

Evaluating the ROI of Your Dining Program

Whether in-house or outsourced, it can be hard to determine the success of a dining program.

These **5 touchpoints** will help you determine the return on investment of a food service contract.

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The Resident Experience

There is nothing that contributes to a resident's quality of life more than the food they eat in your community.

A dining program engages with every resident in your community at least three times a day. Yet there's a reason why "poor food quality" remains a top complaint in the senior living industry. To avoid dissatisfaction among residents and their families, it's important to continually evaluate resident experiences and the value your dining program brings to your community.

Many communities do not emphasize or place a high value on the key components of a successful dining program. A successful dining program is one that is resident-centered, fulfills its promises, and empowers leadership.



Evaluating the Success of your Dining Program

1. Is the dining program successfully meeting the targets and initiatives outlined by our community?
2. Does the dining program effectively maintain, hire, and recruit staff?
3. Do menus meet resident satisfaction goals at an agreed cost?
4. Does the dining program offer innovative solutions that will prepare the community for the future?
5. Is the dining program engaged in the total resident experience?

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TOUCHPOINT 1



If you've outsourced your dining program, it was likely because you had several pain points that needed to be addressed.

Is the dining program successfully meeting the targets and initiatives outlined by our community?

Review the framework outlined in your proposal and contract, has your current dining program achieved the goals they said they would in order to help you overcome these pain points? A good food service provider should clearly identify and recommend solutions to your community's pain points. The solutions they propose should list out everything they plan to do to overcome the issue and come with clear expectations of how often and how soon these items will be taken care of.

Have they streamlined the operation to be more efficient and effective? A good dining program should not be relying on Excel spreadsheets and Word documents for day-to-day operations. Ideally, they've put into place high-functioning technology that builds and stores resident-centered menus, tracks special diets, allergens, and texture modifications while fully integrating with your EMR system.

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TOUCHPOINT 2



Current staffing challenges require a partner with proven solutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created severe staffing shortages across many industries. However, the senior living community has been significantly impacted. Ninety-six percent of assisted living communities are facing staffing shortages according to a recent survey. Today, more than ever, senior living communities need to have a food service partner who can help them tackle staffing challenges in their dining department.

A partner with expert staffing solutions will provide your community with:

- **A recruiting team that specializes in hiring food service workers in healthcare settings.**
- **Quick and efficient onboarding.**
- **Comprehensive training on safe food handling, workplace safety, and customer service.**
- **Growth and development pathways for all employees.**
- **Plenty of ways for staff to feel appreciated throughout the year.**

Does the dining program effectively maintain, hire, and recruit staff?

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TOUCHPOINT 3

Do Menus Meet Resident Satisfaction Goals at an Agreed Cost?

Every community is unique. A good food service provider will assess the community's needs through resident surveys and feedback. They'll take into account regional preferences when selecting recipes and building menus. They'll also participate in resident council meetings and resident food committee meetings to make sure your residents are heard when it comes to the food they eat.

Many food service providers use set menus and locked order guides to meet financial goals. This may create monotony in your day-to-day menu offerings. With today's supply chain challenges, it may also create procurement issues. Instead, a good food service provider can reduce costs by passing volume-based purchasing savings on to their clients. They'll use more from-scratch cooking and eliminate higher-cost convenience foods while looking for ways to reduce food waste. They'll also work with local suppliers to ensure freshness and availability.

As good stewards of your resources, your food service provider should manage menus and food costs to align with the agreed per patient per day cost outlined in your contract. Any changes in costs should be quickly communicated to administrative staff.

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TOUCHPOINT 4

The dining room will take center stage through design, services, and technology.

Today the baby boomer generation is turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 a day. By 2030, over 70 million Americans will be considered retirement age. Senior living communities are poised for a dynamic shift in the way they market themselves, and the dining room will likely take center stage through design, services, and technology.

In the future, providers will need to provide alternative food service settings, like smaller dining areas and technology-enabled dining services. A good food service provider should be exploring how to integrate technology platforms and services into a dining program today. They should be exploring new service styles like on-demand dining and micro-markets that will appeal to the baby boomer generation.

Without innovation, your dining program risks being seen as “old fashioned.” This may be unappealing to the tech savvy, amenity-driven, baby boomer generation. Partner with a food service provider that is preparing themselves for the future to ensure your community’s success tomorrow.



Does the dining program offer innovative solutions that will prepare your community for the future?

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TOUCHPOINT 5

Resident Feedback is Key.

For the best resident experience, communication is key. How often does your food service provider get feedback from residents? This could be through requesting feedback (by cards or a digital device). Do they complete meal rounds and engage with residents during meal service? Are they active on the resident council or have they established a resident food committee? All of these provide ways for your dining program's leadership to communicate with those they serve.

A successful dining program will keep menus interesting and exciting while ensuring it appeals to the preferences and tastes of the community. Residents want to feel welcomed and connected to their dining experience. Without engaging and communicating with residents, your dining program may seem "tone-deaf" to the needs of the community.



Is the dining program engaged in the total resident experience?

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BEST PRACTICES FOR DINING SERVICES IN 2022

Train and Maintain

Stabilize your staffing through increased training efforts and by rewarding retention. Dining staffing shortages remain a major pain point for senior living organizations. Building the right team and maintaining dining staff should be a top priority. Without the proper staffing levels, innovation will be impossible.

Change Perceptions

Recruiting the culinary talent needed for today's senior living dining operations requires changing community life. Add a dining section to your website with photos of food creations. Go out in the local community a get cooking! Enter cooking contests. It's all about awareness and showing chefs your dining service can compete with any restaurant.

Increase Innovation

Stay ahead of the changes coming to senior living by continuing to be innovative. Look for ways to increase the choices available to residents. Add more scratch cooking with fresh ingredients and look for opportunities to provide cooked-to-order menu items.

Value Added Services

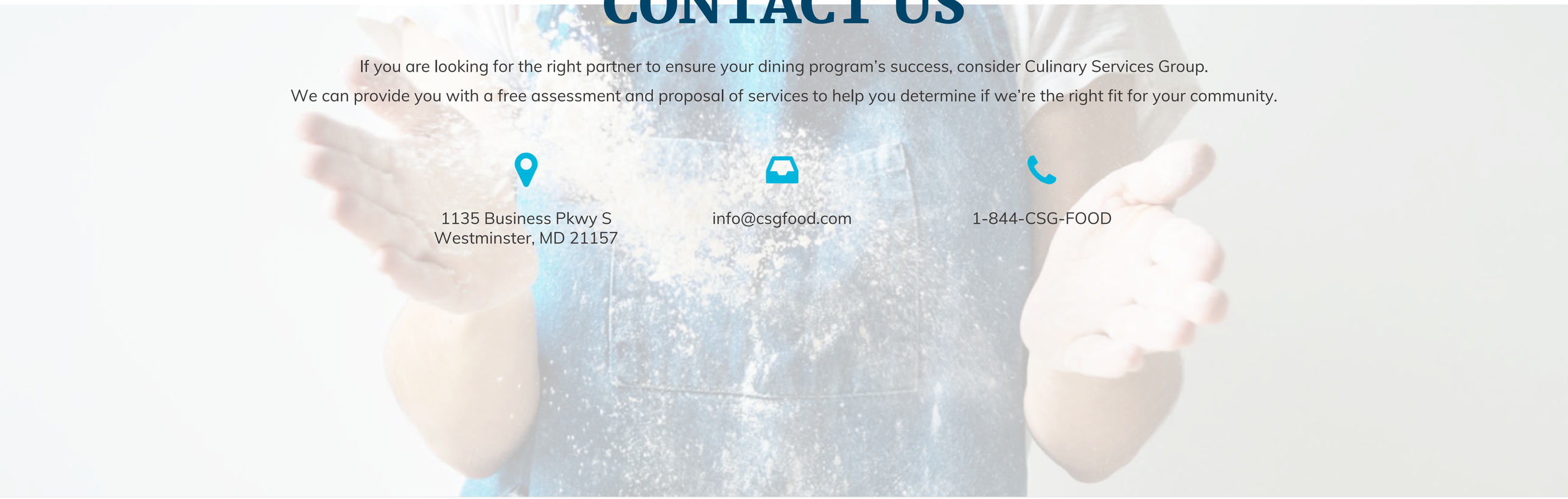
Special touches that enhance the dining operation from display cases to grab-and-go options can make a dining program feel like something more than 3 meals a day. Residents want a choice in how and where they eat. Consider creating a smaller private dining space so residents can entertain family or guests.

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CONTACT US

If you are looking for the right partner to ensure your dining program’s success, consider Culinary Services Group.

We can provide you with a free assessment and proposal of services to help you determine if we’re the right fit for your community.



1135 Business Pkwy S
Westminster, MD 21157

info@csgfood.com

1-844-CSG-FOOD

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