

Marketing the School Nutrition Program: A Resource Guide for School Nutrition Professionals



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National Food Service Management Institute The University of Mississippi

Building the Future Through Child Nutrition

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the National Food Service Management Institute is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

MISSION

The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

VISION

The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

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MARKETING THE SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM: A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marketing and advertising are not new concepts in reaching children for food and beverage product sales. The debate over food and beverage marketing to children spans for at least a 30-year time frame, and involves the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and the United States Congress. These marketing and advertising efforts are generally positioned on mainstream media. However, public schools are not immune to marketing campaigns by food and beverage companies. Schools have been targeted for marketing purposes through food and beverage product sales, direct sales of food and beverages, indirect advertising, and market research among students (Story & French, 2004; Wilde 2009). Although the current changes to the National School Lunch Act reauthorization helps gain control over the outside influences of marketing and advertising to children and adolescents in the school setting, marketing and advertising can still be utilized by the school nutrition (SN) program to benefit the youth.

Previous National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division research has addressed the issue of branding in SN programs. Topics included identifying trends and barriers to implementing brand concepts in SN settings as well as identifying sustainable strategies, resources, and successful branding personalities. (Castillo & Nettles, 2011; Rushing & Asperin, 2010). This research has identified the potential for a successful marketing initiative in the local SN program that is designed to benefit the health and well being of school-age children. Rushing and Asperin (2010) identified that a school can effectively implement a branding

initiative if focus is given to four primary areas: aesthetics and décor, SN employees and their interactions with students, nutrition and health promotion through promotional materials, and school spirit incorporated into the décor, menu, staff uniform and promotional materials. Castillo and Nettles (2011) assessed perceptions, practices, barriers and advantages SN programs face when attempting to implement branding initiatives. Based on the research conducted in this national study, SN staff involvement, stakeholder support (students, school/district administration), and student outcomes would have a significant impact on implementing a marketing initiative in the local school. In addition, participants indicated that successful marketing initiatives should include poster/banners, school specific color schemes, and consistent marketing in the schools and district wide (Castillo & Nettles, 2011). Both findings indicated that a marketing initiative within the SN program can be successfully implemented if key components are employed.

The purpose of this research was to identify sustainable strategies, resources, and successful practices used by SN professionals to market the SN program, and to develop a research-based resource to guide SN professionals in marketing the SN program. Seven SN professionals were asked to serve on an expert panel, work group session to assist in the development of marketing practice statements and goals. This project also included a national review panel consisting of SN directors to evaluate a draft marketing resource designed from the marketing practice statements and goals identified by the expert panel. The review panel members evaluated the practice statements, goal statements, and the draft practice resource. Panel members also reviewed and assessed the content, scales, format, and usefulness of the resource as a self-assessment tool for SN professionals.

The *Best Practices for Marketing the School Nutrition Program* resource consists of sixteen goals and seventy-three best practice statements within six practice categories. The resource can be used as a self-assessment tool for SN professionals to develop, maintain, and review the local SN program's marketing plan. Once the marketing plan has been assessed using the current status area of the assessment tool, the SN professional can establish a plan of action to address and/or implement those practices identified as needing attention. The following are suggestions and implications for using the resource:

- The resource can be used to identify essential marketing practices to implement in the SN program.
- School nutrition professionals can use the resource to identify the roles of SN personnel, school district personnel, school personnel, and community personnel, and the resources required for planning, developing, and implementing policies and procedures related to marketing.
- The practice resource can be used to identify marketing-related training needs for SN personnel.
- School nutrition professionals can use the resource to establish a plan of action based on their assessment of the practice areas that require some attention.
- Additional resources in the reference list at the end of the best practice resource can also be used to assist with the implementation of marketing plans in SN programs.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing and advertising are not new concepts in reaching children for food and beverage product sales. The debate over food and beverage marketing to children spans at least a 30-year time frame, and involves the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and the United States Congress. Marketing to children and adolescents is prominent, because they spend billions of their own money on food and beverage purchases, and have significant influence on food purchases in their households (Story & French, 2004). In recent times, public schools have also been targeted as venues for marketing and advertising food and beverages. Some of the ways in which schools have been used for marketing purposes is through food and beverage product sales, direct sales of food and beverages, indirect advertising, and marketing research among students (Story & French, 2004; Wilde 2009). Although the current changes to the National School Lunch Act reauthorization helps gain control over the outside influences of marketing and advertising to children and adolescents in the school setting, marketing and advertising can still be utilized by the school nutrition (SN) program to benefit the youth.

According to current research, a common marketing strategy identified as successful in promoting and maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty is the development of a brand with a strong personality (Rushing & Asperin, 2010). Brand personality is defined as the “set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (Aaker, 1997; Marconi, 2000). A brand personality must have the following characteristics: deliberately coordinated elements of the brand’s marketing mix, a personality that is competitively distinctive and desirable, and the personality is robust and consistent over time and over media (Batra, Lehmann, & Singh, 1993; Lannon, 1993). Admittedly, the branding concept is fairly new in the SN setting; however,

developing a strong brand and creating an appealing brand personality for the SN program may be beneficial to increasing the student's desire to participate in the National School Lunch Program and to impact the SN program through financial gain. In addition, the ability of SN programs to clearly define its brand personality may have practical implications in the managerial, communicational, and operational decisions made in the SN program. Establishing a branding concept can aid in understanding the customer and their attitudes, provide a foundation for differentiation from competition, and guide operational decisions (Aaker, 1996).

In the SN setting, branding practices can be associated with packaging the SN program (menu merchandising, as well as cafeteria design and décor), keeping the communication to stakeholders consistent, guiding the personal interactions between SN staff and students, and designing marketing strategies to maximize the leverage that a well-established brand personality provides (Rushing & Asperin, 2010). Many SN professionals do not recognize that they have a "brand," and identify these strategies as being more of a marketing initiative, since they may not have a logo or name for their SN programs. A brand is neither a logo nor a name, but it is who you are, what your customers think of you, and what they say about your operation. It is, in essence, the SN program's identity. While marketing is how you raise awareness, promote your goods and services, and draw customers to your operation, it will also help to build the brand personality (Crutchfield, 2009; Klein, 2008).

Previous National Food Service Management, Applied Research Division research identified perceptions, practices, barriers and advantages SN programs face when attempting to implement branding initiatives. Based on survey responses of 208 participants in the national study, SN staff involvement, stakeholder support (students, school/district administration), and student outcomes would have a significant impact on implementing a marketing initiative in the

local SN program. In addition, participants indicated that successful marketing initiatives should include posters/banners, school specific color schemes, and consistent marketing in the schools and district-wide (Castillo & Nettles, 2011). These research findings helped to reinforce the importance of identifying the sustainable strategies, practices, and resources that are being successfully utilized by SN programs.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study included the following:

- Identify sustainable strategies, resources, and successful practices used by SN professionals to market the SN program.
- Develop a research-based resource to guide SN professionals in marketing the SN program.

METHOD

Research Plan

This research project was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved an expert panel of school nutrition (SN) directors who previously participated in the development and/or review of the *Marketing the School Nutrition Program* survey. The purpose of the expert panel was to assist in the development of marketing practice statements and goals. The information collected in Phase I was used to revise and format a draft practice statement resource. In Phase II, a national review panel consisting of SN directors participated in the evaluation of the resource for content clarity, accuracy, and usability, and the provision of comments and suggestions to improve the document. The comments provided by this group were considered for incorporation into the final marketing resource.

Informed Consent

The researcher for this project followed consent procedures established by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee at The University of Southern Mississippi. There were no identifying codes used to recognize participants involved in either Phase I or Phase II of this project. Expert panel and review panel members' agreement to participate in this research served as consent.

Phase I

Expert Panel

In Phase I of the research, an expert panel session was conducted with SN directors. A pool of expert panel members was selected from the list of SN directors who previously participated in the development and review of the National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division (NFSMI, ARD) survey, *Marketing the School Nutrition Program*.

Seven SN directors were identified and invited to participate in a day-and-a-half expert panel, work group session to assist in developing the marketing practice guide. Each participant received an e-mail to determine willingness to serve on the expert panel work group. The invitation explained the project and the purpose of the meeting, as well as provided the researcher's contact information for questions and concerns. Seven individuals agreed to participate as expert panel members. After the invitees agreed to participate, a confirmation letter was sent to each expert panel member, with additional information on the work group session and travel arrangements.

Each expert panel member received a pre-meeting packet that included a cover letter and a pre-meeting assignment form. The form was comprised of a draft list of marketing statements developed around six primary factors that contribute to marketing the SN program identified in previous NFSMI, ARD research: School Nutrition Staff Involvement, Development and Implementation, Advantages for Students, Advantages for Other Stakeholders, Stakeholder Support, and Communication. Expert panel work group members were provided with instructions to review the draft list of marketing statements prior to the meeting and to complete the pre-meeting assignment form, providing feedback on content, wording, and final selection of the statements as marketing practices for SN programs. These documents were collected at the close of the meeting in order to capture individual responses and comments.

The work group session was facilitated by one researcher, with two assistant moderators capturing the participants' comments. The panel was initially divided into two subgroups and given two objectives. The first objective was to discuss the outcomes of the pre-meeting document review and come to a consensus within the group as to whether each statement should be accepted, deleted, or modified. The second objective was for the subgroups to classify each

practice statement into the most appropriate practice area: School Nutrition Staff Involvement, Development and Implementation, Advantages for Students, Advantages for Other Stakeholders, Stakeholder Support, and Communication. Consensus building steps were then applied by the moderator to guide the two subgroups in the following tasks:

- Review the wording of each practice statement and take an appropriate action (keep, delete, or modify).
- Establish agreement on the practice statements.
- Classify statements under the appropriate research-based practice area.
- Discuss additional practice statements that subgroups identified as missing.

Statements classified by both subgroups under the same practice area were accepted as written without discussion. Statements categorized in the same practice area, but worded differently, were briefly discussed to resolve wording issues. Statements that subgroups categorized differently were discussed to determine the appropriate practice area, and whether the statement will be kept or modified to fit the practice area, or be deleted. Added statements were discussed to determine the classification of the statements.

After the expert panel work group session ended, researchers reviewed the work group results, and captured all of the agreed upon practice statements. Researchers drafted a work group summary for the expert panel to review, which included the practice categories, the practice statements, and goals created by the expert panel teams.

An e-mail was sent to each expert panel member providing an overview of the steps taken by the researchers after the conclusion of the expert panel work group session. Attached to the e-mail was a summary form designed for the panel members to evaluate the outcome of the work group session. Instructions for completing and returning the evaluation and the objectives

of the expert panel review were provided. Panel members were asked to confirm the following: the wording of the marketing practice statements from the work group session; the placement of the marketing practice statements into the appropriate category; whether the marketing statement is grouped under the appropriate goal; and the wording of each goal. Participants were also asked to provide any additional statements that were omitted in the original work group session.

Draft Resource Guide

The draft resource guide consisted of six practice categories with 16 goals and 73 practice statements. The resource was formatted to include a checklist which included one 4-point scale to assess current status: “elements in place,” “majority of elements in place,” “few elements in place,” and “no elements in place.” The resource also included an area to indicate the date when a practice with few to majority elements in place has been fully implemented and an area for additional marketing practices identified by the SN program that should be implemented. A list of definition of terms related to SN programs was included in the draft resource.

Phase II

Researchers contacted SN professionals to participate in the review panel phase of the research. Potential review panel participants were e-mailed an invitation to be involved in the review of the draft practice resource. The objectives of the review panel were to evaluate the practice statements, the goal statements, and the draft resource, and to assess the content, scales, format, and usefulness of the resource as a self-assessment tool for SN professionals.

Review panel members were e-mailed review packets that included instructions, the evaluation questionnaire, and the draft practice resource. The panel was instructed to review the practice statements and goal statements prior to completing the evaluation questionnaire. The evaluation questionnaire was divided into seven sections, six representing the practice categories

with the goal statements and one representing the overall review of the document and additional comments. In the first six sections, the panel members were asked to consider the goal statement in relation to the practices sub-grouped within a goal, and to respond as to what level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

- This goal statement accurately reflects the marketing practices listed.
- The goal statement is clearly worded.
- The practices listed are applicable to marketing of the school nutrition program.
- The goal statement is appropriate for this marketing practice category.

The other considerations section was in relation to the evaluation of the scale, format, and usefulness of the resource. Panel members were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- The draft formatting of the resource is appropriate for SN professionals.
- The current status and priority level scales are appropriate for SN professionals using the resource.
- The practice resource is a user-friendly assessment tool.

Review panel members were sent follow-up reminder e-mails to encourage completion and return of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Researchers used qualitative research methods to identify and confirm goals and practice statements for the practice categories. Descriptive statistics were calculated and consisted of frequencies and percentages of total response from the review panel's evaluation questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Expert Panel Work Group Session

An expert panel work group session convened to review and reach consensus on the draft best practice statements for the six practice categories identified from previous National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division (NFSMI, ARD): School Nutrition (SN) Staff Involvement, Development and Implementation, Advantages for Students, Advantages for Other Stakeholders, Stakeholder Support, and Communication. The seven SN professionals invited to participate on the expert panel all completed the pre-meeting assignment form and attended the work group session. The expert panel members represented four of the seven United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regions.

During the expert panel work group, panel members deleted 35 (32.7%) of 107 statements, accepted 25 statements (23.3%) as written, and modified and accepted 47 statements (43.9 %). One statement (0.9%) warranted further consideration by the expert panel (and was included in the panel review), and four new statements were added.

Expert panel work group members were asked to participate in a post-session review. All seven expert panel members (100%) completed the post-session review and provided additional feedback. The draft list of practice categories, goal themes, and practice statements were created based on the expert panel ($n = 7$) session (Table 1). The revisions from the expert panel post session reviews resulted in 73 practice statements grouped into 16 goal themes under six practice areas. The definitions of the practice areas agreed upon are listed below:

- **Development** – These practices focus on developing the marketing initiative.
- **Implementation** – These practices focus on implementing and monitoring the marketing initiatives.

- **School Nutrition Staff Involvement** –These practices focus on involving the school nutrition staff in the marketing initiative.
- **Communication** – These practices focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder Support** – These practices focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.
- **Advantages for Students** – These practices focus on advantages the marketing initiative provides students.

After the post-session review, the researchers formatted the practice categories, goal statements, and practice statement into a draft resource. The first section of the resource should enable users to establish baseline data to identify current marketing practices implemented in their facilities that are operationally addressed or not addressed by the SN program. The “Current Status” scale for the first portion of the resource included “elements in place,” “majority of elements in place,” “few elements in place,” and “no elements in place.” The second portion of the resource was designed to offer an opportunity to identify items that need to be addressed further and to determine a course of action.

Table 1

Expert Panel Work Group Session Results

Practice Areas, Goal Themes, and Sample Statements	Practice Statements
Development	
<i>Goal Theme 1:</i> Marketing strategies are identified to update the school nutrition program.	2
<i>Example:</i> Encourage the planning for comfortable dining furniture that is age appropriate, and promote social interactions among customers.	
<i>Goal Theme 2:</i> Marketing strategies are developed to increase student participation and sales revenue.	4
<i>Example:</i> Establish menu pricing strategy in a manner that advances the goals of the school nutrition program.	
<i>Goal Theme 3:</i> The marketing initiative is developed specifically to meet the needs of your school nutrition program.	12
<i>Example:</i> Research and observe marketing trends in a variety of industries (e.g., retail lighting, product placement, displays, layout, design).	
Implementation	
<i>Goal Theme 1:</i> Processes are created and utilized to implement the marketing initiative.	5
<i>Example:</i> Implement a marketing plan to guide the marketing initiative of the school nutrition program.	
<i>Goal Theme 2:</i> Menu and pricing strategies are created utilizing the marketing initiative and monitored through student participation and sales revenue.	2
<i>Example:</i> Ensure menus are easily accessible for students and families.	
<i>Goal Theme 3:</i> Marketing strategies are created and implemented to increase student support.	2
<i>Example:</i> Use student focus groups and/or survey results to generate marketing ideas.	

(Table 1 continues)

(Table 1 continued)

Expert Panel Work Group Session Results

Practice Areas, Goal Themes, and Sample Statements	Practice Statements
School Nutrition Staff Involvement	
<i>Goal Theme 1:</i> The school nutrition director researches various marketing strategies to enhance their marketing initiative.	3
<i>Example:</i> Visit and network with other school districts to share marketing ideas for your school nutrition program.	
<i>Goal Theme 2:</i> The school nutrition director creates a marketing plan that guides the development of marketing strategies for the school nutrition program.	2
<i>Example:</i> Create a marketing strategy that involves students in the distribution of taste-testing samples	
<i>Goal Theme 3:</i> The school nutrition director involves the school nutrition staff in all phases of the marketing initiative to gain their buy-in.	5
<i>Example:</i> Involve school nutrition staff in planning and implementing the marketing initiative.	
Communication	
<i>Goal Theme 1:</i> Promotional marketing strategies are created and implemented to ensure effective communication with stakeholders.	8
<i>Example:</i> Communicate marketing initiative to stakeholders.	
<i>Goal Theme 2:</i> Diverse modes of communication are utilized to increase stakeholder buy-in.	6
<i>Example:</i> Provide information promoting the school nutrition program to stakeholders.	
Stakeholder Support	
<i>Goal Theme 1:</i> Student advocacy will be encouraged to increase buy-in for the marketing initiative.	2
<i>Example:</i> Meet with student leaders to educate them about the role of good nutrition and encourage them to be advocates for the school nutrition program.	

(Table 1 continues)

(Table 1 continued)

Expert Panel Work Group Session Results

Practice Areas, Goal Themes, and Sample Statements	Practice Statements
Stakeholder Support, continued	
<i>Goal Theme 2:</i> The school nutrition director collaborates with stakeholders to encourage their promotion of the school nutrition program in the community.	6
<i>Example:</i> Collaborate with stakeholders on marketing ideas to continually improve the school nutrition program image in the community.	
<i>Goal Theme 3:</i> The school nutrition director collaborates with district/school administration and school staff to increase support of the school nutrition program and the marketing initiative.	9
<i>Example:</i> Involve district/school administration in the marketing initiative to gain support.	
Advantages for Students	
<i>Goal Theme 1:</i> Students will increase their consumption of healthier menu choices.	2
<i>Example:</i> Provide healthier versions of popular retail food items.	
<i>Goal Theme 2:</i> The school nutrition director ensures student accessibility to an inviting eating environment.	3
<i>Example:</i> Ensure that serving and areas are clean, well-lit, and attractive.	

Review Panel

Of the twenty-five SN directors invited to participate in the review panel evaluation, seven (28%) completed the evaluation questionnaire and provided additional comments and suggestions for the resource. Review panel members evaluated the practice statements, goal statements, and the draft practice resource. Panel members also reviewed and assessed the

content, scales, format, and usefulness of the resource as a self-assessment tool for SN professionals.

The panel members' evaluation of goal statements and best practice statements is displayed in Table 2. The agreement percentages and frequencies indicate a high level of agreement that these statements were practices for marketing in SN programs; that the goals appropriately reflected each best practice statement sub-grouped under that goal; and that there were an adequate number of practice statements to appropriately address the goal(s) under the practice category.

The review panel also evaluated the content, scales, format, and usefulness of the resource. They identified whether they agreed or disagreed with the evaluation questions. The review panel's evaluation of the overall resource is displayed on Table 3. The agreement percentages indicate a high level of agreement that the formatting of the best practice resource was appropriate for the community it would serve, and that the current status scale and the progress review and implementation sections are appropriate for SN professionals using the resource. Space was provided on the evaluation questionnaire for the review panel members to make comments and suggestions. The researcher reviewed the comments made by the panel and incorporated their suggestions into the practice resource.

Table 2

National Review Panel's Evaluation of Goal and Practice Statements (N=13)

Evaluation Questions Per Goal	Level of Agreement		
	Percentages and Frequencies per Practice Category and Goal for Agree and Strongly Agree		
	<i>Development</i>		
	1	2	3
The goal statement accurately reflects the marketing practices listed.	71% (5)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is clearly worded.	85% (6)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The practices listed are applicable to marketing the SN programs.	71% (5)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is appropriate for this marketing category.	71% (5)	100% (7)	100% (7)
	<i>Implementation</i>		
	1	2	3
The goal statement accurately reflects the marketing practices listed.	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is clearly worded.	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The practices listed are applicable to marketing the SN programs.	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is appropriate for this marketing category.	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)

(Table 2 continues)

*(Table 2 continued)**National Review Panel's Evaluation of Goal and Practice Statements (N=13)*

Evaluation Questions Per Goal	Level of Agreement	
	Percentages and Frequencies per Practice Category and Goal for Agree and Strongly Agree	
	<i>School Nutrition Staff Involvement</i>	
	1	2
The goal statement accurately reflects the marketing practices listed.	85% (6)	100% (7)
The goal statement is clearly worded.	85% (6)	100% (7)
The practices listed are applicable to marketing the SN programs.	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is appropriate for this marketing category.	100% (7)	100% (7)
	<i>Communication</i>	
	1	2
The goal statement accurately reflects the marketing practices listed.	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is clearly worded.	100% (7)	100% (7)
The practices listed are applicable to marketing the SN programs.	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is appropriate for this marketing category.	100% (7)	100% (7)

(Table 2 continues)

(Table 2 continued)

National Review Panel's Evaluation of Goal and Practice Statements (N=13)

Evaluation Questions Per Goal	Level of Agreement Percentages and Frequencies per Practice Category and Goal		
	<i>Stakeholder Support</i>		
	1	2	3
The goal statement accurately reflects the marketing practices listed.	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is clearly worded.	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The practices listed are applicable to marketing the of SN programs	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)
The goal statement is appropriate for this marketing category.	100% (7)	100% (7)	100% (7)
<i>Advantages for Students</i>			
	1	2	
The goal statement accurately reflects the marketing practices listed.	100% (7)	100% (7)	
The goal statement is clearly worded.	100% (7)	100% (7)	
The practices listed are applicable to marketing the SN programs.	100% (7)	100% (7)	
The goal statement is appropriate for this marketing category.	100% (7)	100% (7)	

Table 3

Review Panel's Overall Evaluation of the Marketing Practice Guide

Overall Resource Evaluation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Marketing resource is organized in a logical sequence.	14%	0%	43%	43%
Marketing resource uses language that is familiar to SN professionals.	0%	14%	57%	29%
Format of marketing resource is easy to use and understand.	14%	0%	43%	43%
Current status scale is appropriate for SN professionals using the marketing resource.	0%	14%	43%	43%
Progress review and implementation section is appropriate for SN professionals using the marketing resource.	0%	14%	43%	43%
Marketing resource is a useful tool for SN professionals.	0%	14%	43%	43%

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous National Food Service Management Institute, Applied Research Division research on branding and marketing indicated there were 10 factors that impact marketing initiatives in the school nutrition (SN) program. These factors included staff involvement, advantages for the students, stakeholder support, importance of development and implementation, and communication. This research also identified barriers that might exist for a SN program marketing initiative. These barriers included funding for the marketing initiative, time commitment to the marketing initiative for planning and implementation. This research provided significant insight to the issues and promise of implementing a marketing initiative for SN programs. It also helped guide the development of this project.

The primary objective of this project was to develop a research-based resource to guide SN professionals with developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a marketing initiative in their SN program. Two panels of experts comprised of SN directors who participated in the development and/or review of the *Marketing the School Nutrition Program* survey representing the seven United State Department of Agriculture regions were actively involved in the development, evaluation, and confirmation of the marketing practice resource.

Using the recommendations from two expert panels, the practice categories, goal statements, and practice statements were structured into a user-friendly, Web-based, self-assessment tool for SN professionals, *Best Practices for Marketing the School Nutrition Program*. The resource consists of six practice categories with 16 goals and 73 practice statements. The resource was formatted to include a checklist which includes a 4-point scale to asses current status: “elements in place,” “majority of elements in place,” “few elements in

place,” and “no elements in place.” The resource also contains a plan of action section, and an area to add additional practice statements.

The resource can be used as a self-assessment tool for SN professionals to develop, maintain, and review the local SN program’s marketing plan. Once the marketing plan has been assessed using the current status area of the assessment tool, the SN professional can establish a plan of action to address and/or implement those practices identified as needing attention. The following are suggestions and implications for using the resource:

- The resource can be used to identify essential marketing practices to implement in the SN program.
- School nutrition professionals can use the resource to identify the roles of SN personnel, school district personnel, school personnel, and community personnel and the resources required for planning, developing, and implementing policies and procedures related to marketing.
- The practice resource can be used to identify marketing-related training needs for SN personnel.
- School nutrition professionals can use the resource to establish a plan of action based on their assessment of the practice areas that require some attention.
- Additional resources in the reference list at the end of the best practice resource can also be used to assist with the implementation of a marketing plan in SN programs.

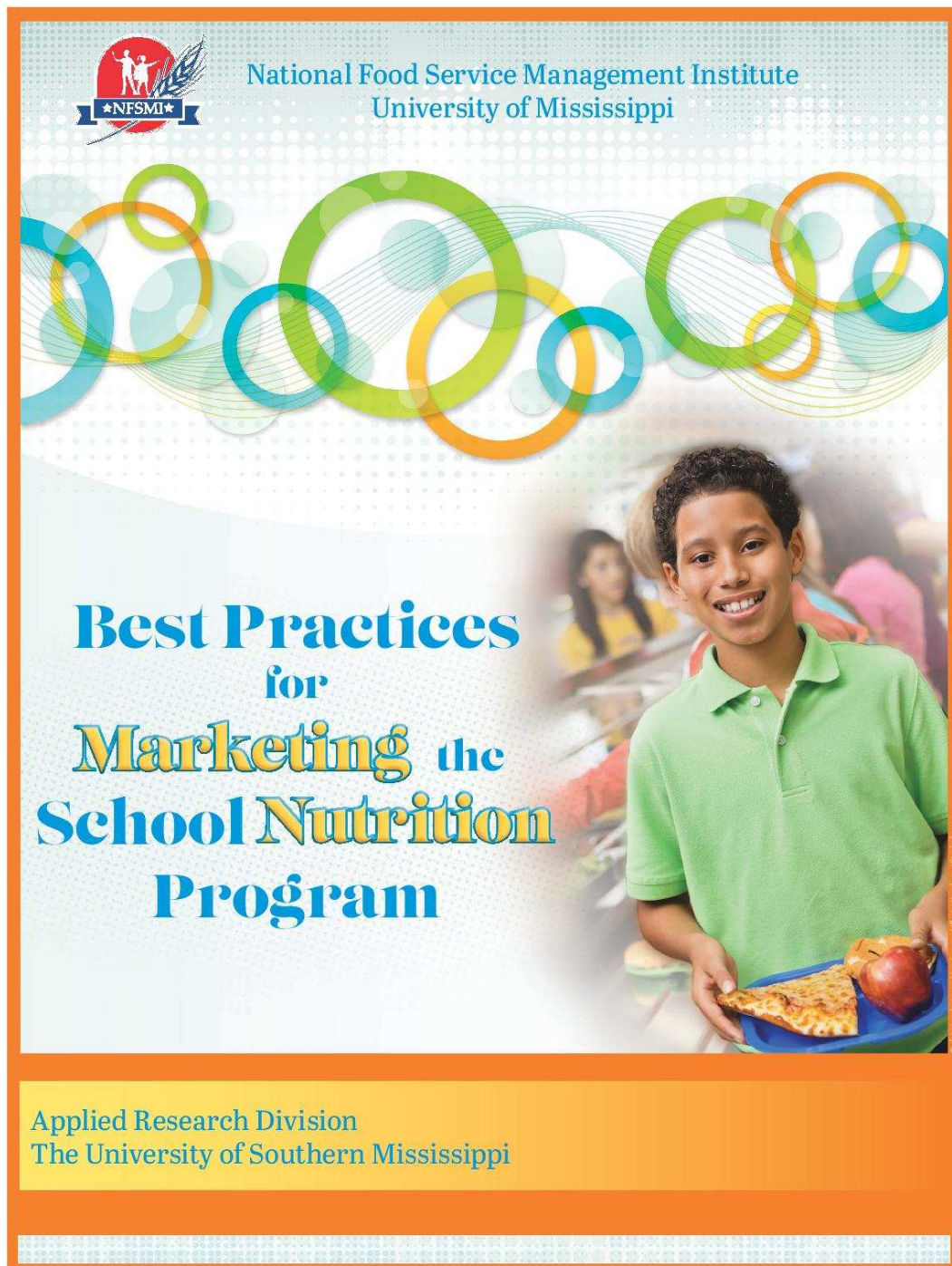
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Appendix

Best Practices for Marketing the School Nutrition Program



BEST PRACTICES FOR MARKETING THE SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM



National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi

Item Number GY 2011 #2
2013

Marketing the School Nutrition Program: A Resource Guide for School Nutrition Professionals

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**NATIONAL FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
BUILDING THE FUTURE THROUGH CHILD NUTRITION**

The National Food Service Management Institute was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at The University of Mississippi in Oxford and is operated in collaboration with The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the National Food Service Management Institute is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

MISSION

The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

VISION

The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing and advertising are not new concepts in reaching children for food and beverage product sales. The debate over food and beverage marketing to children spans for at least a 30 year time frame and involves the Federal Communications Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, and the United States Congress. These marketing and advertising efforts are generally positioned on mainstream media. However, public schools are not immune to marketing campaigns by food and beverage companies. Schools have been targeted for marketing purposes through food and beverage product sales, direct sales of foods and beverages, indirect advertising, and market research among students (Story & French, 2004; Wilde 2009). Although the current changes to the National School Lunch Act help schools gain control over the outside influences of marketing and advertising to children and adolescents in the school setting, marketing and advertising can still be utilized by the school nutrition (SN) program to benefit the youth. Previous National Food Service Management, Applied Research Division (NFSMI, ARD) research has identified the potential for a successful marketing initiative in the local school nutrition program designed to benefit the health and well-being of school age children. These research findings also indicated that a marketing initiative within the SN program can be successfully implemented if key components are employed.

DEVELOPMENT OF THIS RESOURCE

The *Best Practices for Marketing the School Nutrition Program* resource was developed with the assistance of SN professionals from across the country. Based on their recommendations, the resource is designed as a Web-based, self-assessment checklist developed around six practice categories:

- Development,
- Implementation,
- School Nutrition Staff Involvement,
- Communication,
- Stakeholder Support,
- Advantages for Students,

and consisting of sixteen goals and seventy-three best practice statements. It is recommended that each statement be reviewed and a determination be made through the self-assessment process regarding the stage of implementation or assessment associated with the practice.

Each practice statement is assessed using a 4-point scale for current status. The four response options include "Elements in Place", "Majority of Elements in Place" "Few Elements in Place" and "No Elements in Place". Space is provided for the user to include a "Plan of Action" to address and utilize the best practice identified as one that requires further attention. This scale is an assessment tool to determine the current



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status of each practice statement as it pertains to the user's school nutrition program. Once the assessment is complete, school nutrition professionals can establish a plan of action to address those practices that have been identified as needing attention and schedule an annual review for the action plans and implementation process.

The practices featured in this resource are measurable practices that define achievable and effective strategies for school nutrition professionals. Both the expert panel and review panel agreed the practices define the steps required to successfully market the school nutrition program. School nutrition professionals can use this assessment to develop and maintain a successful marketing initiative for school nutrition programs. Listed below are additional ways in which to use this best practice resource:

- Identify essential practices to implement in your school nutrition program.
- Identify the role of school nutrition staff and other stakeholders.
- Identify resources needed for planning, developing, and implementing policies and procedures related to marketing practices.
- Identify training needs of school nutrition staff specific to marketing activities.



DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

GOALS

Specific, measurable objectives that provide the context for what is to be accomplished under each category.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Measures that provide the most important performance information to enable management or their stakeholders to understand the performance level of the organization.

MARKETING CATEGORIES

Research-based factors that influence marketing practices

- **Development:** Practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.
- **Implementation:** Practices that focus on implementing and monitoring the marketing initiative.
- **School Nutrition Staff Involvement:** Practices that focus on involving the school nutrition staff in the marketing initiative.
- **Communication:** Practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder Support:** Practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.
- **Advantages for Students:** Practices that focus on advantages the marketing initiative provides to students.

MARKETING INITIATIVE

Planned action that drives the marketing efforts.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Specific steps taken to execute the marketing initiative.

STAKEHOLDERS

Individuals or groups of individuals (e.g., students, parents, school nutrition staff, school staff, district/school administration, community members, and/or other organizations) that can directly or indirectly affect, influence, and/or benefit from the services offered by the school nutrition program.



USING THE RESOURCE

This checklist contains six research-based marketing categories that influence marketing practices:

- Section 1: Development
- Section 2: Implementation
- Section 3: School Nutrition Staff Involvement
- Section 4: Communication
- Section 5: Stakeholder Support
- Section 6: Advantages for Students

There are 73 marketing practices comprising 16 goals that support the 6 marketing categories.

STEP 1 – CURRENT STATUS

Indicate the current status of each practice statement pertaining to YOUR school nutrition program with regards to marketing the school nutrition program by placing a check mark in the appropriate column.

ANCHOR	DESCRIPTION
Elements in place	Practice is implemented in your program
Majority of elements in place	Practice is mostly implemented in your program
Few elements in place	Practice is implemented to some degree in your program
No elements in place	Practice is not implemented in your program

STEP 2 – ACTION PLAN

Review and assess those practice statements identified as needing attention, indicated by the selection of “Few elements in place” and “No elements in place”. Establish an action plan based on the assessment of YOUR school nutrition program with regards to marketing the school nutrition program.

STEP 3 – EVALUATION

Schedule an annual review of YOUR action plans and implementation process with regards to marketing the school nutrition program.

- Evaluate your marketing practices.
- Based on your assessment, analyze and revise your action plan.
- Establish a timeline for implementation and include long-term plans and goals.



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 1: Marketing strategies are identified to update the school nutrition program.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Encourage the planning for comfortable dining furniture that is age appropriate and promote social interactions among customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Offer a variety of food choices to accommodate the ethical and religious/cultural diversity of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 2: Marketing strategies are developed to increase student participation and sales revenue.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Establish menu pricing strategy in a manner that advances the goals of the school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify locations where customers are more likely to buy foods and beverages at school (e.g., vending machines, kiosks, food carts).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 2: Marketing strategies are developed to increase student participation and sales revenue.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Establish key performance indicators for each marketing promotion and/or event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Plan, promote, and present nutrition related events for special occasions, theme days, and/or holidays (e.g. at student body assemblies and/or pep rallies).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The marketing initiative is developed to meet the needs of your school nutrition program.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Research and observe marketing trends in a variety of industries (e.g., retail lighting, product placement, displays, layout design).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review marketing strategies of other school districts to assist with the development of your school nutrition marketing initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The marketing initiative is developed to meet the needs of your school nutrition program.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Conduct student focus groups and/or surveys to determine customer expectations and preferences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Seek, allocate, and budget resources to plan and implement the school nutrition marketing initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The marketing initiative is developed to meet the needs of your school nutrition program.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Develop a marketing plan to guide the marketing initiative of the school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Find a consultant/advisor to assist with the development of the marketing initiative, as the budget allows.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The marketing initiative is developed to meet the needs of your school nutrition program.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Involve students in the development process to include marketing strategies and menu changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Utilize branded dining concepts in the school nutrition marketing initiative, as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The marketing initiative is developed to meet the needs of your school nutrition program.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Create a personalized school brand to implement a color scheme, logo, and/or slogan that represents a consistent appearance easily identifiable with your school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Create a marketing strategy that involves peer-to-peer discussions to identify attitudes and beliefs regarding the school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on developing the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The marketing initiative is developed to meet the needs of your school nutrition program.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Seek and incorporate feedback/perceptions on the marketing initiative from stakeholders through surveys, comment cards, suggestion boxes, focus groups, and/or use of technology.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Establish partnerships with local and national organizations to help promote marketing strategies (e.g., SNA, Dairy Council, ADA, AHA).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 2 IMPLEMENTATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on implementing and monitoring the marketing initiative.					
Goal 1: Processes are created and utilized to implement the marketing initiative.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Implement a marketing plan to guide the marketing initiative of the school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Implement the marketing initiative in all school nutrition venues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 2 IMPLEMENTATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on implementing and monitoring the marketing initiative.					
Goal 1: Processes are created and utilized to implement the marketing initiative.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Implement the marketing initiative in phases (i.e., budget, logistics, training) to ensure customer buy-in.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure consistent marketing in all school cafeterias.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 2 IMPLEMENTATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on implementing and monitoring the marketing initiative.					
Goal 1: Processes are created and utilized to implement the marketing initiative.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Using the established key performance indicators, evaluate the effectiveness of each activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Goal 2: Menu and pricing strategies are created utilizing the marketing initiative and monitored through student participation and sales revenue.					
Set the price of healthy menu items so that customers perceive them as a good value.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 2 IMPLEMENTATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on implementing and monitoring the marketing initiative.					
Goal 2: Menu and pricing strategies are created utilizing the marketing initiative and monitored through student participation and sales revenue.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Ensure menus are easily accessible for students and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Goal 3: Marketing strategies are created and implemented to increase student support.					
Use student focus groups and/or survey results to generate marketing ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 2

IMPLEMENTATION

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on implementing and monitoring the marketing initiative.

Goal 3: Marketing strategies are created and implemented to increase student support.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Increase student buy-in by appealing to their interest through student centered activities (e.g., recipe contest, nutrition mascot, cafeteria name, slogans).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 3 SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF INVOLVEMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on involving the school nutrition staff in the marketing initiative.					
Goal 1: The school nutrition director researches various marketing strategies to enhance the marketing initiative.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Visit and network with other school districts to share marketing ideas for your school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attend conferences, seminars, webinars, network groups, and trade groups to stay current on marketing trends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 3

SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF INVOLVEMENT

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on involving the school nutrition staff in the marketing initiative.

Goal 1: The school nutrition director researches various marketing strategies to enhance the marketing initiative.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Provide professional development to school nutrition managers on marketing the school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Goal 2: The school nutrition director creates a marketing plan that guides the development of marketing strategies for the school nutrition program.					
Create menus to support the marketing theme or brand.					



SECTION 3**SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF INVOLVEMENT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on involving the school nutrition staff in the marketing initiative.

Goal 2: The school nutrition director creates a marketing plan that guides the development of marketing strategies for the school nutrition program.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Create a marketing strategy that involves students in the distribution of taste-testing samples.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Goal 3: The school nutrition director involves the school nutrition staff in all phases of the marketing initiative to gain their buy-in.					
Involve school nutrition staff in planning and implementing the marketing initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 3 SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF INVOLVEMENT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on involving the school nutrition staff in the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The school nutrition director involves the school nutrition staff in all phases of the marketing initiative to gain their buy-in.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Incorporate school nutrition managers' feedback into the marketing initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide training to the school nutrition staff on implementing marketing strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 3**SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF INVOLVEMENT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on involving the school nutrition staff in the marketing initiative.

Goal 3: The school nutrition director involves the school nutrition staff in all phases of the marketing initiative to gain their buy-in.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Train school nutrition managers to conduct taste-testing activities and to obtain customer feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Train school nutrition staff on customer service expectations and problem solving to increase customer satisfaction.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 4 COMMUNICATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.					
Goal 1: Promotional marketing strategies are created and implemented to ensure effective communication with stakeholders.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Communicate marketing initiative to stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Promote regular communication to stakeholders as part of the marketing initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 4 COMMUNICATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.					
Goal 1: Promotional marketing strategies are created and implemented to ensure effective communication with stakeholders.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Communicate to stakeholders the importance of proper nutrition for students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Develop creative names for menu items and add signage to the cafeteria serving line.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 4

COMMUNICATION

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.

Goal 1: Promotional marketing strategies are created and implemented to ensure effective communication with stakeholders.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Use menu boards and/or signs (i.e., post menus in various locations throughout the school) to communicate menu items offered and prices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Utilize enticing labels to describe menu items to include brand and/or logo, as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 4 COMMUNICATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.					
Goal 1: Promotional marketing strategies are created and implemented to ensure effective communication with stakeholders.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Broadcast menu items on the school announcement systems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Post menus in various locations throughout the school to draw customers' interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 4 COMMUNICATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.					
Goal 2: Diverse modes of communication are utilized to increase stakeholder buy-in.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Provide information promoting the school nutrition program to stakeholders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Utilize simple messages and designs on promotional displays to ensure readability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 4 COMMUNICATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.					
Goal 2: Diverse modes of communication are utilized to increase stakeholder buy-in.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Include school nutrition promotions and communicate activities in the school district calendar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Initiate media coverage of school nutrition services provided to students, as approved by district policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 4 COMMUNICATION In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on communicating the marketing initiative to stakeholders.					
Goal 2: Diverse modes of communication are utilized to increase stakeholder buy-in.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Utilize targeted promotional materials to address different market segments (e.g., females/males, ethnic groups, athletes).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Utilize social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) to promote the school nutrition program, as approved by district policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 1: Student advocacy will be encouraged to increase buy-in for the marketing initiative.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Meet with student leaders to educate them about the role of good nutrition and encourage them to be advocates for the school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Practice peer-to-peer marketing by utilizing prominent school campus figures in promotional messages (e.g., athletic team captains, school mascots, most popular teachers, student council officers, famous alumni).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 2: The school nutrition director collaborates with stakeholders to encourage their promotion of the school nutrition program in the community.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Collaborate with stakeholders on marketing ideas to continually improve the school nutrition program image in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Address feedback from stakeholders in a timely manner to improve the image of your school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 2: The school nutrition director collaborates with stakeholders to encourage their promotion of the school nutrition program in the community.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Encourage parents/guardians and community participation in school nutrition programs, when appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Partner with parents/guardians (i.e., PTO/PTA) to promote and educate on school nutrition program benefits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 2: The school nutrition director collaborates with stakeholders to encourage their promotion of the school nutrition program in the community.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Offer school nutrition services as a resource to stakeholders for after school events (e.g., PTO/PTA meetings, school plays).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Establish partnerships with local allied health and/or community organizations for special promotions and events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5 STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.					
Goal 3: The school nutrition director collaborates with district/school administration and school staff to increase support of the school nutrition program and the marketing initiative.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Involve district/school administration in the marketing initiative to gain support.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Encourage advocates within the school district to promote the marketing initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 3: The school nutrition director collaborates with district/school administration and school staff to increase support of the school nutrition program and the marketing initiative.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Encourage district/school administrators to promote school nutrition programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Promote healthful eating, encourage district/school administrators and school staff to participate in the school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 3: The school nutrition director collaborates with district/school administration and school staff to increase support of the school nutrition program and the marketing initiative.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Display samples or pictures of menu items so that customers see them prior to entering the cafeteria and/or serving lines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Utilize multiple communication channels (i.e., Web site, flyers, menus, posters) to provide nutrition data and promotional messages related to building a healthy school nutrition environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 3: The school nutrition director collaborates with district/school administration and school staff to increase support of the school nutrition program and the marketing initiative.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Present a recipe of the month with nutrient analysis on the school nutrition Web site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide promotional messages that meet the diverse languages of your district's populations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 5**STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on obtaining and maintaining the support of stakeholders related to the marketing initiative.

Goal 3: The school nutrition director collaborates with district/school administration and school staff to increase support of the school nutrition program and the marketing initiative.

BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Establish partnerships with the local media (i.e., print, TV, radio) to promote your school nutrition program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 6 ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on advantages the marketing initiative provides students.					
Goal 1: Students will increase their consumption of healthier menu choices.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Provide healthier versions of popular retail food items.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Encourage students to explore healthier food choices through appropriate promotional events (e.g., tasting sample, taste testing).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 6 ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on advantages the marketing initiative provides students.					
Goal 2: The school nutrition director ensures student accessibility to an inviting eating environment.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Ensure that serving and dining areas are clean, well-lit, and attractive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use colorful signage, posters, and/or décor to make the cafeteria environment more appealing and attractive to customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SECTION 6 ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS In this section, you will consider the goals and best practices that focus on advantages the marketing initiative provides students.					
Goal 2: The school nutrition director ensures student accessibility to an inviting eating environment.					
BEST PRACTICE STATEMENT	CURRENT STATUS				NOTES FOR ACTION PLAN
	Elements in Place	Majority of Elements in Place	Few Elements in Place	No Elements in Place	
Provide alternative foodservice options (i.e., reimbursable vending, kiosks, grab and go, breakfast in the classroom) to meet the wants and needs of customers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SCHOOL NUTRITION MARKETING RESOURCES

For more information about Marketing the School Nutrition Program, please visit the following Web Sites:

Arizona Department of Education. (n.d.). *Effective marketing strategies*. Retrieved from <http://www.azed.gov/wp-content/uploads/PDF/EffectiveMarketingStrategies.pdf>.

Cornel Center for Behavioral Sciences in Child Nutrition Programs. (n.d.). *Bringing the smarter lunchrooms movement to your school or district*. Retrieved from http://smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/school_board_intro_plaintext_version_1.pdf.

Cornel Center for Behavioral Sciences in Child Nutrition Programs. (n.d.). *6 guiding principles to improving eating behaviors*. Retrieved from <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/6principles.pdf>.

Cornel Center for Behavioral Sciences in Child Nutrition Programs. (n.d.). *Smarter lunchroom best practice evaluation & implementation guide*. Retrieved from http://smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/slm_best_practices_implementation_guide.pdf.

Cornel Center for Behavioral Sciences in Child Nutrition Programs. (n.d.). *Quick and inexpensive lunchroom makeover ideas*. Retrieved from http://smarterlunchrooms.org/sites/default/files/quick_and_inexpensive_slm_ideas.pdf.

National Food Service Management Institute. (n.d.). *Marketing your school nutrition program*. Retrieved from <http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20120301103120.pdf>.

National Food Service Management Institute. (n.d.). *Marketing your school nutrition program: Develop a brochure to showcase your program*. Retrieved from <http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20120301102850.pdf>.

United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. (n.d.). *Marketing Efforts*. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/breakfast/toolkit/marketing.pdf>.

United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services. (n.d.). *Meal Appeal: Attracting Customers*. Retrieved from http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/meal_appeal.pdf.

Vermont Feed. (n.d.). *Taste testing new foods in the classroom and cafeteria*. Retrieved from <http://www.okfarmtoschool.com/pdf/Taste-testing-new-foods.pdf>.





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