

THE GOOD KITCHEN

Improved food service equals better life quality for elderly people

Client

Municipality of Holstebro, Denmark

Agency

Hatch & Bloom

(<http://www.hatchandbloom.com/>)

In autumn 2007 the Danish idea- and design agency, Hatch & Bloom was assigned to design a new meal service for The Municipality of Holstebro. Six month later the idea for The Good Kitchen was created. Thus the way was cleared for a new type of meal service in Denmark, meal service with more quality, more flexibility and more freedom of choice.

The briefing

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Facts on Danish meal service

- Meal service is a public service that is assigned to citizens that because of reduced functions, illness, age or other reasons are referred to have food delivered with subsidy from the municipality.
- There are two types of meal service in Denmark
 1. Refrigerated and vacuum packed food with approx two weeks shelf life. The food is delivered to the citizen once a week for a week's consumption.
 2. Hot food delivered to the citizen every day.
- Refrigerated and vacuum-packed food is the most common type of meal service as it is the cheapest way to produce a meal and ensure correct nutrition. The food is usually prepared, packed and delivered from a public catering centre in the municipalities. Otherwise private companies are in charge of the meal service.
- Most public meal services offer special

The process

Participatory Observations

In advance of the development of The Good Kitchen, Hatch & Bloom's design anthropologists conducted a comprehensive ethnographic identification of the seniors' behaviour, needs and wishes including unrecognized and unspoken needs. Also interviews with relevant experts was conducted and the staff's needs and work processes was outlined.

User-workshops and idea development

Under the development of The Good Kitchen, Hatch & Bloom planned and facilitated a string of workshops with representatives from all user groups and interested parties. The objective was together to develop ideas for a new and better meal service through various creative idea development methods, including the method "Radical Analogies". Thinking for instance the meal service as a service for a family with children or as a restaurant created the idea for a new name and image.

Participatory Design

The different design solutions for The Good Kitchen is developed through systematic iterations between design- and feedback studies, among other things by user-workshops, collaborative design processes and testing of user-friendliness with prototypes and mock-ups. This ensured design solutions with a great extend of user-friendliness and applicability.

The result

A kitchen with great added value

A new name, visual identity and communication style was a few of the design solutions that changed the seniors' perception of Holstebro Municipality's meal service. These solutions contributing to the fact that The Good Kitchen today is perceived as a modern and user-centred kitchen with a focus on quality and high level of service. It is this improved image that contributes to the enhancement of the seniors' appetite and gives them a good meal experience.

Increased user insight and dialogue

The development of a simple dialogue tool, today gives the seniors a possibility to contribute with suggestions and ideas on postcards for The Good Kitchen. The postcard is read aloud on staff meetings and put up in the kitchen for the entire staff to gain insight into what the seniors think about their food makes more committed employees and gives the seniors an opportunity to influence their food.

New dishes and higher food quality

Through cooperation with one of Denmark's finest chefs, The Good Kitchen is today able to offer new season inspired dishes of high quality. The emphasis is still on the good traditional dishes with lots of familiar taste experience but the menu also contains newer dishes as: instance 'lemon spaghetti with mushrooms parsley' and 'soup with Jerusalem artichoke and grilled cockerel'.

diets for diabetics, vegetarians or citizens with diminished appetite.

Challenges for Danish meal service

- Today 125,000 seniors are dependent on meal service. This number will increase intensely as the total number of seniors above 67 years will increase during the next 10 years. This means new and high demands on food quality and menu variation.
- 60% of seniors living in assisted living facilities has a poor nutritional condition, 20% hereof are downright malnourished. Almost all seniors are at risk of getting a disease as a consequence to bad or wrong nutrition.
- Poor nutritional condition has negative consequences for seniors' health and causes reduced functions making it harder for the seniors to take care of themselves. In the end this means poorer quality of life and an increased socio-economic burden because of an increased need for assistance and support.
- Apart from the health related challenges, Danish meal service is facing another extensive challenge when it comes to accommodating the seniors' individual needs and wishes. Today all seniors in a municipality and in institutions are receiving the same type of public meal service, regardless if they are well functioning or heavily demented.

Guest menus and kitchen specialties

The Good Kitchen today has an extended menu containing a two-course guest menu that gives the seniors the possibility to invite guests. In addition there is also a series of kitchen specialties, including homemade pastry and chocolate confectionery.

Hatch & Bloom
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