

## **STARBUCKS' EXPERIENCE AS A SOURCE OF QUALITY IDEAS FOR BELARUSIAN COFFEEHOUSES**

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All commercial foodservice operations have one thing in common: a financial objective to generate a profit from the sale of their food and beverage products. There are also some ways in which they are different. This article focuses on the unique characteristics of food services in Starbucks' coffeehouses.

What, if anything, can you do to better manage the foodservice operations (to reduce costs without sacrificing quality standards) and to develop more effective marketing (to increase guest counts, check averages, and revenues?). It's high time to get inspired by the positive experience of the most successful chain of the coffeehouses in the world which is growing by three to four stores a day – Starbucks Company.

Many guests of these restaurants have typically visited this or another restaurant in the chain. They know what to expect and use their experiences to determine whether future visits are likely to be enjoyable. Systems for food and drinks serving in Starbucks' coffeehouses is effectively designed to minimize unsuccessful service that can cause lowered food quality (such as cold food) and longer guest waits (for example, when a large volume of slow-to-prepare ice cream drinks hinders the production of other drinks). The speed and manner in which products are delivered to guests is very important: the perceived quality of service is an important factor considered by guests as they evaluate their food service experience.

In Starbucks' coffeehouses professional food and beverage servers must be knowledgeable (for example, about the available food or beverage products and about work tasks required to serve their guests). They must also be skilled (to deliver service meeting the foodservice operation's quality standards). As importantly, professional servers must have an attitude that emphasizes pleasing the guests. Every foodservice operation in Starbucks' must meet or

exceed the product, service, and environmental quality standards expected by the guests. These expectations are, however, not often the highest for the restaurant guests in our republic. Quality ideas of Starbucks' Company can be easily turned into a set of recommendations for Belarusian restaurants.

No restaurant can function properly unless the personnel are friendly. And there are slim chances of personnel being friendly unless Human Resources department does its job properly.

At Starbucks efficient HRM begins with efficient job postings. Unlike Belarusian employers who make quite impersonal want ads, Starbucks' HR managers make emphasis on the personal qualities they want to see in the candidates. This allows prospective employees to self-select themselves to a certain extent and make the job postings sound livelier [1].

Starbucks' managers have come up with an idea to call all their employees «partners». This is quite easy to implement in our country as well because the word «partner» is international [2].

Every partner hired for a retail job in a Starbucks store receives at least 24 hours training in the first two to four weeks which is aimed at developing a true connoisseur's palate from the start, by teaching trainees the basics about coffee and its rich history. They have opened Coffee Master Programme and those who complete all the stages including preparing complicated beverages and making a report at the Starbucks annual conference wear a black apron to set them apart [3]. It's no use for Belarusian coffeehouses to introduce suchlike complicated training programmes but putting more efforts and time into trying to make training an event for future co-workers may pay off by ensuring motivated personnel and low employee turnover.

It's worth paying attention to the fact that career paths in Starbucks are very structured. One will never see some of their vacancies advertised externally as they are keen to grow from within. They take an individual approach to employees since they want them to develop at a pace that's right for them. This means they will expect their partners to speak out and let them know they are ready to talk about progressing to the next stage [4].

By taking measures Starbucks can be proud of their competent personnel. No wonder that According to a Hewitt Associates Starbucks Partner View Survey, Starbucks employees have an 82% job satisfaction rate. This percentage is staggering compared to the industry average of 50% [5].

Starbucks' unique atmosphere is determined by a number of factors. First of all they create it in accordance with the needs of the customers by having launched "My Starbucks idea" project with the help of which each customer can suggest some ideas concerning service, products and special offers in the special section on their web-sites. Their ideas range from suggesting new

flavors to making a new logo for Starbucks' coffee [6]. Adapting this idea to our conditions it would be great to have suggestion boxes inside the coffeehouses because visiting web-sites of the restaurants on a regular basis is still not that popular with Belarusian customers.

Another tip helping to create a special atmosphere is to sell merchandise in the coffeehouses like bottled drinks, CDs, drinkware, gift packs. Apart from bringing additional profit merchandise contributes to creating a unique concept of any restaurant [7].

Despite the fact that the concepts of Belarusian restaurants differ a lot from that of Starbucks', using its ideas may boost the quality of service in local restaurants with the minimum amount of effort, money and time.

### **Literature**

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