



## The Big Picture of Customer Service: Does Your Team See It?

By Jackie Yudd


Training service staff members to see the big picture can be frustrating because they often have trouble just seeing the "little picture" (the areas they're directly responsible for). But even though the challenge to open their eyes (and change their perspective) may be a tough one, it's well worth working with your staff to help them see things through your eyes.

Start by explaining the "big picture" concept of guest service. Walk your team members through a dining situation that they may have had recently. Have them talk about the entire process... from their arrival to their departure. Remind them that service is not just about what happens table side; it's about the whole event. Their enjoyment is based on the entire experience from the time they enter the parking lot until they pay the check and say good night.

Another way to teach them to see things through your eyes is to directly link their success to the overall success of the operation. Whether it's their level of gratuity or

the number of available shifts, the overall success of the operation is linked to the guest's entire experience and how well each staff member meets his or her responsibility in this mission. Remind them that they swim – or sink – together! When they see something that needs attention, let them know that they should take action whether it's their station or not!

When you train team members on service, remember that the goal is to create other sets of "manager's eyes" everywhere in the house. Here are some points to begin the dialogue:

- **Concept of one station** – The house is one station and everyone is responsible.
- **Little things make a huge difference** – Be focused on the details from the pick-up window to the guest table.
- **Everything interacts to create the whole meal experience** – It takes the "eyes" of the entire team looking out for each other to ensure that the guest has an incredible experience! 

## Role-Play: Catering to Pint-Sized Customers

When kids have to wait, the situation can get ugly fast. During a training session, make sure your team knows how to handle your littlest guests and make the experience more enjoyable for the parents (who'll come back if things go well) and other customers (who might leave if things don't).


**Server:** Hello, I've brought some crayons and crackers. Do you mind if I give them to your children?

**Guest:** Well, the crayons aren't such a good idea; Cody eats them.

**Server:** We have some dough in the kitchen that we use for our fresh-baked bread. Kids like to use it as molding clay and, if Cody nibbles on it, it won't hurt him at all.


**Guest:** Great!

**Server:** And, if you like, I can bring the children's dinners out first while the chefs finish your entrées.

**Guest:** That would be wonderful. Thank you! 

## Put It To Work

Seating is an integral part of the job, but getting out from behind the stand to make greetings is key. Do guests want the first impression to be an unenthusiastic person leaning against a door or holding the stand down? Find people who want constant motion. During slow times they can assist with drink refills, clean the entry floors and glass or help with to-go orders. Sample interview questions: "What do you when it's not busy?" "What is a typical day like?" "What do you do when there is nothing to do?" "At your previous job, show me how you greeted guests." Hosts need to be able to handle stress with a smile!

Look for applicants who can turn on the charm to welcome guests and speak energetically about the restaurant and its food while escorting guests to the tables. Interview strategy: Have applicants role play taking you to a table. If they can't do a great job during the interview, they certainly shouldn't be allowed to seat guests for real. 

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