

## **What Should Your Service Provider Provide?**

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*Third article in a series about managing outsourced service providers. The previous articles in this series may be found at our website, [clariongp.com](http://clariongp.com).*

Your food and hospitality service, janitorial and other service providers owe you more than an on-site manager, a monthly bill and occasional client relations lunch. You hired the company because it's an expert in its specialized field and has resources you don't have in-house, or could better use elsewhere.

The on-site manager is the key to a successful operation, but one step up, it's the district manager (or equivalent title) who is key to the vendor's success in providing you with the full value of its resources.

### **What Should You Expect?**

At a bare minimum, you should expect the district manager will visit at least several times a month, and not just to say hello and use the manager's phone.

The DM is responsible to see the operation is running properly, help the manager solve any problems, ensure costs are in line, keep you in touch and handle any questions or issues you may have.

The DM should know when the manager isn't doing the job well, tell you before you're aware of it, and do something about it. "Something" could be additional training, support or, if necessary, replacement.

A good contractor is proactive, improving services, introducing new features and in general, makes the services better and more efficient at no greater cost, or at a lower cost – continuous improvement. The DM is the maestro who orchestrates all the support services, knowing what's needed for your operation and bringing in the right resources.

### ***Resources your contractor should offer as part of its services include:***

#### **Training**

This is the most important support service contractors should provide, especially for new managers and hourly employees.

On-site managers need on-going education to improve skills such as supervision, hourly employee training, financial reporting, legal compliance (e.g. discrimination and harassment prevention) and their company's and your organization's policies.

Hourly employees need to learn job standards and skills, service and courtesy. They also need training to help them move up to higher-level positions.

#### **Human Resources**

Beyond providing training programs, the vendor's HR department also should be monitoring employment issues to prevent problems and protect you from entanglement in any legal problems that arise from the actions of their employees.

HR has a key role to play in recruiting management personnel and providing guidance to district and on-site managers in the recruiting, selection and hiring of qualified hourly personnel

## **Operational Support**

Whatever the service, there come times when extra support is needed – a manager is ill and a fill-in is needed or there's a day or period of peak activity when more hands are needed. The contractor should have competent people available as needed.

## **Technology**

The service vendor should be able to bring the newest technology to your operation, whether it's part of their package or something for you to adopt.

There's never a time when whatever technology your service requires isn't being improved. You may not need to update with every tweak, but every so often it will pay to upgrade. Your provider should be your expert and guide in this area

## **Financial**

The contractor should provide accurate, timely and comprehensible financial reports and supporting data, so you remain apprised of sales, costs and the progress (or lack) of the operation.

## **Dining and Hospitality**

This is an area that requires specialized support. The contractor should have comprehensive resources in such areas as food safety, purchasing and marketing, merchandising and promotional programs that improve the value offered to your employees and guests, maintain their interest and increase sales.

A vendor who isn't providing at least these services isn't doing the job.

*Clarion consultants have spent years as dining and hospitality service operators. We know what you should receive in services and support and can help you obtain it. For information, contact Tom Mac Dermott, 603/642-8011, Angela Phelan, 973/544-6223 or Ernie Wilder, 703/282-3030 or e-mail us at [info@clariongp.com](mailto:info@clariongp.com).*