26TH ANNUAL PROSTART CULINARY TEAM COMPETITIONS

UCF'S ROSEN COLLEGE **MANAGEMENT** COMPETITION

UCF | Rosen College of Hospitality Management
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

FRLA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
FLORIDA RESTAURANT & LODGING ASSOCIATION

Participating teams are responsible for understanding and following all the procedures and rules contained in this document; they will not be reviewed at the ProStart Culinary Team Competitions. Please read this document carefully to maximize your opportunity for success and to avoid receiving penalties during the competition.

GENERAL COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Event Personnel

The ProStart Culinary Team Competitions is hosted by the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association Educational Foundation (FRLAEF) and made possible through the generous support of industry sponsors, donors, and volunteers. Together, these partners help provide a high-quality, industry-driven experience that showcases student talent and supports the development of future restaurant and hospitality leaders.

Personnel Group	Who They Are	Primary Responsibilities
Event Organizers	FRLAEF staff members	Plan, manage, and oversee all aspects of the ProStart Culinary Team Competition; coordinate competition operations, logistics, and participant experience.
Volunteers	Trained and assigned by FRLAEF	Provide event support, assist with competition operations, guide participants, and help ensure a successful event experience.
Judges	Restaurant and foodservice industry professionals and post-secondary educators	Evaluate team performance, provide feedback, and score competitions according to established criteria.

Eligibility Requirements

Students	
Enrollment	Students must be currently, actively enrolled in a Full or Premier ProStart program. The program must be a confirmed ProStart program as recognized by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.
Team Member Definition	Active Competitors are students presenting to the judges.
Competition Limit	May compete for a maximum of three (3) competition years: • Active competitors must be Juniors or Seniors. • **Team Manager may be a sophomore.** Students can serve as Team Manager in any year of participation (Sophomore, Junior or Senior). However, Sophomores may only be Team Managers. Team Managers that are Sophomores may only replace an Active Competitor during the actual competition and not in advance.
Competition Categories	A student may only compete in one competition.
Teams	
Team Size	Two (2) to four (4) competitors plus one (1) optional Team Manager. (*Max 5 students)*
School	The team must consist of students from the same school or career center. If the students are not from the same school or career center, the team will be disqualified. Only one team per school may competition in the Management Competition.
Alternates	No alternate competitors are allowed. Only the Team Manager may replace a competitor if approved by Lead Judges and FRLAEF.
Replaced Competitor	Must leave active team area and may not return; may not communicate with team until competition dismissal.

Team Manager (Optional)	
Competition Status	Considered part of the team and subject to all communication restrictions.
Communication	May not communicate with anyone outside of the team and event personnel.
Emergency Replacement	May replace a competitor with approval from Lead Judges and FRLAEF.
Post-Replacement	If Manager replaces a competitor, they remain in that role for the rest of the competition.
Management-Specific	May have writing utensils and paper, notebook, cards, etc., for taking notes during presentation. May be introduced with team at beginning of production segments. May actively participate in feedback segment after presentation segments. Must remain in the designated Team Manager seating area throughout the team presentation. *May not communicate with team or judges or answer questions directly during presentations.*
There are no additional provisions for teams without a Team Manager.	

COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS & GENERAL DISQUALIFICATIONS

Failure to comply with the following information may result in disqualification. See full lists of disqualifications and penalties in the sample Management Competition Score Sheet.

Participation

- Teams will send all required information to the FRLAEF no later than January 29, 2027. (If necessary, you will be able to make changes after you turn in your information.) If all the required information is not received by January 29, 2027, the first team on the waiting list will replace your team in the competition.
- Teams must attend all assigned competition segments.
- Teams are responsible for arriving on time and following all competition schedules and instructions.
- If a team experiences a medical emergency competition staff, at their discretion, may stop the timer until the medical situation is resolved. The team will then be given the time remaining to complete the meal.

If you encounter **unexpected travel delays** beyond the control of your team **that impact your attendance** at any portion of the event, please **notify FRLAEF** in a timely manner to avoid disqualification.

Communications

- From check-in through the completion of competition, competitors may not receive coaching, assistance, or communication from spectators, educators, mentors, family members, or other supporters.
- The determination of what constitutes coaching or unauthorized communication is solely at the discretion of FRLAEF and Judges.
- FRLAEF strives to provide fair and consistent evaluations; however, all judged competitions involve professional discretion. All judges' decisions and scores are final. All questions regarding scoring must be directed to laura@frla.org. Judges should not be contacted directly after the competition by teams, or educators.
- Spectators may only record their team's presentation. Spectators may not record other teams.

Conduct & Professionalism

- Competitors are expected to conduct themselves in a safe, respectful, and professional manner throughout the event.
- Competitors must follow safe foodservice and workplace practices at all times. Unsafe behavior, horseplay, or actions that create a risk of injury will not be tolerated.
- Prohibited behavior includes, but is not limited to, illegal activity, nonprescription drug use, alcohol use, unsportsmanlike conduct, harassment, or any behavior that threatens the safety or integrity of the competition.
- Teams must comply with all written and verbal instructions provided by FRLAEF.

- Educators, mentors, chaperones, family members, and other team supporters share responsibility for supporting appropriate conduct and compliance with competition rules. Misconduct by any adult associated with a team that compromises the fairness, safety, or operation of the event may result in penalties or disqualification of the team.
- Educators and mentors may assist team in preparing for the competition but may not develop the menu. Their expertise is limited to menu suggestions and technique advice.

Management Competition Overview

Teams will demonstrate their knowledge of the restaurant and foodservice industry by developing a new restaurant concept and presenting it to a panel of judges at a simulated business exposition. The teams will also submit a written proposal for review and will present their concepts to various groups of judges through verbal presentations, question and answer periods, and posters.

1. Mentors and educators may assist teams in preparation for the competition; however, they may not prepare the written materials or posters. Their expertise is limited to acting as a sounding board for concept development.
2. Each team will have an assigned meeting room to present their restaurant concept. They will present their restaurant concept to judges as the judges rotate throughout the meeting rooms.

Concept Components	Description & Specifications
Written Proposal	• Restaurant Concept Description (2 pages maximum) • Floorplan and Selected Restaurant Space Scenario (1 page maximum) • Interior and Décor (2 pages maximum) • SWOT Analysis (1 page maximum • Organizational Chart (1 page maximum) • Menu (1 page maximum) • Recipes • Costing • Menu Pricing • Photographs (2 pages maximum) • Two Marketing Tactics (2 pages maximum per tactic, including sample)
Posters	• Two (2) 24x36 inch posters • Entirely flat and may not include 3-dimensional objects • Poster one (1) – sample menu and floorplan • Poster two (2) – one marketing tactic • If using a social media tactic – a QR code is allowed, but an image of the tactic must be included

3. Restaurant Concept must be located in ProStartville, USA. The strongest concepts use the selected location as an advantage.

   Teams should use the demographic, economic, and location information provided to develop a concept that responds to the needs of the ProStartville community. Strong proposals will demonstrate how the restaurant's menu, target market, operations, staffing, marketing, and financial strategy align with the opportunities presented by the city's residents, visitors, businesses, and attractions.

   While every team works within the same ProStartville framework, creativity is encouraged in how teams bring their concept to life and position it for success within the community.

About ProStartville, USA			
Population	275,508	***Year-Over-Year Population Change***	+2.6%

ProStartville, USA is a fictional city created exclusively by the National Restaurant Association. The geographic location of ProStartville is at the discretion of each team, allowing competitors to creatively position their concept in the region of the country that best supports their restaurant vision. While fictional, ProStartville is designed to reflect the opportunities and challenges of a vibrant, growing American community.

Home to a diverse mix of families, students, and young professionals, ProStartville features a thriving arts and entertainment scene, a large university with a strong athletic program, an international airport, and a collection of unique neighborhoods that each contribute to the city's character and culture. Together, these elements create a dynamic environment in which a variety of restaurant concepts can succeed.

Demographic Profile			
Median Age	31.8 years	***Gender***	49% Male • 51% Female
Age Distribution	0–9: 8% • 10–19: 12% • 20–29: 26% • 30–39: 16% • 40–49: 11% • 50–59: 10% • 60–69: 9% • 70+: 8%		
Families	33% of population	***Foreign-Born Population***	13%
Median Household Income	$76,817	***Civilian Labor Force Participation***	65%
High School Graduate or Higher (Age 25+)	96%	***Bachelor's Degree or Higher (Age 25+)***	59%

4. Teams will select one (1) of the four (4) provided restaurant space scenarios provided. Teams may enhance their selected scenario, but the team may not change the set parameters.

   For example, a team selects the freestanding option but explains that many of the offices are actually open seven days a week so it's always busy.

Scenario	Location Description	Advantages	Considerations
Freestanding	Located on Main Street between the county courthouse and the ProStartville Community Center.	High visibility; strong daytime foot traffic.	Business district activity may result in slower evenings and weekends.
Airport	Located in Concourse B of ProStartville International Airport, beyond TSA security.	Consistent traveler traffic; strong seasonal demand.	Customer base is limited primarily to travelers and airport employees.
Food Truck	Mobile operation that can serve multiple locations and events throughout ProStartville.	Maximum flexibility to reach customers where demand is highest.	Limited workspace and storage require efficient operations and dependable staff.
Strip Mall	Located near the university alongside a nail salon, craft store, bank, and other developing businesses.	Benefits from university traffic and growing commercial activity.	Increased visitor traffic may create parking challenges.

The Management team may collaborate with their state's Culinary team on the menu and recipe items, including recipe development, costing, pricing and photography.

Competition Segments and Scoring

Segment	Time (in minutes)	Possible Points
Pre-Presentation		
Materials Check-In	Check-in by Noon on Saturday	
Presentation Day		
Report and Setup	5	
Concept	7 with judges – 15 between judges	30
Menu & Costing	7 with judges – 15 between judges	40
Marketing	7 with judges – 15 between judges	40
Operations	7 with judges – 15 between judges	30
Critical Thinking	7 with judges – 15 between judges	55
Break		
Judge Feedback	10	
Totals	**~1 hours, 30 minutes**	**195 points**

In the event of a tie:

- The tied team with the highest number of Critical Thinking points will be awarded one (1) additional point to break the tie.
- Teams will only be evaluated on information and materials requested in these rules.

Competition Schedules

Competition schedules will be distributed in advance of the event once all teams have been identified. The schedule will include assigned start and finish times for all competition segments. All schedules are subject to change and will be communicated with as much advance notice as possible.

Competition Space

Item	Notes
Provided prior to Arrival	
Uniform Elements: • Aprons • Hats • Name Badges	Teams will receive Aprons, Hats and Name Badges in advance of the event. Team Manager will be indicated on Name Badge. (Aprons and Hats are not required to be worn.)
Provided in Meeting Room	
Two (2) easels	Teams will place their two posters on the easels using the clips provided
One (1) six-foot banquet table	One written proposal will be on the table. Teams may place bottled water and notecards on the table.
Two (2) posters	The two posters, turned in at check-in, will be in the room.
One (1) written proposal	One of the written proposals, turned in at check-in, will be in the room. The judges will have the other ones.

Evaluation Criteria, Penalties and Disqualifications

Evaluation criteria for each judging category, penalties, and disqualifications are included in the Sample Management Competition Score Sheet.

MANAGEMENT COMPETITION RULES

Team Proposal Submission

Each team must create a written proposal that allows judges to review preparation and execution of the restaurant concept. Teams are required to provide the following, with specifications, procedures and deadlines in the next sections:

1. Fifteen (15) identical printed copies to be turned in at Management Check-in for in-person judge review.
2. One manila folder with the team number and an additional copy of the sample menu, recipes, photographs, and costing and menu pricing worksheets. These documents must be single sided.
3. Two (2) posters for display in their booth.

Materials Formatting

- Fifteen (15) printed copies which must be identical.
- Typed, 12 point, Times New Roman or Arial font, 1-inch margins.
- Printed on 8 ½" x 11" white paper and stapled (not in a folder, spiral bound, binder, etc.).
- Front cover must include only the following information: team number, names of team members, concept name, concept logo, and year. Style and font of the cover page should match the contents.
- All documentation must be on the official templates provided in the rules exhibits.

Materials Requirements	
All packets must include the following documents and all the listed elements. Teams should utilize Foundations of Restaurant Management & Culinary Arts Levels 1 and 2 when crafting their written proposals. Definitions, explanations, and examples of complex topics are included throughout the curriculum and can provide sufficient background knowledge for teams to develop unique and creative concepts. Additional research and use of outside resources is also encouraged.	
Restaurant Concept Description Maximum two (2) pages	• Type of establishment • Purpose and impact • Meals served (breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc.) • Hours of operation • Type of cuisine served • Target market within the fictional city of ProStartville (defining characteristics, demographics, business/leisure, etc.)
Floorplan and Selected Restaurant Space Scenario Maximum one (1) page *Exhibit G*	• Identify restaurant space scenario : Freestanding, Airport, Food Truck, Strip Mall • Basic floorplan of the restaurant's layout – front of house and back of house required • Handwritten or electronically diagrammed • As close to scale as possible – scale will not be judged • Convey the restaurant's flow and inclusion of features necessary to run a restaurant
Interior and Décor Maximum two (2) pages	• Description of interior and décor for the restaurant concept • May include photos, samples of paint, etc. • Entirely flat and printed on paper

Materials Requirements	
SWOT Analysis Maximum one (1) page	• Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis
Organizational Chart Maximum one (1) page *Exhibit H*	• List of positions necessary to staff the restaurant • Demonstration of the reporting structure for the restaurant • It is not mandatory to include how many staff will fill each position • Charts should not be hand drawn
Menu Maximum one (1) page	• Must support restaurant concept • Includes exactly twelve (12) menu items • Representative of how information would be communicated to customers • Must include pricing • Even if a team has developed a build-your-own concept, the 12 menu items must all be composed dishes with static ingredients • Dishes should exemplify a team's unique concept • Menu items that offer ingredient choices or substitutions will result in a penalty for the menu containing fewer or greater than twelve (12) menu items
Recipes No Page Limit *Exhibit B*	• Recipes for the same one (1) of the twelve (12) menu items • Use official template • Must include acknowledgements and sources in MLA format • Must be written in logical sequence
Costing No Page Limit *Exhibit C*	• Costing information for the same one (1) of the twelve (12) menu items • Use official template • Must include acknowledgements and sources in MLA format • Recipe cost must be calculated for each individual recipe • Small amounts of kosher/table salt and black pepper may be priced at 1% of the total recipe cost • Oil for deep frying may be priced at 2% of the total recipe cost • Everything else must be costed out, including garden-grown ingredients
Menu Pricing No Page Limit *Exhibit D*	• Prices for the same one (1) of the twelve (12) menu items • Use official template • Calculated at 33% food cost percentage • May be rounded up after applying the 33% food cost percentage for a more realistic price • Final calculation before rounding must be indicated
Photographs Maximum two (2) pages	• Prepare and photograph at least one (1), and up to four (4), menu items • Must be made by the team • Should not be stock photo, clip art, or other published images

Marketing Tactics
Maximum two (2) pages per tactic, including sample
	• Present two (2) traditional tactics or one (1) traditional and one (1) social media tactic
	• Include tactic description, tactic goal, detailed budget with associated costs (use local rates, list rate sources), ROI, paper-based sample
	• At least one traditional tactic from the list below
	  ○ Print or digital ad – mockup of ad
	  ○ Radio commercial – script
	  ○ TV commercial – storyboard
	  ○ Public relations campaign – sample press release
	  ○ Promotional giveaway items – photo or mockup
	  ○ Email or mail campaign – email text and mockup of accompanying artwork
	• The other tactic may be traditional or social media

Materials Requirements	
	○ Video (20-second limit) – Uploaded to FRLAEF Dropbox and accessible via QR code with management proposal on the paper-based sample ○ Promotional post – Uploaded to FRLAEF Dropbox with a screenshot on paper-based sample ○ Specific to one (1) social media platform (Instagram or Facebook) ○ Use the following cost-per-click amount (the amount team spends per the cost of each click the ad receives) ▪ Instagram - $1.53 per click ▪ Facebook - $0.51 per click • All content produced by the team but may feature an influencer • Enlisting the services of a PR firm or 3rd party agency is strictly prohibited • Required Return on Investment (ROI) formula ○ (Return [profit] – investment [expense] / investment [expense] x 100
One (1) Manila Folder	• Sample menu • Recipes • Photographs • Costing and menu pricing worksheets • Team number • Documents must be single sided
Two (2) Posters	• 24” x 36” in size • Must be entirely flat • May not include 3-dimensional objects • Should be able to be rolled up when fully constructed • Poster one (1) ○ Sample menu ○ Floorplan • Poster two (2) - One marketing tactic and tactic ROI

Proposal Submission Requirements

Hard-Copy Submission (submitted at Check-in)

- Submit fifteen (15) identical hard copy packets for judge review
- One (1) manila folder with team number on front and include:
  - Sample menu
  - Recipes
  - Photographs
  - Costing and menu pricing worksheets
  - School name should not be included
- Two (2) Posters

Please review the Management Competition Checklist for competition deadlines, proposal outline, and other general competition requirements.

To promote student-led innovation and creativity, team submissions must represent original work and may not be significantly repetitive of materials previously submitted.

Requirement	Expectations	Notes/Deadlines
Proposal Originality	All fifteen (15) components of the Management concept proposal must be unique and not significantly repetitive of work submitted within the previous three years.	Failure to meet the Standard of Change may result in disqualification.
Video or Promotional Post Submission	Teams must submit their required video or promotional post to the FRLAEF Dropbox.	February 5, 2027

Materials Check-In

Not Timed

Materials Check-in is the first segment of the competition, which is held on Saturday, March 6 from 8 AM until Noon. Team check-in will close at Noon. Teams should schedule their travel to arrive in Orlando with sufficient time to check in their materials. Teams that have not checked in their materials by Noon on Saturday, March 6 may be disqualified.

Teams will:

- Submit their fifteen (15) written proposals
- Submit one (1) manila folder with team number, sample menu, recipes, photograph(s), costing and menu pricing worksheets
- Submit two (2) 244" x 36" posters, rolled for storage

Uniform Requirements

Element	Specifications	When to Wear
Dress Shirt	Collared, solid color, ¾- or long-sleeved *Only ProStart logo and sponsor names are permitted; no other logos are permitted – including concept logos*	All Segments
Dress Pants or Skirts	Appropriate and professional *Khakis allowed; jeans prohibited*	All Segments
Shoes	Professional, suitable for business meeting, closed toe and heel, heel height no more than three (3) inches	All Segments
Mgr. Name Badge	MUST wear item provided	All Segments
Neckware	Neckware of any sort (i.e. necktie, bowtie, bolo tie, etc) should not be worn	Never

Report to Competition

5 Minutes | Not Scored (Penalty assessed for late arrival)

Each team will have an assigned meeting room which will be provided in the schedule prior to March 6, 2027. Inside the meeting room will be one 6-foot table and two easels for poster display. Once a team reports, they are not allowed to communicate with or receive assistance from anyone outside of the FRLAEF, Judges, Timcer.

Teams will:

- Report to their assigned meeting room five minutes before their scheduled start time
- Have 5 minutes to set up their meeting room. (Team posters and one copy of the Written Proposal will be in the assigned meeting room.)
- Bring a bottle of water and notecards, if desired, but nothing else.
- Stay in their assigned meeting room while the judges rotate.

Competition Flow

Competition includes five (7)-minute presentation segments for each judging category.

- During this time, students will present on the relevant section of their concept, reference their posters, and answer judge questions.
- Each set of judges will leave the meeting room at the conclusion of this seven (7)-minute period.
- There will be an eight (8)-minute break, and announcement of the next group of judges before the next judges arrive.
- Teams may not shake hands, distribute materials to judges or use additional materials (i.e. business cards, promotional items, props, etc.) during the competition segments. Any relevant material must be included in the written proposal.

All spectators must be seated during the team's presentation. If there are not enough seats available in the room, those standing will be asked to leave.

Concept | 30 pts

- Teams should be prepared to clearly describe their restaurant concept, including its purpose, target market, distinguishing characteristics, and overall value proposition.
- Presentations should demonstrate how demographic and market data from ProStartville support the concept and explain how the SWOT analysis influenced business decisions, strategic planning, and long-term viability.
- Teams should be able to confidently explain why their concept fills a need in the market and what positions it for success.

Menu | 35 pts

- Teams should be prepared to explain how their menu supports the restaurant concept, appeals to the target market, and contributes to overall business success.
- Presentations should demonstrate thoughtful menu development, including item selection, menu descriptions, pricing strategy, and how menu offerings align with the concept's brand, customer expectations, and operational capabilities.
- The intent is for teams to develop a menu featuring only twelve (12) menu items. This may be treated as a representative of the concept's broader menu.

Description

- Outline a menu with twelve (12) feature items or guest favorites. These twelve (12) menu items should serve as the true highlights of the restaurant's brand.
- Anything packaged together for one price counts as one item
- For beverages, each item of the same variety that is individually priced counts as one (1) menu item. The total number of items below is four (4).
    - Brewed Coffee – Small - $1.75, Medium - $1.95, Large - $2.00 and XL - $2.15
- Build-your-own dishes, or any dishes featuring substitution options, will result in a penalty. Teams may still develop a build-your-own restaurant concept, but the 12 items featured on the menu must be composed dishes with static ingredients.
- An exception to this rule is a table d'hôte menu or prix fixe menu. In those cases, each dish that makes up the table d'hôte or choice for prix fixe counts as one menu item. (See FRMCA Level 2, 1st Edition, pp. 473-74, 2nd Edition, pp. 28-29, 3rd Edition, p. 46.)

Sample Menu

On the sample menu below, there are examples of how to count menu items. Item count is indicated in red.

Appetizers	Salads
Calamari [1] $8.00 Fresh, tender squid lightly floured then deep fried, served with lemon wedges and homemade marinara sauce ***Spinach and Artichoke Dip*** [2] $7.50 Warm blend of creamy spinach, tender artichokes, and melted Asiago and Parmesan cheeses. Served with tortilla chips.	***House*** [3] $6.50 Spring greens, avocado, roasted peppers, onions, shredded carrots, tomatoes & balsamic dressing ***Crazy*** [4] $8.50 Chicken breast, goat cheese, spring greens, crushed walnuts, bacon, roasted peppers, onions & balsamic dressing ***Wild Alaska Salmon*** [5] $10.50 Alaska salmon, spring greens, tomatoes, sliced lemon & balsamic dressing
Sandwiches	**Entrees**
Best Burger [6] $8.50 ¼ lb. beef patty, pickle, tomatoes, sauteed onions, spring greens, cheddar cheese. Served with fries. ***Best Chicken*** [7] $8.00 Chicken breast, spring greens, tomatoes, onions & basil mayo. Served with pasta salad. ***Garden Burger*** [8] $7.00 Veggie patty, sun-dried tomato pesto, spring greens, avocado, tomatoes, onions, shredded carrot & basil mayo. Served with mix green salad.	***Pot Roast Dinner*** [9] $15.75 Piled high with cippolini onions, carrots & mushrooms over mashed potatoes, served au jus ***Chili Glazed Salmon*** [10] $16.50 Served over a roasted vegetable & quinoa pilaf finished with micro greens ***Chicken Pot Pie*** [11] $13.00 Alaska salmon, spring greens, tomatoes, sliced lemon & balsamic dressing
Desserts	**Beverages**
Cake of the Day [12] $4.00 ***Ice Cream Sundae*** [13] $3.50	***Soda*** [14] $2.00 ***Housemade Lemonade*** [15] $2.50 ***Brewed Coffee*** [16] $1.50

Total menu count is 16 – (Appetizers 2, Salads 3, Sandwiches 3, Entrees 3, Desserts 2, Beverages 3)

Menu pricing should reflect the plated menu item.

Operations | 30 pts

- Teams should be prepared to explain how the restaurant will function on a day-to-day basis, including facility layout, customer flow, staffing structure, organizational design, and operational procedures.
- Presentations should connect floorplan and décor decisions to the guest experience while demonstrating how operational efficiencies support profitability, employee effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.

Menu & Costing | 35 pts

- Teams should be prepared to explain how their menu supports the restaurant concept, appeals to the target market, and contributes to overall business success.
- Presentations should demonstrate thoughtful menu development, including item selection, menu descriptions, pricing strategy, and how menu offerings align with the concept's brand, customer expectations, and operational capabilities.

Critical Thinking | 55 pts

- Critical Thinking Judges will question each team and evaluate their critical thinking skills and ability to react to management challenges.
- The Judges will present each team mini-scenarios from four (4) of the following seven (7) categories:
    - Safety and Sanitation
    - Customer Service
    - Social Media
    - Human Resources and Staffing
    - Menu Development and Design
    - Marketing
    - Concept Knowledge
- All teams will be evaluated on the same categories – the chosen categories will not be distributed at check-in. The team will present how they would address that scenario from the context of their unique restaurant concept.
- Teams should be prepared to analyze business scenarios, explain their decision-making process, and demonstrate a strong understanding of restaurant and hospitality operations.
- Responses should reflect sound business judgment, application of industry knowledge, and the ability to think strategically when addressing operational, financial, marketing, or customer-service challenges. Judges will look for thoughtful reasoning, confidence, and the ability to adapt ideas when presented with new information.

Sample Critical Thinking Scenarios

Social Media

- A guest leaves a negative comment of your restaurant on a popular restaurant review website. How would you handle?
- Someone posts a bad comment on your restaurant's Facebook page. What should you do?

Safety & Sanitation

- While pulling out the beef for your signature ribeye, your prep cook notices that the walk-in seems a bit warm. What do you do?
- While cutting lemon wedges for iced teas, your server finds a moldy lemon halfway through the box of lemons. What should the server do?
- We see that you have a line cook position. While the line cook is carrying your signature soup, he slips in a puddle of water by the dish area. What do you do?

Customer Service

- A reservation for a party of 4 is showing up in your system as cancelled, yet they have arrived and checked in. What will you tell them?
- A guest chokes on a toothpick on their way out the door. What do you do?

Human Resources & Staffing

Management Penalties

ALL penalties worth 5 pts.

_____
Proposal missing, incomplete or late.

_____
Team not in uniform.

_____
Posters do not meet specifications.

_____
Concept not in ProStartville/approved scenario.

_____
Menu contains more or fewer then 12 menu items.

_____
Alcoholic beverage or any adult consumable is used as a menu item or part of a marketing tactic.

_____
Recipes submitted for more/fewer than 1 menu item.

_____
Costing worksheets submitted for more/fewer then 1 menu item.

_____
More/fewer than 1 menu pricing worksheet.

_____
More/fewer then 2 marketing tactics.

- One of your employees reports that he is being bullied by another employee. How would you address this? Who would you speak to first?
- A guest calls the day after dining and complains that the server added an extra $5 to the tip the guest left. How do you address this?

Marketing

- In the coupon you printed in the newspaper, you forgot to put an expiration date. Two months later, a table presents it for redemption. What do you do?

Menu Development and Design

- You don't sell as much of the filet as you anticipated on Friday night. What will you do with the extra filets?
- A guest at your steakhouse is a vegetarian. What can you serve them?

Concept Knowledge

- Due to your location, you serve a high-volume during lunch. However, dinner tickets are down. What can you do to increase dinner volume?
- A restaurant very similar to yours opens up across the street. How do you compete?

Marketing | 40 pts

- Teams may submit two traditional marketing tactics, or one traditional marketing tactic and one social media marketing tactic.
- Teams MAY NOT submit two social medial marketing tactics.
- Teams should be prepared to explain their overall marketing strategy, including why specific tactics were selected and how those tactics support the target market and restaurant concept.
- Presentations should demonstrate an understanding of budgeting, anticipated results, return on investment, and the role each marketing activity plays in generating awareness, attracting guests, and supporting business goals. Teams should be able to articulate both the creative and financial reasoning behind their decisions.

Traditional Marketing Tactics

- For the traditional marketing tactic, website and social media presence are not tactics in and of themselves. For example, Sprinkles Cupcakes uses twitter for a "whisper words" promotion. Each day a "whisper word" is announced via the official Sprinkles Twitter account, and the first 50 patrons to whisper the word-of-the-day receive a free cupcake. In this example, Twitter is the vehicle for the promotion. The marketing tactic employed is actually sample/free product.

MARKETING SEGMENT NOTES

Teams should be careful to avoid combining tactics. For instance, offering free shirts at a street fair consists of two tactics: a promotion and public relations.

RELATED PENALTIES

More/fewer than 2 marketing tactics — 5pts

Alcohol-related marketing tactic used. — 5pts

Traditional Marketing Tactics Include:

Tactic	Definition	Examples
Advertising	Paying to present or promote an operation's products, services, or identity.	Newspaper, Radio, Magazine, Billboard, Metro Transit, Digital advertisements on social media or billboards
Promotions	Incentives to entice customers to patronize an operation.	Frequent shopper program, Special Pricing, Special Events, Samples, Contest or Sweepstakes, Signage & Display Materials, Merchandising, Carryout & Door Hanger Menu
Public Relations	The process by which an operation interacts with the community at large.	Hosting a Charity Event, Press Release, Sponsoring a Team or Event
Direct Marketing	Making a connected effort to connect directly with a certain segment of the market.	Post Card Mailing Campaign, E-mail Campaign, Deal of the Day Website (Groupon, Living Social, etc.)

Social Media Marketing Tactics

- For the social media marketing tactic, the social media platform itself is not the marketing tactic; rather, it is the vehicle used to deliver and amplify the tactic. Teams should focus on the specific promotional strategy being implemented and explain how social media supports the achievement of their marketing goals.
- For example, a restaurant might use Instagram to promote a limited-time offer, host a giveaway, showcase behind-the-scenes content, highlight menu items, feature customer testimonials, or build community engagement. In each case, Instagram or Facebook serves as the communication channel, while the actual marketing tactic is the promotion, campaign, or customer engagement strategy being executed.
- The video or promotional post created by teams should reinforce the restaurant's brand identity, clearly communicate the concept, and encourage potential customers to take action, such as visiting the restaurant, attending an event, trying a featured menu item, or engaging with the brand online.

Social Media Marketing Tactics Include:

Tactic	Definition	Examples
Video	Promoted short form videos, with captions	Instagram story, Instagram reel, Facebook reel
Promotional Post	Promotion posts with images and captions	Instagram reel, Facebook reel

Post-Presentation & Feedback

- After the final judge rotation of the competition is complete, all teams will receive a short break.
- The entire team (including the team manager) will then be escorted to the Feedback Room at the designated time for a ten (10)-minute feedback session from the judges.
- Only the designated teacher(s), and mentor(s), are allowed to be present to observe only during the Feedback sessions.
- Teams must remove their posters from the room.
- Teams will take their posters to the Management Competition display area in the Grand Ballroom where they will affix the posters to the easels.
- Teams may pick up Written Proposals and posters by 3 PM on Sunday, March 7 at the Registration Desk outside of the Ballroom.
- FRLAEF will retain one copy of the information from each team. Any items not picked up at the end of the competition will be discarded.

Awards

The first-place team will advance to the 24th Annual National ProStart Invitational to be held April 23-25, 2027, in Baltimore, Maryland. FRLAEF, along with its sponsors, will cover the cost of the trip.

The teams that finish in the top five will receive medals.

Various colleges may award scholarships.

Exhibit A: Proposal Folder Examples

Competition	Item	Examples
Management	Team Proposal Submission Manila Folder	 link

Exhibit B: Recipe Worksheet Example

Team Number: **Your Team Number Here**

Educator Chef Jane Doe

Menu Item	Ratatouille		
Dish Element *(e.g., Protein, garnish, sauce, etc.)*	Accompaniment (Vegetable)		
Number of Portions	500	***Portion Size:***	5 ounces
Cooking Method(s)	Sauté		
Recipe Source	Lagasse, Emeril. "Ratatouille." *Food Network,* http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/ratatouille-recipe0.html. Accessed 30 September 2016.		

Ingredients	
Item	***Amount***
Olive oil	¼ cup
Yellow onion, small dice	1 ½ cup
Garlic, minced	1 tsp
Eggplant, medium dice	2 cups
Thyme	½ tsp
Green bell pepper, diced	1 cup
Red bell pepper, diced	1 cup
Zucchini squash, diced	1 cup
Yellow squash, diced	1 cup
Tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped	1 ½ cup
Basil, chiffonade	1 tbsp
Parsley, chopped	1 tbsp
Salt and black pepper	TT

Procedure

Set a large 12-inch sauté pan over medium heat and add the olive oil.
Once hot, add the yellow onions and garlic to the pan.
Cook the onions, stirring occasionally, until they are wilted and lightly caramelized, about 5 to 7 minutes.
Remainder of procedures…

Exhibit C: Recipe Costing Worksheet Example

Team Number: **Your Team Number Here**

Educator Chef Jane Doe

Menu Item	Ratatouille		
Dish Element *(e.g., Protein, garnish, sauce, etc.)*	Accompaniment (Vegetable)		
Number of Portions	6	***Portion Size:***	5 ounces

Ingredient	*Purchase Unit*	*Purchase Cost*	*Unit Cost*	*Amount Needed*	*Ingredient Cost*
Olive oil	51 oz / 6.375 cup	$16.79	$2.634 / cup	¼ cup	$0.658
Yellow onion, small dice	1 lb / 4 cup	$1.40	$0.35 / cup	1 ½ cup	$0.525
Garlic, minced	1 head	$0.50	$0.10 / tsp	1 tsp	$0.100
Eggplant, medium dice	1 lb / 3 cup	$2.05	$0.683 / cup	2 cups	$1.367
Thyme	Harvested	$0.00	$0.00	½ tsp	$0.000
Green bell pepper, diced	1 lb / 4 cup	$2.30	$0.575 / cup	1 cup	$0.575
Red bell pepper, diced	1 lb / 4 cup	$1.07	$0.268 / cup	1 cup	$0.268
Zucchini squash, diced	1 lb / 2.5 cup	$1.93	$0.772 / cup	1 cup	$0.772
Yellow squash, diced	1 lb / 2.5 cup	$1.93	$0.772 / cup	1 cup	$0.772
Tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped	1 lb / 2 cup	$2.40	$1.20 / cup	1 ½ cup	$1.80
Basil, chiffonade	Harvested	$0.00	$0.00	1 tbsp	$0.000
Parsley, chopped	Harvested	$0.00	$0.00	1 tbsp	$0.000
Herb Garden Seeds	3 seed packets	$8.00	$0.080 / recipe	Recipe share	$0.080
Soil/Compost	2 cu.ft. bag	$12.00	$0.120 / recipe	Recipe share	$0.120
Fertilizer	1 lb. bag	$6.00	$0.060 / recipe	Recipe share	$0.060
Water	Seasonal usage	$1.00	$0.010 / recipe	Recipe share	$0.010
Pest Control	24 oz. bottle	$8.00	$0.080 / recipe	Recipe share	$0.080
Tool Depreciation	Seasonal allocation	$5.00	$0.050 / recipe	Recipe share	$0.050
Garden Labor ($15.00/hr)	2 hrs	$30.00	$0.300 / recipe	Recipe share	$0.300

Subtotal	$7.537
1% for small amounts of salt and Pepper (Q Factor)	$0.075
2% for frying oil (if used)	$0.00
Total Recipe Cost	$7.612
Portion Cost	$1.269

Exhibit D: Menu Pricing Worksheet Example

Team Number: **Your Team Number Here**

Educator Chef Jane Doe

Menu Item	Ratatouille		
Menu Category	☒ ***Starter***	☐ ***Entrée***	☐ ***Dessert***

Recipe	***Portion Cost***
Ratatouille	$1.212
Couscous *(from additional recipe & costing sheets not provided in sample)*	$0.972
Garnish *(from additional recipe & costing sheets not provided in sample)*	$0.127
Total Plate Portion Cost	$2.311
Menu Price at 33% Food Cost	$7.003
Actual Price on Menu	$8.00

Exhibit G: Sample Restaurant Floor Plan

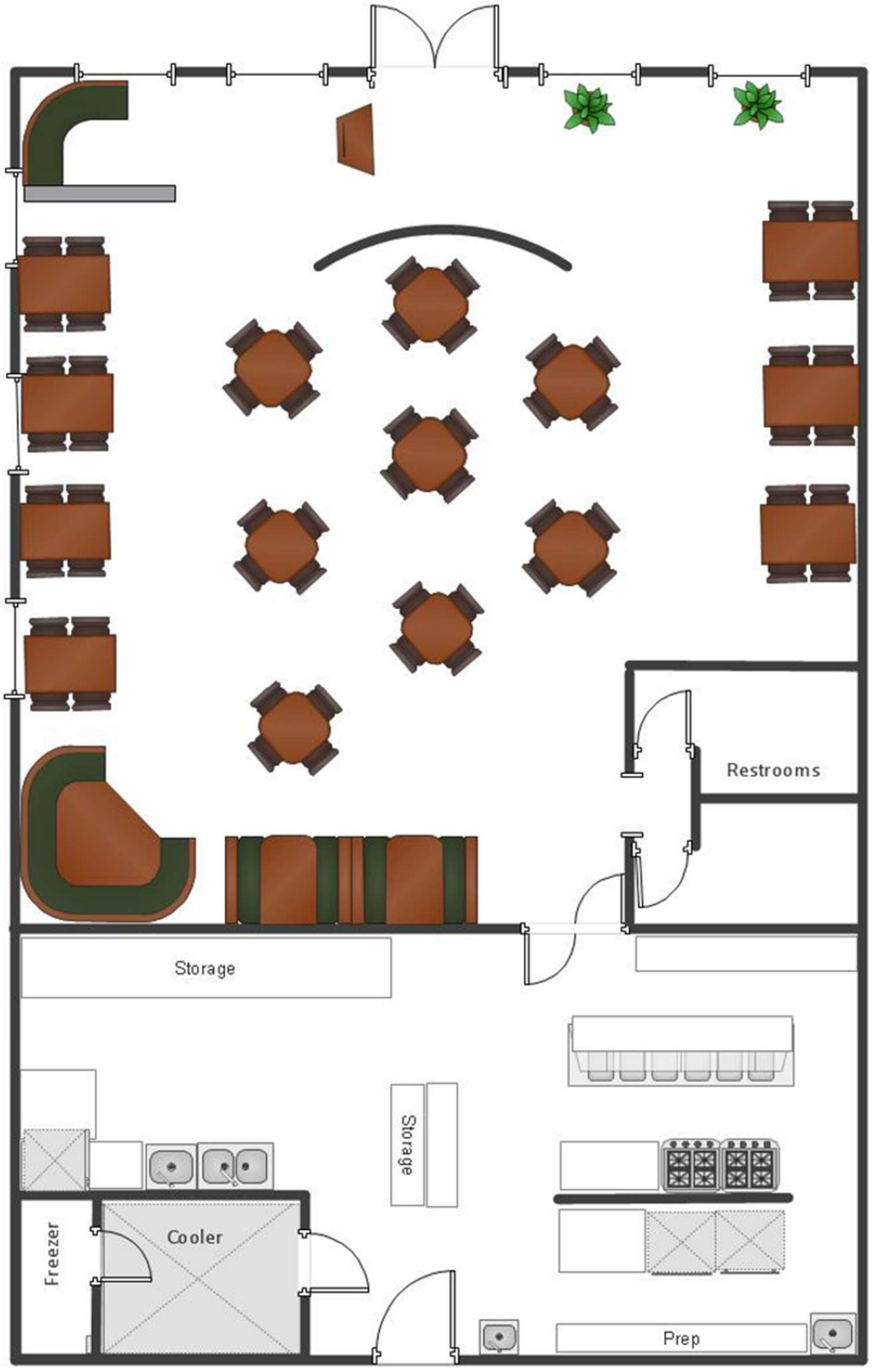
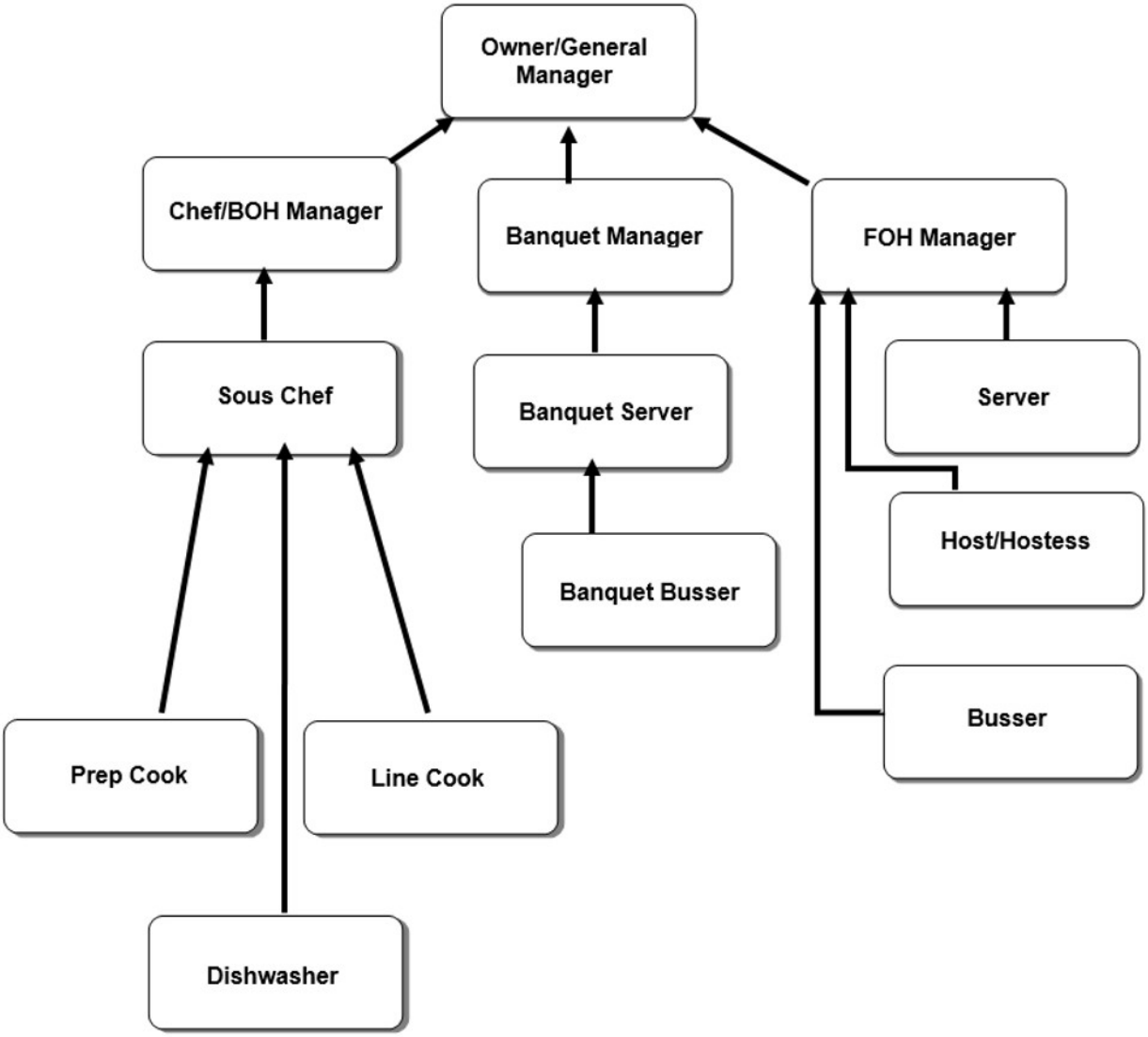


Exhibit H: Sample Organizational Chart

The Organizational Chart below is an example of the positions needed to staff a full-service restaurant with catering functions.



Sample Management Competition Score Sheet

EVALUATION CRITERIA	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	VERY GOOD	EXCELLENT	SCORE
Concept (30 points)						
Description of Concept	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
SWOT Analysis	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Presentation Skills	1	2	3	4	5	
Q & A – Depth of Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	
Menu and Costing (40 points)						
Menu Matches Concept	1	2	3	4	5	
Description of 12 items	1	2	3	4	5	
Sample of how presented	1	2	3	4	5	
Photos	1	2	3	4	5	
Presentation Skills	1	2	3	4	5	
Q & A – Depth of Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	
Menu Poster	1	2	3	4	5	
Recipes, Costing, Pricing	1	2	3	4	5	
Marketing (40 points)						
Matches Concept	1	2	3	4	5	
ROI	1	2	3	4	5	
Tactic Budgets	1	2	3	4	5	
Samples	1	2	3	4	5	
Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	
Presentation Skills	1	2	3	4	5	
Q & A – Depth of Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	
Marketing Poster	1	2	3	4	5	
Critical Thinking (55 points)						
Teamwork	1	2	3	4	5	
Presentation Skills	1	2	3	4	5	
Q & A – Depth of Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	
Category 1	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Category 2	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Category 3	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Category 4	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	
Operations (30 points)						
Layout Selection & Floorplan	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	10	
Interior and décor	1	2	3	4	5	
Organizational chart	1	2	3	4	5	
Presentation Skills	1	2	3	4	5	
Q & A – Depth of Knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	

DISQUALIFICATIONS	
	Unauthorized coaching or communication.
	Team does not return all required paperwork by January 29, 2027.
	Team is comprised of students from different schools or career centers.
	Unsafe, illegal, or unsportmanlike misconduct from team member(s) and/or adult supporters.
	Team submitted previously submitted work, in part or in full.
	Team did not arrive during allotted check-in window on the appropriate date or did not check in at all.
	Team did not report to the competition floor on time.
	Team did not compete in a required segment.

PENALTIES		
	Written proposal does not meet specifications or was not submitted on time.	5 pts
	Team was not dressed in uniform.	5 pts
	Posters do not meet specifications or include additional information.	5 pts
	Restaurant concept is not located in ProStartville or does not match one of the provided restaurant space scenarios.	5 pts
	Team menu includes more or fewer than twelve (12) items.	5 pts
	Alcoholic beverage or any adult consumable is used as a menu item or part of a marketing tactic.	5 pts
	Team submits recipes for more or fewer than one (1) menu item.	5 pts

	Team submits recipe costing worksheets for more or fewer than one (1) menu item.	5 pts
	Team submits more or fewer than one (1) menu pricing worksheet.	5 pts
	Team submits more or fewer than two (2) marketing tactics.	5 pts
	Menu and costing not presented in separate manilla folder	5 pts
	All 15 copies of the written proposal are not identical	5 pts
	Team did not submit video or promotional post by February 5, 2027	5 pts
	Team began any competition segment before their assigned start time.	1/4 pt per 15 secs
	Team did not finish any competition segment within their allotted time.	1/4 pt per 15 secs

Management Competition Checklist

Deadlines	
☐ Submit required paperwork	Friday, January 29, 2027
☐ Submit video or promotional post (if using social media)	Friday, February 5, 2027

Management Proposal Documentation

- ☐ **Restaurant Concept Description**
  - ☐ Type of establishment
  - ☐ Purpose and impact
  - ☐ Meals served
  - ☐ Hours of operation
  - ☐ Type of cuisine served
  - ☐ Target market
- ☐ **Floorplan of selected restaurant space scenario**
- ☐ **Description of interior and décor**
- ☐ **SWOT Analysis**
- ☐ **Organizational chart**
- ☐ **Sample menu**
- ☐ **Recipe Worksheet(s) for one menu item**
- ☐ **Costing Worksheet(s) for one menu item**
- ☐ **Menu Pricing Worksheet for one menu item**
- ☐ **Photo of one to four menu items**
- ☐ **Two Marketing Tactics**
  - ☐ Description
  - ☐ Goal
  - ☐ Budget
  - ☐ ROI
  - ☐ Sample
  - ☐ QR code linking to actual social media tactic, if one is used

To Bring to Materials Check-In

- ☐ **15 hard copies of management proposal**
- ☐ **2 Posters**
- ☐ **Manila Folder**
  - ☐ Team Number
  - ☐ Sample Menu
  - ☐ Recipe Worksheet(s)
  - ☐ Costing Worksheet(s)
  - ☐ Menu Pricing Worksheet
  - ☐ Photograph(s)