



Employee Dining Options

Healthy, delicious ways to feed your employees.

By Amanda Koehler

Hospital employees usually don't have much time to sit down and eat during their shifts. The busy nature of working in a hospital sometimes means healthcare workers grab something quick and convenient. However, oftentimes quick and convenient choices are not healthy ones.

But there are quite a few employee dining options out there that are convenient, tasty and healthy. *Executive Insight* examined three different ways to spice up your employee dining.

BRANDS WITH HEALTHIER OPTIONS

No doubt about it: many Americans are attached to their brands. So why not offer employees something they already know, like putting in a chain restaurant along with your hospital cafe-

ria? Subway, for example, not only offers a name people recognize, but quick and more than a few healthy food options.

Subway opened its first location in a Baltimore-area hospital in 1991, and they've been popping up in more than 185 healthcare facilities worldwide ever since. "Because Subway became so popular and we're known for the healthier choices on our menu, we thought we were a natural fit for hospitals," said Joanne Kilgore, global account manager, Subway. "Hospitals started calling us. There was a demand for adding us to the typical cafeteria menu."

Subway has been getting positive feedback from hospitals offering their brand, Kilgore added, and many say their healthier choices go along well with hospital wellness plans. The portability of Subway's menu options is a great fit for hospital employees who only have time to quickly grab food and then return to work.

Additionally, Subway can feed off-shift employees after the hospital cafeteria closes for the day. "We can be open 24/7 if it makes sense to do so," she said.

Typically, the menu at a Subway restaurant inside a hospital is the same as the one you'd see outside the healthcare setting, although it can be tweaked to meet the needs of the employees. Some Subway restaurants inside hospital locations offer breakfast all day to accommodate different shifts; others may offer a day-long snack menu in addition to the regular menu. There are also Subway Cafes serving cappuccinos, lattes, espressos and smoothies.

Subway is always looking to expand their healthy choices, Kilgore noted. The restaurant franchise is currently testing a diabetes-friendly menu in Kansas City; they're also testing gluten-free sandwiches in other locations.

The Subway option can also be a perfect fit for hospital executives. "Subway is not costly to operate, and we can expand the food service menu without using the hospital's money," Kilgore explained. "We're among the lowest in the industry for start-up costs." The Subway chain offers hospitals three ownership options: the hospital can be the landlord, or the franchisee or hospitals can work through their contract feeder.

Additionally, Subway restaurants can fit into a hospital's floor plan. "Hospitals are always expanding, and we can fit in some tight spaces," Kilgore mentioned. "Some Subway locations are in a shared food court, or in an open space →"

Amanda Koehler is an associate editor at Merion Matters, the parent company of *Executive Insight*.

JEFF LEESER

EMPLOYEE DINING

area in the lobby.”

Many employees may get tired of a hospital cafeteria menu and decide to order meals out. “Some people crave branded food, so having a Subway there can recapture some of that lost hospital revenue,” she said. “Hospital cafeterias sometimes barely break even, but a national brand can be a profit center.”

“It’s the ultimate convenience,” added Les Winograd, public relations specialist, Subway. “Having Subway right there means employees don’t have to leave if they don’t want to, which is good for employees and employers. Employees won’t run into traffic or have to go out in bad weather, and employers don’t have to worry about employees missing shifts or coming back late.”

Employees also appreciate the healthy choices. “We had another local vendor for nights when the cafeteria closed, and it wasn’t working out,” remembered Paul Donnelly, director of food, nutrition and protective services, Saint Agnes Hospital, Baltimore. “It was mostly a hamburgers-and-French-fries operation, and it was not pleasing the staff. We looked at several different companies and branding concepts. We did a little research and talking to people at Subway, and after we heard how successful it was in some hospitals already, it was almost a no brainer.”

For 13 years, employees and executives at Saint Agnes Hospital have been enjoying their 24-hour Subway. “Management has been great, and the leasing arrangements are easy to work through. We just extended our lease for another 10 years,” Donnelly added.

HIRE A FOOD MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Food and dining management companies, such as Unidine Corporation, offer a growing variety of programs that feature healthy, sustainable and appealing options for employees, as well as the specific expertise and systems required to pull them off – resources that aren’t readily available in many hospitals.

How does Unidine assist hospitals to provide employee dining options that align with health and wellness goals? After a hospital has expressed interest, Unidine representatives come to the facility to assess all aspects of the dining program – from patient in-room dining to retail and community outreach programs. This process can take anywhere from a day and a half to 5 days depending on the hospital’s size and the community it serves, explained Steve Servant, vice president of business development.

“We come in and examine every aspect of their operations — from procurement through preparation and presentation — what we call the three Ps,” he said. “We also take the time to talk to employees and patients and understand where the current program is successful and where it can benefit from improvements.”



Add PROFITS to your BOTTOM LINE
By adding a SUBWAY® franchise to your facility



Find out what hundreds of hospitals
and medical facilities across
the country already know . . .

Contact Joanne Kilgore
800.888.4848 x 1729
Kilgore_J@subway.com
www.subway.com

SUBWAY® is a registered trademark of Doctor's Associates Inc. ©2011 Doctor's Associates Inc.

'We come in and examine every aspect of their operations — from procurement through preparation and presentation — what we call the three Ps.'

— Steve Servant, vice president of business development, Unidine Corporation

After the assessment, Unidine submits a proposal based on its findings and the objectives of the hospital administration. "Every hospital is different," Servant said, "and we collaborate closely with the administration to ensure the program reflects their values and goals as well as the best practices in culinary and dining management." Unidine then provides the management staff and hands-on training to support hospital staff involved in the dining operation. New menu choices are determined through preference surveys and focus groups.

Unidine, which has currently assisted about 140 healthcare facilities since 2001, focuses on healthy choices, fresh ingredients and sustainable practices; they've been called the Whole Foods of healthcare dining, Servant said.

"A hospital administration says they have a fresh food program in about 50 percent of our assessments," Servant said. "In almost every case, we find out they are 25 percent fresh, 75 percent convenience. Through our assessment, they come to understand what a true fresh food program is. The process is often transformative, not only for the individuals involved, but for the entire organization."

Why are fresh ingredients and freshly prepared foods so important to employee dining? "When you prepare food with fresh ingredients, it is high in flavor and low in sodium and fats," Servant explained. "You demonstrate that a healthy lifestyle is also more enjoyable, and you create committed ambassadors that promote the health and wellness objectives of the hospital. It's a transformation that is reflected in employee attitudes toward their peers, patients and the greater community."

CREATE A UNIQUE EMPLOYEE RESTAURANT

In a country where food shows such as Top Chef are favorites among viewers, it's a fun, creative idea to draw employees into a dining program by offering something unique: a menu created by a celebrity chef.

This is what executives at Bon Secours Charity Health System's Good Samaritan Hospital, Suffern, NY, did this January when they decided to hire Chef Cary Neff to transform their dining area, Lafayette Grille, into a health-conscious restaurant. The menu contains a rotating offering of more than 60 meals, and all the meals are less than 450 calories. The restaurant is open to all employees, patients and the public.

"The space for the new Lafayette Grille is amazing," explained Deborah Marshall, vice president-public relations, marketing and strategic initiatives, Bon Secours Charity Health System. "It has an

uplifting, bright color scheme, a wide variety of foods and snacks, and an 'airy' atmosphere."

Good Samaritan connected with Neff after he worked with other hospitals within the Bon Secours Charity Health System with successful results. Neff, originally trained in classical French cooking, is the author of Conscious Cuisine; he's also appeared on the Food Network, The Today Show and The Oprah Winfrey Show.

"Hospitals staffs were energized to have a new dining concept restaurant in their facilities," Marshall recalled. "We really wanted a menu developing calorie-conscious meals. Neff's Flavors 450 menu concept was a great fit for the Lafayette Grill because of the many attributes of his nutritious program, especially the incorporation of foods combating disease and supporting sustainable agriculture."

Neff's cooking concept offers creative, healthy substitutions. Sodium is reduced or eliminated by adding herbs. Chefs use millet, a cereal grain, to thicken soups instead of cream. Additionally, all ingredients are sautéed in olive oil instead of butter.

Produce is grown within 150 miles of Good Samaritan, and all dishes are low in fat, with an emphasis on whole grains, lean proteins, low-fat dairy products and fresh ingredients.

A major benefit of offering these nutritious meals to employees concerns about calories are eased and they can fully enjoy their meals, Marshall added. E



Unidine presents the new dining standard for patient-centered care.

At Unidine, we share a belief in the healing and nurturing power of fresh food and the importance of caring, attentive service. You see our commitment to these principles in the actions and enthusiasm of every member of the Unidine team.

Find out why so many hospitals have partnered with Unidine for food service management and how our patient-centered programs are defining the new standard in hospital dining services.

UNIDINE
Putting our expertise on the table®

Call Today!
1.877.UNIDINE (864-3463)
www.unidine.com

