



“DISHING IT OUT” THE BOHSE WAY:

Operating Your Food Services as a “Business”

What’s your bottom line? Is it breaking even, a profit or loss? What revenue and/or funding sources does your food service rely on? Public-government grants or contracts, participant contributions and/or fees, fee-for-service ventures? Running a food service operation is a business no matter who is paying the bills. And those paying the bills want and should expect “the best for the buck!”

The food service world is multifaceted, from recruitment and training, kitchen design, and menu planning; to food purchasing, food preparation, safe food handling, service, and monitoring. Each part is critical to achieving the desired results—that is, operating your food services efficiently and cost-effectively and keeping your “customers” or participants happy and coming back because you provide appetizing and nourishing meals.

Starting with your programs stated “Mission,” your target customer base is determined—mature adult lunches at the senior center, home delivered meals, meals for day care participants, etc. If your organization has a “Vision,” what are its implications to food services? Are expansions and/or changes in the existing services to be planned and implemented in the near future? These may include simply changes to the menu or offering a salad bar. It may include offering a second meal or weekend meals to the homebound. Or it may include venturing into the world of private catering.

The tools to meeting your organizations Mission and Vision related to food services means collaboration within the organization and with funders as well as with representatives of the individuals and communities served. It means evaluating what you are doing now and what you are capable of doing. Often the existing kitchen facility will determine your capacity for change. Likewise, the kitchen layout and availability of storage, preparation and service equipment, the experience and expertise of kitchen staff, and the access to food and supply resources are integral parts of the food service system.

Future articles presented by Bohse & Associates will highlight specific aspects of the food service operation in an effort to help your organization recognize the important elements of the food service operation and run it as a business.