Smart Snacks:
Strategies for Success

Marketing

- Appealing packaging and appetizing presentation is key to marketing your items. For example, rather than putting fresh veggies in a foam cup covered with cellophane, use clear plastic re-sealable containers so students can see what they are purchasing, and the item is convenient to take with them.
- Show off your products with colorful, uncluttered displays. Change up your signage and displays seasonally to keep things new and exciting.
- Make the serving area an inviting, friendly environment. Positivity from staff spreads easily to customers!
- Focus on the many options that students have, rather than what has changed under Smart Snacks.
- Educate and train food service staff on the benefits of selling healthier competitive foods. When staff members understand the "why" of Smart Snacks, they're likely to get on board!
- Marketing efforts should encompass your whole food service operation, not just competitive foods. Advertise the value, convenience, and healthfulness of both competitive foods and reimbursable meals to students, parents, teachers, and staff.

A few ideas for promoting your program:

- ✓ Conduct taste tests
- ✓ Develop a student advisory committee to gather input on new recipes and products
- ✓ Post a message promoting Smart Snacks on your school's website, Facebook page, and/or Twitter account
- ✓ Deliver a promotional message on the morning announcements highlighting new products or recipes
- ✓ Host a student recipe competition

Additional resources:

- DPI Team Nutrition's Smarter Lunchroom Training: http://ne.dpi.wi.gov/ne_tngrant
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Smart Snacks Resource page: https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/smart_snacks/
- USDA's School Breakfast Program Marketing page: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/marketing-ideas
- USDA's Healthier School Day Tools for Schools page: http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools

Portioning

- Be strategic when portioning competitive foods in order to maximize profit.
- Example:
  - A 12 ounce yogurt parfait sells for $1.75 and yields $0.15 of revenue per ounce.
  - A 6 ounce parfait size sells for $1.00 and yields $0.17 of revenue per ounce.
  - This simple change in portion size has increased your profit margin, as 12 ounces (two 6 ounce servings) now nets $2.00 instead of $1.75. Additionally, students may perceive the smaller parfaits as a bargain, as each is only a dollar.

Pricing

Advertise the value of your reimbursable meals! Help students and parents understand that it is a better deal to purchase a reimbursable meal rather than an a la carte entrée. As a reminder, an extra entrée sold a la carte needs to be priced to cover all costs. For example, if your paid reimbursable meal price is $2.65 you may wish to charge $2.40 for the extra entrée a la carte, so that students can purchase the whole reimbursable meal for only $0.25 more.

- The USDA requires that all costs including labor, food, supplies, etc. associated with the production and sale of non-program foods be covered by revenues from those foods.
- The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) recommends using an average of 40% food cost for those items requiring minimal labor.
    - Example: If an apple's raw food cost is $0.26, you would divide $0.26 by 40% (0.40) to reach the recommended selling price of $0.65.
- Vary your markup across non-program foods to remain competitive!
    - When you know that students can purchase chips at a neighborhood convenience store for $1.09, decrease the markup on your chip products to offer value. Charging $0.95 per bag would be beneficial in this situation, despite using a food cost percentage of 48%. You are charging what the market will bear, while remaining competitive with other retailers.
    - To compensate for products sold with a food cost percentage higher than 40%, you can sell other products at a lower food cost percentage. For example, if an apple's food cost is $0.26, you could sell it for $0.75 for a food cost percentage of 35% ($0.26 divided by 35% (0.35) = $0.75).
- Increasing your profit margins on the more popular foods will help offset items with low profit margins. For instance, a carton of milk may cost $0.26 but the market may only bear a $0.35 price point, demanding a high food cost percentage of 74%.

Wellness Policy

- Examine your local school wellness policy to ensure that other practices at your school align with the intention of Smart Snacks. For example, you may want to add a policy allowing only healthy birthday treats to be brought into the classroom, or a policy discouraging teachers from using food as a reward. These types of complementary practices will help ensure the entire school environment is sending consistent health messages to students.
- Promote your updated wellness policy throughout your school and community. Educate and involve students, parents, teachers, staff, and community members with your wellness committee, website postings, school papers, menus, etc. Create a culture of health in your school that celebrates the positive aspects of healthy food and physical activity.
- Smart Snacks truly needs to be a district-wide initiative. Making sure that your wellness policy supports the Smart Snacks guidelines will help everyone in your district understand the importance of healthy school meals, snacks, and beverages.

Visit Wisconsin DPI's Smart Snacks webpage for more resources:
http://fns.dpi.wi.gov/fns_smartsnacks

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