

Module 3, Session 1

Description of slides

Slide 1 - Module 3

Food Service management

Slide 2 - Session 1

This section will present issues such as consumer service systems, with attention paid to the adopted production system. This section will also present the most common causes of food waste when serving meals in a catering facility.

Slide 3 - Consumer service in a food service establishment

Consumer service in a catering establishment, regardless of its specificity, is one of the key aspects of the business. Consumer service is a multidimensional issue, taking into account such aspects as:

- The quality of meals served.
- The competence of the service staff.
- The appropriate equipment and finishing of the dining room are needed.
- The guest service system was used.

Let's look at these elements because every consumer will have certain expectations. Every consumer using the services of a food service establishment expects dishes of appropriate quality. Quality for each consumer may mean a set of different features. But they will certainly expect to be served tasty, safe dishes. An important quality feature is the temperature of the dish served.

The staff serving in the consumer room plays a huge role in customer service. They should be professional and well-acquainted with the menu offered to guests. The staff in the consumer room should know what products the dishes served are made from. Appropriate individual features, such as communication skills, care for appearance, and friendliness should also characterize the staff in the customer room.

Consumer service in a food service establishment also involves using the appropriate equipment and finishing the consumer room. It is essential to properly prepare the place for eating meals, paying attention to, among other things, the room's cleanliness, table linen and tableware, and the good technical condition of all elements with which the customer comes into contact.

Consumer service is inextricably linked to the guest service system adopted in a given establishment, i.e. how ready-made dishes are served to them. Depending on the situation, consumers will pay attention to the speed of service, including the menu's availability and the range of dishes served.

It should be emphasized that without an efficiently organized consumer service, it is not possible for the establishment to function properly and, above all, it is impossible to guarantee consumer satisfaction. Therefore, in this part, special attention will be paid to guest service systems in catering establishments and to the generated food waste at this stage.



Slide 4 - Consumer Service Systems

The following consumer service systems are used in food service establishments: waiter service, self-service and self-service combined with waiter service.

The choice of one of the three mentioned consumer service systems depends primarily on the establishment's type and standard. The individual needs and requirements of the guests served are also important in this choice, including, above all, the speed of the service provided. There are also facilities, such as hotels, where more than one service system can be used, e.g. in a hotel restaurant, it will be waiter service; in a breakfast buffet, self-service combined with waiter service; and in an employee canteen - self-service.

Slide 5 - Waiter service

Waiter service is a common form of customer service in restaurants, cafés, and various sit-down receptions, e.g. wedding receptions.

In its simplest version, this service system consists of a waiter serving a guest at a table, i.e., taking orders, delivering them to the table and, after the guest has finished eating, billing the guest for the service and cleaning the table.

Very often, especially in restaurants with a high standard of service, the waiter greets guests when they enter the premises. Data in the literature indicate that the proper way of greeting a guest by the restaurant staff is about 50% of success, and the other 50% is the kitchen. After greeting, the waiter leads the guest to the table. After familiarizing themselves with the menu card, the consumer places an order with the waiter. The waiter should know the current menu of dishes and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages to assist guests. Guests must receive basic information about the menu, such as the ingredients used and the dish preparation method.

Therefore, an essential issue in reducing food waste is the continuous training of servers in a given establishment to advise guests on the dishes they order. Matching the dish to the consumer's preferences, both in terms of the assortment and the size of the portion, is one of the effective ways to reduce food waste in catering establishments.

The waiter should also be available to the guest to replenish drinks or snacks after the order has been placed.

Finally, after settling the guest's bill for the service provided, the waiter clears the table and prepares it for the next guest. There are more formal and sophisticated styles of waiter service, as well as more casual ones. There are several systems of waiter service.

Slide 6 - Waiter Service Systems - American service

The American service (also known as the German or plate system) involves the waiter bringing portioned dishes from the kitchen. The process of serving and decorating takes place in the kitchen, out of the customer's sight. The waiter's task is to serve the dish directly to the table.



The American system of waiter service has many advantages, including the possibility of shortening the service time and requiring less small equipment and dishes. This system also has disadvantages, such as the small variety of services or the inability to adjust the size of the portions to the consumer's preferences, which is of great importance in reducing the so-called plate leftovers.

Slide 7 - Waiter Service Systems - French service

French service is a very formal and sophisticated style of service that is rarely used today. There are two styles of waiter service in the French system. In the first, the waiter brings unportioned ingredients from the kitchen and, on a special flambéing trolley (called gueridon) placed next to the guests' table, cuts, fillets, seasons, and flambés and prepares sauces. Therefore, the dishes are finished and presented at the customer's table.

In the second style of French service, the so-called banquet (banquet French service), the meal is prepared in the kitchen and served by the waiter from a platter to each guest's plate.

This style of service is undoubtedly very attractive to guests. It also allows for the individual consumer's preferences to be taken into account during the preparation of the dish, which is of great importance in reducing food waste.

It also has disadvantages. Namely, it requires high skills and extensive training of employees serving consumers. Due to the use of numerous additional equipment, including trolleys placed at the guests' table, this system requires extra space in the consumer room.

Slide 8 - Waiter Service Systems - English service

English-style waiter service involves presenting the customer with the dishes served on platters placed on a waiter's trolley or an auxiliary table. The waiter serves each guest individually, starting with the host. To a small extent, dishes can be finished in front of the guests. English service involves individual service, which ensures that direct contact between the guest and the service is maintained, thus making them feel valued. The guest, in constant contact with the waiter, can choose a dish and indicate the size of the portion. English service requires waiters to perform the correct order of activities, in addition to good manners and impeccable appearance. Therefore, similarly to the French style, high waiter skills related to serving guests are required. English service works well at parties with a small number of guests or at special dinners for couples. In a restaurant, it can be used as an additional service for special occasions.

Slide 9 - Waiter Service Systems - Russian service

Russian-style waiter service provides guests with platters, salad bowls, portioned dishes, and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Guests serve themselves, serving dishes from platters, tureens, and salad bowls and passing them on to the next guests.



During service, the waiter successively brings hot dishes and snacks, refills dishes on platters, and replaces dirty dishes and cutlery with clean ones.

This system is often used at family and friends celebrations, e.g., weddings, christenings, birthdays, etc.

The advantages of this waiter service system include the ability to serve many guests in a relatively short time. For example, this would be impossible to achieve in an English service. Another advantage is the ability to prepare tables in advance. This results from the fact that organizers usually plan such events even several months in advance. It should also be mentioned that in this system, waiters are not required to have as much experience as, for example, in a French service.

And what are the disadvantages of the Russian waiter service system? Firstly, there is a need to prepare many dishes for one event. Similarly to plate service, the disadvantages include the limited contact between the waiter and the guest. And finally, one of the key disadvantages of this **system is leaving unconsumed dishes on the platters displayed on the tables.**

Slide 10 - Self-service

As a consumer service system, self-service involves the establishment's customers taking over the activities performed by waiters to a certain extent.

After familiarizing themselves with the range of dishes served, the guest selects dishes served in the buffet (meals and beverages) and takes them to their table.

The consumer is also responsible for removing the dishes and cutlery after the meal. A buffet can serve everything: hot and cold snacks, salads, main courses, soups, desserts, and even beverages. Self-service is commonly used in fast-food restaurants, employee canteens, cafeterias, and catering outlets, where speed and convenience are the priorities.

Slide 11 - Conditions of the self-service system

The basic feature of a self-service system is the speed of service. The following conditions regarding service organisation should be ensured. It is important to remember that the menu should be visible to consumers so that they can familiarize themselves with the range of dishes served before they approach the buffet counter. For example, the menu should be placed well-displayed above the row of service devices. It is a good idea to include information such as ingredients, logos of allergens contained in it, weight, price, or a photo next to the dish's name. This information is important not only from the point of view of the speed of the consumer's choice but also to limit the possibility of leaving so-called plate leftovers, i.e. food not consumed by the consumer and left on the plate.

Research indicate that compared to waiter service, the largest share of plate waste is observed after meals served at a self-service buffet.

Customers, first of all, are often unaware of food ingredients, which can lead to ordering dishes that will be left unfinished. Secondly, they receive too much food that they cannot consume.



The more information consumers receive about the dish they order before placing them, the lower the risk of leaving plate leftovers.

Slide 12 - Conditions of the self-service system

Serving dishes in a self-service buffet also gives a greater possibility of individual selection of dishes (for example, giving up starch additions) than serving meals by waiters. It is recommended that the menu is not excessively extensive in facilities serving meals based on a self-service system. Too rich a range of dishes extends the consumer's decision-making process. A rich offer also contributes to consumers taking more significant quantities of dishes that are not eaten.

Slide 13 - Conditions of the self-service system

Other conditions of the self-service meal service system related to the establishment's offer are:

- meals should be pre-portioned when displayed in the buffet; thanks to this, on the one hand, the customer will quickly compose their set, and on the other hand, their contact with the dishes in the buffet will be limited.
- the assortment should be adapted to demand; do not serve too many dishes based on the same raw material
- finally, the last essential element in reducing food waste is that not all prepared portions of a dish should be placed in the buffet; some should be stored in the refrigerator in the back and served after prior heating as needed.

Slide 14 - Buffet arrangements in the self-service system

As already emphasized when discussing one of the previous slides, dishes are served in a buffet in the self-service system. Expeditionary buffets for serving hot and cold dishes, drinks, and desserts can be set up in various arrangements. The following are distinguished:

- linear buffet
- stand buffet
- window buffet
- bar buffet

In open food service establishments, we most often encounter linear or stand buffets. So, let's take a look at them.

Slide 15 - Linear buffet

The stations are usually arranged in one continuous line in a linear service system. At the beginning of the line, the consumer should be able to take a tray with cutlery. Therefore, there should be a tray and cutlery dispenser here. In the simplest version, they are placed on a neutral counter.

A cash register is planned at the end of the line.



The consumer takes a tray and, walking along the counter, selects the displayed dishes and beverages. The length and form of the linear buffet depend on the number of consumers served and the assortment served. In small facilities, devices for dispatching hot dishes can be placed at the beginning of the counter.

However, the most common arrangements, especially in larger facilities serving more consumers, are cold appetizers, hot dishes, salads, desserts, and beverages.

Moving consumers along one line guarantees quick and efficient service, and the serving lines take up a relatively small area.

Slide 16 - Examples of linear buffet configurations

The display devices and furniture in a linear buffet can be arranged in various configurations. The buffet can be in the form of one line, taking the shape of the letter I, L or U. When it is necessary to serve many consumers quickly, two or even three buffet lines can be used.

The slide presents an example of a double line in the form of the letter E.

Two dispatch lines can also be arranged in the shape of the letters V and W.

Slide 17 - Buffet in the stand system

The stand service system serves individual dishes and beverages at appropriately grouped stands. Buffets are placed in different places in one room or a separate area of the same hall, acting as a serving area. The remaining part of the hall is designated for the consumer hall. There is a cash register between the serving area and the consumer hall. The number of stands depends on the size of the establishment, while the layout and order of the stands are optional. To improve work organization, some stands can be combined. All dishes are displayed in appropriate dispatch devices and can be served by service staff or partially taken by consumers. A difficulty in this service system is the intersection of paths of individual consumers choosing dishes from different buffets.

Slide 18 - Window and bar buffet

The organization of the buffet in the **window system** is based on serving dishes through a window connecting the dining room with the kitchen. There is no display of dishes, only a list of them. After paying at the cash register, the consumer goes to the window where he receives the food and drinks. The location of the cash registers, the serving window, and the window for returning dirty dishes should ensure one-way traffic for consumers. This system is still used in school, small company canteens, and milk bars.

In a fast food chain, the service system is based on the customer approaching the cash register, ordering a specific dish, receiving it on a tray and leaving cash register station after paying. The menu is displayed in the form of illuminated advertisements. This system can function in those establishments where the menu is limited.

The **bar system** is a mixed buffet and waiter service system. Dishes are prepared in the buffet line in the presence of customers.



Consumption can take place at the bar counter or a table in the dining room. The bartender (at the counter) or waiter serving the table is responsible for serving customers and collecting payments. Appropriate workstations must be designated for preparing dishes and drinks behind the counter. The size of the bar counter and the number of devices depends on the number of seats at the counter and the type of dishes served. A life cooking station is often organized at buffets and used to prepare simple dishes (e.g. scrambled eggs and omelette) directly in the dining room, in front of the guests.

Slide 19 - Expedition of dishes in the aspect of the applied dish production system

The waiter service system, or self-service, is a conventional type of service used in most food service establishments.

Food of varying degrees of processing is used for production in these systems. The diagram shows that raw materials requiring a complete technological process can be used. Semi-finished products such as pre-portioned meat or peeled vegetables are also used. Some food products are purchased in ready-made form and stored in refrigerated conditions before serving. A characteristic feature of conventional dispatch systems is that ready-made meals are served to consumers in the same place where they were prepared.

Following receipt and appropriate storage of food items and ingredients, menu items should be prepared as near to service time as possible.

Slide 20 - Commissary Food Service System

These commissary systems are characterized by a centralized food procurement and production facility, with distribution of prepared menu items to several remote areas for final preparation and service.

The centralized production facilities are often referred to as central commissaries or food factories, and the service units as satellite service centers. The potential for economies from large-scale purchasing and production in a central facility has been used to justify design and construction of these complex operations with expensive automated equipment for production of foods from unprocessed states.

The concept of centralized production and meal distribution assumes greater food production automation, as well as the significant use of unprocessed raw materials. This food is usually purchased in large quantities. After delivery, it is stored in a central unit under appropriate conditions. The production of ready meals takes place in the central unit. The ready meals are then transported to the dependent units in frozen, chilled or heated, warm form. Highly specialised distribution equipment may be needed depending on the type and location of the satellite kitchens.



Slide 21 - Distribution systems to satellite unit

The organization of centralized production requires planning a distribution system. Ready meals can be transported in chilled, frozen or warm form. Depending on the form of ready meals and the infrastructure of the central kitchen and the satellite unit, the meal distribution system should be planned accordingly.

In general, ready meals can be transported in bulk container when meals prepared in the central kitchen are transported to dependent facilities in bain-marie or thermoses (collectively), and portioning or completing meals for individual consumers takes place in the dependent unit.

The transport of ready meals can take place in individual trays or packaging. Then, the completion of sets for the consumer takes place on the premises of the central unit - from where they are dispatched to dependent facilities.

Slide 22 - Bulk trolley distribution system

In the bulk trolley distribution system, portioned or unportioned meals are placed in Gastro-Norm containers, marked GN, which are placed in specially insulated bain-marie trolleys or thermoses, in which they are transported to dependent facilities. Gastronomic containers and bain-marie trolleys or thermoses can be of different sizes. The most common bain-marie trolleys have 2, 3 or 4 GN 1/1 containers. Bain-marie trolleys are electrically heated, thanks to which they are kept previously prepared and placed in them hot. Thermoses are made of stainless steel, polyethylene, or plastic and are highly durable. Thanks to appropriate insulation, polyurethane foam is used for this purpose, and thermoses are characterized by maintaining the proper temperature for a specified period. The average drop in temperature of meals transported using thermoses is 2 - 4°C per hour.

Slide 23 - Tray distribution system

In the tray distribution system, the sets for the consumer are completed in the central kitchen, where they are distributed to satellite units. Because the production of meals in this system is highly automated, this type of distribution is particularly recommended in hospitals.

The distribution area of the central kitchen is most often equipped with a unique moving conveyor belt designed for completing meals. The conveyors can be of different lengths, as their dimensions are adapted to the number of meals served. Then, individual sets are transported in special trolleys on trays or thermoses on trays to dependent units, where they are issued to consumers/patients. Each tray is individually assigned to a patient by the diet they use. To distribute meals to patients more efficiently, the tray is specially marked. A card is placed on it, containing information such as the patient's personal data (name and surname), the hospital ward where the patient is staying, and the patient's room number. Such markings reduce the likelihood of errors when distribution staff distribute trays to patients.



Slide 24 - Stages of food waste in gastronomy

In gastronomy, there are three basic stages in which food is wasted. The first is the delivery and storage of raw materials and semi-finished products; for example, food is thrown away because it has exceeded its expiration date.

Next, food is wasted in the kitchen, at the stage of preparing meals.

The last stage at which food is wasted is servit to consumers (post-kitchen). In this case, we are dealing with excess prepared dishes (overproduction) and plate leftovers.

Overproduction is food prepared in excess in specific quantities or portions.

Surplus-prepared meals, if uncontaminated, can then be consumed up to 48 hours after preparation, provided they are suitably packaged and stored at refrigerated temperatures. Surpluses can be classed as unused food waste, as they are finished products that have not been used, distributed and/or consumed.

Plate leftovers are meals given to consumers that they have not fully consumed. Therefore, They are bacteriologically contaminated by the people who have eaten the dish, so such leftovers should never be reused to re-prepare dishes. There is a risk of spreading infectious diseases, such as hepatitis B.

Slide 25 - Food waste causes at the food service stage (post-kitchen)

The problem in gastronomy that affects food waste is unpredictable demand.

Throwing away food in catering establishments due to preparing too much food has been shown in studies by many researchers.

Of course, in most cases, excess food is often stored at refrigerated temperature until the next day, such dishes as soups/broths/sauces, meat, fish or poultry dishes, salads and vegetable salads. Unfortunately, a common practice is throwing away unreleased, prepared excess dishes due to the lack of possibility of storing them or using them for another dish, especially dishes with green vegetables, potatoes and vegetables, or also salads and vegetable salads.

It is believed that producing food in large quantities minimizes costs, but in reality, it causes more waste than preparation to order or cooking to order. The problem with estimating the necessary number of portions exists, especially in facilities where dishes are served in a self-service system.

Slide 26 - Food waste causes at the food service stage (post-kitchen)

The list of causes of food waste in gastronomy often includes the failure to adjust portion sizes to consumer preferences. This reason is related to the mass of plate leftovers generated.

Many establishments offer a constant portion of served dishes without the possibility of choosing a smaller quantity. This is often a problem for women and children using catering services.

The plate size may also be problematic; its non-standard size may make it difficult for new guests to assess the volume of the dishes served.



Finally, the promotional strategy of the establishment is related to the creation of plate leftovers, for example, allowing ordering meal components in quantities exceeding the capabilities of consumers. In the United States, the offered portions are systematically increasing, which is used in the marketing activities of facilities providing catering services.

Slide 27 - Food waste causes at the food service stage (post-kitchen)

Other causes of food waste during the service stage are:

- food decoration,
- free snacks/free sauces/free dishes,
- service errors,
- unsatisfactory quality of served dishes
- consumer concerns about the safety of food served (suspicion about food quality);

Slide 28 - Food waste causes at the food service stage (post-kitchen)

One of the reasons for generating food waste in the catering industry is the low awareness of consumers.

The slide presents selected statements by employees of food service establishments in Warsaw (Poland). They come from a study carried out as part of the project "Food Trails. Supporting the creation of urban food policies in line with the FOOD2030 initiative" (Building pathways towards DOOD 2030-led urban food policies – FOOD TRAILS).

Statement of the first employee: *"Consumers often leave a lot on their plate. They don't always want to take it home with them, and we can't do anything about it."* Statement of the second employee: *"Consumers don't wonder what will happen to it. We even ask if they want to take it home, but they don't always want to."* Consumers don't know how much food is wasted in catering on a national, European or global scale. Not all of them wonder what happens to the leftovers they leave on their plate.

Slide 29 - Thank you

