

# The Spirit of the Industry<sup>SM</sup> 2006



National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation and *Nation's Restaurant News*

**SPiRiT**  
*Awards*

Honoring the People of the Foodservice Industry

# The Spirit of the Industry<sup>SM</sup> 2006

Presented by the

**National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation**

*Nation's Restaurant News*

and

**The Coca-Cola Company**

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A Healthy Approach to Employee  
Satisfaction

Mary Adolf  
*President and Chief Operating Officer*  
National Restaurant Association  
Educational Foundation

The restaurant and foodservice industry continues to thrive as the largest private sector employer in the country, with over 12.5 million employees throughout its 925,000 locations nationwide. In fact, in 2006 alone, sales in the industry are expected to top the half-trillion dollar mark for the first time in history. At the heart of this vast industry lies a workforce that is estimated to add over 1.9 million jobs over the next ten years. To that end, the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, *Nation's Restaurant News*, and The Coca-Cola Company have once again teamed up to present the 2006 SPIRIT Awards, honoring those companies who recognize their workforce as the most important asset of their organization.

High turnover rates continue to serve as one of the biggest concerns the industry faces. It is, therefore, essential to employ a workforce that is educated, trained and recognized properly. A workforce that knows its role in the success of an organization and that is provided with the tools to succeed is likely to remain and grow with that organization.

The 2006 SPIRIT Awards winners—Bambara, Carlson Restaurants Worldwide, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Ohio State University Medical Center—have demonstrated their dedication and devotion to their workforce, realizing that they are the true “spirit” of the industry. We are proud to share their best practices with you in our Spirit of the Industry 2006. ■

W.E. (Chris) Lowe  
*President*  
Coca-Cola North America  
Foodservice &  
Hospitality Division

**A**t The Coca-Cola Company, we understand the importance of employee recruitment and retention in the restaurant industry. We know that these are two of the greatest challenges restaurant operators face day in and day out. We also know that successful and happy employees are the keys to customer satisfaction, which is why The Coca-Cola Company is a proud sponsor of the SPIRIT Awards.

The SPIRIT Awards honor companies that exemplify best practices for enhancing employee satisfaction. Knowing that the number one reason customers do not return to a restaurant is employee attitude, we want to recognize the companies that truly understand the importance of the workforce and that take the necessary steps to make sure they are recruited, trained and recognized properly.

We hope that the following profiles of our 2006 SPIRIT Awards winners will encourage you to continue your efforts in recognizing and demonstrating how important your workforce is to sustaining your business and our great industry.

Congratulations to this year's winners! ■

Alan Gould  
Publisher

*Nation's Restaurant News*

**N**ation's Restaurant News is honored to once again partner with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation to present the 2nd annual SPIRIT Awards, sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company. These outstanding SPIRIT Awards winners have proven their reputation as premier companies dedicated to advanced employee recognition and retention programs in the restaurant and foodservice industry.

The SPIRIT Awards are open to any commercial, on-site, independent, corporate and franchise foodservice and restaurant company in any service format, regardless of size. An impartial panel of distinguished industry leaders and educators judges applicants and determines award winners. Applications are reviewed for innovation and creativity, professional program presentation (and in-unit communication) and measured program effectiveness. One winner can be awarded in each of the following concept categories: quick service; full service; fine dining; on-site; and specialty foodservice.

We want to extend a special thank you to our 2006 SPIRIT Advisory Board members: Scott Barnett, president and chief executive officer, Bubba Gump Shrimp Company; Dina Berta, human resources editor, *Nation's Restaurant News*; Tara Davey, executive director, The Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers (CHART); Alison Fisher, general manager, Panzano; Judy Irwin, vice president of human resources and training, Golden Corral Corporation;

Ellen Nash Christman, vice president, corporate communications and industry relations, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation; Deborah Collins, executive director, Distinguished Restaurants of North America (DiRoNA); Mark Blankenship, vice president, human resources and operational services, Jack in the Box Inc.; Jim Sullivan, chief executive officer, Sullivision.com; Helen S. Wechsler, director, Boston College Dining Services; and the editorial staff of *Nation's Restaurant News*.

Bambara, Carlson Restaurants Worldwide, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Ohio State University Medical Center have proven their loyalty to their workforce, with the realization that they are their most valuable asset, and are deserving recipients of the 2006 SPIRIT Awards.

We are excited to recognize these industry leaders in a variety of ways: first, in covering their programs in *Nation's Restaurant News*; second, by presenting them with this prestigious award at the 47th annual Multi-Unit Foodservice Operators (MUFSSO) conference, held October 15-18 in Dallas, Texas where they will participate in a panel discussion and receive a plaque to display in their restaurant; third, by honoring winners at the 2007 SPIRIT Awards & FMP® Recognition Breakfast slated for Monday, May 21, 2007 during the 2007 National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show in Chicago, IL; and finally, by ensuring their best practices live on through this booklet.

With the SPIRIT Awards and this booklet, we hope that operators around the industry will learn

valuable lessons from these winning companies, making every effort to protect the true “spirit” of their organization...their employees. ■

# CONNECTING TO THE HUMAN SIDE OF FOODSERVICE

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, *Nation's Restaurant News* and The Coca-Cola Company have developed a one-stop, comprehensive Web site addressing all aspects of workforce-related challenges.

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF), *Nation's Restaurant News* and founding sponsor, The Coca-Cola Company, teamed up to create the Foodservice Workforce Solutions Web site, a Web site designed to assist operators in finding solutions to their workforce challenges.

The Foodservice Workforce Solutions Web site is a one-of-a-kind, cutting-edge resource, addressing many aspects of operators' workforce challenges. It provides meaningful, relevant and timely ways to address recruitment and retention issues in the restaurant and throughout the company. The site boasts:

- an updated homepage hosting current and relevant articles on best practices regarding recruitment and retention solutions
- expert advice on how to solve various workforce challenges
- an easy-to-navigate speaker, events and consultants bureau
- highlights of the best practices of past SPIRIT Awards winners

The concrete, actionable tools provided throughout this Web site enable operators to run their businesses more efficiently and effectively by providing them with best practices and ideas that work.

The Web site is another facet in the NRAEF's commitment to being the premier provider of educational resources, materials and programs to the industry, addressing the attraction, development and retention of the industry's workforce, at the high school, college and professional levels.

The NRAEF's ProStart® program encourages high school students to become involved in the restaurant and foodservice industry in both the culinary and management fields. With more than 54,000 students from 1,343 schools, across 46 states, territories and districts, the ProStart program provides students with a

solid foundation for a career in the industry.

At the collegiate level, the new NRAEF ManageFirst Program™ prepares people for management careers in the industry. This management certificate program is based on a set of competencies defined by the restaurant, foodservice and hospitality industry as those needed for success. American Express is the Founding Partner of the NRAEF ManageFirst Program, and the program is being distributed exclusively through our publisher, Pearson Prentice Hall.

The NRAEF Leadership & Management Program, in partnership with Harvard Business School Publishing, teaches industry professionals to become truly effective leaders. Managers in the restaurant and foodservice industry

must not only possess strong technical and operational skills, but they must also boast the people skills necessary to effectively manage teams. Through this program, emerging and current managers will understand how to direct, motivate, train, supervise, retain and evaluate their employees.

The Foodservice Workforce Solutions Web site is a living and evolving tool, and we welcome all industry input. Please visit often to access new information on workforce issues, participate in group discussions to solicit peer feedback and perhaps become a content provider as well.

Visit the Foodservice Workforce Solutions Web site at [www.foodserviceworkforcesolutions.com](http://www.foodserviceworkforcesolutions.com). ■

# THESE EMPLOYEES EARN K.U.D.O.S. EVERYDAY

“Getting and keeping guests,  
keeping and developing employees”  
is the focus throughout every level  
of Bambara’s workforce.

“Serious fun and damn good food.” This is the theme behind every day of work at Bambara Restaurant, for without the former, you lose the latter. This Kimpton-owned, American bar and grill, celebrates the bounty of New England and the flavors of the season in both their menu and their employees. Drawing influences from around the region and employing a workforce that feeds off its New England roots, Bambara creates an atmosphere where the staff is included in every aspect of the organization.

## KNOWING THE PERSONALITY

Creating a dining experience where the guest feels comfortable begins with hiring a workforce whose personality fits the atmosphere of the restaurant. To make certain their staff emanates the fun atmosphere of Bambara, candidates are judged not only on their skill set within the industry, but also on their life outside of work. “What are their hobbies? What courses are they taking in

school? What organizations do they belong to? These are the kinds of things that help us judge what kind of personality these candidates have,” stated Frank Kaweck, Bambara’s general manager. Kaweck uses the philosophy that when a person exudes a fun and creative personality outside of work, he or she can apply that same personality in the workplace. “We look for people who have a nature to be sincere and gracious, knowing that this attitude will carry over to our guests, making for a great dining experience,” he continued.

This same mentality is used in Bambara’s training. For each new hire, management caters the training to his or her personality. This training method helps to ensure that each new hire’s time is utilized in the most effective way possible. “We also

like to ask our staff ‘What else do you need from us?’ before we send them out on their own. This way we know that they are completely comfortable when they step on the floor,” Kaweck explained.

## **UNDERSTANDING EVERY ASPECT**

One of the top goals for Bambara is to promote their employees from within. In fact, “keeping and developing employees” is part of the Kimpton mission statement, and, to date, almost 90% of Bambara’s wait staff have been promoted from within. To facilitate this internal advancement, they enact a “learning from doing” approach to daily job tasks. “We try to cross-train our employees as much as possible,” stated Kaweck. “The runners will help the bussers who help the hosts who

help the waitstaff. This way everyone in our organization learns what it takes to succeed at every level.”

Bambara’s “Continuing Education” program helps keep employees informed on what is going on throughout the restaurant. Daily pre-shift meetings provide an interactive environment for line staff to reinforce their knowledge of Bambara’s “absolute standards”—a set of principles staff use as a guide to treating guests. Staff is also treated to monthly menu and bar tastings, which help reinforce their knowledge of common menu items as well as introduce them to the new additions. Finally, through Kimpton University, management and staff are able to learn the corporate standards and operational actions from various executive-level staff, helping all staff members understand what goes into

the operation of a successful restaurant.

## DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COMMUNICATION

Communication across all levels helps employees know they are a part of the organization and its decisions. That is why Bambara provides several mediums through which staff can communicate with each other and management.

Monthly “Employee Action Committees” (EAC) provide an excellent opportunity for employees to express their comments and concerns regarding their ability to meet the organizational standard. During EACs, employees participate in roundtable discussions in an effort to improve their working

environment. Minutes are then posted along with action steps and estimated completion dates for employees to review. Kawecki elaborated, “Whether it’s as simple as a need for more water glasses or something more complex like speed of service, through EACs staff are able to voice their concerns, and by posting the minutes, know

*“This is just another way that we allow our staff to exhibit their personality with every guest encounter they have.”*

who is responsible for addressing the issue and when it should be resolved.”

The “Kudos” program allows employees to recognize each other for efforts above and beyond their job’s description. When employees feel that a peer has shown exemplary effort in his or her job, they post a Kudos card on the staff bulletin board describing the effort made

and why it is deserving of praise. At the end of the month a unique reward is given to the employee with either the most Kudos or who showed the most unique effort. “The Kudos program is an excellent way for employees to recognize each other. It’s fun at the end of a difficult day to see the employees reading the various Kudos cards, seeing what has been written about themselves and their peers,” Kawecki continued.

## OWNERSHIP AND TEAMWORK

The result of the comprehensive training and communication at Bambara is a staff that is knowledgeable and comfortable in all aspects of their jobs. Recognizing this, Bambara allows their staff

“ownership” of their tables, providing them with opportunities to cater each dining experience to the particular guest. “We have three complimentary food and beverage options that we like to present to guests to enhance their visit with us, and we allow the server to choose which option he or she feels would complement the meal best,” Kawecki explained. “This is just another way that we allow our staff to exhibit their personality with every guest encounter they have.”

Annual parties and company softball and soccer teams give employees the chance to celebrate the fruits of their labor. “We close early and hold our parties off site so that everyone can join the celebration. Our sports teams really have a great time as well. It’s all for fun, and they get a chance to compete against some

of their friends in the industry,” stated Kawecki.

## SHOWCASING THE RESULTS

While there are many steps that operators can take to make sure their employees are hired and trained properly, to see tangible results from these efforts is the ultimate goal. Over the past year alone, Bambara has seen an increase in their employee satisfaction with survey scores jumping from a 72% satisfaction rate to 90%. Furthermore, this has directly translated into guest satisfaction, with guest counts increasing 21% over 2005. Kawecki credits these improvements to the actions that Bambara has taken to ensure that every employee knows his or her importance in the organization. “Our EACs, table ownerships, continuing education and

company-wide celebrations give us the opportunity to let our employees know how important they are to us, and in turn, they carry that respect on to our customers.” ■

### Bambara

**Channel:** Fine Dining

**Headquarters:** Cambridge, MA

**Founded:** 2003

**Sales:** \$5 million

**Units:** 1

**Employees:** 80

**Manager Turnover:** 25%

**Hourly Turnover:** 25.4%

**Website:**

[www.bambara-cambridge.com](http://www.bambara-cambridge.com)

**Contact:** Frank Kawecki,  
General Manager

[frank.kawecki@bambara-cambridge.com](mailto:frank.kawecki@bambara-cambridge.com)



# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Creating a great place for great people to do great work is how Carlson strives to become one of the most respected private companies on earth.

When Carlson Restaurants Worldwide recently accelerated their strategic focus of creating a great place for great people to do great work, the results were astounding—achieving the highest management and team member retention and engagement rates in brand history. With this tremendous attention to attracting, retaining and engaging the most effective workforce, Carlson Restaurants Worldwide (T.G.I. Friday’s and Pick Up Stix restaurants) has earned widespread recognition for being a company devoted to their people.

## **ATTRACTING GREAT PEOPLE**

While their online career opportunities sites and attractive recruitment posters serve as effective ways to engage an interested workforce, for Carlson Restaurants Worldwide (CRW), it’s what’s inside each position they hope attracts a qualified and enthusiastic workforce. By offering their Team Members some of the most competitive benefits on the market as well as beneficial career development programs, new CRW employees are given the tools for success the moment they walk in the door. “We are always constructing and evaluating our programs

around the needs of our workforce,” stated Anne Varano, CRW’s senior vice president of human resources and communication. “We listen to our team members and deliver programs that are most meaningful to them.”

All regular, full-time Team Members working 30 hours or more per week, are eligible to participate in CRW’s medical benefits program. The program includes health care, dental and vision service plans, as well as a tax-free Health Care Spending Account to help employees save the money they will need for health care expenses. Additionally, life insurance, retirement/401(k), disability and even identity theft and pet insurance plans give Team Members security in knowing they and their families will be cared for throughout their tenure with the company.

## **ROCKING THE FUTURE**

CRW provides several convenient and productive methods for Team Members to develop the skills they need to rise through the professional ranks. The “Rock Your Future” Web site serves as an online career mapping source where employees can learn what skills and education they will need to grow and advance with the organization. “Our employees wanted to know what career possibilities were available for them, and this site now gives them the ability to focus on a specific career opportunity and know what it will take for them to reach that goal,” explained Varano.

The Restaurant Management Essentials Training Program is a comprehensive, blended training program that incorporates interactive online learning with on-the-job training. A requirement of all T.G.I.

Friday’s managers, the program gives new managers the chance to learn all aspects of the position while allowing them to practice their skills in a safe environment that does not impact the actual system.

## **LEAVING THE MENU OPEN**

Keeping employees in constant communication with the home office, CRW hosts valuable communications mediums so employees stay updated on what is occurring in their own restaurant, as well as in the corporate support centers. The M.E.N.U. (My Electronic News Update) intranet system provides employees with an online, internal communications vehicle through which pertinent company information can be shared in a clear and concise way.

Various newsletters provide up-to-date information to both

T.G.I. Fridays and Pick Up Stix Team Members, including menu additions, new beverages and helpful customer service tips. CRW has even developed an alumni newsletter as a way to keep in touch with former employees. “We sometimes lose great talent, and the newsletter was developed as a way to always leave the door open for those people to know what we are doing and perhaps even return to the company,” explained Varano.

## HONORING GREAT WORK

Anyone who has ever visited a T.G.I. Fridays or Pick Up Stix restaurant knows they are committed to having fun. From the décor to the staff to the food they serve, having fun is a part of their culture. This fun does not stop at the end of the work day

either. CRW insists that their employees are provided with fun and exciting programs, letting them know how crucial they are to the success of the organization. For starters, milestone anniversaries are celebrated for Team Members, during which the honoree is

*“We really have a caring culture among each other and the communities we are involved in.”*

presented with a gift of their choice and are thrown a party to celebrate.

Believing that people who are recognized for their contribution work better together, CRW’s Pin program gives managers an opportunity to recognize their Team Members for driving home CRW strategies and initiatives. “We strive to recognize our Team Members for their efforts, and we try to do this in

a public forum so they can know that everyone appreciates their efforts,” Varano elaborated. Eligible staff are judged on knowledge, leadership, excellence and “star” performance, and when specific qualities within these categories are exhibited in their work, they are presented with a pin recognizing their achievements towards that goal.

## COMPASSION BEYOND COMPARE

Through this recognition of their employees, CRW creates a bond between not only the Team Members and their managers, but among the Team Members themselves. Recognizing all they have been given, CRW employees are quick to give back to the community in which they serve. “We really have a caring

culture among each other and the communities we are involved in,” continued Varano. “Our people just want to help.”

The bond between fellow Team Members is shown most proudly through CRW’s “Have a Heart” program. This employee-driven and employee-funded charity program provides financial assistance to other CRW employees and their families in times of personal or familial tragedy. Since its inception, participation in the program has grown to more than 10,000 CRW employees and has provided assistance in events of major natural disasters, extended hospital stays, house fires, death of children and/or spouses, life threatening illnesses, major injuries and serious accidents.

CRW’s involvement in the community is not limited to

employees and their families though. CRW restaurants and employees have shown incredible generosity and concern in time of global need. Whether for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and the Asian tsunami or those team members serving in Afghanistan and Iraq, employees are quick to join together to provide whatever support they can to those in need.

### **PROOF OF A GREAT PLACE**

CRW has received several awards and recognitions over the years honoring their devotion to their workforce including, most recently, the *Dallas Business Journal’s* “Best Places to Work” award. Reflecting upon this success, Varano explained, “We are constantly soliciting best practices both internally and externally to make sure we are

recognizing our employees and providing them with everything they need to succeed.” It is these efforts that help CRW maintain their reputation as a great place for great people to do great work. ■

## **Carlson Restaurants Worldwide**

**Channel:** Full Service

**Headquarters:** Carrollton, TX

**Founded:** 1965

**Units:** 948 restaurants in 55 countries

**Employees:** 28,000 company and  
75,000 worldwide

**Manager Turnover:** 22%

**Hourly Turnover:** 90%

**Website:** [www.fridays.com](http://www.fridays.com)

**Contact:** Anne Varano,  
Senior V.P. Human Resources  
and Communication  
[avarano@crww.com](mailto:avarano@crww.com)

# ANYONE CAN MAKE FOAM

## Theses Employees Make F.R.O.T.H.

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf stays  
*Est. 1963*  
 at the top of its class by providing  
 customers with a Total Quality  
 Experience and supplying employees  
 with the necessary tools for success.

When Herbert B. Hyman opened the first Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf store in 1963, he never imagined the quaint little coffee shop would one day grow to over 80 domestic stores and more than 400 locations in 14 countries worldwide. With their continued success throughout the past four decades, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf has managed to maintain several traditions as secrets of their success, one of which is having their Team Members provide each customer with a Total Quality Experience inspired from the company's Core Values, F.R.O.T.H: Friendly, Respect, Ownership, Teamwork and Honesty.

### PICKING THE BEST BEANS

When The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf (The Coffee Bean) stores open their doors, they aren't just opening them to customers—they are opening them to new Team Members, too. Each year the "California born and brewed" company hosts several hiring fairs, held at an actual store, to offer employment opportunities to

the public, while also displaying the familial qualities of each store. “We really like to make our hiring fairs an open house for people interested in working with us,” stated Mike Serchia, The Coffee Bean’s director of human resources. “Hiring fairs for hourly employees are held in stores during normal business hours, so we can showcase our friendly store environment and allow for casual conversation with the applicant.” These hiring fairs have been highly successful in bringing in new Team Members, with about 30% of all new hires coming from fair attendees.

The Coffee Bean employees are also encouraged to participate in the “Team Bean” referral program, which rewards \$150 to \$500 for each team member referral, depending upon the position level of the new hire. “The referral program has really helped

us recruit individuals that exhibit the same fun and professional personalities as our current Team Members,” explained Serchia. On average the referral program generates up to 20% of all new hires per month.

### **BREWING THE SKILLS**

To ensure that each and every Team Member can provide customers with the Total Quality Experience (TQE)—quality of product, service and environment—employees must first understand the foundation of this expectation. Team Members are therefore provided with several opportunities to learn how to contribute to the success of their stores and their own professional growth.

During the recruiting process, candidates participate in “A Day in the Life” scenarios, where they observe, ask questions and shadow the various

management in day-to-day activities of a typical shift. “The purpose of ‘A Day in the Life’ is to give our candidates the opportunity to evaluate the fit between themselves and the company,” explained Serchia. The program also gives management insight into the candidate’s values, interest level and readiness for the management program, ensuring that the candidate is a good fit for the company and vice versa.

The Coffee Bean also offers a Progressive Management Course for those Team Members taking on their first role as a supervisor. Through the course, Team Members learn the company’s leadership guidelines, the communication, planning, delegation and motivational skills as well as the Core Values of a Coffee Bean leader. Most important, they learn how to apply these skills and values within

their stores. “We show them how they can make a difference and create positive customer memories,” explained Serchia.

## **MUCH MORE THAN THE DAILY GRIND**

The Coffee Bean is always looking to continue the professional development of their Team Members. The “Benny Buddy” program is one way the company attempts to break down the barriers that exist between various corporate and managerial levels. Designed around the human resources icon, “Benjamin Edward Fit” (Ben E. Fit), the Benny Buddy program pairs general managers (GMs) with members of the senior corporate team, and not only breaks down the communication barriers between GMs and senior staff, it also

develops crucial senior skills while reducing GM turnover.

Another valuable development tool for Team Members is the “F.I.S.H.” program, (F.R.O.T.H., Inspiration, Synergy, and Honesty). The F.I.S.H.

*“We show them how they can make a difference and create positive customer memories.”*

program provides a platform to teach Team Members how to have fun while they work through activities like theme days (i.e. “Western” Day) and in-store contests and prizes. “F.I.S.H. really helps the company inspire our Team Members to enjoy what they do, which in turn sustains them as employees and improves their customer service skills,” stated Serchia. Since the inception of the F.I.S.H. program in 2001, The Coffee Bean has seen significant and

measurable results. “A store that was struggling to be in the top 10 in sales before F.I.S.H. is now consistently number one in its region. Another store that started utilizing the F.I.S.H. program every Tuesday resulted in an increase of transactions per labor hour by an average 25% on that day,” continued Serchia.

## **A UNIQUE BLEND OF RECOGNITION**

The Coffee Bean hosts numerous employee appreciation programs to let their Team Members know how important they are to the success of the organization. Holiday parties, “not-so-talented” talent shows, baseball outings and quarterly performance lunches are just a few of the ways employees are given the chance to unwind and know how

much their work is appreciated.

The most coveted of the recognition programs, however, is the annual trip to Costa Rica. Each year, The Coffee Bean “Team Members of the Year” are rewarded with a once-in-a-lifetime trip to one of the company’s origin coffee farms in Costa Rica. “The trip to Costa Rica is probably the best way we can show employees how much we appreciate their hard work and dedication, while at the same time demonstrating to them that the product they serve is much more than just a cup of coffee,” stated Serchia. While in Costa Rica, Team Members observe how beans are harvested and actually participate in the harvest of the coffee beans, visit the processing mill and host a thank you dinner for the farmers and growers for everything they do for The Coffee Bean.

The Coffee Bean also provides comprehensive medical, dental and vision plans for their full-time employees, as well as benefits for part-time Team Members who have been with the company for over one year.

### **EYE OPENING RESULTS**

Since implementing many of these and other training, evaluation and recognition tools, The Coffee Bean has seen tangible results, directly affecting their bottom line. The Coffee Bean has reduced their hourly turnover rate an incredible 124 percentage points to 96% from 1999 to 2006. In addition, GM retention currently averages 36 months. Looking to the future, Serchia asserts that, “It is our job as leaders to constantly evaluate our programs and policies and make sure that they are the most effective

ways to not only develop our employees, but also continue to provide all of our customers with the Total Quality Experience they have come to know from The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf name.” ■

### **The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf**

**Channel:** Quick Service

**Headquarters:** Los Angeles, CA

**Founded:** 1963

**Sales:** \$170 million

**Units:** 182 domestic &  
460 worldwide

**Employees:** 3,500 domestic and  
4,500 worldwide

**Manager Turnover:** 32%

**Hourly Turnover:** 96%

**Website:** [www.coffeebean.com](http://www.coffeebean.com)

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Director of Human Resources  
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# A HEALTHY APPROACH TO EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Ohio State University Medical Center strives to make its campus a “workplace of choice” and its Medical Center’s Nutrition Services department is no exception.

Serving more than 2,500 patient meals everyday, across six buildings covering almost six city blocks, the Ohio State University Medical Center (OSUMC) Nutrition Services team has one of the most challenging and unique jobs in the foodservice industry. In addition to the need for patient meals, almost 900,000 customers visit the medical center’s on-site retail locations each year. To meet these incredible demands, the Nutrition Services department employs a workforce focused on the individual needs of the patients, staff and visitors, while adopting cutting- edge technology and defined customer service standards.

## **THE BEST PRESCRIPTION FOR RECRUITMENT**

As the OSUMC campus continues to grow at a remarkable pace, Nutrition Services must continue to evaluate their recruitment and retention efforts to meet the rising demand placed upon its services. “As a department, we have gone through a tremendous amount of change over the past five years,” stated

Julie Jones, OSUMC's Nutrition Services' director. "Department managers are now directly involved in the recruitment process, conducting behavior-based interviews immediately after the candidate is pre-screened by the human resources staff. This process gives us direct access to determine staff members who are the best fit for the position."

In correlation with OSUMC's tremendous growth, one of the most important characteristics the department looks for in their staff is flexibility. As an example, Nutrition Services converted to a centralized rethermalization process in their kitchen. Prior to this, the hospital housed 14 different smaller cook-chill galleys throughout the medical center complex. In 2004, the department added a hi-tech robotics

system, which transports hot meals, soiled trays and trash from over 260 different locations around the Medical Center campus. "This change in logistics impacted every step in our process and every employee involved in that process, and our staff flexibility during this time was tremendous," stated Jones. "The addition of the robotics system required a great deal of new construction, and through it all, our staff remained composed and really helped the transition go smoothly." Through this new robotics system, staff is now able to spend more time focusing on patient satisfaction by concentrating their attention directly on the patients and their needs, rather than the rigorous tasks associated with transporting meals across the extremely large campus.

## **TIME TO SEE A SPECIALIST**

There are several distinct qualifications Nutrition Services staff must possess to work in a medical care facility, and as such their training is an extensive process, including both medical center and departmental orientations. Medical center orientation covers hospital standards and benefits through group education and focuses on customer satisfaction, employee and workplace safety and the mission and values of OSUMC.

After completing the medical center training, staff then begin their specific training for Nutrition Services. During this competency-based process, new hires meet with the department training coordinator to discuss the position and what is required of them to succeed in that position. "We have an open dialogue

with all new hires where we can express to them what expectations we have of them, and, in turn, they are able to let us know what concerns and feelings they have about the position. We feel this communication is a great way to facilitate the job skills learning process,” explained Jones.

New staff members then spend between two and four weeks learning the skills

specific to their position. During this time, new staff also participate in the “Lunch Buddy Program,” where they meet management team members who can guide them during their first weeks on the job.

Nutritional Services also takes great steps to make sure their employees are directly involved in the operation and success of the

department. A critical aspect of this involvement is the annual employee retreats, which focus on team-building and goal-setting for the entire staff. “We first began these retreats at the director level, and because they were so successful, we began offering them to our management and eventually our

*“We like to recognize staff outside the normal programs, including those whose efforts go above and beyond.”*

front-line staff. They really give employees a chance to be a part of the department’s culture, allowing them to help define department standards like the Nutrition Services’ mission statement,” stated Jones. Over a recent five-month period, more than 200 front line-staff participated in the five-hour, offsite retreat.

## RECOGNITION MAKES HOUSE CALLS

Employees are provided with several recognition programs for their hard work and dedication to the department and the medical center. “We like to recognize staff outside the normal programs, including those whose efforts go

above and beyond,” Jones explained.

Personal “letters of gratitude” are sent to

employees who have shown these extra efforts in providing patient, customer or even co-worker care. “We have found that our staff members really appreciate these letters,” continued Jones, “so much so, that they often approach us to tell us how much it means to them that their efforts were recognized in this way.” Timely employee parties and

meals also provide staff with a chance to unwind, while knowing how much their efforts are appreciated at all levels of the department.

OSUMC also offers comprehensive benefit packages to staff members. Medical, dental and vision plans, along with tuition reimbursement for employees and their families provide staff with the resources they need to lead healthy and successful lives. Making sure employees play as hard as they work, OSUMC provides subsidized tickets to Ohio State University sporting and entertainment events.

## **SATISFACTION RECEIVES A HEALTHY INCREASE**

The result of Nutrition Services' focus on the extensive training and appreciation of its staff is a patient,

customer and employee base that continues to give high marks for their satisfaction level with the service they receive. "We have increased our patient satisfaction scores by close to 20% over the past three years. By analyzing these scores and identifying the new or updated strategic initiatives, we continue to evaluate new ways to achieve patient satisfaction targets," Jones boasted. Appropriately, Nutrition Services was also honored with the annual OSUMC "Making a Difference" award, which is presented to the departments with the largest increase in patient satisfaction scores.

Staff also has exhibited improved satisfaction levels. Not only did the results from the 2005 staff satisfaction survey exceed "Best in Class" standards set by the industry, OSUMC has also been able to

promote over 65% of their current managers from within. These results clearly demonstrate that the Nutrition Services department continues to uphold their end of the Ohio State University goal, to become a "workplace of choice." ■

## **Ohio State University Medical Center Nutrition Services**

**Channel:** OnSite

**Headquarters:** Columbus, OH

**Founded:** 1914

**Sales:** \$5.6 million

**Units:** 2 patient kitchens and 4 retail stores

**Employees:** 215

**Employee Turnover:** 12.7% across medical center

**Website:** [www.medicalcenter.osu.edu](http://www.medicalcenter.osu.edu)

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