

## **Managing Food Services**

(Article from Corrections Forum Magazine)

When it comes to managing the large-scale foodservices in a correctional facility, there are ways to streamline, and even cut costs. One such product, Hospitality Suite<sup>®</sup> from Computrition, Inc., is a fully integrated foodservice management software system that is used to cut costs by managing recipes and menus, controlling inventory, automating ordering, and through extensive yet user-friendly managerial reporting.

Within Computrition's Hospitality Suite are two primary products, explains Stephanie Lueros, Director of Marketing: Foodservice Operations Management (FOM) which manages every aspect of the back of house; and Nutrition Care Management (NCM), offering the diet office and patient-care component.

The corrections industry uses both products, but primarily uses the NCM solution if there is a hospital within the correctional facility, or a need to manage several therapeutic diets. If it's a standard operation, FOM is used to manage the entire back-of-the-house: from standardizing recipes and menus, to costing and nutritional analysis. Based on the facility's forecasted counts and established menus, it determines appropriate order quantities along with how much to prepare, along with what should be kept in inventory, resulting in a significant reduction in spoilage and waste. Ordering is automated, and it features interfaces to all the major foodservice distributors for easy online ordering. A fax machine is no longer needed to place orders, and each component of the software is maintained in real-time.

With current customers ranging from operations with 20 beds to the entire U.S. Marine Corps, Lueros notes that it's typically most cost effective for operations with a minimum of 100 beds, or with several facilities to oversee. Since it's fully integrated, it reduces the redundancy in data entry that a foodservice operator would need to do to manage their operation. From the point a recipe is created to the point it's incorporated into a menu, and from determining how much is needed to produce per meal to tying that amount into inventory, it's all done in one system.

Lueros boasts that the software's uniqueness is that its nucleus is "at the ingredient level, rather than the recipe level," which stresses two important aspects for a corrections facility—cost and nutrition. When producing larger quantities of food, the ratios do not translate exactly. The software will generate recipe scaling automatically with the correct nutrient, production, and costing information. Seeing as the laws controlling correctional feeding are more stringent than for the healthcare industry, having detailed information at one's fingertips regarding the nutritional content of food being served is a crucial charge.

"Food cost is a huge concern for foodservice directors," she adds. "There's no way to accurately track food costs if you're not keeping track of how much you're producing or wasting." She also notes that to gain any leverage with foodservice distributors or vendors to get better prices, directors need to know exactly how much of each food they go through. Even switching from turkey to beef, and vice versa, in a meatball recipe will greatly change menu costs as well as nutrition information, and this can be done

automatically and instantaneously with the software. “It gives operators an accurate tool, providing the power of knowledge to make informed decisions at every level about one’s operation,” Luross states.