



About Creative Dining Services

LOCATION: Zeeland, Michigan

ESTABLISHED: 1990

BACKGROUND:

Creative Dining Services (CDS) is a hospitality management partner that provides customized, innovative, and community-focused foodservice to colleges and universities, businesses, and senior living communities.

CREATIVE DINING SERVICES

Magalog Sales Tool

In the past, Creative Dining Services sales team members relied mainly on sales collateral like one-sheets.

These pieces didn't truly capture what sets CDS apart: its creativity, attentiveness, and flexibility. So, CDS approached us with the task of developing a better tool, one that told a story and provided value rather than just presenting facts and numbers. One that was an attractive leave-behind that prospects would return to time and again. It also had to be in line with a revamped brand identity and communicate offerings to three target audiences cohesively.

"We wanted to empower our business development team by providing them with a top-of-the-funnel, beautifully-branded introductory piece about Creative Dining that they could share with prospects," said Susan Golder, associate vice president of marketing at CDS.

OUR SOLUTION

No strangers to creating effective content marketing tools, we immediately recommended a "magalog" to fulfill CDS's needs. Just as it sounds, a magalog combines magazine-style editorial content with catalog-style product information. We knew a magalog would provide the information prospects need to know when shopping around for hospitality management companies, offer valuable and engaging educational content, and showcase CDS's creativity.

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brand—a refreshing approach to the typical stale tri-folds and bi-fold brochures," said Golder.

Our first step was to outline content with CDS. What would be important and helpful for prospects to know? At the front: a short letter from the CEO, setting the stage and providing a window into CDS's philosophy. Then a "Meet the Team" page to showcase the expertise of employees and put faces to names.

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Next, we brainstormed content ideas that would be helpful and applicable across industries. We developed the feature, "Cooking up Community," because of the focus within the foodservice industry on dining as a tool for engagement and retainment. This applied across target audiences, as it was relevant for employees at a business, students at a college, or seniors at an assisted-living facility. This evidence-based piece was educational and set the stage for

presenting CDS as the premiere foodservice option for fostering “sticky” community.

Further content included chef introductions, delicious and creative recipes, sample menus, helpful tips for gathering dining program feedback, ideas for fostering a happy and motivated workforce (a hot topic in dining), and more.

At the end of the magalog, we worked in more feature-specific content. For example, an overview of CDS’s sustainability initiatives and a “Why Choose Us?” chart comparing CDS to “traditional” dining programs. We worked hard to avoid extraneous or self-congratulatory content. We wanted it all to be valuable, whether that value was through educational content or helpful information about CDS’s offerings. Plus, it needed to be interesting!

“The magalog needed to feel like an engaging magazine that would immediately express the brand to the reader no matter what page they opened it to,” explained Adam Rossi, senior creative lead at 2 Fish Co. “A great deal of information needed to be elegantly communicated without the reader feeling like they were doing homework or reading a textbook.”

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As for the layout of the piece, direction pivoted early on. Some members of the CDS team expressed the need for more of a trifold-type piece. We were able to integrate that wish into the plan, adding a fold-out at the end of the magalog with highlight information that sales team members could open to directly in sales meetings.



Design also pivoted, as the CDS team was in the process of updating the company’s brand identity. We helped them try out several different directions, and we jointly developed the finished product.

“The final design embodies CDS’s revamped brand,” said Lisa Talarczyk, creative lead at 2 Fish Co. “It is fun, colorful, dynamic, and creative—distinct from the design identities we’ve seen with other hospitality management campaigns.”

RESULTS

The final product is a visually-stunning, 26-page document full of high-quality content.

“The magalog works beautifully as an engaging piece targeted to all of CDS’s main audiences,” said Lisa Talarczyk. “It captures the essence of CDS to give readers a true idea of what to expect from choosing this dining service.”

The CDS team is thrilled with the final result and has already placed several orders for additional copies. We’ve also been able to help them get even more “bang for their buck” by repurposing some of the content to use in other marketing materials.

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Most importantly, the magalog has been received warmly by CDS prospects—and beyond!

“We’re convinced that prospects spend more time with our content than they did before simply due to the value perception of the piece,” said Golder. “And while we thought we would solely use it for potential new business, we have found that the magalog serves as cornerstone collateral that new board members, influencers, our partners, and even new employees appreciate!”

