's purpose, the number of units, the patron's desires or needs, marketing strategies and cost will dictate the number of menu developed.

2.3.2. Types of Menus

2.3.2.1. A La Carte Menu

An a la carte menu offers food items separately at a separate price. The entrees will be separately priced, and if a diner wants, say, a salad, it will appear on the menu with its own price. An a la carte menu is often used in commercial operations where profit is desirable.

2.3.2.2. Table d'Hote Menu

A table d'hote menu groups several or more foods together and offers them at a single price. This often can be a combination, such as a complete meal of several or more courses. There may be a choice between some items, for example, between a soup and a salad, or types of dessert. This menu enables the operation to limit the number of entrees that may be selected. Very often table d'hote and a la carte menus may be combined.

2.3.2.3. Du Jour Menu

A du jour menu is a group of foods served only for the day. The term "Du jour" means "of the day" and can also be used to indicate a special food, such as the "soup du jour", which means soup of the day. Du jour items can also be on a menu with a la carte and table d'hote.

2.3.2.4. Limited Menu

Limited menus are just that: they are limited in the number of selections offered. These are often found in fast food operations or cafes where labor is limited.

2.3.2.5. Cycle Menu

This is the menu that is made up for a certain period, say, seven days. At the end of the seven days cycle, the menu is repeated. The cycle menu is often used in institutions such as hospitals, but hotels and others also use them. *Some cycle menus are not seen by (the patrons but only used by the production staff.*

The Las Vegas Hilton has a seven-day cycle menu; each day of the week in all of its dining areas the menu is the same. Guests do not object, they may not even be aware of it because there is enough variety on the menu so that the repetition is not noticed.

2.3.2.6. California Menu

This is another type of menu that is usually used in fast food restaurant and the name is called from the origin. It is a menu printed on Bristol cover stock that is quite stiff and durable. Plastic is usually laminated over the printing so the menu does not soil easily. This menu has breakfast, snacks, lunch items, fountain offerings, and dinners on it, with all these items available at any time of the day.

2.3.3 Needs and Desires of Patrons

The menu may be the most important part of the restaurant concept. Selections of the various menu items require a careful analysis. The menu must reflect the concept and vice versa. The restaurant concept is based on what the

guests in the market segment and target market expects, and the menu must satisfy or exceed their expectations.

2.3.4 Capability of Cooks

The capability of the chefs or cooks to produce the quality and quantity of food necessary is a basic consideration. The use of standardized recipe and cooking procedures will help ensure consistency. The standardized recipe is one that, over time, has been well tested. It lists the quantities of ingredients and has a simple step-by-step method to produce a quality product. The menu complexity, the numbers of meals served, and the number of people to supervise are also elements that have an effect on the capability and consistency of the restaurant kitchen. Today, chefs and cooks are more creative and innovative in their approach to the culinary arts. The Culinary Olympics, the local chefs associations, and the many fine food service and culinary programs at colleges and universities have done much to improve the creative and innovative capability of chefs and cooks.

2.3.5. Equipment Capacity and Layout

In order to produce the desired menu items, the proper equipment must be installed in a proper and efficient layout. A systematic flow of items from the receiving clerk to the guests is critical to operational efficiency. The chain restaurants and experienced independent operators carefully plan the equipment for the menu so as to achieve maximum production efficiency. Menu items are selected to avoid over use of one piece of equipment. For example, too many menu items that are broiled may slow service because the broiler cannot handle them.

2.3.6. Consistency and Availability of Menu Ingredients

The availability of ingredients is vital to the selections of menu items. A constant reliable source of supply at a reasonable price must be established and maintained. Quality ingredients make a quality product. Almost any food item is available everywhere at a price. The wise operator takes advantage of the seasons when the items are at their lowest price and best quality. Seasonal pricing may be overcome by seasonal menus, or even daily as is the case with the California cafe where general manager, Volker Schmitz, has the menu on his computer. This enables him to quickly remove an item from the menu in the event of a sudden price increase due to an unforeseen event like a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico or frost in California or Florida dramatically increasing the price of fresh fish, fruit, or vegetables. A decision is made to either adjust the price or take the item off the menu.

2.3.7. Cost and Profitability

Price is a major factor in menu selection. The concept and target will determine the parameters of menu prices. For example, an Italian neighborhood restaurant may select appetizers and salads in the \$2.95 to \$5.95 range and entrees in the \$6.95 to \$11.95 range. A quick-service Mexican restaurant may have a limited menu offering food in the \$.99 to \$3.89 range. The selling price of each item must be acceptable to the market and profitable to the restaurateur. Factors that go into this decision include:

- > What is the competition charging for a similar item?
- > What is the item's food cost?
- > What is the cost of labor that goes into the item?
- > What other costs must be covered?
- > How much profit expected by the operator?
- > What is the contribution margin of the item?

If the costs plus a profit cannot be covered, the restaurant should not be in operation.

Consider each factor. In the dynamic marketplace of the foodservice industry, competition continually changes. Individual and chain restaurants rise

and fall. New restaurants are opened, old ones closed. New marketing concepts are always in the making or being introduced. New management plans, new building designs, new advertising, and, more slowly, newer modified foods are forever appearing. Competition, however, usually determines menu price more than any other factor.

Menu items are selected to complement the restaurant image and appeal to its target market. For example, hamburgers come in a variety of prices, depending upon whether they are self-served or table-served, their size, their garnish, the atmosphere, and convenience of the restaurant. No one expects to get a hamburger served on a white tablecloth at the same price as one served from a counter. At "21" in New York, a hamburger is over with French fries and snow peas. By contrast, McDonald's has reduced the price of their smallest burger back to 59 cents. A walk-up, select-your-own steak may cost a third less than if served at a table in a quiet, attractive dining room, such as Bern's Steak House in Tampa, Florida. Their reputation has been built over the past 40 years by having created an aura around their beef. The restaurant buys only U.S. prime beef which is then aged for an additional four to ten weeks specially built lockers controlled for humidity and temperature. The menu lists six basic cuts, from Delmonico to Porterhouse, which are available in any thickness and broiled to eight levels of doneness. The large multi-room establishment is decorated with some very expensive antiques, gilded plaster columns, red wallpaper, Tiffany lamps, and murals of French vineyards.

Food cost is reflected in pricing. The cost of food varies with sales (a variable cost). When stated as a percentage of sales, food cost provides a simple target for the chef and the management to aim for, becoming a barometer of the profitability of the restaurant.

Traditionally, menus were priced by using a fixed mark-up, or multiple, based on food cost. The system worked fairly well in that other costs tended to be fairly predictable in a well-managed restaurant with a steady market. If, for example, a 33 percent of sales figure was used as a food cost percentage target, and other costs were steady, the main food items were multiplied by 3 to arrive at a sales price. A number of items, such as coffee, tea, cola, desserts and soups, were

sold at a much lower food cost percentage. They balanced the higher cost menu items and waste, which made it possible for the target cost of 33 percent to be achieved; providing there was a higher percentage of lower food-cost items sold.

Steak houses came along, and their operators saw that the traditional "factor markup" did not apply. Steaks could be purchased pre-cut and sold at the price that would permit 40 percent food cost, or higher, and still the operation was successful. The reason was that the labor cost in preparing and serving the steak ran 15 percent or 20 percent, or even less, as percentage of sales. The lower labor cost permitted a higher food cost.

Operators began using food and labor costs as a combination target. If food and labor costs are combined total something less than 60 to 65 percent of sales, a 10 to 15 percent profit on sales showed up.

In menu pricing strategies there are two main ways to price menus. A comparative approach analyzes the price ranges of the competition and determines the range of appetizers, entrees, and desserts. Individual items in each category may then be selected and priced. The cost of ingredients must equal the predetermined food cost percentage.

The second method is to cost the individual dish item on the menu and multiply it by the ratio amount necessary to achieve the required food cost percentage. For example, to achieve a 40 percent food cost multiply the cost of ingredients by 2.5; for a 33 percent food cost multiply by 3. This method results in the same expected food cost percentage for each menu item. It is not the best strategy to have every item priced this way. An expensive fresh fish item may be priced too high when compared to the customer's perception of value or to the prices charged by the competition. A glass of iced tea might have a beverage cost of 10 cents and sell for 15 cents whereas it should be priced at \$1.

This may lead to a "weighted average approach," whereby the factors of food-cost percentage, contribution margin and sales volume are weighted. This strategy allows for the "stars" to save the "dogs". The stars are the high selling items with the greatest contribution margin (gross profit). These items are "strategically" placed on the menu at the focal point will attract the greatest attention. A problem with this approach is that averages are relied upon to

separate the high selling items from the low selling items. Customer menu choices can tilt the food cost percentage.

2.3.8. Nutritional Value

Restaurant guests are increasingly concerned about the nutritional value of food. Demand for the more healthful chicken and fish items is increasing. In fact, two-thirds of all seafood is eaten in restaurants. Compared to other protein foods, fish and shellfish have far less fat. In addition, seafood has been found to be lower in cholesterol and sodium. Fish and shellfish are also rich in the highly polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids, which may prevent heart attacks. Greater public awareness of healthy food and individual wellness has prompted operators to change some cooking methods. An example is broiling, poaching, steaming, casseroling or rotisserieing chicken instead of frying. Kentucky Fried Chicken, to divert attention from the word fried in the title, changed its name to KFC. The company also changed its cooking oil, which included some animal fats to 100 percent vegetable oil. Some restaurants place a heart sign next to menu items that are recommended for guests with a special low-fat dietary needs. A few restaurants put the number of calories beside each item on the menu. Most chain restaurants have taken steps to provide lighter and healthier food. As an example, McDonald's publishes the complete nutritional breakdown of their menu items and has changed their cooking oil for potatoes from animal fat, high in cholesterol, to 100 percent vegetable oil, which is cholesterol free.

A recent Food Marketing Institute survey revealed that consumers are more concerned about a food's fat content than about cholesterol and sodium. A number of restaurants offer menus with leaner meats and more seafood and poultry. Bob Wattel, executive vice-president of Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises in Chicago, notes that as a whole, heart-healthy menu items are sold well. Some of the best sellers in Lettuce's program include tuna asada with papaya relish, charred tuna pizza, and angel hair pasta with shrimp and artichokes. The trends toward foods that are lower in calories, cholesterol, sodium, and fat appears to be here to stay. Seafood is expected to play a major role in heart-

healthy menu planning to come because of its taste and superior nutritional qualities.

The National Restaurant Association recommends that restaurateurs offer meatless main dishes or vegetarian selections. A recent Gallup survey found that 20 percent of restaurant customers look for operation that serve vegetarian fare and at least 1/3 of restaurant goers are ordering meatless item. Blue Mesa in Chicago serves food with a southwestern accent. Its fresh vegetable burrito consists of flour tortillas filled with corn, broccoli, leeks, peppers, tomatoes, onions, and mushrooms, all topped with black bean sauce, Chihuahua cheese, sour cream, and guacamole. In Portland, Oregon, Wholesome and Hearty Foods sells its Gardenburgers, which are made with mushrooms, onions, oats, brown rice, cheese, walnut, and spices, to businesses such as Disney operation, the Hard Rock Café, and the TGI Friday's chain. Avanti's in Manhattan, Kansas, serve meatless sputini, or little bites, which include crostini with walnut-artichoke pesto, fried ravioli with spicy tomato sauce, and grilled polenta with mushroom ragout. There is no doubt that the public believes that healthy eating contributes to prolonging our active lives.

2.3.9. Contribution Theory

The contribution margin is the difference between the sales and the cost of the item. The amount over (the gross profit) when the cost of the item is deducted from the selling price is the contribution that is made towards covering the fixed and variable costs. It works like this:

If restaurant A has a steak on the menu that costs \$5.00 and it sells for \$10.95, the contribution margin is \$5.95. For every steak sold, the "margin" of \$5.95 goes to pay the fixed and variable cost, including a 15 percent amount for surrounding plate costs such as vegetable and sauces (and leave some over for profit).

2.3.10. Accuracy in Menu

Most statements have statutes which stipulate that businesses (including restaurant) may not misrepresent what they are selling. Restaurants must be accurate and truthful when describing dishes on the menu. This means that if the trout on the menu comes from Idaho trout farm, it cannot be described as coming from a more exotic sounding location. Similarly, if the beef is described as prime, than it must be prime according to U.S. Department of Agriculture Standards, butter must be butter, not margarine, and fresh cream must be fresh. Some restaurants have been heavily fined for violations of "accuracy in menu".

2.3.11. The Actual Menu Items

The menu items selected will depend on the type of restaurant. The number and range of items in the menu is critical to the overall success of the restaurant. If the menu offerings are too expensive, there will be problems in getting the food to the guestss in a timely manner. A family restaurant for example, is a "mainstream" for all ethnic groups and will need to offer a range of popular menu items. A balanced is achieved by offering a selection of hot and cold appetizers, soups, and salads. Entrees include different types of meat, poultry, fish, pasta, and dessert items. Soups might include a popular favorite like vegetable beef and a daily special. Salads, which could also be served as a main dish, would likely include house salad, chefs salad, an oriental chicken salad, fajita, or a Caesar salad. Entree dishes reflect the basic American family type meal including charbroiled chicken, baked halibut or cod fish, fried shrimp, steaks, burgers, and a variety of sandwiches. Recently, teriyaki chicken or beef fajitas have been added to the list of entree dishes commonly offered. Dessert may include a selection of ice creams and cakes or pastries.

2.3.12. Menu Analysis

Over the years, several approaches to the menu analysis have been recommended. No matter which is adopted, the important point to remember is that there should be a balance between one that is too high in food cost, which result in "giving food away", and too low in food cost, which "rips the customer of. Expect some items on the menu to yield a higher margin than others.

Professor Jack Miller developed one of the earlier approaches to the menu analysis. The best-selling menu items were "winners" that not only sold more but were at a lower food cost percentage. In 1982, professors Michael Kasavana and Donald Smith proposed "menu engineering". In this approach, the best menu items, the "stars", are those that have the highest contribution margin per unit and the highest sales. 1985, professor David Pavesic proposed a combination of the three variables: food cost percentage, contribution margin, and sales volume. Under this method, the best items are called "primes" ; those with a low food cost percentage and a high contribution margin weighted by sales volume.

More recently, professors Mohamed E. Bayou and Lee B. Bennett proposed menu analysis where each item at each meal is analyzed. Breakfast, lunch, and diner items are analyzed to compute their measure of profitability. They recommend analysis by:

- Individual menu items
- Categories of menu offering (e.g., appetizers, entrees).
- Meal periods or business categories (e.g., the breakfast meal period, the banquet business).

Professor David Pavesic recommends that restaurant operators first think of the psychological factors that influence customer's price perception. Some guidelines he suggests in menu pricing are:

- Use "odd cents" increments for digits to the right of the decimal point.
- Do not write price increases over old prices.
- Resist increases that raise the dollar amount of the item.
- Give items that have been drastically increased in price a less noticeable spot on the menu.

- Try reducing large portions before raising prices. Some restaurant operators suggest taking the items off the menu or changing the dishes because regular guests might notice the smaller portions and feel that they were being cheated.
- Never increase the price on all menu items.
- Put "market-price" on items that fluctuate wildly in price.
- Do not list menu items according to cost, and make sure that menu prices appear after an item's description, rather than in a straight column.

Odd cent menu pricing is widely used in fast food restaurants. It may be that pricing an item using the 98 cents approach is not appropriate for unit-scale restaurants and certainly should not be used for fine dining establishments. Many of these price items end in 95 cents. For example, lobster \$19.95 seems appropriate while \$19.98 would not.

2.3.13. Standardized Recipes

Standardized recipes are used to maintain a consistent food quality. The use of a carefully developed recipe will help cooks because the portion size, ingredients, weights, and production steps including cooking methods and time are clearly indicated. Restaurant guests will be offered consistently high quality food. The standard recipe also acts as a control device in that the same ingredients and their amounts are used over time.

2.3.14. Food Cost Percentage

The food cost percentage is the most often quoted percentage in the restaurant business. The reason of its importance is that it is a barometer of a

major part of the restaurant's operation. The food cost percentage is generally calculated weekly, monthly or annually in the following way:

$$\text{Opening inventory} + \text{Purchase} - \text{Closing inventory} = \text{Cost of food consumed}$$

$$\text{Food cost/sales of food} = \text{Food cost percentage}$$

Opening inventory	\$10,000
+Purchase	\$66,666 + storeroom requisitions
Total food consumed	\$76,660
-Closing inventory	\$10,000
=Cost of food consumed	\$66,666

If total sales were \$200,000 for the month the food cost of \$66,666 divided into the \$200,000 would produce a food cost of 33 percent. This is a basic calculation which become more complex when transfers, returns, breakages, mistakes, customer returns, spillage, employee meals, promotional meals, and so on are factored into the equation.

The method of calculating a more complex food cost percentage is:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Opening inventory} + \text{Purchases} = \text{Total available for sale} \\ &\quad - \text{Returns to supplier} \\ &\quad + \text{Cooking liquor} \\ &\quad - \text{Lounge and bar food (promotional and give away)} \\ &\quad - \text{Promotional food} \\ &\quad = \text{Cost of food} \end{aligned}$$

Taking a food inventory is time consuming and complicated. The storeroom and kitchen must be orderly. This will make the work of the auditor or inventory taker, easier. One method requires that prices are marked on the food items, recorded in the inventory computer file, or in a book. It works like this:

Item A #10 can of tomatoes

Purchased	Quantity	Unit cost	Total cost
6 / 12	12	@\$1.35	\$16.20
6 /18	12	@\$1.35	\$17.60
6 /26	12	@\$1.60	\$19.20
	36		\$53.00

Source : Ninemeier, J.D., 1998, page 95

It is important to maintain an up-to-date price of the items on the inventory sheet. In situations where there may be items bought at two or more different prices, price the food at the price paid for each item. If this is too time consuming, assign a rough average cost.

All of the items in the food storeroom can be listed on a mimeographed form that is made up so that the foods appear in the same sequence as found in the storeroom. Quantities can then be counted and the quantity inserted on the inventory sheet. Larger restaurants may purchase a hand-held inventory-taking device that permits food items and quantities to be punched in.

Some restaurant operators do not go to the trouble of taking inventory. This lack of control is often one of the reasons they go out of business. (Ninemeier J.D., 1998, page 95)

2.4. MENU CONTENT

Determining customer need and market feasibility, are only the beginning steps in planning a successful menu. Before the design, colors, and format of the printed menu are considered, a series of decisions must be made about the contents of the menu. In addition to choosing the right menu items, standard of preparation, production and presentation must be established to create consistent quality controls for all menu items.

In the beginning stages of menu planning, five questions must be addressed:

- > What is the style and/or the theme of the restaurant?
- > What is the established cuisine?
- > What are the needs of the customer?

- > What is the restaurant staff capable of producing?
- > What menu items will be marketable and profitable?

2.4.1. Service Style

The choice of service style has a great deal to do with the cuisine of the restaurant. Some cuisines require combinations of buffet and table service, tableside preparation (French service), or Russian service. However, almost every cuisine can be adapted to a particular style or combination of styles.

The needs of the customer are important to consider also. What will the customer feel comfortable with? Will your customer feel comfortable with the buffet style that needs space and maneuver between tables and other guests with plates of food in their hands? Or would they prefer the French service or the simplicity of American service? The selection of the service style should also be based on the capability of the available staff to perform the service and/or the management's ability to train them.

2.4.2. Cuisine

Cuisine refers to the style or manner in which food is prepared. As a food service industry term, it is usually associated with a specific nationality, such as Italian, Chinese, or German. Cuisine also refers to the cooking styles of certain regional areas (Southern, French Provencal, or New England) and to such cultural groups as Creole, Shaker, and Pennsylvania Dutch. Cuisine also applies to general cooking styles such as classical or nouvelle.

Although individual foodservice operators usually have a fixed or predetermined idea about the kind of cuisine they would like to offer, the market survey should be consulted before this decision is made. It is important to analyze the existing restaurants in the area and determine which cuisines are successful. Very often, the style of cuisine that the foodservice operator prefers can be tailored to suit the community, if the need is there.

In the case that in the neighborhood already exist the same kind of restaurant, the operator should consider to differ in the service style or to move and try another location or another cuisine.

2.4.3. Customer Needs

Customer needs relate directly to the dietary needs, preferences, and taste of the individual. This need is also reflected in the demographic makeup of the community. If students, tourists, and workingwomen can be identified as a substantial socioeconomic group within the area, the needs of these customers should be considered in planning menus.

Moreover, using competitor's menus as a guideline does not mean that you should duplicate them. It makes sense to adapt what seem to be successful items into your own menu, but consistent duplication should be avoided. Although there are types of restaurants, such as family-style steak houses, in which menus may be very similar, customers are looking for variety.

Once the menu is in operation, we will be able to determine customer needs more accurately using the sales mix. Items that are not selling over a period of time should be analyzed. Asking the customers for their comments is also a good way to evaluate customers need. Place comment cards in accessible locations, such as tent cards, tip trays, or the back of checks to give customers a chance to review all aspects of the restaurant and remark on them, good and bad.

2.4.4. Staffing Capability

Assessing the ability of your operational staff to produce the menu items is important to the success of the menu. Do not plan to serve items that your staffs or equipments are not capable of producing.

Staff is an important consideration. How well trained the staff are and how capable they are of producing intricate and highly technical presentations will influence the quality of the produced menu. Do not assume that everyone will always be there. Plan for such staffing problems as absenteeism and shortages.

Assume that the menu will have to be produced under some type of strain and take steps to accommodate those strains.

Menu items should be selected for which quality, proportioned, and partially pre-prepared food items can be obtained from area purveyors and distributor. Food manufacturing companies are continuously developing products to answer this need on the part of the restaurant industry. This does not mean that every menu must consist of very simply prepared items. Menus should, however, be balanced in preparation and production techniques, so that complicated, involved preparations are offset by simpler items that do not require highly skilled help. Let the trained personnel produce high-profit specialties while the regular staff produces the balance of the menu.

2.4.5. Marketability and Profitability

The final objective is to find menu items that will be marketable and profitable. In the foodservice industry, profits are obtained by pricing menu items to cover the costs of production and provide a margin of gain. Although marketing, or selling, is ultimately judged from the standpoint of profit, marketing consist of finding marketable items and presenting them to the customer in an attractive, appealing manner. Finding marketable items depends a great deal on the menu planner's ability to determine needs and to read customers trend. Keeping abreast of changes in consumer spending habits and the popularity of new items will help. Once the marketable menu items have been found, the menu planer must develop effective marketing techniques to sell them.

The initial step in marketing is the placement of the selection on the physical menu. How well the customer can see, read, and understand the item description will affect how well the dish will sell. The next phase of marketing is the understanding how the description will affect the customer's senses. Menu description, trigger responses in the customer's eyes, nose, mouth, and stomach,

activating the pituitary glands and causing a degree of desire or repulsion. Although written copy can make most items sound tantalizing, the menu planner should consider, at this stage, how the actual dish will look, taste, and smell, alone and in conjunction with other selections.

2.5. MENU PLANNER

According to the importance of the menu, the person who is doing the menu planning or we call menu planner should be skilled and suited to the job. This person should know the needs of the operation and the market. He or she should also know a lot about foods, how they should be combine and how they should be prepared and presented. The menu planner has to be aware of how operational constraints such as cost and available skilled labor must be consider in menu development. The menu planner should also be able to visualize how the menu will appear graphically. Communication is a primary requisite of a written menu, and the one who prepare it should be aware of what should be communicated to the patrons.

Menu planning is a time consuming and detailed task and should not be attempted when a person is tired or rushed or not in a proper frame of mind to do the job. A combination of operational and communication skills plus mental alertness will make menu planning a manageable project.

Considering all of that, there are several things really needed by the menu planner such as a quiet room where one can work without any disturbance. A large desk or table is needed so materials can be spread out. These include a file or historical records on the performance of the past menus, a menu reminder list, a file of menu ideas, and sales mix data indicating which items may draw patrons away from special occasion and holiday menus should **be on** hand. Cost and the seasonality of possible menu items should also be available.

Responsibility for developing the menu may begin with the chef, individually or collaboration with the owner/manager and perhaps cooks and servers. In some restaurants, the guestss and servers are also asked for input.

which makes for team consensus building and a feeling of "ownership" of certain dishes (Nancy L. Scanlon, 1990).

2.6. DEVELOPING THE MENU REPERTORY

Menu planning like every phase of the foodservice industry, requires organization. The menu planner searches for food items that will satisfy the needs of the customer, restaurant, and profit margin, and suit the style and cuisine of the overall operation. Once found, these items must be put into some form of organization so that they can be used to maximum benefit. **The menu repertory is a file system that identifies all the food items a kitchen can produce, provides a cross reference for recipe and costing information, and supplies easy guidelines for using and matching the different items.**

Every item listed in the menu repertory is assigned an index number and backed up with *specifications, a standard recipe card, and a standard cost card*. Accompanying this main list are the recipe and cost card for the stocks, sauces, dough, and other major ingredients that are used in a number of recipes. **The purpose of the file is to provide the executive chef and the foodservice manager with all the information they need about the menu.** The file contains a categorized listing of recipes, each of which has been tested for production consistency, and given an updated cost card, and can be properly priced at the correct food-cost percentage.

When the general outlines for the selection of menu items have been established (according to cuisine, customer needs, dietary trends, production requirements, and desire average check), the process of menu item selection can begin. This process is illustrated below:

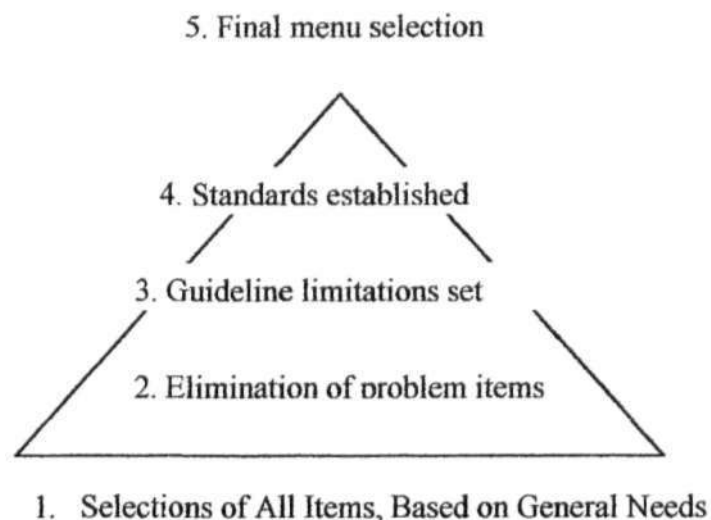


Figure 2-1: The process of elimination that takes place in developing the menu repertory

Source: Nancy L. Scanlon, 1990 p. 93.

In the first phase of menu selection, all of the items in a given food category that meet the general requirements are considered. In the second phase, any items that present production, cost, truth-in-menu, or other problems are eliminated.

Equipment capability is a major concern in selecting menu items. The menu planner must consider the types of equipment and the cooking-load capacity for each piece of equipment. Recipes will be selected according to the ability of the kitchen to produce the item at peak periods. Each item is also evaluated for preparation and holding problems. Foods that hold up well for periods of time under refrigeration and reheating are wise choices. Those that have a tendency to break down in a short time or change color would not be suitable.

A menu selection that is time consuming to prepare or has highly technical steps in production should be eliminated unless production capability is guaranteed or there are special considerations. As discussed earlier, the staff's ability to produce a menu is a paramount consideration. The suggestion to develop menu items around the availability of pre-prepared products does not mean that quality should be sacrificed. On the contrary, by choosing quality products as a base of production, the consistency of the finished item is more controllable. By

increasing a portion of the food cost and decreasing the labor cost, the overall cost of the item balances out.

In the third phase of menu selection, guidelines to the number of items that will be included on the menu are set. There should always be at least three times as many items in the menu repertory as are offered in the menu. If four soups are to be offered, for example, the soup section of the menu repertory should include twelve different kinds of soup. The soup section of the menu repertory is then further classified according to consistency, color, and method of preparation among other characteristics, to ensure that a balanced variety of soups will be available for substitution. The other categories of the menu repertory (meat, fish, and so on) are also classified in this manner, according to the appropriate characteristics of the food.

Using this section of the menu repertory, the chef will be able to prepare different soups to take advantage of seasonal foods, reconstitute leftover items, or simply provide the customers with a balanced variety of colors, textures, and temperatures.

In the fourth phase of menu selection, standards are set for each item in the menu repertory: specifications, a standard recipe card, and a standard cost card. Each item in the menu repertory is tested and retested until a recipe is produced that will consistently yield a certain number of portions of the required quality. Next, a standard cost card is prepared for each recipe. The cost card is an accurate statement of all the ingredients, cost, individual portion cost, and the desired food-cost percentage from which to calculate the selling price. Cost card can be updated quickly against the current purchasing records. A specification is made up on any item not currently included in the general purchasing list.

As the selection of menu items goes into the fifth and final stage, a further refinement must take place. Entree selections are chosen first, on the basis of general cuisine, number of entrees to be offered, types of entrees (fish, beef, lamb, or veal, for example), and method of preparation (roasting, broiling, grilling, and so on). Decisions are also based on the available equipment and its cooking-load capabilities. After the entrees are chosen, the remaining items are selected by category and then balanced against entrees individually. Vegetables, for instance,

were previously chosen as a group in the third phase and balanced for contrasting texture and color. A selection of creamed spinach, sauteed zucchini and onion, creamed corn, and whipped butternut squash would have provided a variety of colors, but the textures of all four items are creamy or runny. French green beans, kernel corn with onions and red pepper, sauteed tomatoes and zucchini, and creamed spinach were determined to be a better choice. Now, these vegetables are reviewed separately and matched with entrees on the basis of suitability. To match entrees with surrounding items, a menu suitability chart is drawn up like this for

example:

	Glazed Carrots	Broccoli	Mushroom, sauteed	Green Beans Amandine	Asparagus	Leeks, au gratin	Spinach, souffle	Brussels Sprouts	Zucchini with Tomato and Onion	Duchess Potatoes	Chateau Potatoes	Rice Pilaf
Salmon Steak												
Filet of Sole												
Swordfish												
Salmon Steak												
Prime Rib												
Braised Steak												
Sirloin Steak												
Sauteed Veal												
Veal Breast												
Lamb chops												
Poached Chicken												
Chicken Breast												
Duck Breast												
Duck a l'Orange												

Source : Nancy L. Scanlon, 1990, page 96

When the final menu items are selected, the chef and restaurant manager take one last step to ensure quality control in production over an extended period of time. Specifications for each menu item as it will be presented to the guests are

drawn up. Each specification includes all of the items that will be included on the plate. Each item is broken down according to its portion size—a 6-ounce filet, 1 cup of rice, and so on. Any garniture is established—2 thin lemon slices, 3 sprigs of parsley, or whole curly endive lettuce leaves as a plate liner. The presentation is specified according to the plate size, underliner, or dish. Items are plated following the specifications exactly. Photographs are then taken of the item in its ideal presentation state. A synopsis of the specification is typed on a card with a photograph next to it, laminated, and posted at the pick-up point for that item in the kitchen. *The result is that both kitchen staff and servers are constantly reminded that there are specifications for this item.* Acting as quality control inspectors, line cooks and servers now have the responsibility of making sure that **the** items appear on the correct serving dishes with the appropriate garnish and in the specified portion amounts. *A consistent complaint of guests who return often to restaurants is that a dish one night is not the same dish two weeks later.*

SPECIFICATION FOR:		DATE:	
RESTAURANT:			
ITEM NAME:			
INGREDIENTS	PORTION BREAKDOWN	GARNITURE	PRESENTATION

Figure 2-2: Specification chart for Individual Menu Items

Source: Nancy L. Scanlon, 1990 p. 97.

Both profit and customer satisfaction can be seriously affected by inconsistent presentation and portion control. The specifications also act as guidelines to the purchasing agent who can review them quickly to see what can be affected by price or quality changes.

The final menu selection should offer a tempting variety of foods, contrasting in taste, texture, color, and style of preparation. To obtain fresh ideas

for menu presentations, the menu planner should consult cookbooks, foodservice industry publications, and other reference sources. In addition, the menu planner should be familiar with all techniques of preparation and production, and should know the characteristics of foods from the raw state to the finished product, particularly the holding properties of individual foods-changes in color, texture, and risk of spoilage when foods are stored at hot or cold temperatures. Research and experience are the best guides to producing creative, successful menus.