

To understand the importance of rhythm, timing, and flow, imagine the following setting. You and your friend have just been seated and presented with menus in a full-service American-style restaurant. The typical sequence of courses in this style of restaurant would be appetizer, soup, salad, entrée, and dessert.

As you review the menu, you look around and notice that the dining room is full, and there are customers still waiting to be seated. You see a busser (back waiter) moving a high chair toward a table; the captain (host/hostess) reseating guests who did not like their table; a server (front waiter) stopping to answer a guest's question; and you just heard the captain take a special request from the guests at the table next to you. While you are watching all of these activities your water glasses have been filled, and your waiter has already taken and served your drink orders.

When your server takes your orders, you notice that each appetizer and entrée will have to be prepared differently. The shrimp cocktail and the mozzarella cheese sticks, just like the grilled salmon and the fettuccini Alfredo, will all come from different stations in the kitchen. Your server passes through the kitchen doors and you hear a muffled burst of activity before the doors quickly close. When the rhythm, timing, and flow of all of these activities occur as planned, the dining experience can be as pleasurable as listening to a well-rehearsed symphony. *Bon appetit!*

Adding Value to Food and Beverage Experiences

Successful F&B operators are quick to point out the need for differentiating their operations from those of their competitors. Operators strive to distinguish themselves by focusing on guest service, adding value through quality or pricing, providing unique atmospheres and dining experiences, or offering innovative foods, beverages, and services. Any of these approaches when successfully implemented may attract new guests as well as encourage loyal supporters to come back time and time again and bring their families and friends.

With many smaller F&B operations, managers are usually in close contact with the entire operation, enabling them to gain personal insights into guests' needs. As operations become more complex in settings such as hotels and resorts and the number of outlets increases, the need for formal planning processes and procedures becomes more important. There are two typical designs or approaches to planning and delivering F&B services in these large "property" settings. The approach chosen usually depends on factors such as the number of foodservice outlets, services provided (e.g., room service, event catering, pool-side service, etc.), and the property's overall marketing strategy for attracting and serving guests.

At one location, F&B facilities may be designed to provide service to a captive audience of guests, whereas at another location, facilities may be designed to attract guests. Let's consider a ski area's approach to its F&B operations. There may be thousands of skiers on the mountain and many more guests in the base area. Most of the skiers are planning to take a break from skiing between 11:30 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. to have lunch. They expect conveniently located restaurants with a layout that allows traffic to flow smoothly (the skiers want to move about without feeling as if they are stuck in a crowd). They expect to be able to order, receive, and pay for their food without long waits. They expect hot foods and beverages to be served hot, and cold items to be served cold. They might expect prices to be a little higher on the mountain because of location and the desire for convenience, but they still expect good food quality. Other guests who have decided not to ski and are staying in the base area or village want the same quality and convenience, but they may desire a larger selection of food and service options.

To run the ski resort's F&B operations successfully, managers must pay close attention to a number of things. For example, organized commissary operations will be important to make sure each restaurant has everything it needs. Accurate tracking systems of food and supplies from the commissary to each restaurant will also be needed. By tracking food and supplies accurately, managers know how much it