

# Consider Services First When Selecting a Food Service Provider

*Costs and contractor investments are important, but mean little if the services don't meet your needs and standards.*

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## CONSIDER SERVICES FIRST WHEN SELECTING A [FOOD SERVICE](#) PROVIDER

Colleges and universities, companies, government agencies and other institutions thinking of changing their food service contractors should focus on current and desired levels of operational performance before considering costs and contractor investments, Tom Mac Dermott, president of Clarion Group, a dining and hospitality services consulting firm, advises.

"Costs are important, of course," Mac Dermott says, "but lowest cost (or highest commission) and size of the food service contractor's investment offer won't be assets if the result is mediocre food, poor services and dissatisfied employees or students."

"We advise clients to focus on these factors first when evaluating proposals from food service contractors," Mac Dermott says.

- > Plan of operation: Which proposer's plan for managing the services make the most sense within the context of your organization's facilities, resources, standards and objectives?
- > The people: Does the candidate on-site manager appear competent, likely to fit into your organization and remain for more than a year or two?
- > Management plan: Is the plan for overseeing and supporting the on-site services realistic and effective? Will the district manager and regional vice president understand your requirements and expectations and provide the leadership and resources the service requires?
- > And lastly, what are they doing now? The promises in the proposal mean little if the proposer can't demonstrate it's providing the same level of services and features for existing, comparable clients.

"The company or companies that effectively demonstrate they provide satisfactory answers to these questions are the ones to consider," according to Mac Dermott. "Financial arrangements, investment provisions and contract terms can be negotiated to a mutually-advantageous

agreement.”

Clarion Group prepares [Requests for Proposals](#), manages or participates with clients in the competitive process, advises in selection of the company most likely to be successful and prepares and negotiates a fair operating agreement that fully protect our client’s interests.

About Clarion Group:

Clarion is an independent consulting firm, now in its 25th year of providing solutions and uncovering opportunities in food service, catering, conference and related hospitality services for companies, professional firms, colleges and universities, government agencies and international institutions. Clarion publishes Dining Insights, a newsletter for the managers and administrators responsible for their organizations’ food services and hospitality services.

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