

## Service That Sells! E-Newsletter Volume 10, No. 7 • February 16, 2009

---



### What Customers Hate

We took a look at customer blogs from around the United States and searched for negative comments on restaurant service. Here are the biggest pet peeves we found. Take a look around your operation. Could one of these have been about you?

- Our waiter yelled instructions to the busboy on the other side of the dining room.
- Our waiter stuck our bill down the back of his pants... and not his pants pocket! Then he pulled it out and gave it to us!
- I got my entrée before my appetizer. When I reminded the waitress that I ordered an appetizer, she said, "I know. It isn't done yet."
- This is the second time I've been here and the last. Both times the kitchen staff has "lost my order." I waited 2 hours and 45 minutes before they finally let me know... even though I'd been asking about it the whole time.
- I asked for salt and didn't get it for 17 minutes.
- I can't count how many times the servers leave the entrées on the table while we're still eating our salads.
- I hate it when I get handed my wineglass by the rim. And when it's too full. The wine has no where to breathe and it spills all over the tablecloth.
- The shirt our server was wearing was so dirty and spotted, it grossed me out to think she'd be handling our food.

---

### The Bribing Of America's Children By Michael Attias

I remember when my son Jerrod went for an exploratory visit to the orthodontist. He returned with a glow on his face, "Guess what the doctor gave me?" His sister chimed in, "Yeah, Dad. Guess what the doctor gave us?"

In unison they both exclaimed, "A free ice cream cone!"

The ice cream cone was not free. It would cost us \$5,800. The braces were the bonus gift. The orthodontist knows what I've been teaching for years. Befriend the kid(s) and the parents will follow with the wallet. At a recent consulting day with a client, we discussed the neighborhood marketing technique of creating affiliations with kid-friendly venues to pass out your free kids meal certificates. We also discussed them getting a mascot to use for distribution of these certificates at kid-friendly events like fairs, festivals, school events, etc.

Based on my personal success with this strategy, I believe you could keep a college student as busy as you'd like fostering these types of relationships. For a few hundred dollars a year in printing costs, we kept our local schools well stocked in certificates. In turn, they kept us stocked with kids bringing full-paying adults. It was one of the best promotions we ever ran.

Peruse your local parenting magazine to build a list of potential marketing partners. Here are a few to get you started: kid's museums, schools, zoos, karate studios, sports leagues, magicians, and toy stores. I was able to create a list of 44 potential partners. This will keep your neighborhood marketing person busy and your kid-friendly restaurant packed.

---

### Role-Play: "Kid Talk"

This week, Michael Attias reminds us not to forget our smallest customers. And for good reason: according to the BNET

Research Center, 78 percent of children and teenage youth influence where the family goes for fast food and 55 percent determine the choice of family or full-service restaurants. Role-play with servers to remind them to address these small customers... and keep them coming back.

**Server:** Here are some crayons and a chef hat. I also brought some crackers to munch on while you decide. Have you heard about our great kids meals?

**Kid 1:** Yeah, I'd like the burger.

**Kid 2:** I really wanted ribs, Mom. Why can't I?

**Mom:** Because it's too big for you and it's not on the kid menu.

**Server:** We're happy to make any meal kid-sized. We reduce the portion size and the price and it still comes with a drink and a prize.

**Mom:** Great!

---

## Put It To Work

Guests are likely to remember the first and last impressions of your restaurant more than any other part of their visit. Train your staff to treat departing guests with as much enthusiasm as incoming guests. Approach every departing guest with four distinct objectives:

- To make sure their experience in your restaurant was pleasurable.
- To thank them for their patronage – by name.
- To invite them back for another visit soon.
- To make sure their last impression is a positive one.

Host staff, servers, busers, and managers all have the responsibility to bid departing guests farewell. But host staff and managers usually have the most frequent opportunities to do so. Add a special touch that departing guests will remember by helping them with their jackets or coats and opening the door for them. To generate a repeat visit, thank guests by name and invite them back for a specific occasion: "Come back and check out our Sunday brunch!"

*Excerpted from **Service That Sells! The Art of Profitable Hospitality**, Red Book Solutions.*

Call 800-526-9635 to order or see more at [www.RedBookSolutions.biz](http://www.RedBookSolutions.biz).

---

2009 Archive:

[Jan. 5](#) • [Jan. 12](#) • [Jan. 19](#) • [Jan. 26](#) • [Feb. 2](#) • [Feb. 9](#)