



The Missing Components of Today's Hospitality Curriculum

By Mark Kelhofer, CFBE, CTA, MBA

Over the past ten decade of professionally speaking not only at tradeshow and industry events, but also volunteering to speak at a numerous hospitality management and culinary programs, I have been able to identify some opportunities with the various program curriculums that I have been exposed to. In general, I have identified a number of topic areas of the programs where critical changes are needed not only to improve the overall program, but better prepare the students for today's workforce challenges. It is well known that the number of business failures in the industry are quite high. Improvements in the curriculum can install a new era of discipline and knowledge to prevent these failures. These changes certainly would prepare the student to better be able to manage the difference facets of the business.

Although there may be cases where some of the courses below may be present, very rarely are ALL the courses part of the curriculum:

Food, Beverage, & Labor Cost Management. Few have a solid course in cost management. In many cases, a purchasing class is offered where recipe documentation, recipe costing, and cost management comprises of a chapter and it is a just a brushstroke on such a vital component of management. Ideally, there should be a solid cost management course that does not just end at the conclusion of the term, but lives on in real application throughout the remainder of the program. In addition to the course, the concepts that the course teaches should be

applied in future courses as well. As an example, in a food preparation course, they should apply recipe documentation and costing learned from the course as part of their ongoing experience.

Hospitality Accounting. In many cases, a traditional financial accounting course may be required which instructs students generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP), debit and credit rules, transactions, and basic financial statement preparation and analysis, but not as it relates to the hospitality industry. In most cases, these courses are taught by certified public accountants (CPAs) and possibly other certifications, but almost certainly, no hospitality experience. There are significant differences between financial accounting and hospitality accounting. As an example, cost of goods sold (COGS) is very different for hospitality operations versus manufacturing operations. By sending hospitality and culinary students to the standard financial accounting course does them a disservice.

Entrepreneurship. Many students, especially culinary students, as a result of their education, has a dream and desire to start a business. In most cases it may be an elective course, but not required. Students have no real experience to the components of a business plan. As an example, students are not example to the true start up costs for an operation. Equipment costs alone would open their eyes to the reality of the investment needed. Today's students not only should exposed to financial side of the business, but also the other components (i.e. marketing and advertising, human resources, etc.). By adding entrepreneurship course can only benefit the student.

In addition to these courses above, there are some skills and value added programs that can be implemented to compliment the overall programs:

Hospitality Related Certificates. As a value add service to students, there should be certificate exams to test their proficiency. When the students receives a certificate, it enhances their resume and Linked In profile greatly and makes them more attractive to prospective employer. The American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI.org) is one association that can provide certificate programs in a wide array of subjects. Student will always benefit from this value added service. When it can, certificate programs should be implemented to make the students more marketable to the industry.

Applied Math. General math skills need to be improved. Unit of measure of conversions, as an example, should be taught and reinforced constantly. Students in today's classroom experience, still have a real fear of math and how to convert conversions properly. Struggles still exist, as an example, converting a percentage to a decimal or understanding quantities to convert certain unit of measures (i.e. that there are 128 fluid ounces to one gallon). The understanding of densities, yields, weights, and measures is knowledge that every student should possess. They do not need to be incredible mathematicians, but they certainly need the basics reinforced throughout the program.

Hopefully with these changes, we'll see a real shift in how prepared the students are once they graduate. The goal would be to better prepare the student not only to manage the operation, but be successful in doing so.

Mark Kelnhofer, CFBE, CTA, MBA, is the President and CEO of Return On Ingredients LLC and has nearly three decades in management accounting experience including 17 years restaurant and foodservice industry. Additionally, he is also adjunct faculty at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio for their Hospitality Management program and Georgetown University, in Washington, DC, for their Global Hospitality Leadership (GLH) masters program. He has published several books, numerous articles, and a periodical publication entitled [FB&L] Food, Beverage, and Labor Cost Control Quarterly, He can be reached at (614) 558-2239 and Mark@ReturnOnIngredients.com.



BRINGING THE ART AND THE NUMBERS TOGETHER TO MAXIMIZE QUALITY AND PROFITABILITY

- Recipe Documentation
- Recipe Costing
- Menu Development
- Menu Engineering
- Wine List Marketing

614.558.2239
ReturnOnIngredients.com



Left Brain

Right Brain