



## CARLTON GREEN, Ph.D.

*UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles*

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE:** *Within 12 months, turn around a foodservice department \$2.5 million over budget, suffering from low morale, and saddled with a near-bottom ranking in two national benchmarking studies.*

In 1997, UCLA recruited Carlton Green to attempt accomplishment of that daunting task. "If it could not be done, the administration was determined to contract out," he says. By the end of that year, however, Green and his staff had not only reduced the budget accordingly, they'd increased cash revenues by \$100,000 per month, upped patient satisfaction by 80%, and set department morale soaring to an all-time high—all without laying off any staff. And, in two recent benchmarkings, the medical center now ranks #1. Here are the main components of Green's approach:

**1. DRAMATICALLY REDUCE COSTS WHILE INCREASING SALES.** Green analyzed every purchase and uncovered some immediate fixes. Typical: a \$16,000 annual savings by switching from flex straws to straight straws in the cafeteria; a \$52,000/year savings by purchasing domestic ham instead of a Polish import a long-gone chef had required. "There were countless small things like that, which in and of themselves might not seem so significant, but which really added up," he explains. Green also renegotiated some vendor contracts; implemented a forecasting system; reduced floor stocks; and—with employees' approval—eliminated free staff meals. To increase sales, Green unveiled a new cafeteria menu and introduced several fresh elements, including an International Corner, a new salad bar, an on-premise sushi chef, local artisan breads, a brand-name cappuccino cart, and made-to-order sandwiches.

**2. FOCUS ATTENTION ON CUSTOMERS.** Once the nutrition department took over patient menu and tray delivery service, late trays dropped from 7,000/month to 2,400/month. Correspondingly, patient satisfaction rose. To appeal to the late afternoon/night shift nursing staff and employees, Green beefed up slow-hours cafeteria offerings with stir-fry's to-order, Philly cheese steaks and other selections instead of the leftovers from lunch and dinner those customers had been used to. "They really appreciated it," he notes, "and sales increased \$14,000 per month from that alone."

**3. LOOK AFTER YOUR PEOPLE.** Before he arrived at UCLA, Green sent a letter to department staff outlining the UCLA senior management vision, committing his help, and calling on each employee to accept personal responsibility to deliver their best. "I promise you mine," his letter concluded. After arriving, Green backed up those words with actions: eliciting and implementing staff suggestions for cost savings and revenue boosters; encouraging employees to return to school for higher degrees (and allowing flexible hours to do so); granting promotions; and adding new, continual training programs. Green also celebrates his employees' diversity by displaying flags from the 28 different countries represented by his staff members.

**TITLE:** Director of Nutrition

**ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET:** \$10 million

**NO. OF MEALS PER YEAR:** 2.8 million

**NO. OF BEDS:** 569

**COST PER MEAL:** \$3.37

**EMPLOYEES:** 170 FTEs (additional 37 at Santa Monica branch)

**YEARS IN FOODSERVICE:** 30+

**FIRST FOODSERVICE JOB:** 17-year-old cook in the Marine Corps in Okinawa

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:** Society for Foodservice Management, National Restaurant Association., Pennsylvania Restaurant Association

**FAVORITE MEAL:** rack of lamb or lamb shank with fresh mashed potatoes, asparagus and Merlot

**FAVORITE RESTAURANT:** Café Bizou, Sherman Oaks, CA

*"We must be improving constantly or we can't compete.  
There is little mercy in the marketplace."*