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## A SERVER'S TEN STEPS TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE

### STEP ONE: GREET GUESTS

- Greet or acknowledge guests no longer than two minutes after they've been seated.
- Smile and introduce yourself by name.
- Welcome first-timers and announce house specialties.

### STEP TWO: TAKE DRINK ORDERS

- Suggest at least two different types of drinks by name.
- Describe daily specials.
- Deliver drinks within five minutes.
- Serve drinks using a tray, with napkins under.
- Throughout the meal, check for half empty glasses. Refill, or take more drink orders, as appropriate.

### STEP THREE: TAKE APPETIZER ORDERS

- Suggest two specific, but different types of appetizers.
- Always use the phrase, "Would you like to try..." to indicate there will be an extra charge.

### STEP FOUR: TAKE ENTREE ORDERS

- If customers ask for help, make recommendations after getting additional information.
- Use an order taking system to help you get orders correct.
- Suggest two specific, but different side dishes.
- Refill, or take more drink orders, as appropriate.
- Confirm orders before leaving the table.

### STEP FIVE: TURN IN ORDERS; SERVE APPETIZERS

- Turn in entree orders.
- Serve appetizers as quickly as possible.
- Refill, or take more drink orders as needed.

#### Left-to-Right Order Taking System

- Ask for children's orders first; then ladies, seniors, and gentlemen.
  - However, when recording the orders on your pad, start with the customer on your left, at the top of your pad.
  - Proceed clockwise around the table or booth, writing these orders on your pad.
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**STEP SIX: SERVE ENTREES**

- Pick up orders as soon as they are ready, to assure that hot food is served hot.
- Check orders for accuracy and quality.
- Use a tray to deliver the food. Put heavier dishes closest to you.
- Serve children first; then ladies, seniors, and gentlemen last.
- Use your left hand to serve guests on your left; and your right hand to serve guests on your right.
- Politely set the plate in front of each guest, identify the entree, and caution about hot plates.
- Ask if anything else is needed.
- Clear dirty dishes.
- Refill drinks.
- Remind guests to save room for dessert.

**STEP SEVEN: CHECK IN WITH GUESTS**

- Within two minutes or two bites, check to see that guests are happy with their meals.
- Ask guests if they need anything else.

**STEP EIGHT: SERVE DESSERT AND DRINKS**

- Offer customers “to go” boxes for left-overs.
- Always suggest dessert before coffee.
- Suggest two specific, but different types of desserts.
- Mention specialty coffees and dessert drinks that are available.

**STEP NINE: PRESENT THE CHECK**

- Circle the total and personally thank guests on the back of the check.
- When you are confident guests are finished, put the check on the table.
- Never walk out of sight without turning to see if the customer has put down money or a credit card.

**STEP TEN: SUBMIT THE CHECK**

- Pick up the tray as soon as you see money or a credit card.
- Submit the check promptly.
- When guests pay cash, always return the change.
- Take your tip after guests have left.

**How to Prioritize Your Tables**

1. Always greet new guests first; get them their drinks.
2. Handle food or drink mistakes immediately.
3. Check in with guests who have just received food.
4. Take care of guests who are ready to pay.
5. Take orders

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## SELLING MEANS COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS

Selling means you are providing information customers need to make informed decisions; decisions that will increase the pleasure of their meal.

### HOW TO SELL YOURSELF

#### Project a Professional Image.

- Bathe regularly and use a good deodorant.
- Wear clean, well pressed clothes or uniforms without holes.
- Keep perfumes and colognes to a minimum.
- Wear a sensible hair style and keep hair clean.
- Trim and groom facial hair.
- Keep your nails short, well trimmed, and clean.
- Wear minimal jewelry.
- Wear supportive, rubber soled shoes with closed toes.
- Don't chew gum or toothpicks.
- Stand up straight, with good posture.

#### Have a Positive Attitude.

- Smile; act friendly.
- Be positive, even when things go wrong.
- Show your enthusiasm about what you do.
- Try whenever possible to answer guest requests in the affirmative.
- Take 100% responsibility for your tables.

#### Show Customers You Care.

- Remember their names.
- Give them your undivided attention.
- Listen carefully; don't interrupt them, don't ask them questions when they have their mouths full.
- When they are hesitant or undecided, ask questions, and make appropriate suggestions.
- Mirror their style.
- Respond to the needs of children.
- Always thank customers for their business.

#### Know How to Talk to Your Customers

- Talk to them—not at them.
  - Be careful not to insult or offend.
  - Do not call customers "honey," "dear," or "sweetie."
  - Never be abrupt, snappy, or make wisecracks.
  - Keep your problems, and those of the restaurant to yourself.
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### **Know Your Menu**

- Be familiar with the daily specials.
- Know the ingredients and preparation methods for each dish.
- Know what accompanies each dish.
- Be familiar with pricing.
- Stay current on changes to the menu.

### **Respond to the Needs of Children:**

- Bring out their meals as soon as possible.
- Bring crayons for drawing on place mats.
- Surprise kids with cherries or straws in their drinks.
- Serve drinks in cups or glasses that are easy to use.

## **HOW TO SELL YOUR PRODUCTS**

You'll be able to sell more appetizers, side dishes, and desserts when you use the following sales techniques.

### **Suggestive Selling**

- Suggest beverages, appetizers, sides and desserts that will compliment and enhance the meal.
- Always suggest two specific, but different items.

### **Upselling**

- Suggest higher quality drinks.
- Use benefit statements to show how the added cost will bring added value.

### **Paint Persuasive Word Pictures**

- Discuss products using a lot of descriptive words.
- Use the word "featured" when selling your products. It makes the product sound special and not to be missed.

**Tips on How to Sell Appetizers**

- In addition to making time pass quicker until the entree arrives, appetizers add “spice” and interest to a meal.
- Always suggest two specific, but different appetizers.
- Remind customers they are an excellent value when shared.
- At lunch, suggest appetizers that can be prepared quickly.
- Be consistent. Suggest them to each of your tables.

**Tips on How to Sell More Sides**

- Know your entrees and what they are “missing.”
- Suggest sides to fill these voids.
- Know which sides enhance or improve the entree.
- Always suggest two specific, but different sides.
- Be consistent. Suggest sides to each of your tables.

**Tips on How to Sell More Desserts**

- Plant the seed for dessert early—once after the entree order is taken, and again after clearing the entree plates.
- Emphasize the visual appeal of desserts by using a tray or cart.
- If a tray is not used, hand guests a dessert menu.
- Always suggest two specific, but different types of desserts.
- When customers hesitate, look for clues as to why.
- If they’re too full, suggest a dessert to share or a “to go” box.
- For dieters, suggest low-calorie options.
- If nothing appeals to them on the menu, suggest a specialty coffee or an after dinner drink.
- Be consistent. Offer dessert to each of your tables.

**Making Food Recommendations**

- Find out more information from your guest—i.e., how hungry is the guest, specific food preferences, special diet considerations, etc.
- Never project your own negative personal tastes or opinions.
- Provide positive feedback from other guests.
- Accurately describe the ingredients in the dish and preparation methods.
- When discussing spicy dishes, talk in terms of “mild,” “medium,” or “hot.”

**REMEMBER:**

- The best time to sell is when the restaurant is busy. Typically, customers who have been waiting are most open to suggestions.
- The key to selling is to make suggestions that coincide with the natural pace and timing of the meal.

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## SELLING AND SERVING ALCOHOL

In order to sell alcohol, it's important to understand the basics.

### Wine

There are two types of wine:

- Varietal
  - Generic
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- Wines are red, white, or blush.
  - They range from being “fruity” to “very dry,” as well as “very light,” to “full-bodied.”
  - It's important to pair up the right wine with the right dish.
  - Dry, red, full-bodied wines are often served with meats like steak or prime rib.
  - Lighter reds are often served with lamb, pork, or veal dishes.
  - Dry white wines are often served with chicken or fish.
  - A fruity white or blush wine is great with dessert.

Learn to pronounce the most commonly asked for wines:

- White wines—chablis, chardonnay
- Blush wines—white zinfandel
- Red wines—burgundy, cabernet sauvignon, merlot, pinot noir

To open a bottle of wine:

- Show the bottle to the person who ordered it, label facing up.
  - Use your corkscrew to cut below the lip of the bottle and remove the foil or plastic.
  - Wipe the top of the bottle with a napkin.
  - Place the point of the corkscrew in the middle of the cork, and turn firmly three or four times.
  - Take the fulcrum and latch it on to the lip of the bottle.
  - Pull up slowly and remove the cork.
  - Place the cork in front of the person who ordered the wine.
  - Wipe the bottle and pour a mouthful for the person who ordered it.
  - If approved, pour wine for all the guests—women first, then seniors, gentlemen, and last to the person who ordered the bottle.
  - Always serve wines in the appropriate glass.
  - Fill each glass 2/3rds full, turning the bottle and pulling it up after each glass to avoid drips.
  - Put bottles of red wine on the table, and bottles of white wine in a cooler.
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## Tips on Selling Wine

- When parties of two or more order wines by the glass, suggest a bottle.
- When guests ask for suggestions, find out about their preferences. Then, recommend mid-priced wines.
- When the bottle is empty, as if you can bring another bottle.
- If guests have ordered by the glass, offer to bring another glass.
- When guests decline dessert, suggest dessert wine, like port or sherry.

### THE FIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUGGEST WINE

- Step Two: Take Drink Orders
- Step Four: Take Entree Orders
- Step Five: Turn in Orders; Serve Appetizers
- Step Six: Serve Entrees
- Step Eight: Serve Dessert and Drinks

## Champagne

- Champagnes are sparkling wines.
- They are champagne, blush, or light red in color.
- They range on a scale from dry (brut) to sweet (demi-sec).

To serve a bottle of champagne:

- Present the bottle to the person who ordered it, label facing up.
- Remove the foil with your fingers or a corkscrew.
- Always keep the bottle facing away from you and your guests.
- Remove the wire.
- With one hand, take a towel and grab the cork.
- With your other hand, place your thumb in the “put” and slowly begin to turn the bottle.
- Hold the bottle on a slight angle, being careful not to point the bottle at either you or your guests.
- Keep turning the bottle until you can slowly remove the cork.
- Present the cork, and pour a taste to the person who ordered it.
- If approved, pour champagne for all the guests—ladies first, then seniors, gentlemen, and last to the person who ordered the bottle.
- Fill each glass 2/3rds full, turning the bottle and pulling it up after each glass.
- Always serve in champagne glasses.
- Put the bottle of champagne in a cooler.

### TIPS ON SELLING CHAMPAGNE:

- Suggest a bottle for celebrations and special occasions.
- When the bottle is empty, ask guests if they would like another bottle.

## Beer

Beer is an alcoholic beverage made from malted grains, hops, yeast, and water.

There are two types of beers:

- Ales, which are slightly bitter.
- Lagers, which are sweeter and more bubbly.
  
- Beers are either light, medium, or dark.
- Temperature and pressure are very important. Most beer drinkers prefer a cold beer, so always pour beer last. Never shake the bottle or let it sit out.
- A perfect head is a two finger (about one inch) head.
- The size of the head is determined by the angle of the glass.
- To achieve the perfect head, hold the glass at a 45 degree angle to start, and slowly move the glass upright as you pour.

### TIPS FOR SELLING BEER

- Mention beer in Step Two: Take Drink Orders, and mention a specific brand.
- Point out any beer lists or tent cards on the table.
- For parties of two or more, suggest a pitcher of beer, and emphasize the cost-savings.
- Suggest beer with appropriate dishes, such as spicy foods.

When pouring beer from a tap:

- Hold the tap handle at the base and pull quickly to begin a strong draw.
- Allow enough room for the two-finger head.

## Cocktails

Cocktails are once again becoming popular. Many guests prefer a cocktail before dinner, and they will typically ask for a “call drink” instead of a “well drink.”

To sell more call drinks:

- Learn the names of at least two premium liquors that are used in the most common drinks.
- Try to upsell liquor by mentioning at least two premium brands.
- Remind guests that premium liquors have less impurities, so the drink tastes better.
- Garnish drinks for extra eye appeal.
- Suggest cocktails after dinner, such as specialty coffees
- With cocktails to start, suggest an appetizer, especially with the second round of drinks, since alcohol stimulates the appetite.



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## HOW TO BE A TEAM PLAYER

Team players:

- Are someone team members can count on.
- Treat others with respect.
- Are willing to do a little extra to help out team members—especially when times are busy.
- Visually check every table on their way through the dining room to see what needs to be done.
- Remember that every guest is their guest.
- Make it a habit never to go to a table or walk away from one empty-handed.

Earn the trust of your team mates by:

- Showing up five minutes early to start work on time.
- Checking to be sure your tables are prepared.
- Checking that your server station is prepared.
- Completing all assigned sidework before your shift begins.

### **TEAM PLAYERS ARE WASTE WATCHERS**

- Tell management about dishes that consistently return half eaten. This is an indication that portion sizes are too large, or there is something wrong with the dish.
  - Try not to break things or accidentally throw things away.
  - Only give customers what they need, in terms of drink refills, bread, condiments, etc.
  - Check the accuracy of your orders, tabs, and change returned to customers.
  - Tell your manager about possible safety hazards.
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## A HOST'S FIVE STEPS TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE

### STEP ONE: GREET GUESTS

- Greet or acknowledge guests within 30 seconds of the time they arrive.
- Use a warm smile, good eye contact, and a pleasant greeting.

### STEP TWO: DISCUSS SEATING OPTIONS

- Seat guests with reservations as quickly as possible.
- If appropriate, ask guests if they have a seating preference.
- When there is a wait, write names on a wait list, and quote realistic wait times for a table.
- Make the wait sound as painless as possible by emphasizing that it is a **short** wait.
- Suggest that guests wait in the bar.

### STEP THREE: TAKE GUESTS TO THEIR TABLE

- Only take guests to prepared tables.
- Address guests by name.
- Depending on restaurant policy, transfer or settle any bar tab.
- Always carry guests' drinks to their table.
- Lead the way, but look back to be sure you are walking at the same pace as your guests. Point out any changes in elevation.
- Make "small talk" as you walk your guests to their table.
- Be sure guests are satisfied with their table before seating them.

### STEP FOUR: SEAT GUESTS

- Pull out chairs for the ladies and hand them a menu first.
- Personally hand menus to the other guests.
- Announce who the server will be, and suggest two specific products.
- Pass on any helpful information to the server.

### STEP FIVE: THANK GUESTS AS THEY LEAVE

- Ask guests how they enjoyed themselves, using specific questions.
- Hand money or a credit card directly to the customer.
- Thank guests for their business, and invite them to come again soon.

#### PROFESSIONAL TELEPHONE SKILLS

- Always answer the phone within three rings.
  - Keep a smile in your voice, and answer the phone using a professional greeting.
  - The customer in front of you always has priority over the telephone caller.
  - If you are busy, greet the caller and ask if he or she would mind holding.
  - If the caller objects, ask him or her to please call back.
  - If the caller agrees to be put on hold, check back within 30 seconds.
  - Know how to give directions to your restaurant.
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## **BUSSERS NEED TO BE PROFESSIONALS**

- Be well groomed at all times.
- Make sure your uniform is clean and pressed.
- Take pride in your work, and do things to the best of your ability.
- Quietly and carefully remove dirty dishes, flatware, and glasses.
- Always use clean towels and a clean sanitizing solution to wipe tables.
- Clean dust, crumbs, and stains from the chairs and booths.
- Wipe off tabletop condiments.
- Make sure table tent cards are clean and in place.
- Check to be sure tables are steady.
- Talk to customers in a polite, helpful, friendly way.
- Know the answers to some of the more common questions.
- Tell servers what customers need and want.
- Help servers as much as you can, especially when things are busy

## **HOW TO DEAL WITH CHALLENGING CUSTOMERS**

### **CUSTOMERS WITH VALID COMPLAINTS**

- Don't take it personally. Just accept that the customer is unhappy.
- Listen and ask questions to find out what the problem is.
- If there is a problem with the food, immediately remove an unsatisfactory plate, and apologize sincerely for any inconvenience.
- Find out what the guest wants.
- Alert your manager, and follow procedures established by your restaurant to take care of the problem.
- If there is a problem with the service, you may need to bring your manager over to the table.

### **THE ANGRY GUEST**

- Remain calm.
  - Don't take the anger personally.
  - Count to ten and let the guest blow off steam.
  - Show the customer you understand by using an empathetic statement.
  - Talk about a solution to the problem.
  - Follow restaurant procedures or ask your manager.
  - Be sure your customer agrees with, and accepts your proposed solution.
  - If a customer uses foul or abusive language, excuse yourself, and ask your manager to deal with the situation.
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### **THE INTOXICATED DRINKER**

- Do not serve any alcohol to an intoxicated guest.
- Never accuse a guest of being drunk.
- Instead, express your concern for your guest.
- Remain calm, and don't take anything that is said personally.
- Don't try to argue with the guest.
- If the guest becomes disruptive, notify your manager.
- When intoxicated guests leave the restaurant, be sure they are not driving. Offer to call a cab or a friend.

### **GUESTS WITH DISABILITIES**

- Know where your handicapped parking and wheelchair ramps are located.
- Know how to take disabled guests through your facility without inconveniencing them.
- Be sensitive to the needs of guests with disabilities.
- Guests who use special equipment to assist in their mobility should be given the same choices about seating as any other guest.
- Animals trained to assist individuals with disabilities should always be welcomed and allowed to accompany guests to any seating area.
- If hearing impaired guests have to wait for a table, notify them in person when their table is ready. Speak slowly and only when the guest is looking directly at you.
- Provide pen and paper for guests who have problems communicating.
- If a guest has problems reading the menu, volunteer to help.

### **MISBEHAVING CHILDREN**

- Don't try to discipline a child yourself.
- Remain pleasant and polite, and try to distract the child's attention.
- If this fails, ask your manager to deal with the situation.

<p><b>YOU CAN'T TELL A BOOK BY IT'S COVER</b></p>
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't make assumptions or pass judgments about any of your guests.</li><li>• Treat each person with respect, consideration, and empathy, and provide the best service you can.</li></ul> |
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