

Manager's Corner

Getting Buy-In From School Administration and Staff

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NUTRITION



OPERATIONS



ADMINISTRATION



COMMUNICATIONS/
MARKETING

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Communication

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Institute of Child Nutrition

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PURPOSE

Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Table of Contents

Professional Standards	1
Introduction	1
Lesson Overview	2
Questions for Staff.....	3
Activity: Getting Buy-In	4
References.....	6

Professional Standards

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING TRAINING – 4100

Employee will be able to develop plans that include involvement with school and community members, empower school nutrition leaders, and address excellent customer service.

4120 – Program Promotion
Promote the Child Nutrition Program

4150 – School and Community Communication
Communicate within the school and to the community through multiple approaches to inform and educate stakeholders.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Getting Buy-In From School Administration and Staff is designed to empower managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes.

This lesson plan contains:

- Learning objective
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- An activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff

Lesson Overview

Instructions for lesson:

- Review the lesson objective and background information.
- Review why it is important.
- Ask staff the questions.
- Facilitate the activity outlined.
- Provide time for staff to ask questions.

Objective: Identify tips and techniques for getting buy-in from school administration and staff.

Background information: The school nutrition program is a business that requires buy-in from its funders (administrators, parents, and teachers) as well as the customers (students, staff, parents, and administrators). Buy-in means that the stakeholder (i.e., administration, staff, parents, and students) has indicated acceptance of the program and a willingness to actively support and participate in program activities.

Why it is important: Getting buy-in from school administration and staff helps to increase participation and involvement in the school nutrition program. It is mutually beneficial for stakeholders and school nutrition programs to have a positive working relationship. Your attitude each day helps provide a positive working relationship. Students, teachers, and administrators are more likely to eat with us when we provide excellent customer service.

Questions for Staff

- **Why is it important to get buy-in from school administration and staff?**

Answer:

- Administration and staff can model healthy eating behaviors and help encourage students to participate in school nutrition programs.
- Administration and staff can be advocates for the school nutrition program.
- Support from administration and staff can be leveraged when upgrades to school nutrition program spaces are needed.

- **What are some things our school nutrition department would like to do that requires buy-in from our school administration?**

Answer: Potential responses may include:

- Provide refreshments on Back-to-School Night and have the cafeteria as a showcase for parents and students.
- Purchase ball caps instead of hairnets to change the image to become more like a restaurant server.
- Host the monthly wellness team meetings and have members test taste new entrée items.
- Invite teachers into the cafeteria or our staff to the classroom to showcase new menu items and their health benefits.

- **What are some ways we can get buy-in from our school administration and staff?**

Answer: Potential responses may include:

- Host a celebrity server day. Invite the principal or local celebrity to serve lunch or breakfast on a certain day.
- Share your personal child nutrition program story.
- Invite the administration and staff to lunch and breakfast.
- Invite the administration to visit local farms when your program goes for a visit.
- Involve administration and staff in testing menu items.

- **What special events or occasions can you host to get the administration and staff involved?**

Answer: Potential responses include:

- Taste Testing
 - Holiday Meals
 - Themed Meal days (i.e., National Back-to-School Month, Chili day)
 - Foods to celebrate a school-wide initiative (i.e., foods that tie into a book or series)

Please note: The answers provided are only examples and are not an inclusive list of possible responses.

Activity: Getting Buy-In

Activity materials included in this document:

- **Getting Buy-In Activity Worksheet**

Materials provided by the school nutrition operation:

- School site or district holiday and events calendar
- Copies of handout
- Writing utensils

Activity Instructions:

- Ask participants to get into two teams, if you have a small staff have them work as a group.
- Ask participants to list ways they can get buy-in from administration and staff.
- Have participants list ways to incorporate their ideas to increase staff buy-in.
- Give participants a school site or district holiday and events calendar for inspiration.

Getting Buy-In

Instructions:

List ways you can get buy-in from administration and staff. List ways to incorporate your ideas to increase staff buy-in. Use a school site or district holiday and events calendar for inspiration.

Getting Buy-In

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Increasing Buy-In

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

References

United States Department of Agriculture. (2015). *Professional standards for school nutrition professionals*. Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>

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