

Meeting the Needs of the End-User: The ServSafe® Serving Safe Food Program

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The Restaurant and Foodservice Industry and the National Restaurant Association

Restaurants are the nation's largest private-sector employers, who generate an annual economic impact of \$1 trillion. Every dollar spent dining out generates more than two dollars for other industries. This year, 11.6 million employees in 858,000 establishments are expected to serve 54 billion meals generating \$408 billion in sales. As you can see the impact of the restaurant and foodservice industry on America is huge.

The National Restaurant Association meets the needs of its 254,000 members through its mission to represent, educate and promote this rapidly growing industry.

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation

The National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) is a not-for-profit organization that was created over 25 years ago when the National Institute for the Foodservice Industry merged with the education department of the National Restaurant Association.

The NRAEF is, essentially, the educational arm of the National Restaurant Association and fulfills their education mission. The NRAEF has the unique responsibility of helping the industry attract, support, guide, train and teach the people who are the future of the restaurant and foodservice industry.

The basis for this responsibility is found in the Industry of Choice study (IOC). Back in June 1995 with a grant from the Coca-Cola Company, the Foodservice Research Forum set

out to identify, research and distribute actionable findings regarding the most critical challenges facing the foodservice industry today. With an expected 13 million skilled workers needed by the year 2010, this study showed that the industry needed to attract workers and create a caring culture to retain them.

The IOC helped the NRAEF focus the organization on providing the industry with the tools it needs. One of the main tools is training. The IOC study identified that if restaurant and foodservice employees are provided job-training and education opportunities, they are more likely to remain in the industry.

Meeting the Needs of the Industry

This is why the NRAEF is committed to bringing the industry groundbreaking training programs. The NRAEF's more than 200 educational programs help people in the industry build their careers and provide tools for operators to run their businesses safely and effectively. These programs come in a variety of formats to fill the needs of a busy industry - from traditional texts to videos and CD-ROMs to on-line learning.

These programs include the ProStart® program, which helps students gain fundamental culinary and business skills while they explore the many career options available to them in the industry; the ProMgmt® program, which prepares future managers by focusing on key management competency areas; and the Supervisory Skills course that is designed to help supervisors develop the necessary skills and competencies needed to successfully perform their job. This, in particular, has been found to have a positive effect on overall employee satisfaction, and employee retention is increased which results in customer satisfaction that encourages repeat purchases and visits

An important factor in maintaining a productive and motivating environment for employees is to ensure that the working environment is safe and secure. The NRAEF Workplace Safety™ program teaches workers and managers how to identify and resolve potential hazards, comply with OSHA regulations and reduce accidents and injuries. Another aspect of safety is addressed through our beverage alcohol service program. BarCode® training emphasizes

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responsible alcohol service to enhance the dining experience and ensure guest and employee safety. And to continuously ensure the safe production and service of food to customers, HACCP is a necessary tool. The Practical Approach to HACCP program brings the concept of HACCP into the restaurant and foodservice industry.

The ServSafe® Program

Since nothing is more important to a restaurant and foodservice operation than serving safe food, all day every day, the ServSafe program represents the industry's leading line of food safety training and certification materials. Simply put the ServSafe program is a comprehensive food safety training program that teaches key food safety concepts to employees, managers and above using a variety of training tools.

Why do restaurant and foodservice employees need to be trained in food safety practices?

There are many very important reasons to train employees, but many of the reasons come down to money. The National Restaurant Association estimates that an outbreak of foodborne illness can cost an establishment at the very least \$75,000. This would include lawyer's fees, loss of sales, increased insurance premiums, and employee salaries. However, if you consider the things you can't necessarily put a price tag on such as loss of prestige, cost of embarrassment, and lowered employee morale that figure might be much higher, and consider if the ultimate cost is the loss of the establishment itself - having to shut down and close completely. That is a pretty high price to pay when, say for example, an employee doesn't wash their hands properly after using the restroom. Food safety training is essential.

This is why the NRAEF has food safety training tools for all levels of employees in an establishment. The majority of the products are targeted to restaurant and foodservice managers because they are typically the person who sets the policies, does the training and serves as the food safety role model. But also available are educational tools for employees, those who train, and those who want to achieve a higher level of food safety understanding.

Regardless of the level of training, all of the materials are designed with the learner in mind. It is essential that the product pertain to the learner and the role they play in the establishment. This is why each of the ServSafe® products is developed from a comprehensive food-safety job task analysis. A job task analysis is very specific to the role targeted for training and consists of a list of all the tasks the target learner needs to know to safely handle and serve food in the establishment. This job task analysis is developed by learning experts in conjunction with subject matter experts. The job task analysis is then used by instructional designers to map out the content for the piece they are developing - whether a book, a video, an on-line course or a CD-ROM. What product they develop is determined by the research staff who have polled typical users in the restaurant and

foodservice industry. From there, content experts both in-house and those selected from the industry are tapped to assist the instructional designers in developing the content. As you can see the products are truly designed for the industry by the industry and over 1.5 million foodservice professionals have earned our ServSafe Food Protection Manager certification.

Specific ServSafe Products

The NRAEF's goal is to develop educational materials flexible enough for the establishment, the user, and the instructor. If, for example, the unit can only train for 20 minutes each morning, they have the tools to do that. If the student learns better at their own pace, a CD-ROM or online course is available to them. Again, the user is the focus.

The NRAEF's main food safety training products are the manager-level textbooks: the ServSafe Coursebook and ServSafe Essentials. The Coursebook is a comprehensive text that prepares participants to maintain the safety of the food served in an operation. The text uses innovative graphics to help clarify concepts. Essentials uses charts, visuals and minimal text to supply the participant with essential information needed to maintain food safety within an operation. The Essentials text has a lower reading level, and is designed to initiate involvement through the use of activities and exercises. Training tips and activities at the end of each chapter are designed to encourage unit-level training.

Because employees are where the rubber meets the road - where many food safety errors can occur and make customer sick - there are tools to help the food protection manager bring the food safety training to the front-line foodhandler. These tools include a Manager's Toolkit which includes a variety of tools and techniques that help to simplify the training process; an Employee Guide which is specific to the practices that the front line employee needs to know to keep food safe.

There are many materials for the instructors of our ServSafe manager course. These include the Instructor Toolkit, which includes everything an instructor needs to energize, organize and customize your training sessions, such as customizable PowerPoint slides with talking points, a lesson plan, coaching tips, practice exams, and a food safety review game. Other instructor materials include the Instructor Newsletter and the Instructor Resource Center website.

Other training tools for the manager include an interactive CD-ROM, online courses and a series of six videos that use realistic settings in a variety of industry segments to help the trainee visualize how the practices they learn in their class play out in the establishment. Online and CD-ROM courses are a cost-effective and flexible new way to train, which allow establishments to provide training when needed, provide consistent training, and have a tracking system to keep track of the learner's progress. All are based on the same manager job task analysis as the textbooks.

The Train the Trainer program is designed especially for trainers and trainers-in-training. The program features teaching methods, tips and techniques for meeting the needs of adult learners, and demonstrates how to implement the ServSafe program.

The Supermarket Essentials textbook conveys the principles necessary to maintain food safety in the supermarket environment.

Summary

The NRAEF is responsible for attracting, supporting, guiding, training and teaching the restaurant and foodservice industry, and has many initiatives to address this responsibility, including training. ServSafe® teaches restaurant and foodservice employees, at all levels, how to serve safe food through a variety of training tools intended to meet the needs of the learner.