

Maple Syrup

A Study of Pure and Artificial Maple Syrup Production

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ABSTRACT

Many people claim that they can tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup. However, pure and artificial maple syrup are made through two completely different processes. Through the method of a blind taste test, I want to answer the question whether or not consumers can in fact tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup when both served as is or baked into products through a catered breakfast. At the catered breakfast the following dishes were served: maple glazed doughnuts, breakfast casserole, sausage gravy and biscuits, pancakes with maple butter and maple syrup, vanilla and maple yogurt, and sliced fruit. There were two options to choose from for the maple glazed doughnuts, maple butter, maple syrup, and maple yogurts. One choice was made with pure maple syrup, the second choice was made with artificial maple syrup; the consumers did not know which option was made with which maple syrup. At the end of the breakfast, I asked each guest to complete a survey that would let me know which option they believed to be made with the pure maple syrup and which option they believed to be made with the artificial maple syrup.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, maple syrup production is growing rapidly. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Data, in 2014, “brutal winter temperatures decreased the length of the sugar maple tapping season and knocked national maple syrup production down to a total of 3.17 million gallons, a 10 percent decrease from 2013” and according to Bruce Kennedy from CBSNews, “U.S. maple syrup production rose by 70 percent between 2012 and 2013, the largest crop in 70 years” (Kennedy). With more and more people entering the sugaring business comes an increase in how many people believe themselves to be an expert in all things maple, including being able to tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup (me being one of those people). I plan to test the theory that there is a noticeable difference between pure and artificial maple syrup through the process of a blind taste test.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not consumers could in fact tell and taste the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup. In order to find my results, I catered a breakfast for 40 guests consisting of current Paul Smith's College students, faculty members, and alumni; the BOOMERANG Alumni Breakfast. After developing a question, my first step was to select three team members to help me execute my menu to make sure the breakfast was a success. I chose my three team members based on their skill level, basic knowledge, professionalism, and their time management skills. With my team members selected and an event to cater, my next step was to design a menu. My final menu design consisted of: maple glazed doughnuts, breakfast casserole, sausage gravy and biscuits, pancakes served with the option of either pure or imitation maple syrup and a choice of maple butter (flavored with pure or imitation maple syrup), vanilla yogurt, a choice in maple yogurt that was flavored with either pure or artificial maple syrup, sliced fruit, and gluten-free granola flavored with Paul Smith's College maple syrup. About a week and half before my event, I tested out the breakfast casserole recipe to make sure I was going to be satisfied with it; I was. Four days before the event, I prepared the pure maple butter and set aside my maple syrups for the event. Two days before the event, I prepared the artificial maple butter and the gluten-free granola. And the day before the event, I sliced the fruit and prepared the breakfast casserole so that it just needed to go into the oven on the day of the event. The day before the event, I sent all of my team members an email reminding them that my event was the following day and that I needed them in the lab and ready to work at 7:00am. I also attached a schedule with what item was going to be prepared at what time and by who. That night, with less than 24 hours until my event, I had a team member email me stating that she could not make it in the morning due to other obligations. At this moment, I

started to panic. I emailed my mentor, Chef Misik, asking for her advice because I didn't know what to do or how to handle such a situation. With the help of my mentor, we were able to convince that team member to come in and help out for as long as she could; we then asked another student to step in once she had to leave. As a team, we prepared all of the food, set up the buffet, and served 37 guests. At the end of the event, I collected my surveys and calculated my results and client satisfaction.

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Catering

According to Lorri Mealey, restauranting expert, there are ten things one should know about catering. The first is “Starting a catering business is less expensive than buying a restaurant” (Mealey). Since beginning my education at Paul Smith’s College, I have noticed that many students dream of owning their own restaurant. However, not many students understand how much work is involved in owning a businesses, especially the business of selling food to the public. According to Mealey, “if you enjoy cooking and entertaining but have never worked in the restaurant industry, you may want to consider catering a few parties. Catering will help you stretch your creativity (menu, name, etc.) and test your organization skills.” (Mealey).

The second is “Catering still requires permits, licenses and insurance” (Mealey). Just like a restaurant, a catering business is still just that, a business, and it is important to make sure that all the necessary measures are taken to ensure that it is legal and properly insured. This is because licenses and insurance protects the owner from lawsuits and protects the customers from just about anything that could possibly go wrong.

Third is “Restaurants already have most catering equipment” (Mealey). If you do already own a restaurant, you already have a bulk of the necessary catering equipment that is needed to cater events such as plates, glasses, and flatware. You may however still need to purchase additional items such as chaffing dishes and cambros.

Forth is “Be realistic about the size of events you can cater” (Mealey). It is completely understandable that an owner of a catering company may want to build and expand their customer base as much as possible, but you must be cautious when it comes to accepting a job

that is more than your business can handle, especially if you're just starting out and catering out of your home.

The fifth thing you should know about catering is “Self-caterers can try a pop-up restaurant as a trial run” (Mealey). Pop-up restaurants pop-up in unusual places. Many growing restaurant owners use pop-up restaurants as a way to test menu concepts or to entice potential investors. Because they are temporary, pop-up restaurants can last anywhere from a single night to a month or sometimes even longer. Pop-up restaurants are a great way to determine whether or not you really want to own your own restaurant.

Number six is “Be flexible with your catering menu” (Mealey). Just because you have set a standard for your business doesn't mean that you can't be flexible with your menu. Don't be afraid to customize your menu for your guests. It may take a little more time, but it will show your customers that you are taking their needs and tastes into consideration.

The seventh thing you should know about catering is “Know your catering competition” (Mealey). This is important know matter what type of business you are running (restaurant, catering company, hair salon, etc.); you must know who your competition is, what food they offer and at what price.

The eighth is “Keep extra staff for catering” (Mealey). Usually catering takes place on the weekend or evening. Stay-at-home parents or students looking for extra work are ideal. Retain a list of your staff who would like to just work catering gigs and it will help you avoid having your regular staff working other jobs when you really need them.

Ninth is “Know where you are catering” (Mealey). A lot more planning is required for off-site catering jobs compared to catering within your restaurant. Make sure you look at every

venue before the event to make sure it has all of the necessary tools such as running water, electricity, etc.).

The final thing you need to know about catering is “Enjoy yourself” (Mealey). Along with the not so fun events, catering also involves fun events such as weddings, birthdays, or anniversaries. Make sure you always have a positive attitude and understand that your hard work is paying off.

Relevant History – Pure Maple Production

Maple syrup begins as sap in a maple tree and can only be harvested in the spring once temperatures rise into the 40s during the day and drop down into the 20s at night (the climate in New England is perfect for maple trees to grow). The sugaring season typically lasts about a month usually beginning in late February and lasting into late April; however, if the weather is right, it can be extended.

Depending on the sugar content of the sap, it can take anywhere from 35 to 50 gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup. Fresh sap flows out of the tree anywhere with a sugar concentration ranging anywhere from 1 to 6% and finished maple syrup has a sugar concentration of about 66 to 67%. In order to increase the sugar concentration of the sap to reach the desired 66%, a lot of the water in the sap needs to be removed. For example, 43 gallons of sap with a sugar concentration of 2% is needed to produce just one gallon of maple syrup (“Removing Water from Sap”). Most of the water in sap is removed by boiling the sap. However, most sugar houses remove some of the water in the sap is by running it through a reverse osmosis (RO) before boiling. A reverse osmosis is a “sap pre-processing system that takes raw sap and forces it under pressure through a semi-permeable membrane. Only water can pass through the membrane thereby increasing the sugar content of the remaining sap” (“Reverse

Osmosis"). The remaining sap must still be boiled to remove the remaining water though before it can become maple syrup. Running the sap through a reverse osmosis can increase the sugar content in the sap to anywhere from 4 to 10%.

In order to extract the sap from the maple tree, the tree is tapped using a drill to make a small hole in the trunk of the tree. A spile (a small wooden or metal peg used to obtain sap from a tree) is then inserted into the hole that the sap will then drip out of given the right conditions. Depending on how many trees are being tapped, the sap will either drip into a bucket or into a tube that flows into a holding tank ("How Real Maple Syrup Is Made").

From the holding tank, the sap then makes its way into the sugar house. In the sugar house, the sap is systematically poured into an evaporator. Evaporators are designed to boil off (also known as boil down) hundreds of gallons of water quickly so that the sap is concentrated into maple syrup. The evaporator first preheats the sap so that it is almost boiling using the steam that is already coming off of the evaporator. The sap is then run through a series of pipes under the hood at the rear of the evaporator. Most of the boiling takes place in the rear of the evaporator. As the sugar becomes more concentrated, it moves toward the front of the pan where it then becomes syrup. Once the sap has reached a sugar concentration of 66%, it is then drawn off into a pail and then through a filter to remove the niter or sugar sand. Sugar sand refers to the debris that settles to the bottom of a container of maple sap once it has reached a sugar concentration of 66 to 67% and must be filtered out to complete the maple sugaring process (Warren). Once filtered, the syrup is then fed into bottles or drums and sealed or shipped off to be packaged.

Maple syrup that is produced earlier in the sugaring season is typically lighter in color and sweeter with a not so strong maple flavor; this syrup is known as 'light' or 'amber'.

Throughout the season, the maple syrup becomes darker in color and the maple flavor becomes more prominent; first it becomes 'medium amber', then 'dark amber'. After 'dark amber', the maple syrup becomes 'Grade B'. During storage, maple syrup loses some of its flavor. Because of this, some maple syrups are only available on a seasonal basis (Steeves).

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture data, last year "brutal winter temperatures decreased the length of the sugar maple tapping season and knocked national maple syrup production down to a total of 3.17 million gallons, a 10 percent decrease from 2013." (Kennedy). However, with maple production decreasing between 2013 and 2014, "U.S. maple production rose by 70 percent between 2012 and 2013, the largest crop in 70 years" (Kennedy)

Relevant History – Artificial Maple Production

Artificial maple syrup consists of white sugar (36.975-61.625% by weight, preferably 49.3% by weight), fructose and glucose (each 3.825-4.675% by weight, preferably each 4.25% by weight), maple flavor (0.117-0.143% by weight, preferably 0.13% by weight), maple syrup (11.25-18.75% by weight, preferably 15.00% by weight), and water to balance (Steeves).

Artificial maple syrup is prepared by heating the water to a temperature between 85°C and boiling and adding the white sugar, fructose, and glucose stirring until dissolved. Once all of the sugars are dissolved, the temperature is then lowered to 75°C and the maple flavor and maple syrup are added. The mixture is then stirred continuously until a homogenous syrup is obtained (Steeves).

Flavor Profile/Customer Satisfaction

Consumer demand is spurring the growth of maple production in Vermont because consumers are searching for natural and healthier sweeteners. According to Jacques Letourneau, CO of the Quebec-based Island Pond Maple Factory, "People are starting to pay a little but more

attention to what they eat and that includes maple syrup because you look at the back of a bottle of maple syrup and you read the ingredient list and there's only one. You look at the back of some table syrups, I won't name anybody, you need a chemistry book to find out what it is exactly you're eating." (Kennedy).

Because pure maple syrup contains no additives or artificial ingredients, it is considered to be an "all-natural food" (Kannall). Also, most imitation syrup contains high-fructose corn syrup as the first ingredient. "According to a study published in April 2004 in 'The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition,' consuming high-fructose corn syrup may lead to weight gain and obesity. This may be because fructose is processed differently in your body than other sugars. It does not stimulate insulin secretion and accumulates in your liver, which may cause fatty liver, interruption of hunger signals and possibly diabetes." (Kannall).

Artificial maple syrup also contains additives such as caramel color, artificial flavors, sulfur dioxide, sodium benzoate, and potassium sorbate. "According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, sodium benzoate may combine with ascorbic acid, or vitamin C, to form benzene, which has been linked to leukemia and other cancers. Caramel coloring, made by heating sugar with ammonia, alkalis or acids, may also pose a cancer risk." (Kannall).

While pure maple syrup is the better choice when looking at your health, they both are very high in sugar. There are roughly 50 calories in about one tablespoon of each form of maple syrup. Both also contain about 13 grams of total carbohydrates per tablespoon, all 13 grams are from sugar in pure maple syrup while only 4 grams are from sugar in imitation maple syrup (Kannall).

Menu Design

Trends in catering don't suddenly happen. Trends are slow expansions of ideas from one end of the country or world to the other. With this in mind, Catersource asked a few caterers to share the trends that they were working with and for some ideas that they were exciting to work with more in the future. The following were just a few of the responses: small plates, food trucks, local menus, and food and drink pairings ("Catering Trends").

Catersource also mentioned how customers are becoming smarter than they ever have in everything except for pricing. Customers today know more about what menus and décor they want to see compared to in the past, however, they still don't understand how much it actually costs to create something and have the final outcome to be exactly what you want ("Catering Trends").

Guests are also intrigued with the idea that sweet is savory and savory is sweet. This idea combines sweet and savory in the same dish. For example, maple bacon ice cream or fruit dessert sliders, or even something as simple as salted caramel ("Catering Trends").

MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS

Project Management

According to Meredith Levinson, there are six characteristics one should develop to become a successful project manager. The first characteristic that successful managers possess is the gift of foresight. This refers to the idea that successful project managers have the ability to anticipate complications that may occur that could possibly jeopardize deadlines, budgets, and user acceptance (Levinson). The second characteristic that a successful project manager should possess is organization. This characteristic implies that they are able to remain focused on the bigger picture and are capable of prioritizing responsibilities (Levinson). The third characteristic is that they should know how to lead. "Project managers have to interact with and influence a variety of stakeholders including their project teams and project sponsors." (Levinson). Because of this, project managers must be able to motivate the confidence of stakeholders and sponsors, especially if matters such as budget and timeline need to be renegotiated (Levinson). Fourth is that they have the ability to communicate often and effectively. Successful project managers use multiple means of communication such as email, status reports, and group meetings to communicate their ideas and resolve disputes. The fifth characteristic of a successful project manager is that they're pragmatic. Successful project managers must be realistic and utilize the resources that are available to them in order to get work completed. And the sixth characteristic of a successful project manager, according to Levinson, is that they're empathetic. Project managers have to rely on others in order to become successful, but they won't be able to effectively influence their team if they don't understand what it is that motivates their investors. They first must learn about and understand what the concerns of their investors are about certain projects and then carefully take those concerns and address them (Levinson).

Team Management

According to the MSG Experts with MSG Management Study Guide, motivation is the key to a team's success. This is because employees who aren't motivated tend to find it more difficult to concentrate on their work and eventually they lose all interest in their organization. However, performance linked incentives and perks can help to motivate an individual to perform better and stay motivated (MSG Experts).

Effective team managers also set clear goals for each team member. Every member in your team should know what their role and their responsibilities in the team are. Your team should never be confused about who has which responsibilities and the workload should be divided equally among all team members (MSG Experts).

Team managers should also never criticize any of their team members in a way that is degrading and discouraging. Scolding and shouting at team members, especially in front of other team members, can insult and discourage them. If you must criticize a team member, always do it in private and in a way that encourages them to continue to try (MSG Experts).

Client Satisfaction/Needs Analysis

There are many factors to consider in effective client satisfaction. For example, you first must listen carefully to what your clients are telling you. Even if you've worked with these clients before in the past and the experience wasn't as pleasant as you would have liked, you must set all past experiences aside and focus on what it is they want now. You also want to make sure that you write down notes and important points about them and their preferences for future events to ensure that they are satisfied again in the future. However, working with clients isn't always easy, it can come with complaints, problems, and concerns. When a client expresses any complaints, problems, or concerns, make sure you use positive vocabulary such as 'I understand'

to let the client know that you are actually listening to them. You also must make sure that you continue to work with a smile, especially around your clients. A professional has the ability to remain positive, friendly, and helpful (Whitehorn).

Conclusion

In every business, there is always a project manager and/or team leader. In order to be a successful project manager and/or team leader, you must possess the following characteristics: foresight, organization, leadership and communication skills, be pragmatic, and be realistic (Levinson). They must also be able to motivate a team, set clear goals, delegate, and give criticism in a way that continues to encourage their team to stay motivated and keep trying (MSG Experts).

However, team members aren't the only people a manager has to aware of, you also have to take your clients into consideration. In order to ensure that your client is satisfied with your services, you must make sure that you listen carefully to what your client is telling you. This includes their wants, needs, concerns, complaints, problems, and more. Also, make sure that you always keep a smile on your face, no matter what the circumstance. A professional manager must be able to remain positive, friendly, and helpful at all times (Whitehorn).

CONFECTION CONNECTION – THE PROJECT

Market Analysis

Customer Demographic

My client demographic were current Paul Smith's College students, faculty members, and alumni who were attending the event as a send-off and to thank the alumni for taking the time to network with current employees about how they got to where they are today and to offer advice to the current students. Because it was a breakfast event, they attended the event with the expectation of enjoy breakfast with the HSMAI club (the club that hosted the BOOMERANG Alumni Event).

Environmental Scan

When catering an event, there are always going to be strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Some are internal forces to the catering operation such as strengths and weaknesses, while others are external forces to the catering operation such as opportunities and threats. Some strengths in the catering operation are: quality assurance, quick response to emergencies, and guaranteed ingredients for menu preparation. However, some weaknesses are: equipment breakage, lack of employee expertise, and increased costs. Catering operations also have many opportunities, for example: freedom to plan, freedom to promote extended services, and implementation of policies. Some threats that catering operations face today are: competitors, training expenses, loss of staff or the commitment of staff, and even food poisoning.

Employees

Front of the House

Front of the house employees are expected to have good communication skills, be able to retain information, and be willing to arrive early to help set up. For my event, because it was hosted by the HSMAI club at Paul Smith's College, they worked the front of the house. Since the event was scheduled to start at 10:00am, they arrived at 8:00am to set up the dining room and prepare the beverage station.

Back of the House

Back of the house employees are expected have basic knowledge about the food being prepared and the ingredients in it. They also must have good time management skills to ensure that all food is prepared and served in a timely manner so that they guest isn't waiting too long to receive their food or to make sure that they don't run out of food. They must also be able to communicate with the rest of the staff and practice proper sanitation and kitchen safety.

Gap Analysis

To select my back of the house staff, I based my decision based on their basic knowledge, skill level, communication skills, professionalism, and time management skills. I expected my team to be knowledgeable about my capstone and my question as well as maintain contact with me with any questions or concerns they may have had. For the most part, my team met almost all of my qualifications. Because some of my team members were also helping out with other capstone events, communication could have been a lot more extensive and the event may have ran slightly smoother than they did. For work hours, two of my three team members met my expectations for work hours. The night before the event, I had a team member email me

informing me that she was unable to make it and that I would be short one team member.

Thankfully, I was able to find another student to fill in and help me serve during the event.

Facilities

In order to successfully cater the event, I needed: a kitchen with a dining room, ovens, ranges, a fryer, hotel pans, bowls, knives, cutting boards, sheet pans, speed racks, a rob coupe, rubber spatulas, measuring cups and spoons, sinks, trash cans, a hot box, chaffing dishes, sternos, serving utensils, and tablecloths. The event was located in the Ganzi in Cantwell, so the kitchen and dining room were already taken care. I also had access to just about everything else that I needed with the assistance of Chef Misik and Chef Temkkit. The only equipment I needed to acquire was the chaffing dishes and the sternos to maintain safe holding temperatures during the event itself. Thankfully, Sodexo was more than willing to help me out and let me borrow three full chaffing dishes and sternos.

Product

During my initial meeting with my contact for the event, I asked a series of questions that I would later use to develop my menu. After that first meeting, I was under the impression that the ideal menu for the event consisted of more breakfast pastry items and less of a traditional breakfast because it was later in the morning. After developing a first draft of my menu, I learned that I was misunderstood and that I would need to redesign my menu. The ideal menu for the event consisted of proteins, fruit, and an action station. With that in mind, I redesigned my menu and sent it back to my contact for approval.

THE EVENT

Data Collection

Menu

Due to some miscommunication early on, I had redesign my menu twice to fit my client's needs. The ideal menu for the event consisted of proteins, fruit, and an action station. With that in mind, I designed a menu with the following selections: maple glazed buttermilk cake doughnuts, breakfast casserole, sausage gravy and biscuits, pancakes served with maple syrup and maple butter, assorted yogurts, gluten free granola, and mixed fruit.

I did not have a financial budget to work within, so I didn't have to worry too much about the cost of the food. However, I did have to make sure that I prepared enough of each selection to feed 40 guests. Once the event was over, I costed out my recipes to determine how much each food selection costed to make per serving and used that to determine my total food cost. The buttermilk cake doughnuts cost a total of \$24.36 (\$0.68 per serving), the breakfast casserole cost \$42.14 (\$1.05 per serving), the sausage gravy and biscuits cost \$41.79 (\$1.03 per serving), the pancakes with maple syrup and maple butter cost \$23.39 (\$0.58 per serving), the gluten free granola cost \$33.55 (\$0.84 per serving), and the fruit and yogurt cost \$139.57 (\$3.49 per serving). That gave me a total food cost of \$304.80. With the cost of the linens totaling \$54.00, I had a total cost of \$358.80.

To determine whether or not my menu met both my client's and guest's satisfaction, I asked everyone to complete a survey after they had finished eating. Not only did I use these surveys to determine whether or not the guests could tell the difference between the pure and artificial maple syrups, but I also used them to gain feedback and to gauge if my food met everyone's expectations.

Front of the House Operations Guide

Based on my research, I wanted to make sure that I maintained excellent communication with my team and all contacts about the event. Because my event was hosted by the HSMAI club at Paul Smith's College, my team only worked the back of the house with the HSMAI club set up the dining room and prepared the beverage station. Because I had multiple contacts in the HSMAI club, communication got a little lost and unorganized which definitely showed on the day of the event.

The Study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not consumers can in fact tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup when it is served both as is as well as baked into products. To collect the data from my event to determine whether or not consumers could tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup, I had a survey placed at each guest's place-setting at their table. In the survey, I asked them to identify what they had consumed, whether they believed it was made with pure or artificial maple syrup, and to offer any feedback about my menu. I then entered my data into excel to calculate the results.

RESULTS

Menu

Even though I was not given a financial budget to follow, I still had to make sure that my team prepared enough of each option to serve 40 guests. Not only did I prepare enough for every guest to come through the buffet line and eat, I prepared enough for them to come through the buffet line twice and I still had some food left over.

Based on the feedback I received in my surveys and speaking with my client, overall I met both the client's and the guest's expectation. However, a lot of guests mentioned that they would have preferred it if I had served smaller portion sizes that way they could try one of each option instead of having to select just one. I also received a comment that, while the breakfast casserole was delicious, it was something that the guest felt like they could have prepared at their own home and would have liked to see something else that they don't get to enjoy as often.

Front of the House Operations Guide

As a manager, I wanted to make sure that I maintained excellent communication with my team and all contacts about the event. Because my event was hosted by the HSMIAI club at Paul Smith's College, my team only worked the back of the house with the HSMIAI club set up the dining room and prepared the beverage station. Because I had multiple contacts in the HSMIAI club, communication got a little lost and unorganized which definitely showed on the day of the event. Not everyone involved knew what was happening or who was setting up certain stations such as the beverage station. Because of this, I had to stop what I was doing quite a few times to help bring order back to the event and delegate jobs.

The Study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not consumers can in fact tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup when it is served both as is as well as baked into products. To collect the data from my event to determine whether or not consumers could tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup, I had a survey placed at each guest's place-setting at their table. In the survey, I asked them to identify what they had consumed, whether they believed it was made with pure or artificial maple syrup, and to offer any feedback about my menu. I then entered my data into excel to calculate the results. Out of a total of 37 guests, my results showed that only twelve of the guests could in fact tell the difference between the pure and artificial maple syrup while eleven could not, that's 32% compared to 30%. The remaining 14 guests were either unsure or did not try any products with maple syrup in it.

DISCUSSION, REFLECTION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Discussion

After analyzing my collected data, I learned that, when presented with a blind taste test, less than half of the consumers could in fact tell the difference between pure and artificial maple syrup. However, the results were very close.

I also learned that managing a team and catering an event was a lot more work that I had originally anticipated it to be. Even though we have worked as managers before while managing out bakery day our second year at Paul Smith's College, catering takes management one step further by required you to meet with a client and determine the needs and wants of the client. You also had to make sure that you had all the necessary catering equipment to make sure that all food was held and served at proper temperatures. For example, I had to utilize dishes from the plate room and borrow chaffing dishes and sternos from Sodexo.

Reflection

Now that the event itself is done and I have collected all of my data and have had some time to look back on the whole experience, I would definitely change a lot. First off, because some of my team members were also helping out with other capstone events, the amount of communication between my team and myself was not ideal. There was a lot of confusion and I found myself wondering if my team was even still involved because I didn't receive responses to any emails that I sent out. Also, the night before the event, I had a team member email me informing me that she was unable to make it for the event and that I would be short one team member. Thankfully, with the help of my mentor, I was able to find another student to fill in and help me serve during the event. I also would have started preparation for the event an hour earlier

to ensure that I was going to be completed and ready to serve on time because I finished setting up fifteen minutes before the event was about to start.

Recommendation/Further Research

For future students who are about to approach this task, I would recommend that they not take it lightly and assume that, just because they have already managed a bakery day, they can manage a team and cater an event; it is not that easy. Catering an event takes an extensive amount of time and detail and should definitely not be put off until the last minute. As soon as you know what your event is and who your clients are, start contacting them and develop your team and menu as soon as you possibly can.

As for the research end of this task, I would also recommend that you start that as soon as possible. I would even go as far as to recommend that each student determine their topic a semester early so that they don't feel stressed and overwhelmed right off the bat. The earlier you know what you want your subject to be, the sooner you can start your research and begin planning your event.

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