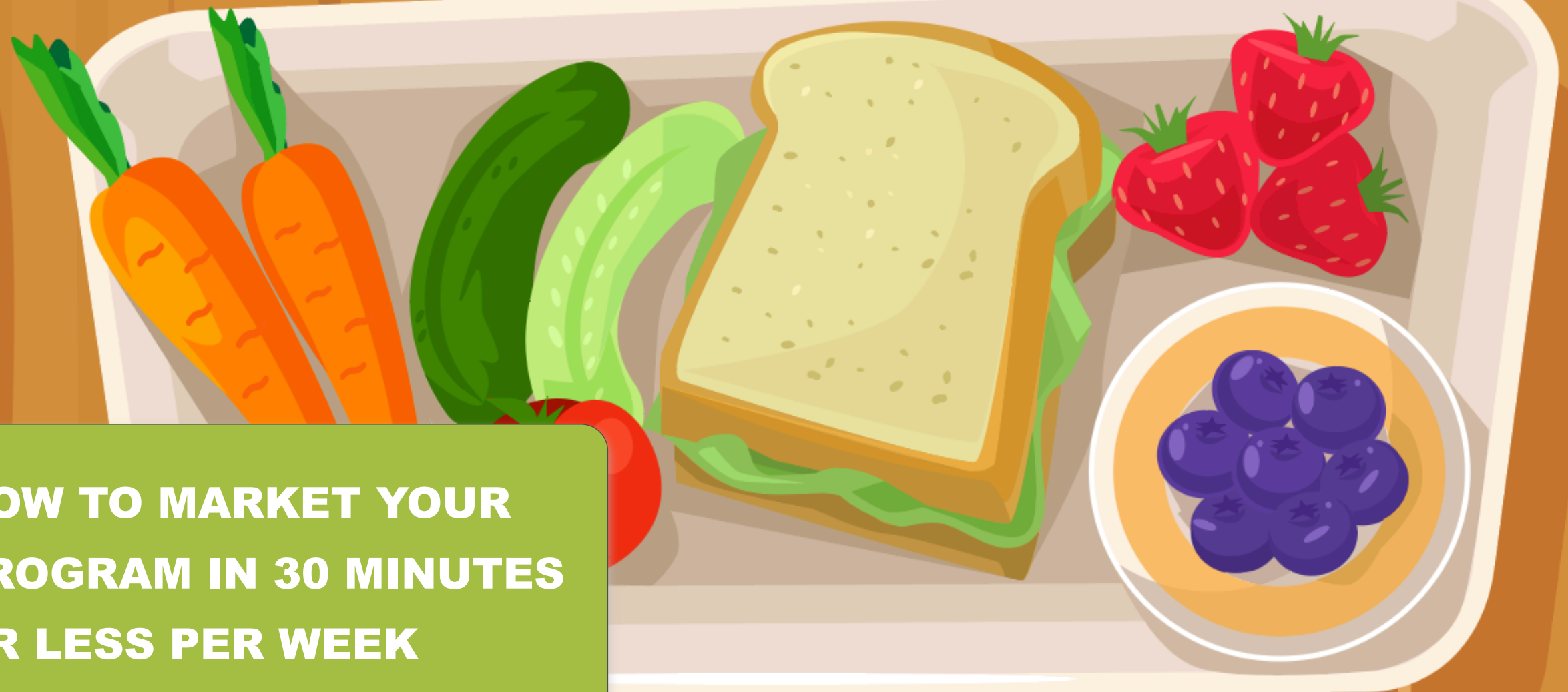


# MARKETING YOUR SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM

**HOW TO MARKET YOUR  
PROGRAM IN 30 MINUTES  
OR LESS PER WEEK**



# AUDIENCE

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When marketing your school nutrition program, there are two important target audiences to understand: parents and students.



## **PARENTS**

Especially for younger children, parents play an enormous role in what their children eat. When marketing to these parents, you want to communicate the messages of fresh and healthy as frequently as possible. If the parents know their children will be taken care of at school with fresh and healthy meals, they will not need to bother packing a lunch for their kids every day. It's a win-win situation for both the parents and the school. The parents save time, the children eat healthy, and participation in the school lunch program increases.

## **STUDENTS**

The message you want to communicate to kids is how tasty the meals are. Chances are, kids don't care whether or not meals are fresh, healthy, or organic. All they care about is how good the food tastes. Most of the marketing for children is done by serving delicious meals, but there are still plenty of ways you can promote your school nutrition program by using that key insight.

# OUTLETS

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After understanding the two audiences to target and what messages to communicate, let's now look at the different outlets to communicate with your students and parents. An outlet is any platform or medium that can be used to communicate a message to your audiences.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PARENTS**

It's no surprise that social media is on the top of our list. The majority of Americans have at least one social media profile. And most of them probably have more than one. If you want to reach the parents of the kids in your school to market your school nutrition

program, social media is a great place to start. Platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are great avenues for reaching these parents.

## **MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR STUDENTS**

Do you have morning announcements at your school? Why not mention your nutrition program every once in a while. If you don't have morning announcements, don't worry. Continue reading to see other ways to promote your program.

## EMAIL FOR PARENTS

Billions of emails are sent out every day and just about everybody uses it. The best part about email? It's absolutely free! No matter your marketing budget for your school or district, email is an essential part of marketing that everyone needs to be utilizing, especially for marketing your school nutrition program.

## SCHOOL NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

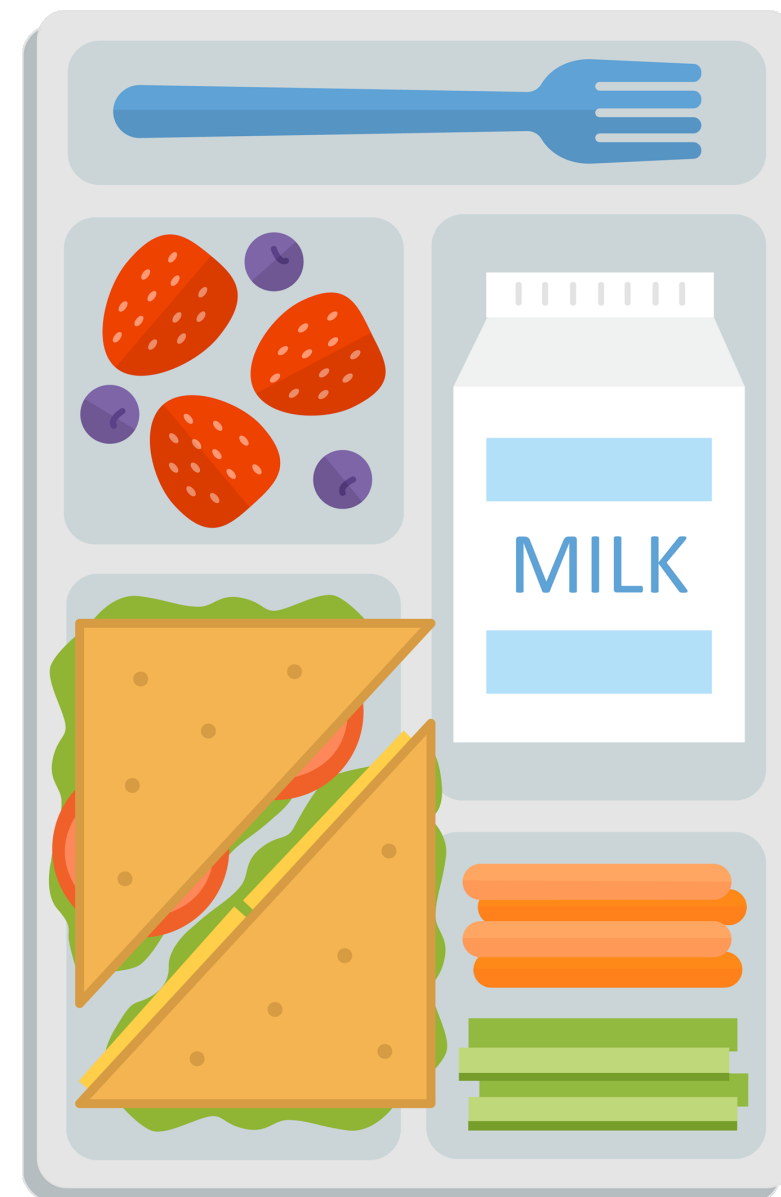
Parents want to know what's going on in their children's schools, and emailing a newsletter is a great way to do that. The entire newsletter does not have to be about the school nutrition program, but it's important to have a section talking about new things going on like the amount of meals served or any new Nutrition Programs like Farm to School.

## COMPUTER SCREENSAVERS / TELEVISION SCREENS FOR STUDENTS

If your school or district has television screens and computers, you can use them to market your school nutrition program. You can create a fun image to be displayed on both your computer screens and televisions for all students to see. This may take some time to get the graphics created and implemented, but the exposure you will receive on a daily basis is well worth the time and effort.

## WEBSITE / MOBILE APP

Both a website and a mobile app are great avenues to get news and pictures about your school nutrition program in the hands of both parents and students. A website can be quick to update, and information or push notifications in a mobile app ensure your news is in the hands of your audience quickly.







## ASSEMBLIES FOR STUDENTS

Assemblies are a great way to educate children about nutrition and benefits of eating healthy through the school nutrition program. Just remember to keep it fun for the students!

## PRINT MATERIAL FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Print media is always a great way to increase participation in the school nutrition program. You can even create a marketing kit, where you can design posters, staff announcements, and even marketing planners to keep yourself organized. Here are a few easy-to-use software programs to help you get started creating your own marketing material:



It's really important to have a good understanding of these first two marketing components before moving on to the next step. Next, we will use what we learned from part one in order to start creating the content for your school or district to market your school nutrition program.

# CONTENT



The illustration depicts a variety of hands interacting with different pieces of technology. On the left, a hand holds a smartphone displaying a storefront with a shopping bag icon. In the center, a hand points at a tablet showing a profile picture and a globe. Below that, two hands are shown typing on a laptop keyboard. To the right, a hand holds a smartphone with a speech bubble icon, and another hand holds a calculator. Various floating icons include gears, a magnifying glass, a pencil, an eye, and arrows, suggesting a process of design and development.

**COMBINING COLOR AND DESIGN  
TO CREATE STUNNING MATERIAL**

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COLOR



In promoting your child's nutrition program, before you even start designing anything, you need to ask yourself, **“what am I trying to communicate to my audience?”** From there, you want to try to use appropriate colors that align with your overall message. Whether you're aware of it or not, your brain has become accustomed to seeing things a certain way your whole life. Take a look at the image on this page to learn more about colors and how they can be used to communicate with your audience.

You'll notice that all of the different colors have smaller words associated with them. Our brains have been conditioned to feel a certain way when seeing particular colors and this image breaks down just that. When creating your content, use this as a reference in order to communicate the proper message to your audience.

# DESIGN TRENDS

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Every year, people will come out with a list of the top design trends for that year based on a number of things.

**It's important to try to keep things fresh every couple of years or so.** There are plenty of design styles to choose from and they can all make a significant impact.

The marketing material you create should be unique and personalized to your school or district. You have the freedom, you have the ability, and now you have the knowledge necessary to create some awesome marketing material. Below you will see a list of content ideas that we came up with to help you improve your marketing as a food service professional and increase participation in your school nutrition program. Enjoy!

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Take pictures of delicious school lunches / menu items
- Share recipes that parents can make at home
- Fun facts and articles about school nutrition
- [Celebrate National Days](#)

## MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Joke of the day (food related)
- Lunch options of the day

## PRINT MATERIAL

- Buttons
- Bookmarks
- Stickers
- Posters
- Flyers



## EMAIL

- Nutrition Tip of the month
- Fun Facts about school lunch
- Educate about school lunch program

## SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

- For Parents: Industry updates, News, Fun Facts
- For Students: Crosswords, Games, Mazes, Trivia

## ASSEMBLIES

- Ask for a student volunteer to come on stage
- Play a game while educating about nutrition
- Ask questions to the audience and reward with small free prizes

## TV SCREEN / MONITORS

- Menu of the day/week: Check out our [Digital Menu Boards](#)
- National Food related holidays: Cheeseburger day, avocado day, fresh veggies day, mac and cheese day, etc



## WEBSITE / MOBILE APPS

- Posting menus online: check out [Health-e Living](#)
- Posting news and events through [blog](#)
- Offering payment information and portal

See? Marketing as a food service professional doesn't have to be hard; you can market your school nutrition program well. You just need the right tools and some helpful information to get you there. It's important to remember that marketing requires three major ingredients and it doesn't work unless you have all three of them. First you need an audience, then you need to establish how you're going to communicate to that audience with different outlets, and finally you need content to send to your audience via outlets.



# SOCIAL MEDIA IN DEPTH





## DIFFERENT PLATFORMS

Different platforms have different audiences, and understanding those audiences—when combined with the message you want to convey—will help you select which platform is best to market your School Nutrition Program. If you're looking to reach parents and the community, aim for Facebook, where users skew older. If you're looking to reach the students, aim for Instagram. Twitter is excellent for those looking specifically for content, whether that's colleagues in your industry or administrators.



## HOW TO SAVE TIME WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

There are a few ways to save time when using social media to market your School Nutrition Program. First, you can schedule posts in advance using a social media aggregator like **Hootsuite** or **Agora**, offering free or cost-effective plans that can work for you. With easy-to-use calendars and schedulers, you can spend 10 minutes and get 30 posts scheduled over the next month!

Second, you can share others' content that's applicable and informative to your audience. Whether it's fun, playful, interesting, or educational, sharing or retweeting other great content can be really helpful to your audience. Tied into that is finding other folks

to follow, both to share and retweet, and to help get the brain juices flowing to creating your own content.

On the next page, you will find some accounts we love to follow that we think could help your School Nutrition Program marketing efforts:



## Farm to School



What makes a great social media post? As you follow other great content creators in the child nutrition space, you'll start to get a feel for what makes an impactful social media post. Combine several of these components together, and you've got yourself a winner.

- Pictures
- Videos
- Hashtags/Tagging others
- Content (funny, cute, silly, informative)
- Emotional
- Audience

Pictures and/or video are the best ways of showing your message: that you care deeply about the children you serve, that you work hard to ensure they're getting the best nutrition you can provide, and that you're having fun creating a special environment for your students. Check out a few more examples on the next page to see how the above elements combine for really entertaining and memorable social media posts.

## ChooseMyPlate.gov @MyPlate





## School Lunch Hero Day (SchoolMealsRock):



**Dayle Hayes**

@SchoolMealsRock



❤❤❤ #SchoolLunchHeroDay honoring unsung #heroes  
#FeedingBodiesFuelingMinds with @BreakfastClrm  
@SchoolLunch and more every #schoolday! Best costumes +  
SMILES might go to this team from @CCSDschoolmeals  
@CCSDConnects @Gotschoollunch @egginschools  
@malissamarsden

♡ 36 3:03 PM - May 4, 2018

[See Dayle Hayes's other Tweets](#)

Here you get to see the awesome folks behind one school's nutrition team, and they're having a BLAST with School Lunch Hero Day! This is a perfect post to use in a message to parents of your students, so they can be confident that their kids are being served by people who care and are having fun—and making sure the students have fun while getting their nutrition, too!

## Having Fun With Food, @LCPSCafe



**LCPS Cafe**

@LCPSCafe



Our students go bananas over our dolphin fruit cups!  
@SchoolMealsRock @SchoolLunch @VDOE\_SNP  
@NoKidHungryVA @LCPSoOfficial #vaschoolmeals #lcps19

♡ 111 9:47 AM - Jul 20, 2018

[23 people are talking about this](#)

This is one of our favorites! When you look at this, do you smile a little bit? Do you think, hey, I could do that at home with my kids, too? And it makes you want to eat these cute little dolphin-bananas, doesn't it? With just a little bit of effort, slicing the banana stem just right, coloring on a couple cute little eyes, and throwing in some "balls" (aka grapes), you've got a really cute, really entertaining fruit snack.



Marketing your school nutrition program can be fun and worthwhile--and a great way to engage your students and parents! From showing your team's personality through social media to utilizing different forms of media to display what you're serving, we hope this guide has provided ideas for you to promote your program.

