

Aladdin Temp-Rite®

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital's Room Service Scores High in Patient Satisfaction.



Location:

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
New Brunswick, NJ

Type of Facility:

Acute Care: RWJUH is a leading academic medical center specializing in cardiac care, cancer care, emergency medicine, pediatrics and maternal-fetal medicine

Bed Size:

584 inpatient beds

Patients Per Meal Time:

500

System Implementation:

Heat On Demand® Room Service – October 2003

Previous System:

Aladdin Temp-Rite® Cook-Serve Pellet System

Contact:

Tony Almeida, Director Food & Nutrition/ Environmental/Host Services

The Challenge: Improve Patient Satisfaction

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital – one of the largest and fastest-growing hospitals in the country – serves over 500 meals per meal time. Patient meals are delivered to multiple serving points across a large campus, including the Bristol Myers Squibb Children's Hospital. In the middle of a major kitchen remodeling in 2003, the decision was made to implement a room service meal delivery system to improve patient satisfaction. Tony Almeida, the food and nutrition director, turned to Aladdin Temp-Rite®. Tony had been happy with Aladdin's pellet system in his traditional meal service, and had seen Aladdin's Heat On Demand® system perform flawlessly in room service settings.

The Objective: Implement Room Service

"It's all about patient satisfaction and patient service," says Tony Almeida. "We knew we had to make significant adjustments to convert from our spoken menu, traditional cook-serve trayline to restaurant-style, à la carte room service. And we wanted those changes to immediately improve our patients' dining experience, so we had no room for trial and error."

The hospital's Press Ganey peer group patient satisfaction scores for meal quality were hovering at about the 50th percentile. The plan was to implement a room service program that gave patients more control over their menu choices, delivering patients the meals they wanted, when they wanted them.





"Aladdin's Heat On Demand® is perfect for room service."

The Solution: Aladdin's Heat On Demand® System

The new walls were up and the new floors were down. Although Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital was in the middle of a three-stage kitchen reconstruction program, things were about to change. The hospital's CEO had recently toured a nearby smaller hospital that had converted to room service and experienced soaring patient satisfaction scores. He was very interested in exploring the feasibility of adopting room service for RWJUH.

He knew there would be inherent challenges in his much larger hospital, including 49 different service locations spread over a seven-building campus. However, the expectation of dramatically increasing patient satisfaction was a very powerful incentive.

When the directive came from administration to immediately implement room service across the hospital, Tony Almeida "stopped everything" – including delivery of a new trayline – and changed course. And among the first pieces he chose for the new room service system was Aladdin's Heat On Demand.®

The Installation Begins

Tony's team was given just 16 weeks to implement the system, and even with a two-week delay caused by interface issues with the computer ordering system, they made the deadline. That includes the six weeks it took to program all of the diet combinations and nutritional information into the system.

"It all comes down to your management team and knowing your operation," said Tony. "The consultants brought in their first drawing of how they were going to set up the kitchen. I taped it out and it didn't fit. I said, 'I don't think this is gonna work, guys.' We had drawn out our own design with two traylines. And they said, 'You know what? We'll do it your way.'"

There was never a question, however, about the technology Tony wanted at the head of each tray line: Aladdin's Heat On Demand.®

"We didn't have to look around because we were so happy with the Aladdin cook-serve system we already had. Heat On Demand.® is perfect for room service. It's fast and reliable, and it holds temperatures better than anything else out there. Because we had two traylines, we bought two Heat On Demand Activators. They meet our needs exactly."



Patient satisfaction on demand:



“We didn’t have to look around . . . Nothing else out there is better.”

Room Service in Operation

After arriving in their rooms, patients receive instructions on how to order their meals from room service. Reading from printed menus, patients phone in their orders to room service associates who use touch-screen monitors to enter the meal requests into the system. Within two minutes, the system generates prep tickets to the printers in tray assembly areas, where the staff prepares the food and assembles the meal trays.

“We run the whole thing just like a restaurant,” said Tony. “And because Robert Wood is so huge, we actually divided it in half. We have a side A and a side B. We’re actually doing the same thing on both sides, just serving different areas of the hospital.

“We have Aladdin Heat On Demand® on both sides. We have two activators going. Hot production drives the process. The tickets print out, two on hot production, two for the whole menu and two on the cold food station. The ticket has the order number, just like in a restaurant. You follow the orders; that’s how we get everything out.

“A lot of people, when they first hear about doing 500 meals for room service dining, they say, ‘Holy cow, that’s chaotic!’ But it just flows, because everybody’s got a role to do, and they do it. And Heat On Demand makes it easier.”

The Result: Improved Patient Satisfaction

Since the room service system was installed, RWJUH has had to make very few changes in its operation. Patient satisfaction scores have been in the 98-99% range. From a management standpoint, the room service program has achieved the goals that were set in the beginning.

“We’ve got seven buildings and 49 different staging areas and we’re handling them all with two Heat On Demand Activators. It’s pretty amazing. The food stays hot and the patients are happy. And in this business there really is no substitute for customer satisfaction.”



“For nine quarters, our Press Ganey scores were 98 or 99 percent.”
— Tony Almeida, Director, Food & Nutrition/ Environmental/Host Services

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