

EFFECTIVE MEAT COUNTER PRODUCT REPLENISHMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT
AND DESIGN METHODOLOGY

by

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Abstract

The accompanying manual to this paper was developed to improve the effectiveness of time usage for meat department employees and to streamline morning activities. One goal of the manual is to bring uniformity to meat department operations--company-wide. The third goal is to standardize a broader understanding of quality, safety, best practices, health and legal policies that deal with effective meat counter product replenishment. Quizzes and areas for note taking conclude each section for the purpose of maximizing the effectiveness of training and learning processes. The overall expectation for the use of the manual is to bring increased customer satisfaction and amplified employee effectiveness and contentment through greater awareness of improved meat department systems. Research was conducted through interviewing of experts and by surveying a sample group to be used in testing the practicality of the use of the accompanying manual.

Supplementary Discussion of Needs Assessment and Design Methodology

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The Need For the Study

The idea for the accompanying manual was first brought up by a meat-cutting student of the South Seattle Community College, that there might be a need for aligning systems within the individual meat departments in the Safeway Metro District. After conducting some research through surveys and questioning, it was concluded that there was indeed a need for aligning methods of morning procedures and company policies among the individual meat departments in the Safeway Metro District.

A survey was first sent out to the district manager and to the district meat field merchandiser asking if they thought each of their dependent meat departments were equal in efficiency, sales, productivity and skill. The questionnaire also confidentially asked whether they thought morning procedures were conducted the same in each of the departments. Finally, it was asked which departments were considered the most efficient and by what standards where they considered most effective?

The results of this short survey deduced that only five of the departments out of sixteen were considered efficient. The determinants were profitability, customer service ratings and efficiency in getting the counter in during morning hours.

Focusing on Performance Deficiencies

After identifying whom the five most effective meat departments were, a survey was sent out to all sixteen meat department managers and meat field merchandiser (considered to be the foremost expert and corporate representative for each district's meat departments). The survey asked the following questions:

1. Do you think your department is efficient?

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2. Do you think you need more training on company policies?
3. Do you think you need more training on morning procedures?
4. Do you think you get your department up-and-running in the most effective way possible?
5. Does your team work as effectively as possible?
6. What do you think must be done in order for your department to meat counter to be filled more efficiently?
7. Do you have efficient resources to do your job effectively?
8. What areas would you like more training in?

Survey Results

The surveys came back with interesting results. The meat field merchandiser and four out of the determined top five meat department managers said that there was more training needed for other stores in the company, but said they did not need more training (question 8). Half the meat department managers said that their departments were not efficient (question 1). The other half answered “Yes.”

All but two of sixteen meat department managers said yes to thinking they needed more training on company policies and procedures (questions 2 and 3). All but one said their department wasn't up-and-running in the most effective way possible (“No” on question 4). Most of those same market managers also answered “No” to question 5, asking if their team was working as effectively as possible.

The answers to question seven were inconclusive. Meat market managers all gave different answers, ranging from, “I do not know.” To “Give more labor hours.” To

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“Let us start earlier.” And “Give us more money.” The meat field merchandiser concluded that more training was needed.

A majority of the meat department managers said they had the proper resources (question 7). Only three stated they did not. The question should also have stated, “If not, then what additional resources are needed?” However, hindsight is 20/20 in this case.

The answers to the final question, “What areas would you like more training in?” majority stated, “policies, practices, receiving, ordering practices, S&P usage, and training.” One meat market manager commented, “none.” Another one commented, “Computers.” Another one wanted more training on “Managing employees.”

Methodology

After the data was processed, the meat field merchandiser was asked about areas of training he thought would best be utilized in a training manual, based on his personal experience and the results of the survey. He concluded that customer service (not mentioned in the survey results), merchandising (giving variety), profitability, product markdown procedures, rewraps, grinding policies, production and S&P usage should be researched, written about and trained for. The meat merchandiser determined that sales were slower because meat counters were not getting replenished quick enough in the morning and early procedures were not competently accomplished. Darker counters were determined to be another reason for slow meat sales and knowledge of markdown practices could be the remedy.

Research materials for the proposed manual were collected from the Safeway *Basic Guiding Principles of Meat and Seafood* guide. The meat cutter’s union was consulted for training materials and an *Albertson’s Meat Career Advancement Program*

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manual, an Associated Grocers, *Retail Training Basic Meat Operations* manual, and a Super Valu University *Meat & Seafood Merchandising* manual were loaned for research purposes. An article on Training Tips for Receiving Meat And Poultry (December, 1998) was acquired through South Seattle Community College's meat cutting apprenticeship program. Data was also gleaned from *Human Resource Development* 3rd edition (2002).

Two journeyman meat cutters assisted in creating an outline for the manual that was later approved by the meat field merchandiser and the researcher. The researcher compiled the data and formatted and edited it with the information in the research resources. The rough draft of the manual was then distributed to the five meat department managers who were determined to be the most efficient who added comments on ideas to the rough draft. Another copy was distributed to the journeyman meat cutters who contributed ideas to the outline. The field meat merchandiser approved the last document's content.

When the final document is completed, it will be re-edited by the field merchandiser and given to his supervisor for approval and distribution to meat departments for use as an official training manual for all of the local division meat departments. The document will also be reformatted for use in the meat cutting apprenticeship-training program.

Conclusion

Organizational goals, resources, constraints and climate were assess through conversations and surveys in a confined locality. A common goal was established of creating a method of streamlining systems in meat departments in order to better serve

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customers with brighter, fresher meat counters at an earlier rate. Research included interviewing experts that work in the field and train.

Putting together the accompanying manual on effective meat counter product replenishment required countless hours of research, compilation and revisions overseen by meat department experts. The final product will ultimately be used in training of new meat cutters in a community college apprenticeship program for meat cutters. It will also be utilized as a review for meat cutters and meat managers in a localized area. The training will include one-on-one discussion and practice, followed by discussion, review and feedback given on the process of training and the materials.

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