

13 Smart Ways to Drive More Revenue Every Shift

**Here are some easy ways to help drive revenue each and every shift.
Give them a try and you'll be surprised at the results!**

1. Endorse the choice

Whenever a guest orders a particular dish or drink, servers should always respond with words like "Good choice", or "You're gonna love that". This reassures the guest and adds value to the transaction every time."

2. Ask the right questions

If you're serious about identifying your hospitality (or culinary) goals, Lee Cockerell, Executive VP, Operations at Walt Disney World suggests you pose this question to your staff: "What do we want to be famous for with guests?" George Mannion, co-owner of the LoDo Grill in Denver prefers asking these questions every six months of both his employees and vendors: "Is it easy for customers to do business with us? If it isn't, why? Change it. Is it easy for us to do business with ourselves? If it isn't, why? Change it."

3. Always "pre-market" point-of-sale items to your service staff

Whenever you get new table tents in from a vendor, don't just put them on the bar or tables, be sure to post them in server stations, behind the line or by the time clock so servers see them every where they look. Explain, promote and "sell" the table tents at pre-shift meetings to increase the odds of servers understanding how to use them with their guests.

4. Restaurant Servers should always subtotal guest tabs before dessert

If the subtotal of your guest check after the entrees is \$8.35, try to sell a dessert to get the tab over \$10, or at least a cup of coffee to raise the tab over \$10. Why? On a \$8.35 tab, people will tip 15%-20% on \$8. Bumping it to \$11 with a coffee sale makes the customer's thought process relative to tipping work to your advantage: you'll be tipped on \$12 (\$1.80 instead of \$8 (\$1.20) now.

5. Pair up suggestions

This means training your sales team to practice selling in "pairs". You can do this by playing a simple game before each shift for 3 minutes called "I Say/You Say". The manager begins: "I'm a customer and I say I'll have a piece of pie, what do you say in reply, Mary?" Then hopefully Mary says

something like: “I say, how about some vanilla ice cream with that?” Or in a deli the guest says “I’ll have a roast chicken to go”, you say? “Would you like to try some of our famous penne pasta salad to go with that? I’d be happy to let you try a sample.”

6. Have Servers Compete With Their Own Sales “Records”

“Selling competitions succeed when a server competes with his or her own track record,” says Jay Cone, former director of human resources for East Side Mario’s in Dallas. Jay gives this example: if your records show that a particular server usually sells one appetizer for every seven entrees, challenge her to increase the ratio to one in every five. At East Side Mario’s, the company then splits the additional profit with the server 50-50.

7. Keep your Mission statement short and sweet

Be careful of wordy mission statements that don’t resonate with team members. Here are two of our favorites, and neither is more than five words long:

- “Every guest leaves happy.” —The DeRosa Corporation in Milwaukee, operators the Chancery Pubs and several other concepts,
- “Be loose and have fun.” This first line of the Great Harvest bread company employee manual sets a tone for hospitality that is as clear as it is brief:

8. Smile when you answer the phone

It may sound silly, but hospitality begins on the phone and your guests can hear the friendly difference in a smiling voice on the other end.

9. Adopt the two-person rule

Mistakes happen. Problems occur. And a guest should never have to talk to more than two people in order to resolve a problem.

10. Touch Every Table

Don’t spend too much time being friendly and hospitable to only your “regulars” at the risk of ignoring your “unknown” new guests. “Seek out a stranger very shift,” says Michael Edwards, owner of the Sarasota Seafood Company in Siesta Key, FL, “and make every guest feel special.”

11. Define the heroes, symbols and rituals

Cultural anthropologists can learn a lot from Sue Elliott, a foodservice trainer in San Antonio, TX. She says the best way to first assess and then improve hospitality is to look at the behavior of the

natural leaders and evolving culture of the restaurant. She suggests identifying first who the heroes are; i.e. which employees are held in esteem because of caring behavior toward the guest or fellow employees? Why? Which employees have the greatest success selling appetizers, desserts, wine? What behavior of theirs can be taught or repeated? Sue also believes it's important to identify and reinforce the success symbols in the restaurant's culture; in other words what does your company do to recognize achievement relative to hospitality, suggestive selling or education? Pins? Certificates? Different colored aprons or shirts or hats for certified trainers? Awards? And finally, what rituals in your company reinforce caring behavior and incremental sales? Pre-shift meetings

12. Be hospitable to your “internal” customers (employees) first

“Where we have the highest level of employee satisfaction, we have had the highest increases in sales and market share,” says Stephanie Skurdy, Director of Communication for McDonald's. And remember that hospitality, like charity, begins at home. As Union Square's Bolles-Beaven adds, “it matters how the staff feels, because how they feel ends up on the plate.”

13. Hospitality delivery is dependent on staffing

All the best intentions and hospitality focused training may be for naught if you're nagged by a chronic labor shortage. “If you're under-staffed, even excellent training is wasted and the customer becomes the shock-absorbing system,” explains Scott Armstrong of LaborWizard.com. “If the quality of the customer experience is very poor there is a strong risk of permanent customer loss. If the quality of the experience is marginal, the visit frequency will be less than it should be. In all cases the average check is lower because the server does not have the necessary time to read the guest or suggestively sell. The good employees become dispirited because they cannot provide good service by getting to the tables as often as they know they should and the marginal employees are completely swamped.” You get the picture. Morale sinks, turnover rises, and you end up focusing too much time on filling a schedule instead of providing hospitality to both the internal and external customer. So staffing is the nail, and training is the hammer. After all, in these days of labor challenges, we could be focusing on how to make the people we've got better as well as looking to “fill positions”. It's possible to build a better person than you can hire.