

Module 5 Assignment – Food and Beverage Policies

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### Food and Beverage Policies

Running Food and Beverage in a stadium involves a lot of decisions behind the scenes to keep the customers happy. As Hudson said in his chapter of *The GM's Handbook*, after purchasing tickets, concessions is the next step for people to spend money, so it's important to be prepared (Hudson, 2018).

#### **Food Waste**

At the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars in Maryland, and Atlantic League baseball team that opened their doors this past May, eliminating food waste was a priority because they were a small market team. Saving money was important wherever possible. One method they implemented was to cook-to-order vegan or allergy friendly products. Popular items like hamburgers and hot dogs were cooked ahead of time, but less popular items like vegan items would only be cooked if a customer ordered them. The customer would be told that they would take a little longer (Ryan Robinson, personal connection, May 2024).

Another great method to use is the event notes mentioned by Hudson. Precooking is helpful before every game, but the amount of food needed before a Thirsty Thursday game is vastly different than the amount needed before a Wednesday afternoon game (Hudson, 2018).

#### **Costs of Production and Sales**

Stressing over costs too much won't help anything because people are always going to complain about the prices. Go for quality over a slightly lower price point. Promotional days are always a good time to draw in crowds with lower priced concessions, if done smartly. Selling \$0.50 hot dogs when they cost \$0.45 to make is not the best promotion (Hudson, 2018). In Hagerstown, every Wednesday was Double Dog Wednesday. Patrons could buy two hot dogs for the price of one and bring their dogs to the park. Each Wednesday home game was sponsored by Hearty Pet,

so additional money was coming in to cover the cost of the hot dogs (Scott Shank, personal connection, May 2024).

### **Pricing**

Hudson suggested checking inventory sheets frequently to make sure prices from the suppliers aren't going up. Comparing prices with local venues can keep things competitive (2018). Using local vendors over national can help to bring the prices down (Scott Shank, personal connection, May 2024).

### **Menu Choices**

At the Flying Boxcars, showcasing local fare was a priority. Every concession stand offered “standard ballpark fare,” which meant hot dogs, hamburgers, nachos, etc., but then each concession stand also had a specialty – Crabby Fries and Krumpé's Donut Hot Honey Chicken Sandwich were among the favorites (Ryan Robinson, personal connection, May 2024).

Alcohol options were also a mix of nationally recognized and local brands. Michelob Ultra is one of the most popular beers to drink in a ballpark, so it is a must have, followed by Coors Light and Bud Light. Miller Lite is also extremely popular, but the ballpark had a contract issue, which they need to get worked out before next season. Some of the other choices were other popular brands, both imported and craft, but a lot of the choices came from breweries that were within driving distance. This was important because the Flying Boxcars, while important to the Hagerstown natives, was also a tourist destination. People coming to visit want to try local cuisine and local beer (Devan Boppe, personal connection, May 2024).

### **Staffing**

In order to staff their new ballpark, The Flying Boxcars put on multiple job fairs throughout the tri-state area. They needed to hire not only concessions staff, but staff for the entire ballpark, it just happened to be that concessions staff was the largest. Any person who noted even the slightest interest in food and beverage was interviewed for concessions over any other department. Going forward, the organization will use platforms like TeamWork Online (Matt Kane, personal connection, May 2018).

#### References

Hudson, Joe. (2018). Feeding Fan Ballpark Experiences. In *The GM's Handbook* (pp. 136-151). book, Kirby Publishing, LLC.