



## MANAGEMENT CONNECTION

# HIGHLIGHTING COLLABORATION

## BETWEEN CDM, CFPPs AND CONTRACT COMPANIES

BY KRISTIN KLINEFELTER, MS, RDN, LDN

**MY FAVORITE ASSIGNMENT** in the Nutrition and Foodservice Professional Training Program involves students visiting other facilities and CDM, CFPPs. Why? Because it highlights the importance of networking and collaborating! As a certified dietary manager, certified food protection professional, you might feel “out there all alone” since you may be the only CDM, CFPP in the building. In reality, there are thousands of others facing the same daily challenges that you confront.

Professionals who have the same credentials after their name can relate to your successes and challenges. In addition to networking with other CDM, CFPPs, you may team up with consultant dietitians, vendors, and corporate partners to accomplish daily tasks. Each person on your team is working towards a common goal: to produce healthy, delicious food to nourish a variety of people. Chances are, you have positive experiences with your corporate partners and are interested in ways to continue building those relationships.

*Collaboration* involves two or more people working together toward a common goal. It can be extremely helpful to collaborate with someone outside of your department and facility. Key aspects of collaboration include effective communication, implementation of cohesive programs, culture and community building, and effort (work) from all parties to reach the common goal.

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

We all have preferred methods of communication. A key goal of communicating is to pass along information in a manner that receivers understand the intent and details of the data. Details may be informational (not requiring the receiver to

act) or instructional (requiring the receiver to act). In this fast-paced, digital age, people are looking for convenient ways to communicate, often with instant responses. There are many apps out there that can provide just that.

Curt, a corporate operations manager for a private restaurant group, communicates with his team daily using Slack. He said it keeps all of his local store managers in constant communication, maintaining the community that they desire. “Without that daily communication, they feel out there all alone. We bounce ideas off of each other and support each other.”

Other forms of communication can be slower, using emails or even printed publications. According to Earthweb.com, the average person receives over 100 emails each day and the ideal attention span that users give each one is 10-15 seconds! This means that if CDM, CFPPs and corporate partners are using email as a primary form of communication, the email should be brief and concise. When people have time, they can sit down to sort through the information, extracting what is important for them to know. If you send emails that require responses, it is helpful to state that in the subject line. Also, think of how you can format the email so it grabs the receiver’s attention and they read the key points.

Darla Beaver, a contractor with school system programs, uses a “bold and bullet” format in emails. “I limit my information to 3-4 key points, and use bold headings with 2-3 bullet points below each heading. My colleagues often comment on how they appreciate that format.”



## Practice This! Creative Ways to Collaborate with Communication

- **Participate in online communities.** Join or start a networking group on Facebook or LinkedIn. People often pose questions or ideas that might benefit you and your department.
- **Schedule check-ins with your contractors and consultants.** Keep a notebook or clipboard on your desk with items you would like to report on or discuss at your meeting.
- **Create and maintain shared documents.** Start using drive-based documents and share access with your contractors and consultants. Sharing drafts of policies, schedules, spreadsheets, and other documents allows everyone involved to access and edit information when it is convenient for them.



**MAKE SURE AS YOU SHARE AND COLLABORATE,** that you're not sharing any sensitive, private, or proprietary information about your company, its employees, or your clients.

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### COHESIVE PROGRAMS

One of the benefits of working in a facility that is managed by a contract company is the structure that shapes our daily work. For example, many kitchens that are managed by corporate companies have menus, standardized recipes, policy & procedures, and diet manuals ready for you to implement. It can be time-consuming for a CDM, CFPP to write and update all of those pieces. Not only will your department have access to those programs, you will have the support to modify and implement them from the corporation.

Kristopher Kilduff, a dietary manager in a small, local hospital, shared that

when he and his foodservice representative modified prices last fall, it took them weeks. The process took away from the client care and employee training. Kilduff reports, “Working with my representative on recent price changes was a huge task. I am so thankful for our partnership and help with this project, so I didn’t take too much time away from my daily operations and team.”

In addition to help with menus and pricing, contracting with a corporate company may increase your purchasing power and reduce costs. Both capital expenses and food and supply prices may be lower if you align with a larger purchasing group. With food costs on the rise, this is a significant benefit to the CDM, CFPP and their facility.

### CULTURE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Workplace culture, which can be shaped by company values, develops the community within your department, improves employee job satisfaction, and reduces turnover. Do your employees know your company mission statement?

According to Glassdoor’s Mission & Culture Survey (2019), more than 77 percent of applicants consider a company’s culture before applying for a job there, and 79 percent would consider a company’s mission and purpose before applying. In their survey of 5,000 people, over half responded that the company culture is more important for job satisfaction than salary. As a CDM, CFPP, think of ways you can collaborate with your corporate partners to build your department culture and community.

### Collaboration Opportunities: Culture and Community Building

- Invite your corporate dietitian to be a guest chef or co-lead an in-service.
- Play a trivia game at your department meeting to fill in the blanks of your contract company’s mission statement.
- Hold a contest to come up with a fun logo or theme word to put on T-shirts that employees can wear on casual days. Your corporate partners can help with the design or printing.\*

- Have a drawing and invite the winners to tour your vendor’s distribution warehouse.
- Ask your sales representative to bring a unique product\* for employees to sample.
- Invite your corporate partners to donate small items\* like stickers or water bottles to give away during special recognition weeks. (Pride in Foodservice Week is the first full week in February, and National Healthcare Food Service Week is the second week in October.)
- Work with your contract company to complete mock-surveys in the department.

*\*Note on gifts: According to the US Department of Labor Ethics office, a small gift valued at less than \$20 may be offered between government vendors and contractors/clients. Health care and private industry might have different policies. Prizes at food shows, education events, or association meetings may be considered acceptable, depending on the intent of the prize. As a CDM, CFPP and department head, follow your facility’s HR policy & procedure manual.*

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### EFFORTS TO REACH THE COMMON GOAL

Tasks between CDM, CFPPs and contract companies might include ordering products, menu changes and development, researching new products, writing product or equipment specifications, department design or construction, designing workflow or writing job descriptions, pricing and merchandising training, conducting continuing education, and writing policy & procedures.


Both parties benefit from the education and experience of the other. For example, a CDM, CFPP who works in the field might share that a menu cycle is not working for their population, or a scheduling template needs adjusting. The contractor has the benefit of visiting many facilities to see what works for them and can share these ideas with the CDM, CFPP.

Michelle Jaeger, RDN and Client Lifecycle Manager for Sodexo, states that during her monthly operating reviews with CDM, CFPPs, the team effort to achieve goals and

metrics confirms that they are all working together towards that common goal. "Everyone wins and we feel like a team. If times are challenging, we can offer the

necessary support to get through it. We also have a lot of fun!"

Your day as a CDM, CFPP consists of unique tasks, responsibilities, and challenges. Creating and maintaining

relationships with your contract companies and corporate partners can relieve stress and provide you with concrete documents, programs, and support. Collaborate for the win! 



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Kristin Klinefelter has worked as a corporate dietitian, consultant dietitian, and in facilities that collaborate with contractors. In her 25 years in the field, her favorite advice to students and colleagues is to "network and collaborate!"

The logo for ANFPtv, featuring the letters "ANFP" in red and "tv" in black, with a stylized red swoosh under the "A".

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The logo for the ANFP Job Board, featuring the letters "ANFP" in white and "JOB BOARD" in a smaller font, with the tagline "Explore. Network. Grow." below it.

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## CE QUESTIONS | MANAGEMENT CONNECTION



This **Level II** article assumes that the reader has a thorough knowledge of the topic. The desired outcome is to facilitate application of knowledge into practice by drawing connections among ideas and using information in new situations.

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Reading *Highlighting Collaboration Between CDM, CFPPs and Contract Companies* and successfully completing these questions online in the ANFP Marketplace has been approved for 1 hour of continuing education for CDM, CFPPs. To earn 1 CE hour, visit [www.ANFPonline.org/market](http://www.ANFPonline.org/market) and select **Edge CE Articles** within the Publications section. Purchase the article and complete the quiz.

1. What are key aspects of collaboration?
  - A. Exchange of money, a hierarchy system, and a top-down approach
  - B. Similar credentials, continuing education, and professional membership requirements
  - C. Communication, cohesive programs and values, and efforts to reach a common goal
2. According to this article, how long does the average person look at an email?
  - A. 10-15 seconds
  - B. 30-45 seconds
  - C. 60-75 seconds
3. According to this article, what did more than half of survey respondents say is more important for job satisfaction than salary?
  - A. Time off
  - B. Medical benefits
  - C. Company culture
4. A benefit to aligning with a contract foodservice company may include access to:
  - A. Menus and standardized recipes
  - B. Policy & procedure manuals
  - C. Both A and B
5. If you would like to coordinate efforts with your contract company to celebrate Pride in Foodservice Week, in what month will you be celebrating?
  - A. January
  - B. February
  - C. October
6. How can a CDM, CFPP utilize their relationship with their contract company to lessen daily stressors?
  - A. Work collaboratively on menu development
  - B. Implement corporate company policy & procedure manuals
  - C. Both A and B
7. Where can you find specific guidance on accepting or offering gifts between contractors/vendors and customers/clients?
  - A. Your facility HR department policy & procedure manual
  - B. Your local police department
  - C. The CBDM Code of Ethics



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