

## Sometimes It's More Difficult Than It Seems

What had begun as an exciting sale soon turned into an important learning experience. It was Carrie's first big sale and she could hardly contain her excitement. As the newest employee on the catering and sales staff at the River Front Hotel, she was anxious to pull her weight and be a productive member of the team.

After dealing with several small groups, Carrie had been assigned to work with Marge Lundstrum of Getaway Tours. Marge had already reserved space for a lunch stopover on their Fall Foliage Tour, and the only remaining detail was to select a menu. After a few qualifying questions, Carrie learned that there would be three busloads consisting of 125 to 150 older men and women.

Marge said that they had been served chicken salad in pineapple boats their last two fall seasons, but this time they wanted something different. She also stated that they didn't want to spend much more than they had in the past. Following a brief discussion, Carrie and Marge decided on bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwiches (BLTs) with garnish to be accompanied by a fruit salad with poppy seed dressing.

As Carrie reviewed the proposed menu at the weekly staff meeting, the food and beverage (F&B) director, Martin Yantis, listened in disbelief. The thought of toasting 450 slices of bread would prove to be a logistical nightmare with the other daily activities taking place in the kitchen.

Although Martin thought about having Carrie call Marge to offer her some other alternatives that would be just as appealing and easier to prepare, he decided to turn this potential problem into a learning experience. On the day of the luncheon, Carrie was given the opportunity to work with the preparation staff in the kitchen.

She soon discovered how difficult it was to make so many BLTs. Carrie learned that preparing and serving large meal functions required a team effort and consideration of the physical and human capabilities of the kitchen and staff. Carrie now knew her job was more than just sales and decided to learn more about all of the different aspects of F&B marketing, management, and finance.



*Open kitchens can add value to the dining experience.* Photo courtesy of Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong