

## **Enhancing Employee Skills and Confidence with Menu Descriptions and Complementary Food and Beverage Pairings**

Prepared By: Renee Corcoran, BS, MSIT Graduate Student  
Amanda Hodges, BA, MSIT Graduate Student  
Kristen Lee, BA, MSIT Graduate Student

For: Ralph Muranto, Owner/Proprietor  
Harry and Jean's, LLC

Submitted: March 16, 2005

# Table of Contents

- Executive Summary.....3
  
- Section I**
- The Operating System.....4
  
- Organizational Chart.....6
  
- Problem Statement.....7
  
- Operating Systems Analysis
  - A. What is the operating system like now?.....8
  
  - B. What should it be like?.....11
  
- Probable Cause of the Problem.....13
  
- Section II**
- Possible Solutions.....15
  
- Analysis of Solutions
  - A. Instructional Development and Delivery Capabilities.....16
  
  - B. Comparing Solutions.....19
  
- Recommended Solution.....21

## **Executive Summary**

Harry and Jean's Passionate American Food is a relatively new restaurant located in Charlotte, NC. The Charlotte restaurant falls under the management of Harry and Jean's, LLC, which also manages a restaurant in Rock Hill, SC. On an average night, Harry and Jean's Charlotte location serves approximately 250 people in the restaurant and the bar.

In October 2004, Harry and Jean's Charlotte restaurant began a customer satisfaction survey program to assess patron reactions to the quality of services and products. The expectation is that the overall satisfaction rating be 90% or higher. However, at the current time, only 70% of customers report a satisfying experience. The area of most concern falls under the category of employee food and beverage knowledge.

Although training is provided at the time of initial hire, employees are not being effectively trained through the current three-day course, which focuses on rote memorization of menu rather than application of skills and practice. Because of this problem, workers are facing high levels of frustration and strained working relationships. The restaurant is suffering from a decreased profit margin due to food waste costs and high turnover rates. Additionally, recent restaurant reviews in local magazines and papers have portrayed the restaurant poorly. Concerns in reaching a solution include the short three-month goal for satisfaction to be raised to optimum levels, budget shortfalls, and availability of training facilities.

Feasible resolutions include menu changes, a detailed training program led by mid-level management, and the development of job aids. The most effective method to meet company goals is to design and develop, in consultation with instructional experts, a thorough training program that would incorporate all aspects of menu items including preparation techniques, ingredients, and complementary pairings. Shift managers would deliver this training to lower level employees. All supplies and/or facilities needed to present the information effectively are available to the restaurant at a limited cost and with limited interference to business.

## **Section I**

### **The Operating System**

Harry and Jean's Passionate American Food is a relatively new restaurant located in Charlotte, NC. The Charlotte restaurant falls under the management of Harry and Jean's, LLC,

which also manages a restaurant in Rock Hill, SC. The mission of Harry and Jean's Restaurant is:

The success of each and every member of the staff is dependent on how well duties are performed on a daily basis. The key to an exceptional experience for Harry and Jean's guests is great food, excellent service, and aggressive courtesy in a clean and comfortable atmosphere. Therefore, we are committed to physically step forward and verbally convey courtesy. Harry and Jean's employees will show extreme desire to welcome and anticipate all guests' needs. Harry and Jean's employees strive to look for something special we can do to make our guests' visit memorable. Our success is dependent on taking charge of our service goals.

Mission Statement Adopted by Harry and Jean's LLC, August 14, 2004

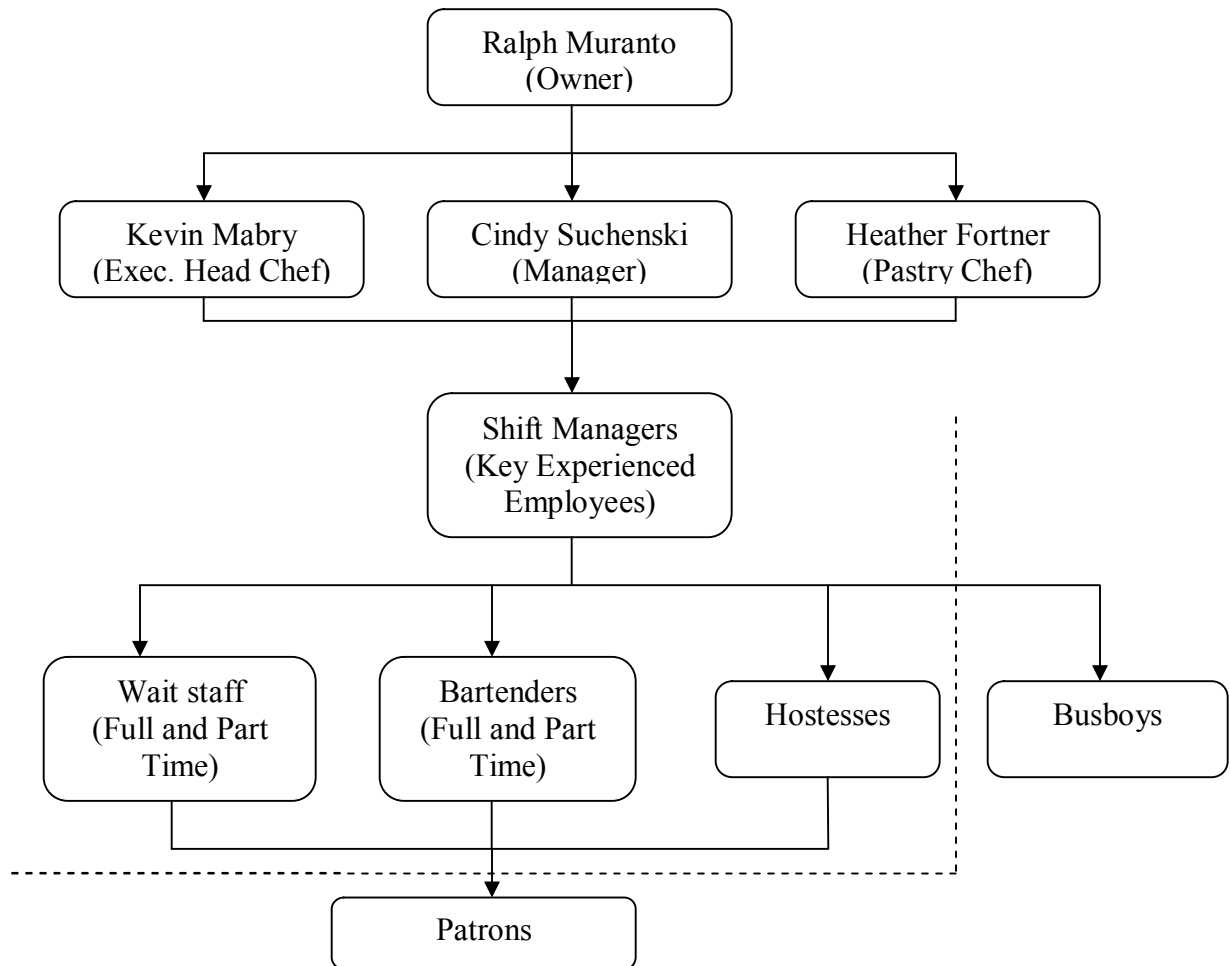
Through training, the restaurant encourages employees to make each patron feel as though they are the most important customers. All employees are required to maintain a high level of restaurant cleanliness and professionalism. Each front of the house employee (i.e. wait staff, hostess, bartender) greets the guest warmly and introduces themselves. In addition, they offer descriptions of the restaurant and menu to put the customer at ease. While serving the customer, the employee is required to maintain appropriate interactions, making suggestions as necessary, without overwhelming the patrons with information or conversation.

Harry and Jean's Charlotte location currently has fifty employees who serve an average of 250 people each night. According to recent customer satisfaction surveys, 30% of patrons have rated employees' ability to make food and beverage suggestions/describe menu items as unacceptable resulting in only a 70% approval rating. The management of Harry and Jean's LLC has mandated that this approval rating increase to 90% or higher within three months.

In pursuit of its mission to "...make our guests' visit memorable," hostesses, wait staff and bartenders must be able to effectively communicate menu item descriptions and suggest food and drink pairings. The hostesses provide the first contact with the patrons. The host staff is expected to have an understanding of the food and beverages served each night in order to provide information to any guests while they are waiting to be seated. The wait staff and bartenders are the patrons' primary resource for understanding and combining dishes and beverages on the menu. They are required to have a larger working knowledge of the food and beverage listings than any other front of the house staff. At the current time, the shift managers oversee the wait staff, bartenders and hostesses. The shift managers provide the initial hire training as well as on-the-job support for the lower level employees. All content for the initial

hire as well as follow-up training is provided by Kevin Mabry, the executive head chef; Cindy Suchenski, the general manager of the Charlotte location; and Heather Fortner, the pastry chef.

### **Harry and Jean’s, LLC (Charlotte Location)**



### **Problem Statement**

Harry and Jean’s Passionate American Food is a trendy restaurant located in uptown Charlotte, NC at 201 S. Tryon Street. The menu offers home-style foods in an upscale environment. Harry and Jean’s Charlotte restaurant currently has fifty employees: one executive head chef, one pastry chef, one store manager, one head bartender, two head wait staff, two head

hostesses, three key employees (shift managers), thirteen members of the kitchen staff, four bartenders, four hostesses, four busboys, and fourteen waiters/waitresses. Of those employees, twenty-five are full-time and twenty-five are part-time.

Harry and Jean's patrons are mostly well-educated business people, upper-middle class families, and individuals looking for comfort food with high-end service. As part of the service expectation, patrons expect to be indulged. On an average night, Harry and Jean's Charlotte location serves approximately 250 people in the restaurant and the bar. This is an 11% increase from their opening in August 2004.

In October 2004, customer satisfaction surveys were added to the tables and lobby for customers to provide feedback concerning service, food quality and atmosphere. Patrons have the opportunity to leave cards in a box in the lobby or mail them in later. The owner and manager expected to achieve an approval rating of 90% or higher for returned cards. However, at this time the approval rating has fallen from 89% in October 2004 to 70% in January 2005.

The area of most concern in each month's surveys was the staff's understanding of the menu. This area was consistently given ratings of fair, average, or poor. In addition, comments on cards reflected patrons concerns that the staff was unable to communicate information about the menu and offer suggestions regarding food and beverage selection.

Harry and Jean's management is concerned that not addressing this problem will result in continued decreases in customer satisfaction and ultimately the loss of customers. Therefore, the management has set a goal of having 90% satisfaction within three months based on collected surveys.

## **Operating Systems Analysis (See Appendix A)**

### **A. What is the operating system like now?**

In order to ensure accuracy in analyzing the current operating system status, multiple methods were used to gather data. The methods consisted of interviews, email correspondence, telephone correspondence, company web site review, training materials review, final analysis of recent customer satisfaction surveys, a study of the company organizational chart, and area restaurant reviews. The most important method we employed was personal observations of current practice and service.

One of the main goals of Harry and Jean's Charlotte location, according to its mission statement, is to provide a knowledgeable staff that can suggest food and beverage items with confidence. The analysis of the training materials and practices shows that the training has not adequately addressed the staff's knowledge of the menu. The staff at Harry and Jean's attends initial hire training for three days before beginning work on the floor. This training includes a review of customer service techniques, identification of supervisors, company policies and procedures, and an overview of the menu items. The training does not include practice time to learn the skills they are being taught, nor does it include the opportunity for employees to taste the foods and learn the preparation techniques for each item. Through observation and interviews of current employees, we found that new employees memorize the components of menu items to pass a test at the end of each training day.

Presently, the management has begun using staff meetings to review the menu and requiring front of the house staff to constantly review their initial hire training materials. Current training materials include a notebook of food and beverage descriptions with portion sizes as well as information about each staff member's job description and how they fit within the organization of the restaurant as a whole. The management does not conduct any supplementary training on original menu items or recent additions to the menu.

After conducting observations and interviews with both front of the house and kitchen staff, we discovered that there is a problem with the order placing process. Wait staff and bartenders are sending multiple orders to the kitchen at one time, which causes the kitchen to become overloaded with work. This slows down production time and causes orders to come out to the customers incorrectly. Thus, many customers are returning their dish and requesting that it be done correctly.

Due to the current problems with front of the house knowledge of the menu, multiple side effects can be observed. The most prominent side effect at this time is strained relationships between kitchen staff and front of the house staff. Because of the front of the house staff's inability to communicate menu items effectively to customers, tickets are being sent back to the kitchen incorrectly causing the kitchen to become backed up and an increased food turnover time. These in turn contribute to rising costs because customers are sending their food back on a regular basis.

At the same time, as costs are rising, the restaurant is losing money because customers are unhappy with both their food and the service, thus, not returning for subsequent visits and not recommending the restaurant to others. In addition, the customers are not leaving a standard gratuity on a regular basis, which is contributing to front of the house staff frustration. This frustration concerning loss of tips, strained work relations, and the dissatisfaction of not being sufficiently trained to do their job has resulted in higher than industry average turnover rates of 95% for all base level employees. Harry and Jean's Charlotte location is constantly running over budget and consequently losing money because they are consistently having to hire and train new employees because of their high turnover rate.

Relevant resources for this system are comprised of experienced personnel, facilities, presentation equipment, monies, and high quality food and beverage preparation equipment. Additional resources available on an as needed basis include food and beverage samples from vendors. Harry and Jean's Charlotte location currently has eleven veteran service employees, who have a working knowledge of both the menu and preparation procedures. These employees are currently used to develop and present training to new personnel. In addition, the restaurant does not presently serve Saturday lunch or Sunday dinner; therefore, the facilities are used for staff meetings and product tastings at those times. Likewise, equipment including LCD projectors and presentation screens is available in house. At this time, 1% of the operating budget is available for training. The restaurant plans to increase this amount to 3% over the next two years. Preparation equipment as well as vendor samples are utilized on a periodic basis to introduce staff to new menu selections.

The fixed constraints of the system are the limited time available for training and the lack of a sufficient training budget. As stated above, the restaurant is only available for training twice a week for minimal periods of time. With a three-month timeframe to raise customer satisfaction levels from 70% to 90%, the amount of time available is extremely narrow. Since the operations budget only allows for 1% of operating costs to be allocated for training employees, any training solutions will have to operate with minimal supplies and expending minimal salaries.

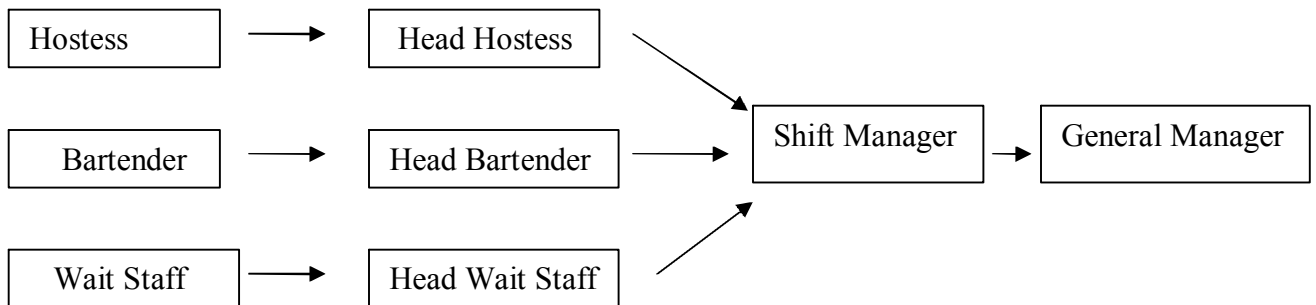
The owner/proprietor of Harry and Jean's, LLC is Ralph Muranto, who oversees both the Charlotte and Rock Hill locations. Cindy Suchenski, the general manager of the Charlotte location, reports directly to Mr. Muranto. Ms. Suchenski is authorized to make daily decisions regarding the operations of the Charlotte location, including guidelines and policies for employee



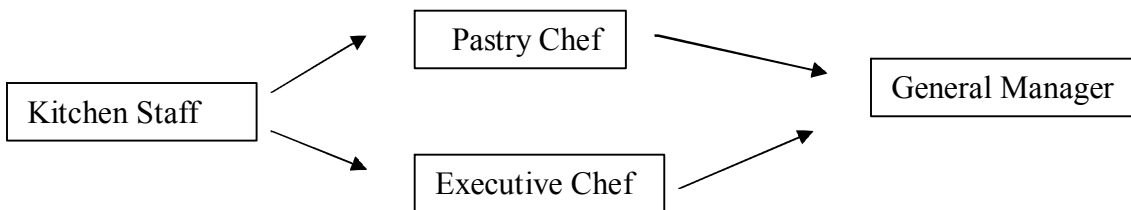
training, customer service, and special menu selections. Mr. Muranto must approve all major shifts in policy. Kevin Mabry, the executive head chef, and Heather Fortner, the pastry chef, manage the kitchen and kitchen staff. They are able to make split second decisions concerning substitutions and/or preparation changes.

The front-of-the-house employees all follow a similar chain of supervision by upper-level employees. All hostesses report directly to the head hostess, which in turn reports to a shift manager, who reports all unresolved problems to the general manager. This same chain of command is also in effect for the wait staff and bartenders, who report to the head wait staff and head bartender respectively, who report to the shift manager. Again, any unresolved issues are reported to the general manager. All back of the house staff, including line cooks, fry cooks, salad sides, sauté' chefs, and pastry cooks, report directly to either the head pastry chef or the executive chef. The head pastry chef and the executive chef then report directly to the general manager. For a visual depiction of the chain of supervisory command, see the chart below.

**Front of the House Chain of Supervisory Command**



**Back of the House Chain of Supervisory Command**



## **B. What should the operating system be like?**

In order to ensure accuracy in analyzing the optimal operating system, we visited the Rock Hill restaurant where they are receiving scores of 90% or higher from the customer satisfaction surveys. We spent time observing and interviewing the employees and customers to determine how the system is operating in order to achieve these results. In addition, before introducing ourselves and our purpose, we visited the restaurant as patrons to observe the actions and methods used by the employees of Harry and Jean's Rock Hill location.

Ideally, Harry and Jean's Charlotte location desires for every wait staff personnel to have the knowledge to accurately describe every menu item. The company wants the customers to be satisfied with the service provided by the wait staff and provided with accurate information to make correct choices. Accurate orders alleviate the overflow of repeat tickets sent to the kitchen. Harry and Jean's believe every customer should be a repeat customer, and they want their wait staff to receive above average gratuities.

Harry and Jean's feels that their Charlotte location should be able to receive the same satisfaction levels as that of the Rock Hill location from its patrons. Wait staff should be able to describe the menu items to customers and suggest drink pairings while providing other excellent customer service. Also, front and back of the house staff should be able to work together to meet the needs of the patrons. The company bases these expectations from their successful Rock Hill location.

We have witnessed some side effects from the excellent customer service and the correct placement of orders from the Rock Hill location. The most prominent side effect is the harmonious relationship between the front and back of the house where both areas strive to give the patrons the best dining experience possible. The kitchen in the Rock Hill location has a low turnaround time between orders taken by the wait staff and when the food is delivered to the customer. This in turn decreases food costs because orders are rarely being sent back to the kitchen. Also, a side effect is the increase in gratuity left for wait staff and bartenders resulting from great customer service. Because the service at Harry and Jean's Rock Hill location is so exemplary, repeat customer visits is not uncommon. With the repeat customers, wait staff recognizes the patrons and is able to quickly predict their needs. In addition to these observations, the employee turnover rate of 25% from the Rock Hill location is extremely low in comparison to the industry average of 80%. With employees not leaving their positions the

company has been able to reduce their operating budget since they are not constantly hiring and training new employees.

Relevant resources for the Harry and Jean's Charlotte location should be a budget of 3% of the monthly budget designated for employee growth or personnel improvement. With these funds the company will have the necessary funds for providing in-depth employee growth and for improvements. Harry and Jean's should have samplings of food and beverages, like their other location, as a means of using a hands-on approach with the employees and to provide them with personal opportunities.

Upper-level employees, shift managers, the executive chef, the head pastry chef, and the general manager are resources that all employees should use to gather more detailed information about menu items and drink pairings. All salaried employees are available for and are experienced with the company policies and procedures. There is also a small meeting room in the back of the restaurant which should be used for employee meetings, which includes some multimedia equipment such as an LCD projector. This room is equipped with all appropriate presentation materials and is available for use when customers are in the restaurant without disturbing business.

The general manager should be empowered to make decisions for the betterment of the restaurant; she should use this to improve the current situation at the Charlotte location. The employees in the front of the house should work with the employees in the back of the house. They should focus on the experience of the patrons, like in the Rock Hill location, in order to acquire repeat business. The staff should have the knowledge to successfully complete their job responsibilities and create an enjoyable working environment.

With the fixed constraints of the restaurant, the Charlotte location should still have the opportunities for enrichment activities with the employees without a time constraint through the use of the back meeting room. The restaurant should also increase the budget to 3% to allow for any necessary activities for promoting well educated and enthusiastic employees in order to provide the customers with the best experience possible.

The system should be organized so that the General Manager is allowed to make all necessary decisions concerning the day to day operations of the restaurant. Ms. Suchenski should have the authority to decide the manner in which employees should experience the enrichment activities as well as any necessary training and daily activities. The employees should report to

their respective bosses as they do now. For example, the hostess reports to the head hostess, the bartender reports to the head bartender and the wait staff reports to the key holder. Then if there is still an issue, the head hostess, the head bartender and the head waiter reports to the manager. The same set up should apply to the back of the house. The workers in the back of the house report to either the head chef or the head pastry chef and they in turn report to the manager. This system should work well, as it already works well in both the Rock Hill and Charlotte locations.

### **C. Probable Cause of the Problem**

According to Harry and Jean's mission statement their focus is on serving the customers effectively. However, a disparity exists because customer satisfaction levels are at an all time low of 70%. The restaurant expects its staff to confidently portray all aspects of the menu to patrons; however, it does not provide them the appropriate tools with which to make this possible. Therefore, Harry and Jean's is not meeting the goals of its stated mission.

Although the general manager of the Charlotte location, Ms Suchenski has noted a decrease in customer satisfaction ratings during recent months, the restaurant had not attempted any formal corrections of the problem until Mr. Muranto, the owner, mandated that the satisfaction level be raised to 90% within three months. All attempts made at correcting the disparity in performance were informal in nature and did not address the root problem of inadequate employee preparation. Assumptions were made in the initial training process that rote memorization of menu items and preparation styles would result in effective use of the information among the staff. However, the evidence from the interviews, observations, and customer satisfaction surveys clearly demonstrates the need for further, more effective training as well as more efficient use of training time and available materials.

In previous training sessions and staff meetings, the staff is not given the opportunity to taste items from the menu or watch the items being prepared; thus, all their knowledge is from reading and memorizing in order to pass the training assessments each day. Without allowing employees to have experiences with the menu, such as tasting the food or observing the preparation, they have not been able to solidify the knowledge and match it with a schema for use later.

Based on our data collection, we feel the probable cause of the problem is a lack of knowledge of the menu, dish ingredients, preparations techniques and drink pairings. This is

shown through the inability of the employees to answer questions posed by the customers concerning the composition of the dishes and a wine to complement them. For example, the wait staff, when asked if the crab cakes were meaty or bready, could not answer us and we had to wait while they checked with the kitchen. After ten minutes, we had our answer and then when we asked for a wine to drink with the crab cakes, the waiter yet again excused himself to go to the bar to ask the bartender. Another example of the employees' lack of knowledge is a table asked for a wine for their meal and the waitress offered a wine the restaurant did not even serve and had never offered.

As the lack of knowledge seems to be rampant through the Charlotte location, the kitchen bears the brunt of the wait staffs' deficit. The kitchen is constantly recreating or replacing orders because of the wait staffs' wrong suggestions to the customers. Kitchen workers are becoming irritated with the wait staff and tension is starting to mount between the front and back of the house. This problem is overflowing to the customers because they have to wait longer for their food and see the restaurant as unable to meet their needs. The unhappy customer, in combination with the extra food preparation, is causing the company's profits to spiral downward.

In addition, the high turnover rate will continue and even less experienced staff will be coming on board which in turn will perpetuate the difficulties in maintaining an experienced and knowledgeable staff. Relationships between front and back of the house staff will also remain antagonistic without some resolution to this problem because the performance levels will continue to decrease and frustration levels will increase due to food preparation troubles.

Harry and Jean's meager training budget currently allows the restaurant to maintain initial hire training as it has been done in the recent past. However, in order to bring employees to the level of expertise they expect, the budget may not meet their needs. The planned raise to 3% of the operating budget for employee enrichment may need to be expedited in order to help solve the problems they are currently facing. Also, the lack of facilities poses a problem because the restaurant has certain business hours.

For the restaurant to meet its goal of 90% customer satisfaction within three months, the restaurant needs to change and work to solve the lack of knowledge the employees have.

## **Section II**

## **Possible Solutions**

- Weekly staff meetings performed by managers
- Training program (including video and live preparations of food, job aides and training manuals)
- Redesign menu
- Remove menu items and decrease the selection
- Provide servers with "Cheat Sheets" for use on the floor
- No change in current practices

The general manager of Harry and Jean's could expect employees to attend weekly staff meeting each Saturday morning to review menu items and discuss food and beverage pairings. Each week they would review the most popular dishes and then one or two other dishes to ensure that employees were getting repetition with information.

The owner could hire consultants to develop a detailed training program that would include refresher training for front of the house staff on menu items as well as food and beverage pairings during normal business hours for employees not working on the floor. This training would also include video and live presentations on food preparation techniques and utilize available resources to conduct tastings of both food and beverage items. Shift managers would conduct pre-shift follow-ups and job aids would be used at server stations.

The general manager and executive head chef could alter the format of the menus to include more descriptive details about each dish and cross-reference each menu item with appropriate beverage selections in order to prevent customers from needing server assistance.

The executive head chef could, under the supervision of the owner, remove some items from the menu thus making it simpler for servers to remember the dishes and pairings because there are fewer choices.

The shift managers could design "cheat sheets" for the front of the house staff to place in their server books in order to allow them a way of making sure their answers and suggestions are correct.

Finally, the restaurant could choose to make no changes to their menu or training procedures; therefore, not providing staff the means necessary to meet the expectations that have been set by the owner.

## **Analysis of Solutions**

### **A. Instructional Development and Delivery Capabilities**

If management decides to address the problems with the staff's understanding of the menu through weekly staff meetings and review sessions, the shift managers as well as the general manager will take on the responsibility of developing any additional training materials that will be provided to supplement the initial training handbook. In addition, these same employees will be delivering the instruction to the lower level front of the house staff in short amounts of time and on an inconsistent basis. Delivery of follow-up instruction will be conducted in large groups during times when the restaurant is closed and no time will be provided for application of the skills learned. In essence, this weekly refresher course will require unpaid overtime from the shift managers as well as additional hours from staff being trained without much benefit to the staff or customers. The training will be rushed because it must be completed before the restaurant opens for the next seating and will not allow time for processing the information.

The company could bring in outside consultants to develop the training program for the employees. Training consultants have experience in developing and designing effective training programs and will develop a curriculum to successfully correct the problem with menu knowledge. The consultants will develop a detailed training course to use with both initial hire employees as well as current staff members for years to come. Participants will review or learn the menu item descriptions, preparation techniques, and pairing through experiential learning such as tastings, multimedia presentations, and observation of kitchen processes. Participants will develop first hand knowledge of the menu through these experiences that will allow them to have confidence when speaking with customers about restaurant offerings. The training package will include short weekly follow-up sessions to be used over the course of the next few weeks and again when needed in the future. In addition, job aids will be created based on training materials that can be posted in server stations and in the back of the house. Kitchen management and shift managers will deliver the instruction in small groups using the training room in the back of the restaurant. In this way, the restaurant can minimize the effect on time and budget because staff is being trained on a staggered basis when they are not working on the floor.

Additionally, the participants are given an opportunity for immediate practice and review rather than waiting for a week between each training session thus making this a very effective solution.

The executive head chef and general manager could re-create the menu in order to make the item descriptions more detailed and provide cross-references between foods and drink pairings. This will allow the customers to read all the details concerning the given menu item and ideally request less help and/or suggestions from the service staff. However, the mission of the restaurant is to provide the most excellent service possible to their customers and forcing the customers to process all the information with no guidance from the staff is not working towards that goal. Many customers may not understand the culinary terminology used in the descriptions and would continue to order dishes they are unhappy with, thus perpetuating the problems the restaurant is having with rising food costs.

The executive head chef, with permission from the owner and general manager, could choose several items to remove from the menu. This would require less for the employees to remember and make it easier to focus on the remaining dishes and their beverage pairings. However, making these changes could also negatively affect customer satisfaction because the variety of dishes is decreased and some regulars may not like losing their favorite items. Additionally, the kitchen staff will become frustrated with the monotony of making the same few dishes repeatedly every night.

Another solution is creating job aids or “cheat sheets” for employees to carry in their server book. This would allow them to quickly access information about menu items and/or food and beverage pairings while at the table. Although there are undeniable benefits to this solution, the goal of the restaurant is to provide information to the customers with confidence and a server or staff member who must constantly look to their book instead of relaying knowledge immediately does not instill confidence in the patron. This option would be excellent in combination with an effective training program.

Finally, the restaurant could choose to make no changes to their current training process or situation. This will preserve their training budget at its current level and decrease the amount of money paid out in salary over the next few months for training. This solution will also continue to result in profit losses because of food waste costs when selections are returned to the kitchen and high turnover rates among both front of the house and kitchen staff. In addition,



customers will begin to seek out alternative restaurants and leave Harry and Jean's to seek out a solution to the same problem at a later date and at possibly a more significant cost.

The appendix B is a chart, which displays the multiple solutions available. However, a careful analysis of the positive and negative aspects of each solution leaves only one choice worthy of consideration. A detailed training program including first hand experiences with both the preparation and final product of each menu item paired with follow-up session and job aids is by far the best solution. While the constraints of time and cost are a problem with this solution the benefits far outweigh the obstacles faced. The staff is receptive to further training that will allow them contact with the food and this program will fit into their pre-existing initial hire training to supplement the material already being covered. The staff already involved in delivering training to employees will continue in that role, but they will be better prepared for the task. Additionally, all materials are already in place for providing presentations as well as food and beverage tastings. Both the individual employees as well as the organization as a whole will benefit from this solution through knowledge and skills development, confidence in the workplace, better relationships with colleagues, increased customer satisfaction, and ultimately increased profit margin.

While other solutions do have positive attributes, none have the long term benefits available to both individuals and the organization as a whole. Therefore, while they may offer more short term positives in the area of cost and/or time, they will not be as successful in the long run in preventing future problems with new employees.

## **Recommended Solution**

Based on the data that has been gathered and a careful analysis of the results, the best solution for Harry and Jean's Charlotte location is for an instructor-led training program to be implemented. This stems from the detailed knowledge necessary for the wait staff to offer descriptions of menu items with complementary beverage selections. The employees will receive training in the back of the restaurant during non-peak hours, in small groups, and review the menu while sampling and studying two dishes with the suggested wines. Training will be an on going process over several weeks to cover each entrée in great detail. The dishes will be explained in depth while the staff views the preparation of the meal. As the participants sample

the dishes, they will be presented with the best choices of wine for each meal and an explanation of why the two complement each other so well. Likewise, the restaurant will also provide job aides for the wait staff, designed by the consultants, to be posted at the server stations and at the back of the house for employee perusal.

This solution provides employees with a thorough understanding of the menu and complementary wines by offering reasons behind the choices for the employees to help enhance their working knowledge. In turn, the staff will be able to better relay the information to the customers, causing the patrons' satisfaction levels to increase. The training is necessary for the success of the restaurant and with the training held during normal business hours at off peak times, the kitchen staff will already be working and materials will be in use, therefore the cost of creating the dishes and holding the training will be minimal.

In order to develop the training materials, outsourced instructional designers and subject matter experts will collaborate on material to be presented and in which order. The subject matter experts will consist of the head chef, Kevin Mabry, the head pastry chef, Heather Fortner, and the general manager, Cindy Suchenski. In order to achieve expert results, the designers will work with the subject matter experts to design the instructional materials. These materials will include an instructor manual for trainers to use in teaching the content, participant handbooks for those staff being trained, a video featuring clips of each type of food preparation, and observation opportunities during actual kitchen hours. At that time, the consultants and subject matter experts will use their expertise to review the resources to ensure the information is in the most user-friendly format and is accurate as possible.

The delivery system adopted to best train the employees will be instructing the shift managers, head hostess, head bartenders and the head wait staff so they can present the resources to the rest of the staff. Consultants will instruct the trainers about the information they are required to teach the lower level employees and the ways in which it will be presented to be most effective. The instruction for the initial trainers will be conducted through video clips as well as observing the creation of the entrées in the kitchen. The trainers will then sample the dishes with the appropriate wines. During the tasting, the trainers will discuss in pairs, why they thought the wines did or did not complement the dishes and why. Initial trainers will go through this additional preparation so they can effectively communicate to lower level employees and new hires the reasons why some wines complement some meals and not others.

A detailed training program is the best solution in this situation. All members of the staff, the restaurant as a whole, and its patrons will benefit from this training program. The staff will benefit from increased gratuities; heightened confidence in their job skills, and improved job satisfaction. As a result of the successful training program, the restaurant will see an increase in profits, an improved reputation among restaurant reviewers in the area as well as among potential patrons, and more positive atmosphere for both management and employees. Because of this training, customers will enjoy a higher quality of customer service, a higher level of satisfaction with their food and beverage selections, and faster service due to reduced turnover rates in the kitchen.

Analysis of interviews and observations conducted during the front-end analysis clearly offers evidence that lower level staff is especially receptive to any training that would enhance their job performance. However, management is weary of any new training programs, but with the right amount of support feel that this solution is the best option for the restaurant at this time. Therefore, the attitudes among both staff and management are conducive to the development and implementation of this nested training program.

## Appendix A: Is/Should Be/Gap Chart

What is Happening?	What should be Happening?	Gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait staff cannot describe menu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait staff can describe every menu item</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge of menu</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers dissatisfied with the customer service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers satisfied with customer service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of customer service (Lack of knowledge)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers provided with wrong information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers provided with accurate information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orders sent back to the kitchen and bar consistently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orders rarely sent back to kitchen or bar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of accuracy of orders (Lack of knowledge)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restaurant is not acquiring repeat business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restaurant acquiring repeat business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of repeat customers (Lack of motivation)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relations are strained between kitchen and wait staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmonious relations between front and back of the house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of motivation to work together</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait staff is not receiving standard gratuity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait staff receiving standard and above gratuities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of motivation</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Comparing Solutions

Possible Solutions	Time	Environmental Consideration	Organizational Change	Space/Equipment Requirements	Cost	Benefits and Loss to Individuals	Benefits and Loss Organizational
Weekly staff meetings to review menu items and descriptions	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
Detailed training including tastings, preparations viewing, and weekly follow-ups as well as job aids	-	+	+	+	-	+	+
More descriptive menus cross-referenced with drink selections	-	-	+	+	-	-	-
Decrease menu selection to make menu simpler for employees to remember	-	0	0	0	-	+	-
Provide job aids for employees to refer to when talking with customers	-	+	+	+	-	+	-
Make no changes to current training and working conditions	+	0	0	0	+	-	-