

Fast Food versus- Full Service Restaurants

**By: Stephanie Evans,
Senior Consultant Restaurants
Renard International**

Whatever the size or type of outlet, all restaurant managers must coordinate a variety of activities. Though the day-to-day tasks may be vastly different from one environment to the next, they do share some of the same common interests.

Both Fast Food Restaurants as well as hotel restaurants must maintain a high level of service in order to succeed. Strategic planning is a key element of continued success for any business. Restaurant management may be fast-paced, highly demanding and very rewarding. In both environments they must focus their efforts on the overall business performance of the restaurant. They must also take into account the standards of food quality and what good service means to them.

In a fast food restaurant environment the manager may not have to rely so heavily on personal relationship building; yet at the same time, they still have to pay attention to quality of service, and abide to health and safety regulations in order to generate repeat business. They may also experience some differences in regards to the creative aspects of the role particularly in the areas of marketing and business development.

In both environments, marketing activities, such as promotional events and discount schemes must take place. However, a manager working in a Fast Food environment will more and likely not have the responsibility of coming up with fresh new innovative ideas to revamp the menu. In addition to that special deals or promotions will be a responsibility of head office and would be implemented across the board to the various franchises.

If we were to compare the two restaurant managers in terms of responsibilities managers from a fast food chain would seldom be asked to advise customers on menu choices nor would they be expected to have knowledge of wine. In a quick service restaurant environment, their efforts are not so much focused on a personalized service. Rather the idea is to meet the needs of their guests by providing quick and efficient service at a price nearly everyone can afford.

Fast food restaurants do not have to go through the trouble of taking table reservations or organizing a seating plan because it is on a first come first served basis. Educational requirements would also be different from one atmosphere to the next. For example; someone who is employed as a manager in a fast food environment may or may not have graduated from hotel management school or have an educational background in accounting. They may have started as crew member and slowly as they proved themselves worked their way up into management position. Unlike restaurant managers who work within hotels, responsibilities are not divided in terms of front of the

house and back of the house responsibilities. The manager who works in a fast food environment would over see all aspects of the operation.

Though some of the roles may be vastly different in terms of the size and type of outlet, the expectations according to job performance would virtually be the same. They are both responsible for locking up the establishment, checking that ovens, grills, and lights are off, and switching on the alarm systems.

Both have to meet and greet customers and respond to their complaints. Both must ensure that all employees adhere to company's regulations and uniform standards and both have to create and execute plans to generate sales, set budgets, check delivery of menu items, order and execute cost control. They must also meet with senior management to focus on areas of improvement.

There is a great deal of administrative and human-resource functions attached to the role which includes recruiting new employees and monitoring employee performance and training.

Managers are also responsible for cash and are in charge of receipts received. They must balance them against the record of sales, and must file that information.

Fast Food

Today, there are over 500,000 fast food restaurants in the world. While any meal with low preparation time can be considered to be fast food, typically the term refers to food sold in a restaurant or store with low quality preparation and served to the customer in a packaged form for take-out/take-away.

Additional Factors:

- Tends to be highly processed
- Relies heavily on speed of service, and take-out sales
- Fast food is less expensive than table service
- No tips
- Restaurant meals, has a larger lunchtime clientele
- Pizza places focus almost exclusively on delivery sales and take outs.
- Large scale food production
- Easy menu selections
- Today trying to give customers healthier options

Full Service Restaurants

There are many full service restaurants to choose from. Unlike the quick serve restaurant environment their customers are not always on the go. People tend to sit down with company and eat at a slower pace than what they would do in a fast food environment. Also, a large percentage of sales can be contributed to liquor.

Most restaurants are also fully licensed to sell alcohol, which requires additional training requirements for their staff. In a Full service environment a customer can expect to find plenty of healthier options and more menu options. You can also substitute one side and upgrade to another option to reflect an individual's diet.

Additional Factors:

- Much more expensive than fast food
- Provide table service
- Expected to tip 15-18% of the meal cost
- More selection of the type of cuisine you wish to eat Italian, Mexican, Chinese, Thai, French, etc.
- Liquor sales
- More selection in terms of foods available and preparation methods
- Can substitute side orders

Educational Requirements

Most food service managers qualify for their position based on their restaurant-related experience. A vast majority of chains and food service management companies have rigorous training programs for management positions. Both environments prefer to hire people with at least grade 12 education. However; many restaurant managers start at the bottom and work their way up into their positions.

People who are over the age of thirty may not have a 2- or 4-year degree in a related field. Although educational requirements have been increasing over the years some managers with lots of hands on experience still get hired without the diploma. Today, there are almost 1,000 colleges and universities who offer 4-year programs in restaurant and hospitality management or institutional food service management.

Wages

Median annual wages of salaried food service managers seems to be comparable across the board at \$46,320. I find people who work in casual dining have a tendency to earn more at store level. The middle 50 percent earns between \$36,670 - \$59,580. The lowest 10 percent earn less than \$29,450, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$76,940. In a fast food environment this number usually reflects the salary of an Area Manager. The hours expected from salaried restaurant managers in both fast food and full service environments however seems to be the same.

Expectations

If you want to be a Manager you can expect to work long hours—12 to 15 hours per day, 50 hours or more per week, and sometimes 7 days a week.

Where to find work

Managers recruit employees at career fairs and at schools that offer academic programs in hospitality management or culinary arts, and arrange for newspaper advertising to attract additional applicants.

Other managers can be hired through the use of recruiters or networking. Most managers start from the bottom and work their way up into their positions. A fair number of restaurants also promote only from within and it causes internal conflicts to do otherwise.



Stephanie@renardinternational.com