

(Instrumental music)

Hello, this is Alex Criswell coming to you live from Michigan City, Indiana on April 22, 2014. Today we will learn about the portioning process and GSS and its importance within the restaurant.

First, we refresh our knowledge of the steps in the portioning process. The steps of the portioning process will include portioning an Olive Garden salad.

We will then briefly cover what GSS is and why it is important.

Thereafter, we will hear the viewpoints of two Olive Garden employees regarding their thoughts of the portioning process, why it is important and how it relates to guest satisfaction.

So, join me Olive Garden workers in this brief podcast in relation to the portioning process, the importance of it, and how GSS is affected.

Need for Portioning

Before we move on, let's remind ourselves of the need for portioning.

The need for food portioning is a vital aspect within the hospitality industry as portioning is a critical factor in controlling food cost.

According to Schmidgall (2006), food cost is one of the top controllable expenses in the restaurant business.

Portioning OG Salad

Salad portioning is required as part of Olive Garden's standards. Salads are portioned according to the number of guests who order salad with their meal which include 1-2 guests, 3 guests, or 4-5 guests.

The following chart, which is also included in your training materials, shows the correct amount of ingredients for a properly portioned Olive Garden salad according to the guest count.

Process

The steps of this process include:

- 1) Sanitize the work surface
- 2) Gather equipment
- 3) Retrieve ingredients
- 4) Wash hands and put on food handling gloves
- 5) Balance (or tare) the digital scale

6) Portion the salad (according to the guest group size)

GSS

What is GSS?

- GSS is our Guest Satisfaction Survey which reports data back to each restaurant regarding a guest's experience.

Topics include items such as:

- Food Quality
- Service
- PACE of meal
- Welcome and greetings

Receipt Preview

Almost every guest receipt has a survey available for them to complete online or by phone. The survey invitation will include a survey link or number to call as well as a survey ID or access code. Once the guest completes the survey, they will be entered in a sweepstakes for prizes, such as a monetary amount, a trip or Italy, or free gift cards.

GSS Survey

The GSS survey asks the guest a variety of questions about their experience at the restaurant. Categories covered in the survey are:

Welcome & Greet

Pace of Meal

Food Temperature

Cleanliness

Attentiveness

Likelihood to recommend to someone

Likelihood to return

(pause)

Guest's can also leave comments to managers if they wish to provide further information about their experience.

GSS Results

Managers can view results of the GSS on a weekly basis and view actual and forecasted GSS results.

From there, they can develop strategies to maintain or improve the GSS overall or in a specific category.

First Interview

So how does it all come together? We will now turn to Tony, our first interview who will answer questions relating to portioning and GSS.

---Tony---

1. What is your full name and how long have you worked with the Olive Garden family?

<My name is Tony and I have been an employee of Darden since July of 2013.>

2. What is your position and why is your position important to guest satisfaction?

<I am currently employed as a server for Olive Garden. I believe my position holds the highest value for guest satisfaction given the fact that I must maintain a constant rapport with the guests from the time they walk in the door until the end of their meal when they are ready to depart the establishment. If I do not perform well as a server, the guest satisfaction surveys will reflect my performance.>

3. Why is portioning important to your position and how do you contribute to it?

<Portioning is critical to the continued success of the restaurant. There is, however, a fine line between the correct portions and an unsatisfied guest. It's very important to maintain proper portioning guidelines as well as finding out what my guests are actually requesting. I usually follow the guidelines unless a guest specifically requests a certain amount of salad be brought back to their table.>

4. What are the benefits of the portioning process to you and to the restaurant in relation to guest satisfaction?

<Portioning maintains and controls the excess of waste. At all costs I want to maintain guest satisfaction while maintaining the proper portions to keep both parties satisfied. Some servers try to over portion their salads in order to satisfy their guests and reduce the amount of running they must do. This technique leads to high waste and a cut in profits for the restaurant.>

5. What are the challenges of the portioning process and how does it affect guest satisfaction?

<One major challenge occurs during meal rush period during times of high volume. Often times, I see servers not properly portioning salads as they are not using the scale provided by the salad station. This leads to unsatisfied guests when they receive too little salad. This also adds to the companies waste because many guests cannot finish consuming their salads as too much was provided to them.>

6. As an Olive Garden employee, what suggestions would you provide to improve the training process in relation to portioning and the standards?

<The only suggestion I feel can be offered is simply to follow the portioning guidelines and utilize the scale provided. I also feel that a brief description of waste and how it affects the company's growth should be implemented into the server training process.>

7. With portioning in mind, how can you improve on guest satisfaction?

<The best way I believe I can improve on guest satisfaction is by simply determining the guest's expectations during the initial greeting process. Guests are there to be served and will almost always offer simple suggestions to best serve them.>

8. With portioning in mind, how can the restaurant improve on guest satisfaction in the sales, service, and culinary divisions?

<I think we can best serve the guests by memorizing and knowing the portions of everything on our menu. When servers can briefly describe exactly what each entree contains to their guests, then the guests are better suited to choose something they would enjoy. There can be no deviation in the culinary department when it comes to the preparation of our food as that is our trademark. >

---END SCRIPT---

Research – Quick Tips

Let's examine some research and quick tips behind customer satisfaction.

- Customer satisfaction is one of the major foundations of your business. As cited by Zhang, Jiang, and Li (2013) in Ryu and Han (2010), customer service is noted as one of the critical marketing priorities since it affects repeat sales, adoption of new products, and customer loyalty. With the fluctuation in the country's economy, your customer and their satisfaction is a top priority.
- Tsai, Chen, Chan, and Lin (2011) feel customer satisfaction one of the elements of the restaurant needed to maintain a competitive advantage. Soriano (2002) concluded that most restaurant failures are the result of the management team's "lack of strategic orientation in measuring and focusing on customer satisfaction (p. 1056)."
- Wall and Berry (2007) noted some of the main factors of customer satisfaction include food, physical environment, and employee service. Other driving sub-factors can include menu variety, accessibility, and price, as noted by Hwang and Choi (2012).

With the factor of food in mind, we will focus on the accurate portioning of the food in order to satisfy the guest.

Final Interview

We will now turn to Ann, our final interview who will answer questions relating to portioning and GSS.

---Ann---

1. What is your full name and how long have you worked with the Olive Garden family?

<My name is Ann and I have been with the company for almost three years.>

2. What is your position and why is your position important to guest satisfaction?

<I am a Certified Trainer and Lead Host. I coach new employees to learn to do the job with a sincere attitude and I help encourage us all to raise our guest satisfaction scores by proper training and following the Hospitaliano Way! >

3. Why is portioning important to your position and how do you contribute to it?

<I am trained to teach on portioning to keep waste down within the restaurant on food items, such as salad, soup and breadsticks. Each must be measured as to how much you provide to the guest. >

4. What are the benefits of the portioning process to you and to the restaurant in relation to guest satisfaction?

<If I incorrectly portion a salad, I could upset a guest, whom could have their meal "comped" and also provide an unsatisfactory score on our GSS Surveys. For instance, we give one breadstick per person, we give one eight-ounce ladle of soup to each guest who ordered soup, and then we weigh out salad by how many individuals who ordered salad. So, if a two guests each order a salad with their meal, I would portion a salad for two guests, not four guests, regardless if they are "starving" and want extra salad. It is imperative to follow the portioning process at all times. >

5. What are the challenges of the portioning process and how does it affect guest satisfaction?

<Without portioning correctly, we can get complaints from the guests on having an unfair amount. Most of the time if the portions are done correctly, the guests stay satisfied, as soup or salad and breadsticks are available to them with no restrictions on quantity throughout their meal. Each employee in the restaurant is responsible for making sure they have all they need to serve the guest and are able to portion each of it correctly. >

6. As an Olive Garden employee, what suggestions would you provide to improve the training process in relation to portioning and the standards?

<Hands on experience is a major asset to this learning process on portioning. By allowing the trainee to actually see the Certified Trainer demonstrate how to portion soup/salad, they can see the benefits of the portioning process, which is highly important. They have book work that assists them in detailed explanations of portioning and how important it is to the restaurant and the guests to ensure fair portioning to all of the guests. >

7. With portioning in mind, how can you improve on guest satisfaction?

<I can watch the portioning processes of other employees and as I get my own refills to ensure that the company portioning process is being followed correctly. >

8. With portioning in mind, how can the restaurant improve on guest satisfaction in the sales, service, and culinary divisions?

<We need to follow a uniform standard for portioning, whether it is for a guest whom is dining in the restaurant or ordering a meal to-go. This uniform standard will need to be established not only for soup, salad, or breadsticks, but for all food items within the restaurant. By following a uniform portioning process, we can increase our guest satisfaction by offering the guest the same item, the same way each time they visit our restaurant to ensure that we meet their expectations. >

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So how does it affect you?

Inadequate portioning can lead to confused guests

A guest may receive an over or under portioned item and your tip may be affected.

Loss of profit means budget cuts will take place

Loss of employee incentives and employee parties

Even the Loss of jobs.

Remember, Over-portioning is against the standards and company policy requires Corrective action up to and including termination

If all employee's effectively portion food; food costs will remain low and will bring substantial profit to the restaurant.

Let's review what we learned today

Now you should understand the basic concept of portioning within the restaurant by guest groups

You can describe the process of how salads are made

Know what GSS is and the importance of it

Able to state the Purpose of portioning and why it is vital to the operations of the restaurant and your job.

Conclusion

I thank you for joining me today and I will be back with more podcasts on common tasks and policies at Olive Garden.

Be sure to come back to this podcast when you need a quick refresher on the Olive Garden salad portioning process and GSS.

This is Alex Criswell signing out for today and hope you come back soon for upcoming podcasts and other instructional materials.

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Please note this podcast was created for educational purposes only and is not meant to represent or dictate any company training materials or proprietary information.

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