Abstract

School lunchrooms must balance profits and cost to effectively deliver meals to students. Return-on-investment (ROI) calculations were performed to determine the most cost effective interventions to increase participation and reduce waste resulting in a better bottom line for foodservice operations.

Objective

Determine which of the following Smarter Lunchroom interventions provide the most profit for the least investment:

- Naming Vegetables
- Moving Fruit Next to the Register
- Complete Smarter Lunchrooms Makeover
- Slicing Fruit

Methods

- Return on Investment (ROI) calculations were estimated using a six-week intervention period (30 days).
- Direct and indirect costs were estimated using foodservice operation budgets.
- Benefits were estimated using sales, production and plate waste measures.

Results

1. Naming Vegetables (Savings = 0.06¢*)
   ROI = 7.35%
2. Moving Fruit (Savings = 0.03¢*)
   ROI = 4.83%
3. Complete Smarter Lunchrooms Makeover (Savings = 0.02¢*)
   ROI = 2.09%
4. Slicing Fruit (Savings = 0.04¢*)
   ROI = 0.33%

*Savings are shown per respective serving

Conclusion

- This cost/benefit analysis provides directions for foodservice directors and nutrition educators working in school food environments for improving the bottom line of their operations.
- All Smarter Lunchrooms interventions have positive reinforcing their profitability and ease of implementation.
- If interested in only making one change to their lunchroom a foodservice director should consider Naming Vegetables or Moving the Fruit

Reference
