
Improving Food and Beverage Satisfaction in the Private Club Industry

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Case Study Summary

This case study aims to understand the challenges and issues with food and beverage (F&B) operations and develop strategies to increase member satisfaction with food and beverage. This study will focus on BlueBay Country Club (BCC), an exclusive golf community located in Southern Florida. The club has two golf courses that make up their way through nature preserves, lakes, and landforms to create a challenging and exciting golf experience. The club has seven tennis courts, five pickleball courts, a fitness center, and a fitness studio. Besides these exciting amenities, the club has multiple food service units to provide various food and services to members. However, a recent survey indicates that F&B was the lowest rated amenity in the annual membership survey (Appendix C: Survey and Appendix D: Results). Note that a private club is a very different model from a restaurant because of the unique nature of clubs: private membership, not open to the public, repeat customers, and competitive pricing. Given its own characteristics, the club must meet members' expectations and needs, adapting to the routine member tweaks to menu offerings without charging extra for the inconvenience.

Teaching Objectives

The purpose of the case study is to identify current issues and challenges with F&B management in a country club, discuss important factors of members' satisfaction with food and beverage and develop management strategies responding to the F&B satisfaction surveys. At the end of the case study, the students will be able to:

1. Describe how important F&B is for members' overall satisfaction and loyalty
2. Explain how F&B experiences can be measured
3. Identify differences between service quality and satisfaction
4. Explain relationships between expectation and satisfaction
5. Develop marketing strategies for improving F&B satisfaction
6. Design a survey to measure members' satisfaction with F&B
7. Evaluate a country club F&B survey and make recommendations for recruiting strategies

Target Audience

The case study is appropriate for any hospitality student, restaurant employee, club employee, F&B staff, manager, director, or future general manager. The case study is designed for undergraduate students in a hospitality program studying business management or club management. The case study requires strategic thinking for upper-level students who have acquired basic business skills and have some background in hospitality and club business.

Recommended Teaching Approach Strategy

1. **Pretest** – Before introducing the case study, the pretest will be used to measure and benchmark the student's current status regarding private country clubs and additional reading for the students (Appendix E)
2. **Lecture** – Classroom facilitation based on the case study discussion led by the instructor
3. **Video**- Review a country club video about F&B in a country club
4. **Group assignment** – Divide the class into groups with an assignment
5. **Quiz** - Appendix F
6. **Written assignment** – Allows for evaluation of the case study to measure if teaching objectives and learning objectives have been met

Analysis of Teaching Objectives and Theoretical Concepts

- A. Start the class by reviewing the importance of F&B in a private country club (15 minutes)
- B. Lead a class discussion of potential factors influencing members' satisfaction with F&B in a country club. Review the YouTube video and list the potential factors based on the video that a club may use to enhance F&B experiences. Lead a discussion on the factors the students identify in the video (30 minutes).
 1. Differences between restaurants within clubs and those outside clubs
 2. F&B experiences, service quality, and satisfaction
 3. Identify internal and external factors that may influence members' F&B satisfaction
- C. Divide the students into groups of five and ask them to discuss the following terms (30 minutes):
 1. The importance of F&B for member overall satisfaction and loyalty
 2. The key items in measuring F&B service quality
 3. The key items in determining F&B satisfaction
 4. The importance of a survey in understanding F&B satisfaction and overall satisfaction
 5. Appropriate marketing strategies as a result of the survey information
- D. Ask each group to present to the class and discuss specific examples; assign one group per term from the above list to discuss – 10 minutes each for each group to present to the class (25 minutes).
- E. Written assignment: Given an example of a private country club survey of F&B satisfaction (Appendix C) and results (Appendix D),
 1. Evaluate the results
 2. Develop a new survey that measures F&B experiences

Additional Readings

1. Webinar: Data-Driven Perspective on Food & Beverage
<https://www.clubbenchmarking.com/on-demand-webinars/data-driven-perspective-on-food-beverage>
2. Whitepaper: Data-Driven Perspective on Club Food & Beverage
<https://www.clubbenchmarking.com/whitepapers/data-driven-perspective-on-club-food-beverage>
3. Fast Facts: Club Food and Beverage Profitability
<https://www.clubbenchmarking.com/on-demand-webinars/fast-facts-club-food-and-beverage-profitability>
4. Case Study 2: F&B Reality Check
<https://www.clubbenchmarking.com/on-demand-webinars/case-study-2-fb-reality-check>
5. Club Management Association in America Website: www.cmaa.org
 - a. An overview of the private club business.
6. Club Corporation website: www.clubcorp.com
 - a. An overview of the largest club corporation in the world.

7. Kopplin, Kuebler, and Wallace <https://kkandw.com>

8. McMahon Group <https://mcmahongroup.com>

9. Club Benchmarking www.clubbenchmarking.com

Appendix A: DINESERV

DINESERV Measurement Items - 29 items (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995)

The restaurant....

Tangibles	1. has visually attractive parking areas and building exteriors.
	2. has a visually attractive dining area.
	3. has staff members who are clean, neat, and appropriately dressed.
	4. has a décor in keeping with its image and price range.
	5. has a menu that is easily readable.
	6. has a visually attractive menu that reflects the restaurant's image
	7. has a dining area that is comfortable and easy to move around in.
	8. has restrooms that are thoroughly clean
	9. has dining areas that are thoroughly clean
	10. has conformable seats in the dining room.
Reliability	11. serves you in the time promised.
	12. quickly corrects anything that is wrong
	13. is dependable and consistent.
	14. provides an accurate guest check.
	15. serves your food exactly as you ordered it.
Responsiveness	16. during busy times has employees shift to help each other maintain speed and quality of service
	17. provides prompt and quick service
	18. gives extra effort to handle your special requests.
Assurance	19. has employees who can answer your questions completely.
	20. makes you feel comfortable and confident in your dealings with them.
	21. has personnel who are both able and willing to give your information about menu items, their ingredients and methods of preparation.
	22. makes you feel personally safe.
	23. has personnel who seem well-trained, competent, and experienced.
	24. seems to give employees support so that they can do their jobs well.
Empathy	25. has employees who are sensitive to your individual needs and wants rather than always relying on policies and procedures.
	26. makes you feel special.
	27. anticipates your individual needs and wants.
	28. has employees who are sympathetic and reassuring if something is wrong.
	29. seems to have the customers' best interests at heart.

Appendix B: DINESCAPE

(Ryu & Jang, 2008)

Dimensions	Items
Facility Aesthetics	1. Paintings/pictures are attractive.
	2. Wall décor is visually appealing.
	3. Plants/flowers make me feel happy.
	4. Colors used to create a warm atmosphere.
	5. Furniture (e.g., dining table, chair) is of high quality.
Ambience	6. Background music relaxes me.
	7. Background music is pleasing.
	8. Temperature is comfortable.
	9. Aroma is enticing.
Lighting	10. Lighting creates a warm atmosphere.
	11. Lighting makes me feel welcome.
	12. Lighting creates a comfortable atmosphere.
Table Settings	13. Tableware (e.g., glass, china, silverware) is of high quality.
	14. The linens (e.g., tablecloths, napkins) are attractive.
	15. The table setting is visually attractive.
Layout	16. The seating arrangement gives me enough space.
	17. Seating arrangement makes me feel crowded.*
	18. The layout makes it easy for me to move around.
Service Staff	19. Attractive employees make me feel good.
	20. An adequate number of employees makes me feel cared for
	21. Employees are neat and well-dressed.

Appendix C: Food and Beverage (F&B) Satisfaction Survey

Overall F&B Satisfaction: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement:

"I am satisfied with my food and beverage experience at the Main Clubhouse Dining."

(1: Strongly disagree ~ 7: Strongly Agree)

Dining Frequency: How frequently do you dine at the Main Club for dinner while in season?

- Daily (6 - 7 times a week)
- 4-5 Times a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Once a Week
- Once a Month
- Less than Once a Month
- Never

F&B Menu Satisfaction: Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following food and beverage variables

(1: extremely dissatisfied, 7: extremely satisfied)

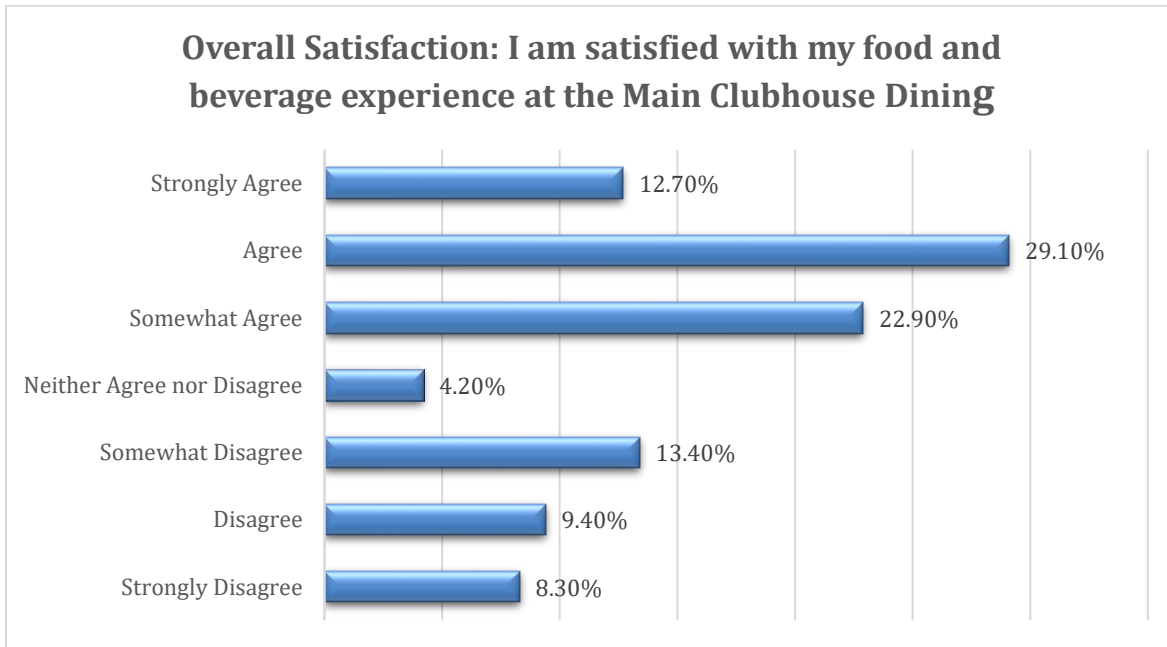
- Food Quality
- Beverage Quality
- Menu Variety
- Value for my Dollar
- Menu Rotation
- Healthy/Dietary Options

F&B Service Satisfaction: Please rate your level of satisfaction with the food and beverage service at the Main Club:

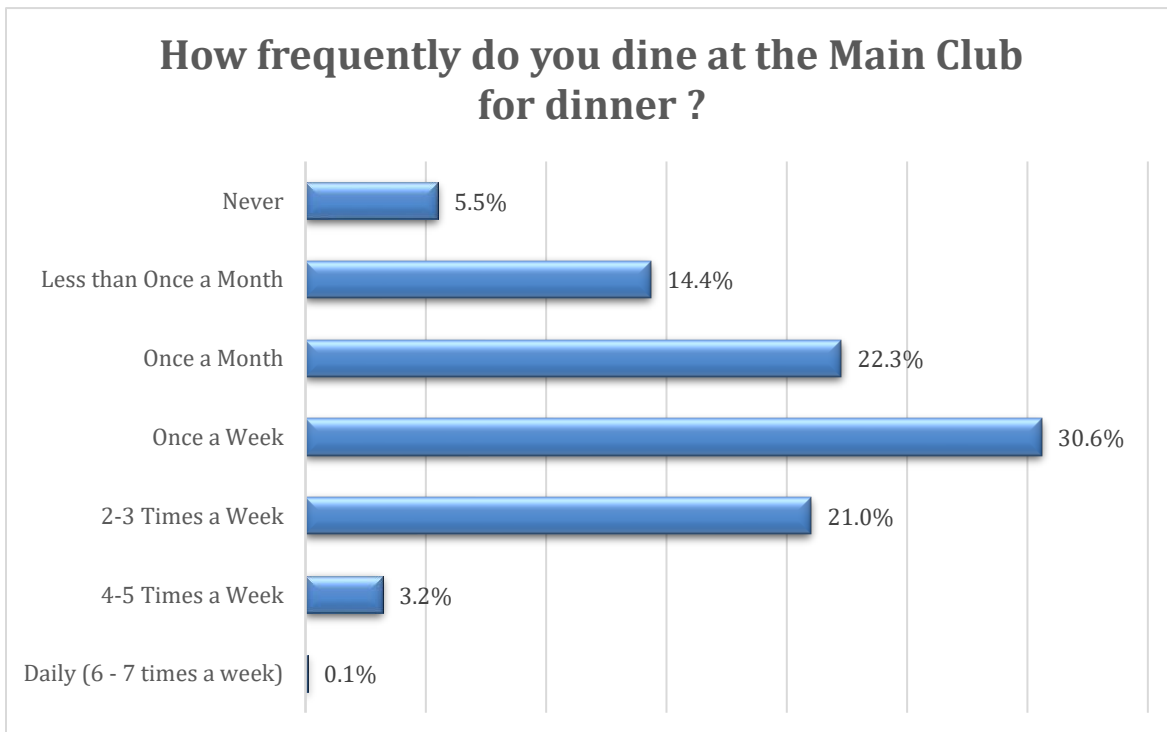
(1: extremely dissatisfied, 7: extremely satisfied)

- Menu Knowledge
- Greeting Upon Arrival
- Friendliness
- Speed of Service

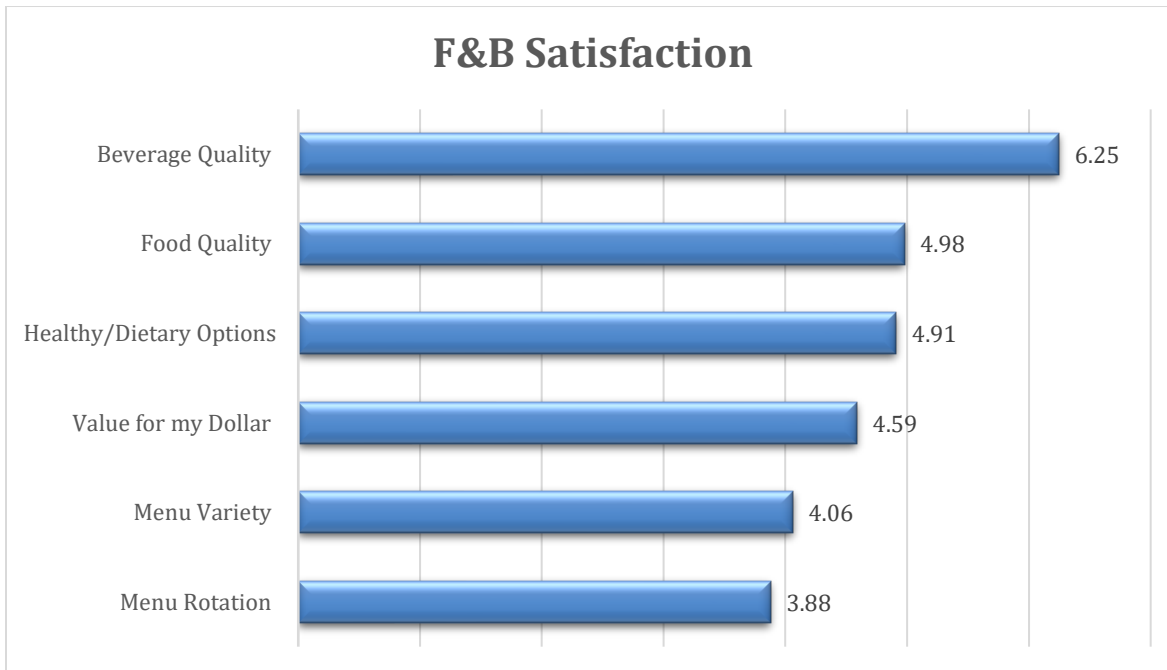
Appendix E: BCC - F&B Survey results



Note. BCC Satisfaction Score: 4.62 vs. Industry Mean: 5.33



Appendix E: BCC - F&B Survey results (Cont.)



Appendix E: Pretest

1. What is the primary business of a private country club?
2. How are restaurants in a club different from general restaurants?
3. What factors are important to influence food and beverage satisfaction?
4. What are service quality and satisfaction?
5. How can satisfaction be determined and evaluated?

Appendix F: Quiz

1. Define the following terms in the club business: (1 point each)
 - 1) Club
 - 2) Initiation fee
 - 3) Annual Dues
 - 4) Expectation
 - 5) Satisfaction
 - 6) Service Quality
 - 7) SERVQUAL
 - 8) DINESERV
 - 9) DINESCAPE

2. Describe the five perspectives of service quality discussed in the case study. (10 points)

3. Describe DINESERV and how it is different from SERVQUAL (10 points)

4. Why is the satisfaction score for food and beverage (F&B) lower than that for others in the club (10 points)

5. Why is F&B important in the private country club business? (5 points)

6. Name key elements in evaluating F&B satisfaction. (5 points)

7. Describe one marketing strategy for improving F&B satisfaction discussed in the case. (5 points)

8. What is the purpose of a survey in the private club business concerning F&B experiences? (5 points)

9. How would a survey influence a club's marketing strategy? (5 points)

10. Describe the expectancy-disconfirmation theory and the relationship between expectation and satisfaction. (10 points)

Extra Credit Question:

If you were BCC's director, name five specific strategies you would employ to improve F&B experiences and why? (5 points)

Appendix G: Discussion Questions and Answers

1. How important is F&B for members overall satisfaction and loyalty?

F&B is one of the most significant amenities in private clubs as all members can eat. F&B in clubs is one of the most important amenities in direct questions of importance and regression analysis in clubs that measure overall satisfaction. Club loyalty can be measured, and the industry's median net promoter score (NPS) is 46. NPS is a loyalty question to help understand customer loyalty (Reichheld, 2003). Because all members have access to eat, all members have access to utilize the compared to other amenities. For example, not all club members go to golf, play tennis, or play pickleball. Thus, the F&B experience is a primary driver for member satisfaction in a club.

2. How can F&B experiences be measured?

F&B experiences can be measured from two perspectives: service quality and satisfaction. First, Service quality is an essential factor influencing customer satisfaction and behavioral intention (Zeithaml, 1988). SERVQUAL, an evaluation tool to measure service quality, has been widely used in various industries (e.g., business, banking, hospitality). SERVQUAL measures five service quality dimensions - reliability, assurance, responsiveness, tangibles, and empathy (see Exhibit 1). DINESERV is a specialized measurement to evaluate restaurant service quality (Stevens, Knutson, and Patton, 1995). DINESERV consists of 29 measurement items in the five dimensions (Appendix A). DINESCAPE is another measurement tool to evaluate customers' perceptions of the restaurant atmosphere (Ryu & Jang, 2008) (Appendix B). DINESCAPE consists of six components-aesthetics, lighting, ambience, layout, dining equipment, and employee appearance. Past studies found that these components were significant factors that affect customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. F&B in clubs is typically measured through membership satisfaction scores. The industry scores are lower for overall satisfaction than the other key amenities in country clubs. Additional information is gathered in clubs through focus groups to enrich the quantitative survey scores. Qualitative measures are gathered through written responses in the survey. The industry's typical member response rate will be between 40 and 60% of the membership. Most clubs survey both spouses in a typical satisfaction survey. Surveys measure survey quality, food quality, staff knowledge, menu variety, menu selection, beverage selection, and beverage quality to name a few elements. Menu variety and menu selection are the lowest-rated food and beverage areas.

3. What are the differences between service quality and satisfaction?

Service quality in clubs is vital because of the personal nature of the service. The staff often knows the member, and in fine clubs, the service staff delivers personalized service beginning with name recognition. Service quality is an antecedent of satisfaction and is measured by the customer's experience with service at a club. Satisfaction is influenced by service quality and the member's expectation if the food/beverage product, along with the other elements of service quality, meets the member's needs. Typically, the member has a very high expectation of the service and thus has a higher threshold for overall satisfaction regarding food and beverage. Satisfaction becomes important in clubs because clubs are not-for-profit entities that are not driven by financial performance but by meeting the needs of the member. Clubs historically subsidize F&B operations; thus, membership satisfaction is a crucial driver of successful clubs. By using the questionnaire, a restaurant can assess how customers perceive the restaurant's service quality. Andaleeb and Conway (2006) found that service responsiveness was the most important factor influencing customer satisfaction in a full-service restaurant. Liu and Jang (2009) suggested that dependent and consistent service and friendly and helpful employees were the key contributors to customer satisfaction, and dependent and consistent service and attentive employees were the primary service attributes influencing customer behavioral intention.

4. What are the relationships between expectation and satisfaction?

Based on the expectancy-disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1981), customers satisfaction can be formed by comparing customers' expectations and their perceived performance toward the products and services. When the perceived performance exceeds their expectation, the expectation is positively disconfirmed, and the customer is satisfied. On the other hand, when the perceived performance falls short of the expectation, the expectation is negatively disconfirmed, and the customer is dissatisfied. Expectations influence satisfaction from both a global and transactional standpoint. Member expectations are set the first time a member experiences the club's food and beverage, and these expectations are carried each time the member utilizes the club. Members are owners of the club and look forward with pride to showing off their clubs to family and friends. Each interaction has excellent expectations as members do not want to be embarrassed by a poor food and service experience. From a global standpoint, clubs expect to deliver quality services and goods. Private country club restaurants are not open to the public; therefore, the expectation is for a more intimate, personal service. This expectation is directly related to the satisfaction of the member.

5. What are the marketing strategies for improving F&B satisfaction?

The best practices involving F& B satisfaction start with setting the members' expectations. Great clubs communicate this expectation and manage the experience. Service staff are coached in lineups based on the reservations and begins with the name recognition of the member. Great clubs also keep a list of member favorites available to the management and staff. This results in personal service for the members.

Additionally, private clubs have great chefs that meet the members' needs. The Chefs in today's private clubs are part chef and part personality. Members love the interaction with the Chef, and each Chef must interact with the member and learn the members' likes and dislikes.

6. What approach can a club employ to understand members' satisfaction?

Membership surveys are used to measure member satisfaction. Many clubs are doing smaller surveys at more regular intervals to gather data. Additionally, each server needs to "read the table" while servicing the members. A plate with food on it when clearing is a potential clue to dissatisfaction. Kitchen management should be aware of food times and make a sweep of the dining room during dinner hours. Both formal and informal measurement strategies are imperative in successful operations.

7. What management strategies may be used as a result of the survey information?

Private club restaurants should utilize a business plan annually to run the restaurant in a private club. The cycle includes gathering financial data and membership satisfaction data. The data is analyzed by demographic and membership information. Strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities are developed. These strategies then turn into an operational business plan highlighting service quality issues and membership satisfaction. The resulting performance should be measured on an ongoing basis and repeated to create a continuous improvement plan for the operation.

Appendix H: Written Assignment Guideline

Written assignment: Given an example of a private country club survey of food and beverage (F&B) satisfaction (Appendix C) and results (Appendix D), 1) evaluate the survey results and 2) develop a new survey that measures F&B experiences.

1) Evaluate the results:

a. Overall F&B Satisfaction

Looking at the bar chart, about 64.7% of members, including strongly agree, agree, and somewhat agree, were satisfied with the overall dining experiences at the club. The satisfaction mean value was only 4.62 out of 7, which was lower than the industry mean score of 5.33. This survey results show that members are dissatisfied with F&B experience at the Main Clubhouse Dining.

b. Dining Frequency

About 54.9% of members dine at least once a week, while 42.1% eat once a month or less. The club must pay attention to those who dine frequently and evaluate their satisfaction scores. Also, the club should attract those who dine for less than a week.

c. F&B Menu Satisfaction

Beverage quality was the highest score (6.25), followed by food quality (4.98), healthy/dietary options (4.91), value (4.59), menu variety (4.06), and menu rotation (3.88). It appears that members are not satisfied with most factors. The club should focus on enhancing food quality, providing more dietary options and menu variety, and rotating the menu frequently. As over 50% of members dine once a week or more often, more options, menu variety, and rotation would be critical factors influencing members' satisfaction.

d. F&B Service Satisfaction

Friendliness was the highest score (6.76), followed by greeting upon arrival (6.7), menu knowledge (6.25), and speed of service (5.66). It appears that members are overall satisfied with dining services. The survey results show that members were not satisfied with F&B, mainly due to menu issues, particularly menu variety and rotation, while members were satisfied with service.

2) Develop a new survey that measures F&B experiences

The current survey measured F&B satisfaction only. Suggest developing a survey that includes members' expectations and service quality, using DINESERV (Appendix A) and DINESCAPE (Appendix B) as well as F&B satisfaction (Appendix C). If there is more than one restaurant in a club, the survey should include questions for each restaurant. Also, members' demographics (e.g., age, gender, income, etc.) and membership profiles (e.g., length, type, usage, etc.) will be included to identify any differences in satisfaction by demographics and profile.