

THE ULTIMATE IN MEMBER SERVICE

INTEGRATING CATERING SOFTWARE WITH F&B MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

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FEATURED IN THE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2018 ISSUE OF BOARDROOM MAGAZINE

Catering software and F&B Management software are both highly specialized tools. Given the complexity of each, it is unlikely any all-in-one software package can perform both specialties well. Our club clients rely heavily on catering for supplemental F&B revenue, and in many cases catering revenue is a significant percentage of total F&B revenue. Therefore, many use catering systems to help automate this key aspect of their business.

Providing catered events require a number of specialized components, the first of which is actually making the sale. In order to help with this, catering software must maintain an event database. Catering sales staff must create each event largely from scratch, and include all aspects of the event such as food, beverages, tables, flatware, glassware, floral requirements, decorations, entertainment, dance flooring, and of course staffing. With the exception of the food and beverage aspect, these things fall outside the scope of the F&B system, thus requiring the specialized event database.

THE PROBLEM

Sales staff must associate costs with all of these components, and while most of them are straightforward and easy to quote, the food aspect is anything but. The catering system must be able to provide these costs and allow for the markup required by the club. Unfortunately, catering systems have limited recipe building and group menu costing capability, and do not have the procurement or inventory functionality required by clubs and associated with F&B systems. Therefore they require that data and capability be supplied by other means.

In many cases, the catering sales staff will bring the F&B requirements for each event to the chef, who must cost out the recipes and provide that information. This can be an extremely time consuming and inaccurate endeavor and in the case of clubs with significant catering activity requires a great deal of the chef's time. Once the event is sold and the time comes to execute, the chef must examine the banquet event order (BEO), break down the recipes and determine the purchase quantities of all the ingredients. Again, a significant time requirement.

Finally, if the customer believes the cost to be too high, in many cases the catering salesperson will find a way to discount it while providing the same menu, thereby reducing the margin. The alternative is to go back to the chef for pricing on a modified menu, delaying the process for the customer and requiring more time of the chef.



"INTEGRATING THE F&B SYSTEM WITH THE CATERING SYSTEM RESULTS IN MULTIPLE BENEFITS AND AS MUCH AS 30% OF THE CHEF'S TIME."

THE SOLUTION

This is where the F&B system can come into play. If the club has such a system, it becomes much easier for the chef to provide sales staff with the menu cost numbers they need. If the catering system can be integrated with the F&B system, this step can be eliminated entirely. Costs can be uploaded to the catering system and associated with every item typically sold in catered events. For example, if hors d'oeuvres, appetizers, entrees and desserts are set up as individual components in a catering system, they can each be tied to a recipe in the F&B system and automatically receive updated costs on a daily basis if needed. The sales staff can then simply build the event BEO using these pre-costed components and apply the markup. If the customer believes the cost is too high, the salesperson can simply swap out more expensive components for less expensive ones.

In addition to the transfer of current costs to catering systems, the other type of integration is for the catering system to send the BEOs over to the F&B system. With this capability, the F&B system can prepare a list of raw ingredients to be purchased for the event, provide a production schedule for the culinary team and track the usage of the items required. It can also report on the profitability of the event at current costs.

We have found that integrating the F&B system with the catering system results in multiple benefits. The labor savings afforded the chef not only occur in costing out the event, but also in breaking down the recipe to determine purchasing requirements. These tasks alone have been reported to save as much as 30% of the chef's time which can be spent managing the kitchen instead. Catering sales staff saves time by responding to customers while on the sales call with pricing, instead of delaying their response until the chef can give them pricing. They can also swap items in and out on the fly, making it possible to build and sell the event on the first call. In club environments, the ability to provide this level of service to members is especially appreciated. Finally, the ability to correctly cost and mark up the event improves the club's ability to generate the appropriate margins.

In simpler terms, the integration of a strong F&B system with a strong catering system provides clubs with the best of both worlds. After all, working together to provide the best possible member experience is a mantra shared by almost every club. Shouldn't the same apply to its systems?

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