

Section 3 – Assessing the situation

Section 2 outlined how the committee can gain a clear understanding of what is required for food outlets to comply with *A Better Choice* and gather relevant resources that can be used in assessing the current situation.

This section includes:

- a guide to assess the menu against the requirements of the strategy
- a guide to assess the proportion of food and drink choices against the requirements of the strategy.

Key elements of success:

- ✓ The committee has used the Food and Drink Guide and Nutrient Criteria to identify the foods and drinks that fit into the **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** categories.
- ✓ The committee has determined the proportion of **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** choices that are available.
- ✓ The committee has used the findings to stimulate discussion and identify practices that are done well and those that could be improved.

Assessing the situation

Once the committee has a good understanding of the strategy it is time to assess the current situation to identify the areas where foods and drinks are provided. Some facilities that have a number of areas to address may find it easiest to nominate relevant committee members to investigate specific situations.

For example in a facility that has a privately-run kiosk, vending machines and functions menu managed by internal food services, the functions coordinator would be best suited to gather information on catering.

Assessing the menu

Before assessing the current menu you may wish to review the presentation (on the CD-ROM located in the back of the *Tool Kit*).

Provide a copy of the menu to each committee member. Look at each food or drink listed on the outlet menu and those available in other areas of the facility including vending machines, fundraising and catering. Obtain recipes and contact suppliers for nutritional information on ingredients.



Step 1 – Assess how menu items are displayed

To determine the proportion of products that are available first identify what menu items are displayed together.

Start by drawing a basic floor plan of the outlet as this will illustrate what foods and drinks are grouped together (refer to Figure 1).

This example shows there are six sections that will need to be assessed (highlighted in dark blue) including a drinks fridge, snack stand, ice-cream cabinet, refrigerated cabinet, hot bain marie and cake cabinet.

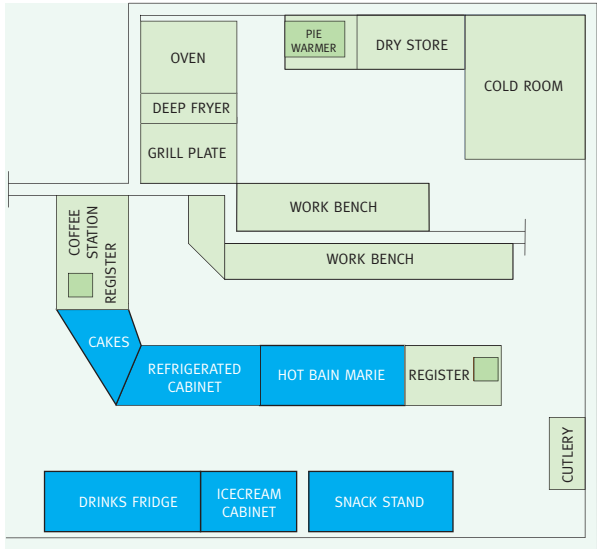


Figure 1. Kiosk floor plan

The next step is to look at each section separately. Draw a basic diagram which captures the range of products and how they are arranged.

Figure 2 illustrates the types, volume and placement of cold drinks available for the above example. This diagram also identifies there are a total of 10 shelves which will help to determine the proportion of choices displayed.

Door 1	Door 2
Soft drink	Sports drink
Soft drink	Sports drink
Soft drink	Diet soft drink
Water	Fruit juice
Water	Flavoured milk

Figure 2. Diagram of kiosk drinks fridge



Step 2 – What category?

Now determine whether a food or drink fits into the **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED** category. Use the ABC strategy to assist this process including:

- The types of foods that fit into **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED** are listed on page 10, 13 and 15 of the ABC strategy.
- The Food and Drink Guide (pages 27–39 of the ABC strategy) identifies what category commonly supplied products are most likely to fit. Certain foods and drinks may differ depending on the ingredients used or cooking techniques so that some products may fit into more than one category. Those foods that have an **AMBER** and **RED** symbol in the ‘Likely ABC category’ column will need to be assessed against Nutrient Criteria to identify **RED** foods and drinks.
- If, after looking at the information on these pages it is still unclear as to whether a product fits into the **RED** category, look at the Nutrition Information Panel on the label of the product. Compare this information with the correct food or drink table from the Nutrient Criteria on pages 18 and 19 of the ABC strategy.
- Assess products using the serve size as sold in the kiosk as this may differ from the serving size listed on the Nutrition Information Panel ie. 500mL bottle versus 2 x 250mL serve. The information on reading food labels on pages 20 to 26 of the ABC strategy will be helpful at this point.

It may help to start this process by focusing on identifying **RED** options first. Once all foods that fit into the **RED** category have been identified, use pages 10 and 11 of the ABC strategy for details about the types of foods that fit into **GREEN** and highlight these foods. The remaining foods will fit into **AMBER**.

TIP: Use **GREEN**, **ORANGE** or **RED** coloured pencils or highlighters to shade where foods and drinks fit within the three categories on the menu and the diagrams for each section (refer to Figure 3).

Door 1	Door 2
Soft drink	Sports drinks
Soft drink	Sports drinks
Soft drink	Diet soft drink
Water	Fruit juice
Water	Flavoured milk

Figure 3. Classified drinks

Step 3 – Assess the proportion of products available

Using the diagrams for each group of products, determine the amount of **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED** choices. For the drinks example count the number of shelves that contain **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED** – in this case five shelves contain **RED** options, three **AMBER** and two **GREEN** (refer to Figure 3).

If there are five **RED** shelves out of total of 10 shelves this represents half or 50 per cent of the drinks displayed ie. $5/10 \times 100\% = 50\%$.

Using the same approach 30 per cent of the drinks are **AMBER** and the remaining 20 per cent **GREEN** choices. Repeat these steps for the remaining sections in the outlet.

Step 4 – Look at the overall mix

Now that all foods and drinks have been classified and the proportion of choices from each category calculated look at the overall mix of foods available. It may help to tabulate the results to highlight areas that require more attention to help prioritise actions (refer to Figure 4).

For the example it is evident the snack stand and bain marie will require the most work with the highest percentage of products from the **RED** category. This process also identified that the refrigerated cabinet currently complies with the strategy ie. 20 per cent of the refrigerated foods displayed are **RED** choices.

Step 5 – Discuss the findings

It is now up to the committee to discuss the findings from the various sections where foods and drinks are supplied. For each section discuss:

- priority areas that require changes and a timeline for implementation
- additional elements that require attention ie. product placement and advertising materials
- potential resource requirements ie. equipment or staff training
- whether additional representation on the committee is required.

Following these discussions consider if a coordinator is required to lead changes in specific areas.

Display Area	% GREEN	% AMBER	% RED
Snacks stand	10	10	80
Drinks fridge	20	30	50
Ice-cream cabinet	0	40	60
Cake cabinet	0	40	60
Refrigerated cabinet	50	30	20
Bain marie	0	10	90

Figure 4. Proportion of products displayed

Check your progress

- All areas where foods and drinks are supplied have been identified and assessed against the requirements of the strategy.
- Foods and drinks that fit into the **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** categories have been identified.
- The proportion of foods and drinks from the **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** categories have been determined.
- Additional elements that require attention have been identified including a timeline for change.

Breeze Café – The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation

“Our customers have welcomed the changes to the café especially the increased range of fresh foods now on offer,” Ricardo Dawson, Manager.

“We’re more conscious to reduce fat content, use better oils such as canola and increase both the proportion and variety of vegetables in our meals.

“We’ve also made changes to our daily schedule to allow the café to offer healthier snack and meal items from 9.30am until 3.00pm. Deep-fried options have been reduced and are now offered less often. Instead we have increased the amount of oven-baked and grilled hot foods – grilled fish can be ordered all day!

“Changing the menu is just one aspect of our plans to implement the strategy. We’re also trying to inform our customers about the strategy and promote the healthier options. We’ve laminated the posters and placed these in the seating areas.

“We are now looking at ways to highlight the healthier choices after seeing how other sites have colour-coded shelves and cabinets.”

