



**Private Club
Performance Management**

Service on the Go



Ed Rehkopf

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Introduction

Club operations face a challenging training burden if they are to deliver the high levels of service expected by their members. Yet with tight budgets how can managers meet their training obligations while controlling costs since every hour of training is a payroll hour for each employee being trained? Add to this the difficulty of getting all your employees together at one time for formal, consistently-presented training sessions.

The answer to these challenges is to build your training programs around the “on the go” concept where ongoing training material is formatted in brief – no more than five to ten minute – modules. In every shift, in every department, there are spare moments, time when employees have finished their shift preparations, time when employees are socializing among themselves or awaiting instructions from supervisors. Since you’re already paying for this time, plan on putting it to good use.

In every department there are hundreds of operational details that employees must learn and refresh themselves with some frequency. This is true in all areas of the club operation. All that is necessary is for the department head to outline training requirements in brief doses and format them so they can be pulled out at a moment’s notice for either group-led or individual instruction.

With today’s ability to find anything on the Internet with just a few keywords and keystrokes, all the information you need to teach your employees values, etiquette, product knowledge, safety, security, sanitation, HR requirements, responsible beverage service, or how to operate or maintain any piece of equipment is readily available. You just have to format it for easy use.

Private Club Performance Management has developed a variety of On the Go Training programs for leadership, values, service, food and beverage, human resources, accounting, and safety. These offer a proven model of how easy it is to format material and train your employees to increase their knowledge, skills, abilities, and service techniques. For examples, check out the Training on the Go material on the PCPM Marketplace store.

Take Away: Training will always be a challenge in the club business. One solution is to format training material in short, easy-to-absorb and easy-to-use modules that can be used whenever blocks of time open up during otherwise busy operations.



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Tips for Use

One of the major motivations for creating the Service on the Go material is to provide managers and employees a common understanding and application of service standards and skills.

As with any other tool, Service on the Go is only as effective as the effort put into it by the supervisor and/or employee. Each sheet provides the “take away” from the lesson. Comprehension can be improved by asking employees to explain terms or points in their own words, offer examples from their own experience, or illustrate points with real or imagined scenarios. The key is to get them to think deeply about each topic and connect it with their own experience and the context of their job.

The Service on the Go material can be used in group-led discussions for ongoing training of employees to reinforce service skills or they can be used for an individual who wants to work through the entire program in sequence to upgrade skills and knowledge. They are also an excellent way for a newly-hired employee to be brought “up to speed” on the service requirements of the organization.

Teachable Moments



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#01

So You Want to Be a Service Leader

What's the first step? Teaching employees service skills, techniques, and attitudes? Nope! This approach will have only a limited, short-term effect on some of your staff ... and even these will give up soon if they don't see a consistent service ethic and example from their leaders.

Becoming a service leader requires a long-term, sustained effort from a management team committed to a consistent service-based approach to leading their service teams. The goal of such an approach is to empower employees to think and act like managers – to take the initiative and ownership to resolve service issues wherever encountered with the sure knowledge of their leaders' backing and support.

Simply put, the requirements and priorities for becoming a service leader are:

- Establishing a club-wide service-based leadership style with its emphasis on serving employees by providing all the necessary tools, training, resources, support, and example to provide high levels of service.
- Establishing a culture of service continually and consistently reinforced by all managers.
- Creating a highly organized operation where expectations and standards are understood by all, and managers and employees are held strictly accountable for conduct and performance.
- Ensuring that managers at all levels of the organization understand and consistently employ the many disciplines and best practices of operating a well-organized private club. This requires that all managers are trained to common standards and performance expectations.
- Hiring well and training thoroughly so that the club employs the best people with the right personalities for the positions they hold and that every employee is trained in the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for the jobs they perform.
- Empowering your employees to take the initiative, make decisions, and take actions to “wow” members and resolve any and all service issues. Such empowerment requires that employees are well-trained not just in the how's of service, but also the why's. Finally, you must carefully define the parameters of employee empowerment and decision-making and create a supportive environment that doesn't blame employees for their decisions and actions, only looks for better ways of doing things.

Becoming a service leader is not an easy undertaking or one to be approached lightly. On the contrary, it requires the management “will to make it happen” and the service-based leadership to create the environment that naturally promotes service.

But regardless of the effort involved, the bottom line is, as John Tschohl, president of the Service Quality Institute, says – *“Without empowerment, an organization will never be a service leader.”*

Take Away: Poor service is a threat to viability of any private club operation.



#02

What Price Poor Service? – 1

No two people would describe service in the same way, as service like beauty and quality is in the eye of the beholder. Yet, there are certain terms that are routinely used to describe the expected norms of service in private clubs. To name a few would include adhering to commonly accepted standards of etiquette, prompt, courteous, alert and aware, knowledgeable, engaging, responsive, consistent, anticipatory, effortless, and friendly.

We've all experienced poor service in restaurants or retail establishments and will seldom return to the places where service does not meet our expectations. After such experiences we'll warn family, friends, and acquaintances to avoid such businesses. On the other hand, when we come across outstanding service, we'll return often to spend our money and sing their praises to anyone who will listen.

But these experiences are in public establishments that serve the wider public. How about the service members might experience at a private club? What are their expectations from a place where they are known and where they pay regular dues? What happens when a member or members are dissatisfied with the service received from club employees?

First, they are offended, sometimes deeply, that their own club performs so poorly, and their disappointment is compounded by a monthly reminder when they pay their dues. Often, they'll come to the club less frequently and will feel the value of the club is not worth the expense. In the dining room this is made even worse by the seemingly coercive nature of minimums.

Second, they complain to other members, some of whom may have experienced similar service breakdowns. Individual complaints when repeated widely can quickly develop into an undercurrent of dissatisfaction particularly when there are repeated service failures.

Third, in focusing on past service issues members can become hyper-sensitive and critical of even the smallest service faults.

Fourth, negative comments about service at the club are made to non-member friends and acquaintances in the community making it harder to attract new members, thereby choking off the continuing lifeblood of the club.

Fifth, members are less inclined to bring their guests to the club out of fear that they'll be embarrassed by further service failures. This can impact the club's revenues significantly in all areas – golf, food and beverage, catering, activities, and club events. Declining revenues in many clubs is met with staff cutbacks that only make service levels worse.

Discussion Points: Select one or more of the above consequences of poor service. Discuss how each one is damaging to the club and its reputation. Consider the big picture consequences of unaddressed poor service and how each employee's actions on a daily basis either foster or hinder the club's mission of exceeding member expectations.

Take Away: Poor service is a threat to viability of a private club.



#03

What Price Poor Service? – 2

Sixth, members begin taking their complaints to board members and when enough similar complaints are heard, the board can become fixated with solving service issues, even to the exclusion of other important club business.

Seventh, when board and member concerns about service are not quickly addressed, it's not unheard of for some members to take it upon themselves to address these issues directly with department heads, or even line employees. This involvement, or as many managers would say – interference, is seldom helpful in fixing the problem, and in some cases, only makes things worse.

Eighth, when service is sufficiently bad or uncorrected over time, some members may resign, further damaging the club's finances.

Ninth, the club's outstanding employees – those who take pride in their work and their place of employment – become discouraged by the failures around them and morale suffers. Reduced morale is the start of a downward spiral that is challenging to turn around. In the worst case, good employees leave for greener pastures. There is great cost in such turnover, including lost continuity and knowledge of members and their habits.

Tenth, members pick up on the declining morale which only compounds their unhappiness with the club and its service. This is especially critical when long-term employees who are well-known and beloved by members let their dissatisfaction and sagging morale be known.

Eleventh, a group of influential or vocal members begins calling for the replacement of certain department heads, or the general manager.

Twelfth, at this point the focus of member dissatisfaction, whether general manager or department head, is so severe that it is difficult to turn around. Many members and even the board will conclude that the only solution is a change in management staff.

The above scenario usually plays out over a period of many months and creates havoc in the smooth functioning of the club. The turmoil and emotion impacts all involved in a most profound way and can be avoided if management simply recognizes that, despite all the other management disciplines necessary for success, service and service delivery are first and foremost in the service business.

As the first principle in Principles of Service states, *"Service is our only product."* Everything else is just the details of how to consistently make it happen. To paraphrase the old safety slogan, "Service is job one!"

Discussion Points: Select one or more of the above consequences of poor service. Discuss how each one is damaging to the club and its reputation. Consider the big picture consequences of unaddressed poor service and how each employee's actions on a daily basis either foster or hinder the club's mission of exceeding member expectations.

Take Away: Service failures have significant consequences for any club operation.



#04

The Foundation of Service

Leadership. Nothing happens without strong, consistent club-wide leadership. The mass of detail and complexities of providing service to a many members, each with their own expectations, can only be achieved by Service-Based Leaders who know they must provide all the tools, training, resources, as well as daily example, engagement, and support to the line employees who deliver the service.

Beyond this service commitment of leaders, it takes a strong and persistent “will to make it happen” from leaders at all levels. Like pushing on the giant flywheel of Jim Collins’ good to great companies, “*it takes a lot of effort to get the thing moving at all,*” and requires “*persistent pushing in a consistent direction over a long period of time*” to build momentum and achieve breakthrough. This persistence to push in a consistent direction can only come from the organization’s leadership.

Values. Recognizing that service is, first and foremost, an attitude or state of mind, it takes well-defined organizational values and a culture of service that is consistently and continually reinforced in both word and deed by the club’s leadership team. But leaders must realize that the development of this culture is not some organic entity that arises on its own or from the inherent values of a diverse workforce. To ensure it meets the needs and desires of members, it must be defined and modeled by management. When employees see their leaders living the values they preach and supporting the employees in their daily efforts, service becomes second nature to all.

Organization. A major obstacle to providing service is poor organization. Without ongoing efforts to set up the workplace for efficiency and to seek out and remove obstacles to the smooth functioning of all areas of the operation, line employees quickly become frustrated and disheartened. When unaddressed this frustration can turn to cynicism – which defeats any effort to provide service.

Poor organization is not found just in the physical layout of facilities, but also includes misguided or ever-changing policies and procedures, lack of standards and discipline in fellow workers, and weak or non-existent training. To be efficient, management and staff must be constantly focused on how to do things better and with less effort and frustration. This focus is commonly called Continual Process Improvement and should be an integral part of the club’s organizational values.

Training. But having an organization with strong leadership, a well-defined culture of service, and efficient organization is of limited value if those qualities cannot be consistently passed on to the employees who must deliver service everyday. This requires a well-planned and executed training system that delivers all essential values, knowledge, information, and service techniques to employees in manageable doses on a continuing basis. Without thorough and consistent training, service execution is dependent upon oral history and the attitudes, abilities, and personalities of individual employees. Some will do well, many won’t!

Personalized Service. Once the foregoing foundational elements of service have been firmly established, everything is in place to take service to the next level – rendering personalized service to individual members. While such service is often the stated intent of club managers, it’s unrealistic to expect that your service teams will be able to focus on such a detailed endeavor while struggling under weak leadership, poorly-defined values, disorganized operations, and lack of training.

Take Away: Just as in the construction of a dramatically appealing clubhouse, the finished details are built upon a structural foundation. The analogy for how to provide high levels of service could not be more appropriate – first you must build the foundation!



#05

Quality and Service

Every club claims to offer its members extraordinary legendary remarkable superb world-class (your pick) levels of service; yet how many of these organizations have taken the time or made the effort to define their quality and service standards?

Given that your club's quality is defined by the relative merits of service standards, let us pose some questions regarding the service to which you aspire or claim to offer.

- Have you or your organization defined what service is for your service-delivery employees?
- Have you explained to employees your members' expectations for service?
- Do you know what your members expect when it comes to service? If so, how do you know? What methodology is used to determine members' needs and expectations?
- Have you identified your key service touch points or moments of truth for your employees?
- Have you taught or demonstrated for your employees how to handle various touch points in all their variations and contingencies?
- Have you documented touch points and service standards, policies, and procedures to ensure that they are taught consistently to each new employee and generations of new employees?
- Do you have a means of measuring compliance with service standards, policies, and procedures?
- Do you have a process to address service failures?
- Do you have a process to make service failures right for your members?
- Do you have a process to discover underlying causes of service failures to ensure they don't happen again?
- Do you have a consistent process to educate employees about changes to standards, policies, and procedures to eliminate service failures?
- Do you have a means of monitoring service failures to identify trends or spot problems?
- Do your employees know that they can self-report their service failures without fear or repercussions?

If you've answered "no" to many of the questions above, you cannot provide quality service. What you do provide is a series of interactions between members and employees that may or may not meet the expectations of members or management. The quality and service you provide is based purely on chance and, therefore, has an unacceptably high risk of failures.

If the above describes your operation's quality and service, there is much to work on to meet the promises you've made to your members.

Points to Consider: Think about the requirements above and how your club measures up. Identify your weaknesses and gaps, establish priorities, and begin working to build a consistently high-quality service organization.

Take Away: Quality and service do not happen by chance. They can only be assured by a disciplined regimen of leadership, values, organization, and training.



#06

Principles of Service

The following principles govern the quality of the service we wish to offer:

1. SERVICE is our only product. We aim to provide the highest possible level of service to our members and their guests.
2. Attitude and a sense of enthusiasm are important ingredients in providing high quality SERVICE.
3. The first step in providing SERVICE is to anticipate the needs and desires of our members and their guests. To do this we must examine every area of our operation in detail to determine how we can give more and better service and value.
4. To provide high quality SERVICE, we must know what our members want and expect. Therefore, we should constantly seek their comments, criticisms, and opinions about our operation.
5. If a member perceives a problem, there is a problem. It makes absolutely no difference whether we think there is a problem or not. Furthermore, the problem is ours, not the members. The burden rests entirely with us to change the member's perception.
6. We should never be defensive when a member comes to us with a problem. He or she is doing us an immense favor by bringing the problem to our attention. We must listen carefully to make sure we understand the nature of the problem and take action to correct it.
7. Every problem has a solution. Placing blame for problems is not our concern. Solving problems and analyzing them to ensure they don't happen again is our only concern.
8. The SERVICE profession is a demanding one, but one that offers many rewards. There is nothing more demanding or more satisfying than accepting the challenge of turning someone's anger and unhappiness into a smile.
9. A true SERVICE attitude involves sincerely caring for our fellow man. The good feeling we get from helping others is proof positive that when we give to others, we give to ourselves.
10. A sincere smile is the smallest yet most important element of SERVICE. Though smiles are formed with the mouth, when sincerely given, they come from within. Smiles are more than just lip service.

Discussion Points: Select one or more of the above principles and discuss their meaning and purpose. Illustrate with examples from your own experience or describe how a service problem could have been avoided had a principle been followed or observed.

Take Away: The Principles of Service and what they mean should be second nature to every club employee.



#07

Our Members – 1

All of us who work at the club from general manager to supervisors to cart attendants to servers are here to provide service to our members. They are our ultimate bosses. Treat them accordingly. Our willing deference to them is a sign of respect. Without them there would be no club. Their use of club facilities and services makes our paychecks possible. Members should:

- Be greeted cordially wherever encountered.
- Be listened to politely when they have a comment, complaint, request, or suggestion. Always pass their remarks on to your supervisor.
- Be given our undivided attention. We must immediately interrupt our personal conversations at their approach. By giving them our absolute attention, we demonstrate our respect for them and our dedication to their comfort and welfare.
- Be helped in any way possible. We will not be naysayers to our members. There is always an alternative way to meet their requests. Be creative, be bold, but most of all, be helpful.
- Have doors opened and carts moved aside for them. When passing a member in hallways or on stairs, yield to them while greeting them cheerfully. Even if there is enough room to pass, make a point of moving aside to show deference.
- Never see us eating, drinking, or smoking. These personal habits interfere with our immediate and absolute focus on our members. Even if these habits don't actually interfere, they may give a negative impression – and impressions are what service is all about. We do not chew gum, candies, mints, toothpicks – it's unprofessional.
- Never see us “breaking a sweat.” Service is a form of theater. We are putting on a show for our members and guests. The pace of service should be measured – never hurried or harried.
- Be able to enjoy their round of golf with as little interference and disruption as possible. Equipment operators, beverage cart staff, and marshals should stop equipment when golfers are hitting or putting, and we should keep our conversations low so as not to disturb play.
- Not have to listen to our personal conversations anywhere around the property. Talk quietly when members are present. The club is not our place to play and have a good time. We should strive to maintain a dignified, quiet atmosphere.
- Hardly be aware of our presence. Be out of sight and out of mind. Good service is unobtrusive. Public areas of the club are for our members. Therefore, we should not be in the public areas unless working or quietly transiting from one work area to another.
- Never hear us complaining about the club or its policies and procedures. Such complaints should be brought directly to your supervisor.

Discussion Points: Select one or more of the above points and discuss why each is important. Illustrate or reinforce each point with examples or personal experience.

Take Away: Members are our ultimate bosses, and their use of the club pays our wages.



#08

Our Members – 2

As service employees, we must assume a deferential role in all our dealings with our members. The following thoughts will help guide us in that role:

- When greeting a member, let them know our names and that we are here to help them in any way.
- Be formal when interacting with members. To assume familiarity with them is to presume equality. In the service profession, we willingly assume a subordinate position and should not presume anything in our dealings with members. This does not mean that we should not respond to their friendliness. It does mean that we should take our cue from them and not assume familiarity.
- Speak slowly and deliberately, using standard English when talking to our members. Avoid slang expressions or trade jargon. Never refer to members as “You guys.”
- Do not lean against walls, sit on furniture in public areas of the club, stand with hands on hips or in our pockets, or fold our arms across our chests. All of these convey an attitude that this place is ours. These may seem like nitpicking details, but they send powerful messages about our attitudes.
- Be knowledgeable about our jobs and what is expected of us. We must take it upon ourselves to learn everything we can about all aspects of our business. While we strive to do a thorough job of training, our continuing commitment to learning has a great bearing upon our success.
- Make every effort to appreciate the member’s perspective. Every problem a member perceives is a real and immediate problem for him. To solve it, we must focus and listen carefully to what he is telling us. We cannot assume that we know what he is going to say.
- Make everything about our operation as plain, simple, and clear as possible for our members and their guests. Though they may come here every day, it is our job to make things as easy as possible for them. Therefore, changes in our policies and operation must be communicated well and thoroughly.

Satisfying our members is not an easy matter. They expect high quality food, recreation, and service in a clean, friendly, well-maintained and operated environment. They also expect value for price. To meet their expectations, we must have a keen commitment to our standards of service and the right attitude to make it happen.

Discussion Points: Select one or more of the above points and discuss why each is important. Illustrate or reinforce each point with examples or personal experience.

Take Away: Members are our ultimate bosses, and their use of the club pays our wages.



#09

Attitude

The right attitude is the most important requirement for success in any endeavor. How we approach our work has a direct bearing upon the quality of our work and, more importantly from each individual's standpoint, the enjoyment and the sense of satisfaction we derive from working here. If we dwell on the negative, our work and every aspect of our lives will be negative. We must choose instead to see our work in a positive way and take pride in our contributions to the larger effort.

The club feels strongly about maintaining a positive attitude. One sour, negative attitude can ruin the workplace for the rest of us. Our members don't need it and we don't need it. So, we say with deep conviction, "BE OF GOOD CHEER OR DON'T BE HERE".

Because of the importance of a right attitude and good cheer to our business and collective effort, we state categorically that an employee may be discharged for a chronically bad attitude.

Attitude Toward Members. We must prepare ourselves mentally each time we come to work. Be ready to serve our members. Our attitudes, appearance, and work performance are the basis upon which members judge us. Treat every member, their families, and guests with the respect they deserve as the people who employ us.

It is in our best interest to present ourselves in a manner that reflects pride in our work and loyalty to the club. Dissatisfaction with our place of employment or a supervisor must be taken up with him or her, not with members.

Attitude Toward Co-Workers. Consideration and helpfulness toward our fellow workers is essential to efficient team effort and to the morale of each department and the club. Be understanding and cooperative with other employees – it will make everyone's job easier and more enjoyable.

Praise and compliments make people feel good about themselves and the job they do. Each of us does many things right each day, so don't hesitate to compliment or thank a fellow worker. His or her appreciation will be its own reward!

Our Workplace. It is up to each of us to make our club an enjoyable and satisfying place to work. Life is too short to give a significant portion of it to something we don't enjoy or don't feel is worthwhile.

While every organization has its problems, life and our work are what we make them. Every staff member is encouraged to make the most of his or her time here. If we do this, our common purpose and collective experience will add much to our lives.

Discussion Points: Discuss from personal experience how a positive attitude can make all the difference in everything we attempt to do. Offer experiences or anecdotes demonstrating the damaging effects of bad attitudes on performance and success.

Take Away: Attitude is the most important requirement for success in any endeavor.



#10

Basic Service Issues – 1

There are certain basic service issues common to most clubs.

- **Maintain Decorum.** Clubs typically develop an atmosphere that reflects its membership. Whether formal or casual, the attitudes and behaviors of members will establish an appropriate decorum for the club in general and various areas of the club in particular. Employees need to be aware of and maintain this decorum.
- **Avoid Familiarity.** Many members live a more casual, relaxed lifestyle and they naturally carry this casualness into their interactions with club employees. Some members ask employees to call them by their first names and enjoy joking and exchanging banter with employees. This, however, can create a potential minefield for employees.
- **Avoid Sensitive Topics and Language.** Club employees should always avoid engaging in or responding to conversations with members on sensitive or controversial subjects such as religion, politics, discussions of other members, and ethnic or off-colored jokes.
- **Enforce Club Rules.** Each club has rules and regulations for its members to follow such as dress code, proper golf course etiquette, ready play, prohibition of bringing personal food and drink onto the golf course or into the pool areas, etc. When members do not follow the rules, it is up to employees to enforce them. Often the infraction is unintentional, and the member simply needs a reminder. In some cases, it may be best to make an exception in the immediate case to avoid embarrassment, but the member should always be educated in the process to avoid future problems. When informing members of a rule violation, it is always helpful to offer an alternative to the member, for instance, seating inappropriately dressed members in the bar to eat instead of the dining room.
- **Offer Special Touches.** There are small, yet special touches that demonstrate the club's commitment to service. Special touches should be devised and included in all areas of the operation.
- **Meet Service Requests.** All employees will make every effort to meet the special requests of our members. Going the extra mile to provide service will always impress members and their guests.
- **Satisfy High Maintenance Members.** Employees should understand that there will always be “high maintenance” members. Satisfying their higher expectations is part of the cost of doing business and the ultimate challenge of service. So, employees should not dwell on the more demanding few; rather they must recognize each request or complaint as legitimate and focus on the solution.

Discussion Points: Discuss the most relevant of the above service basics and how they can create opportunities for both the employee and the club. In discussing each issue, offer appropriate ways to handle emerging issues. By sharing success stories and failures with each other, employees gain a better understanding of how to handle any and all situations.

Take Away: Employees should be aware of all the service issues associated with their club.



#11

Basic Service Issues – 2

There are certain basic service issues common to most clubs.

- **Know your Club.** Every dining room has good seats and bad seats. The good seats are near the fireplace in winter, overlooking the verandah in summer, or a booth for quiet, intimate dining. Conversely, there are bad tables under air conditioning vents, near pantry and exterior doors, or near a large party of young children. You should be aware of the good, the bad, and the ugly of the club and seat members at the best available location.
- **Know Member Names.** Members want to be recognized and acknowledged at their club. These are among the main reasons people join clubs. Strive to learn their last names and address them as Mr., Mrs. Ms., Doctor, General, etc., at every opportunity.
- **Know Member Habits.** Employees should make every effort to learn the habits of members, particularly those who use the club frequently. Whether it's Dr. Jones liking his martinis dry and straight up or Mrs. Smith's inability to tolerate dairy products or Mr. Martin always having a Courvoisier after his meal, these tidbits of information, when followed up on by employees, provide a higher level of service and a personal touch that is always appreciated by our members.
- **Reinforce Club Value.** It is through the daily casual conversation with members that you can build value. Most members pay dues monthly or quarterly, so the club must reinforce to them that their money is well spent. Talk about the upcoming club activities and events, talk about an exciting new offering in the dining room, talk about items of interest that will help them see the benefits of being a member at their club.
- **Maintain Club Appeal.** One way to ensure that the club is appealing to members is to pretend you are the member. Each time you arrive to work, view the club and its facilities as if you were a new member or were entertaining guests. Look from top to bottom and see if you discover something that is out of place, dirty, or in need of repair. Then take action to report or fix it.
- **Establish WOW Factors.** We must all recognize that what excites and astounds today will be old news tomorrow. For the club and its employees to continually provide the unexpected service touches that wow our members, we must challenge ourselves to brainstorm and plan for ways to continually impress. We should not leave it to chance. See *Teachable Moments #49 and 50* for more information.

Discussion Points: Discuss the most relevant of the above service basics and how they can create opportunities for both the employee and the club. In discussing each issue, offer appropriate ways to handle emerging issues. By sharing success stories and failures with each other, employees gain a better understanding of how to handle any and all situations.

Take Away: Employees should be aware of all the service issues associated with their club.



#12

Teaching the Subtleties of Service

High levels of service in a club environment are so much more than knowing service techniques, smiling, and greeting members. To do service well requires people who are sensitive to the needs and desires of others and who understand a wide range of the customs and courtesies of human interaction. They need to recognize the subtleties of service. But what do we mean by subtleties?

Subtlety is the awareness and ability to make fine distinctions in how one engages with others or a well-calibrated sense of how to respond to or engage a person in a particular situation.

As leaders how do we go about teaching our employees the subtleties of service? It certainly takes more than telling them to smile and be nice to members. They must have a basic understanding of the underlying customs and practices of service, manners, and gracious behaviors, as well as an awareness of the signs and signals of unspoken needs. Not only do they need to know what to do, but they need to have the sensitivity and perceptiveness to recognize members' needs even before these are expressed.

Such sensitivities improve with knowledge and experience, but unless a new hire naturally possesses these abilities (which experience has shown that few do), club managers must start somewhere in training employees in the subtleties of service. Here's a list of requirements:

- The club must have well-defined organizational values and a constantly reinforced culture of service. When employees are immersed in such a culture, service becomes second nature to all.
- Daily engagement and consistent example of Service-Based Leaders. Without appropriate examples of service from leaders, don't expect employees to possess and provide it.
- Empowerment training that spells out the limits of employee initiative and discretion in resolving issues and problems.
- Making employees aware of the rules of engagement. Different members will want to engage differently with employees at different times and in different settings. Understanding the issues of engagement is critical to service and service delivery (see *Teachable Moments #26*).
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the mental environments for each area of the club. Different areas have different mental environments at different times of the day. Being aware of the concept of mental environment and recognizing member moods and desires is an important part of providing appropriate levels of engagement (see *Teachable Moments #18*).
- Teach service recovery and how to apologize. This is so basic it hardly needs stating, but experience has shown that a consistent approach must be taught to ensure employees understand the importance of recovering from bad situations and the need for a sincere "we accept all responsibility" apology (see *Teachable Moments #41 and 45*).
- Make sure employees understand the importance of the Three A's of Service – that is:

Be Alert, Aware, and Anticipate customer needs.

As with everything else demanding quality, service behaviors and delivery must be defined and taught to all employees. Otherwise, how would they know what you and your members expect?

Take Away: There is much more involved in service than just smiling and being friendly.



#13

Teamwork

Because we are a team of individuals committed to a common effort, we:

- Treat co-workers with courtesy and respect.
- Are considerate of co-workers. Cooperation and understanding make everyone's job easier and more enjoyable.
- Recognize accomplishment and thank co-workers for their efforts.
- Understand that every employee contributes regardless of position.
- Offer assistance and ask for help whenever necessary – this is, after all, the hallmark of a team.

A major part of teamwork is thoroughly completing all your assigned tasks. If you have opening duties, make sure to complete them all and with the same detail you would expect of others if they were opening for you. If you do them haphazardly, it can impact others when they arrive for their shift. The same applies to end-of-shift and closing duties. If you don't complete them properly or don't clean and restock your work areas, the next shift or opening staff the next morning will have more to do. Should they be short-handed, or someone arrives late, it impacts the entire staff and may impede member service.

Teamwork also includes helping new employees by showing them where things are and reinforcing what is expected of them. Despite the formal training given them, there is so much to learn that it's sometimes overwhelming, particularly if they start during a busy period. Further, it's hard for new staff to absorb everything at once and your helpful attitude and watchful eye will go a long way in making them feel welcomed and becoming a productive part of the team.

Employees should also share their good and bad service experiences with each other. No one has all the answers, and a unique or innovative approach may point to a best practice for everyone.

Finally, do not do anything that will exclude, abuse, or marginalize any team member, whether you like them or not. In order to deliver high quality service, each employee and the entire team must be at peak performance. Slighting any team member damages their self-esteem and brings a level of hassle and drama into the workplace that none of us needs or wants. Just as an athletic team cannot win without the maximum contribution and performance of every team member, the same is true in a work setting, particularly in the fast-paced and sometimes stressful environment of club service.

To foster a strong sense of teamwork, we state absolutely that the Golden Rule applies in how we treat and interact with one another.

Discussion Points: A sense of service to your fellow employees is just as important as your service efforts for members and guests. Discuss the meaning of teamwork and what actions on the part of individual employees can foster or hinder a sense of teamwork in your department or section.

Take Away: No club employee works alone; we are a team dedicated to a common purpose of quality and excellence.



#14

Touch Points

The term “touch point” refers to those critical moments and events that shape and define a member’s impression of service and service delivery. Also called “moments of truth,” touch points are defined as “a critical or decisive event on which much depends; a crucial action.” But no matter what they are called, if the club is to be a service leader, it must consistently get the touch points right and it’s up to the club’s managers to work with employees to identify, plan for, train, and flawlessly execute each of these service opportunities.

Most club departments have a limited number of touch points, probably less than ten. The food and beverage department has considerably more due to the intensive interaction with members during food service. Regardless of number, it’s up to service teams to identify and establish standards for each touch point – even to go so far as scripting and rehearsing employees’ touch point roles.

So what are the steps in planning touch point tactics? Here’s a basic list of requirements:

- Identify members’ needs and expectations.
- Carefully review interfaces with members and identify all touch points.
- Prioritize touch points based on service impact and impression.
- Spell out in detail the optimum manner of executing each touch point.
- Script, train, and rehearse to consistently execute touch points.
- Revise and refine touch point execution based on employee feedback.

Points of caution:

- Avoid robot-like, lockstep execution. You must be comfortable enough in your service role to improvise according to the dictates of the moment and situation. Everything you do must be comfortable and personal – that’s why employee empowerment is so important and powerful.
- Managers must encourage and act upon feedback from employees. The people who have direct service contact with members are in the best position to determine what works and what doesn’t.

Discussion Points: Examine your service contacts with members to identify touch points. Then work with your supervisor and service team to determine the optimum approach(es) for service and service delivery. Continue to evaluate these important events to fine tune them as you gain more experience. Share your experiences with your fellow workers to learn from the experience of others.

Take Away: Managers and employees must identify touch points and focus on consistent and appropriate service delivery at these critical moments.



#15

Club Etiquette

Etiquette is defined as the prescribed conduct or procedures to be observed in social or official situations. For our purposes we define etiquette as the requirements of decorum and behavior expected in a particular setting or environment of the club. In other words, it is the standard of behavior required of employees to meet member expectations.

While every member has their own expectations for the club, most, if not all members, expect courteous, friendly service in a quiet and relaxing atmosphere. They expect well-trained and respectful employees who are dedicated to their comfort and well-being. They expect employees to behave in a manner appropriate to the club and its surroundings.

While many of the standards of employee behavior apply to all areas of the club in all interactions with members and guests, some areas of the club have their own unique standards associated with the activities taking place in those areas. For instance, the expected etiquette for the dining room is different from that on the golf course.

Appropriate behavior and decorum (or as some might say, “good manners”) in the club environment is more than a series of rules and requirements. It is an understanding of what is appropriate in all your dealings with members and guests and requires both an awareness of and sensitivity to the nuances of service. By “nuance” we mean the subtle shades of distinction and variation found in various social situations and settings; for example, the difference in one’s behavior and demeanor in meeting your employer’s wife versus meeting friends for drinks after work.

Basic club-wide etiquette encompasses the following broad categories:

- Respect and the Ultimate Value of People
- Common Courtesies
- The Club’s Mental Environment
- Inappropriate Language and Slang
- Appropriate Words and Phrases
- Body Language and Tone of Voice
- Awareness and Responsiveness
- Focus – The Zen of Service

Each of these categories will be covered in greater detail in the following Teachable Moments.

Discussion Points: To ensure the greatest understanding, the elements of club etiquette should be discussed often and explored in detail to grasp the many subtle distinctions and variations encompassed in service.

Take Away: All employees must be aware of the etiquette requirements for each area of club operations.



#16

Respect and the Ultimate Value of People

It is natural to show respect for those who employ you and whose continued patronage and goodwill provide your job and income. Demonstrating this respect in all you do and say is at the heart of etiquette and good manners.

You show respect for others by how you treat them, the manner in which you approach them, and the common courtesies you extend to them.

It is just as important to show respect for your fellow workers. Like you, they work hard toward the common goal of providing outstanding service to members and guests. Your cooperation and timely assistance when needed demonstrates your respect and concern for your team members.

While every person is an individual, unique in background, experience, and education, the great majority have a common set of needs as they negotiate their lives. They:

- Wish to be treated well, with dignity and respect.
- Want value for their labor given or money spent, in other words, they don't want to feel cheated.
- Want to know what's going on and appreciate timely and accurate information that affects them.
- Prefer to trust and be trusted.
- Appreciate kindness and generosity of spirit, especially when unexpected.
- Recognize someone who is principled and whose words and actions are grounded in values.
- Want to be recognized for who they are, not lumped into some great unknown, and often unnoticed, mass.

While this may seem obvious to all, experience has clearly confirmed that many people are so wrapped up in their own issues and drama they seem oblivious to those around them. Experience has also shown that when you begin to focus outward on others instead of inward on yourself, all manner of positive things come into your life, not the least of which is the good feeling you get while helping and serving others.

Discussion Points: Discuss the importance of treating others with respect and likewise being treated with respect yourself. How does it feel to be "disrespected"? Why is showing respect particularly important in service environments and in building successful teams? Why is recognizing the ultimate value of people so important in everything you do?

Take Away: People always matter – no matter where they are found or what they are engaged in.



#17

Common Courtesies

Common courtesies are the everyday things we do to demonstrate good manners, show respect for others, and display our kindness and willingness to help. They include:

- Smiling easily and often, greeting members by name, using the word “please,” thanking people, wishing people a good day, saying goodbye.
- If a member has a title, such as doctor, general, or professor, they should be addressed as such.
- Members should never have to wait on you. Understand that members and guests always take precedence over employees and managers. If you are conversing with another employee, interrupt your conversation immediately when approached by a member or guest. This applies just as much to a manager or supervisor. He or she will never be upset when you interrupt a conversation to serve a member.
- Members shouldn’t have to listen to your personal conversations with co-workers, no matter how interesting such conversations might be.
- Step aside in hallways or on stairs when approached by members as a sign of respect.
- Open and hold doors.
- Assist any ladies, the elderly, or children who may be present.
- Do not allow members to see you eating, drinking, or smoking. These personal habits detract from the perception of service.
- Always take your breaks out of view for the same reason.
- Do not engage in “horse play” on club premises. The club is not your place to play and enjoy yourselves; horse play also results in accidents.
- Do not congregate and socialize with your co-workers where members can see you. Again, this is not your club. Your attention should always be focused on members and guests.

Discussion Points: Discuss the above points most relevant to your club and how they contribute to or detract from an atmosphere of helpfulness and service. Conversely discuss how an absence of common courtesy contributes to a negative atmosphere or perceptions.

Take Away: Common courtesy towards others – members, guests, and co-workers is at the core of service.



#18

The Club's Mental Environment

Every space has a mental environment made up of the attitudes, moods, activities, and pace of the people occupying that place. Compare the mental environment of a happy well-adjusted home and one that is in marital strife. Even the same place can have a different feel at different times. Consider the camaraderie in a busy bar on Friday night versus the same bar that morning with one patron. The natural environment is not just a reflection of current occupants and activity, but it affects everyone who enters. Walk into that same bar on Friday night and you'll soon join the fun.

In some restaurants the prevailing mental environment is one of "horse play" and a sense that the restaurant is there for the amusement and pleasure of the employees. Certainly, it's not a mental environment of service and caring for the customer; and certainly not appropriate for a private club.

What is the mental environment of your club? Is it one of service? Is there a sense among all employees of dedication to helping and assisting not only members and guests, but also each other? If not, what are the factors that contribute to your club's mental environment?

- **Values** – all employees must understand the importance of your organizational values and service ethic and demonstrate it in all they do.
- **Attitude and Mood** – Managers must insist on positive attitudes and good moods. Say to everyone, "Be of good cheer, or don't be here." Employees should reinforce this good cheer among themselves. No one should be subjected to someone else's bad mood or sour attitude.
- **Standards of Decorum and Demeanor** – as a fundamental requirement everyone must understand club etiquette and appropriate behavior. Working quietly, efficiently, and with purpose sends a powerful message to all who witness it.
- **Organization and Efficiency** – a sense of order and efficiency says a lot about your operation. Everyone needs to know what to do and when and how to do it.
- **Controlled Pace** – while hustle is an important quality in any operation, having a well-organized and efficient operation results in fewer chaotic moments with people rushing wildly about – which doesn't inspire confidence in anyone.
- **Helpfulness and Good Cheer** – your service teams create this by their absolute dedication to members and each other, but it must be directed and reinforced.

Your club and all aspects of its operation are a reflection of everyone who works there. Make sure your club's mental environment is appropriate to your membership and you'll see the results in member satisfaction and your bottom line.

Discussion Points: Every inhabited physical space has a mental environment based on people and their activities. Examine your workspace and discuss its mental environment. How do the actions of employees reinforce or take away from the environment desired by club members?

Take Away: Club employees need to be aware that their actions contribute to a pleasant environment for club members and guests.



#19

Inappropriate Language and Slang

Avoid using slang, informal terms, and jargon that are unique to the hospitality industry, such as F&B, an item is 86'd, PDRs, etc. Here is a sample list of inappropriate terms and slang:

- Not a problem
- You guys (as in "how are *you guys* tonight?")
- No sweat
- Can do
- Yep (nope) / Yeah (naw)
- Hey!
- Dude
- What's up?
- How's it going?
- Yo!
- Whatever!
- What?
- Long time no see
- What's happening?
- My bad!
- We don't do that
- I can't help you
- I'm not your server
- It's not my section
- No!

There are obviously many other inappropriate things such as cursing, swearing, or using expletives. These obviously have no place in polite conversation or in a club service environment.

Discussion Points: Discuss the language and terms above and why they are inappropriate in a private club. Discuss language with your service team and come up with your own list of what's appropriate and not.

Take Away: Certain types of language are entirely inappropriate in a club environment and should never be used.



#20

Appropriate Words and Phrases

Members and guests at private clubs expect high levels of service from those who serve them. Central to this service are the words and phrases that employees use while interacting with them. Below are listed examples of words and phrases that are appropriate in a club environment :

- Please / Thank you
- Yes sir (or ma'am) / No ma'am (or sir)
- May I be of assistance? (use "may," not "can")
- How may I help?
- It's my pleasure
- At your service, ma'am (or sir)
- Good morning (day or afternoon) / Good evening (or night)
- Welcome back, Mr. _____ / It's good to see you again, Mrs. _____
- Pardon me / Excuse me
- We look forward to seeing you again
- Certainly / Of course
- As requested
- We hope everything is satisfactory
- Is everything to your satisfaction?
- Right away, ma'am (or sir)
- I'll be right with you, sir (or ma'am)
- Let me replace that immediately

How words and phrases are said is as important as what is said. Whatever words and phrases you use, they must be natural and sincere. Do not sound stiff, robotic, or like they are memorized. Use the acceptable words and phrases above or similar ones that come naturally to you. Speak clearly. Look members squarely in the eye. Smile when appropriate. Be natural, be sincere, be friendly, but most of all, be engaging (that is, "winning, attractive, pleasant").

Discussion Points: Discuss the language and terms above and why they are appropriate in a service environment. Also discuss the importance of being sincere and natural in everything you say. Brainstorm with your service team to develop your own list of appropriate words and phrases.

Take Away: The words and phrases you use in serving members can have a major impact on how that service is viewed.



#21

Body Language and Tone of Voice

Non-verbal signals are powerful communicators and often speak louder than words. The proper service attitude if you are waiting to provide service is to stand with your hands clasped in front of you (as seen at right) or behind your back.



Body language to avoid includes:

- Hands in your pockets or on your hips
- Arms folded across your chest
- Lounging around club premises
- Sitting on furniture or leaning against walls where members can see you

This may seem nitpicking, but such body language sends the wrong signals to members. They say, “This is our place – and we can behave any way we want.”

Your tone of voice is also important. Cultivate a tone that is cheerful, friendly, willingly helpful, and enthusiastic. Done incorrectly your tone can convey an unintended message of:

- Irritation,
- Impatience,
- Sarcasm, or
- Negative attitude;

and obviously, we never want to give our members that impression.

Discussion Points: Share personal experiences when the body language or tone of voice of someone you were dealing with was offensive or off-putting. Discuss how this can destroy all sense of service for a member or guest.

Take Away: Body language and tone of voice can send unintended signals about your service attitude.



#22

Awareness and Responsiveness

There is no better way to demonstrate your dedication to the welfare of members than to be aware of and responsive to their needs. This means that you are always alert for ways to serve and assist.

Part of awareness and responsiveness is anticipating members' needs. This means you need to know where members are, what they are doing, what their habits are, and try to put yourself in their place. What might they need or want next?

- For servers in the dining room, this means that you should constantly survey the dining room, as well as your section, to see if a member is signaling for assistance or looking around for her server. Do not congregate and socialize with co-workers during meal service – it absolutely detracts from your awareness of and responsiveness to members and their needs. This is just as true in the pantry and kitchen as in the dining room itself.
- For the outside golf staff, it's being alert to which member has guests coming, noting their names, and watching for their arrival. Assume guests are unfamiliar with club facilities and escort them to the locker rooms or pro shop while informing them of other members in their party, frost delays, carts on the path, when the beverage cart will be running, and any other information to enhance their experience at the club.
- For the housekeeper, it's turning off the vacuum cleaner when members or guests are present or interrupting the cleaning of a rest room and stepping outside to allow members privacy.
- For the golf course maintenance staff, it means shutting off equipment when golfers are present or watching for a golfer's errant shot.

It also means that you should show hustle. A person who shows hustle is actively and energetically involved in whatever he or she is doing. It is important because it demonstrates effective use of time and a willingness to do whatever is necessary to get a job done. The opposite – slow-moving and dawdling sends a message of inattention and laziness – certainly not something to inspire confidence in those who witness it.

But while you should always demonstrate hustle, you must never let members see you breaking a sweat. Good service is a form of theater, and you should always give members the impression that what you do on their behalf is effortless – that everything is well-planned, organized, and well-executed.

Discussion Points: Discuss events and situations that occur in your area of the club and how being alert and aware, or as some might say “on your toes,” helps you anticipate opportunities to provide service to members and guests.

Take Away: Being alert and responsive to members' needs is the essence of good service.



#23

Focus – The Zen of Service

You should focus on each member you encounter as if they were the only person in the world and your success and the club's depended upon them. You should also be fully aware of your surroundings, what you are doing, who is present, and how your actions may be impacting others.

There are moments when people are daydreaming or distracted in a fog of their own making. They are thinking about other things and not focused on what they are doing. When they are not present in the moment, they can cause accidents and their inattention negatively impacts service and the club operation as a whole.

Have you ever been in a diner and had to listen to the loud clatter of a busboy throwing dirty silverware into a bus pan? The amount of noise he makes is a sure sign of how little attention he is paying to his task. His only interest is speed. He's completely detached from his surroundings and the impact of what he is doing. But consider his impact on a member who is trying to conclude a major business deal with important guests.

The opposite of such distracting behavior is a complete focus on what you are doing in the moment – as some would say the Zen of service.

Discussion Points: Discuss the need for focus in accomplishing anything worthwhile. Provide examples of how distracted people are unaware of their surroundings and the needs of members, thereby impacting service or causing accidents by their inattention.

Take Away: Quality service depends upon our absolute focus on members and what we are doing at all times.



#24

The Challenges of Food Service – 1

There are challenging situations associated with food service operations. Here are some of the more common ones:

Children. In general, children, particularly pre-teens and teens, appreciate being treated as adults. More importantly, children are often embarrassed by overly protective or patronizing treatment. They should be presented with a menu and made to feel an important part of the dining experience. Give them preferential treatment only if requested by their parents or guardians. Small children may require a highchair or booster chair. Supply the requested chair, but let the parents place the child in the seat and secure them.

Elderly. Courtesy and respect are especially important when serving elderly guests. Normally, these guests require more time to eat and enjoy their visit. They may also require extra assistance but take your cue from them or other members of their party. In all dealings with elderly members and guests, be friendly, courteous, and avoid rushing them in any way.

Differently-abled Diners. Occasionally, a disabled member or guest will come into our dining room. Understanding a disability and assisting properly and discreetly will add to their enjoyment of the meal. A guest in a wheelchair may wish to be pushed up to the table. Be sure the wheelchair is out of the aisle so he will not be bumped unnecessarily.

A visually-impaired person will usually need the most assistance but be careful not to offend by being overly solicitous. Hang up her coat and belongings and gently lead her to a seat. Offer your arm, but let the guest take your arm rather than you taking hers. Discreetly move objects so they will not be upset. Quietly ask if you may acquaint the guest with the menu. Do not fill glasses too full. As you serve, inform her where the food and beverage items are being placed.

A deaf person may be able to give you his order verbally like any other guest. Some, however, prefer to write out or point to their choice. Be alert to the fact that the deaf communicate with hand signals. If you are concerned about an accident as you are serving, lightly touch the person on the right or left shoulder, indicating you are serving him from that side.

If you are unsure how to best handle the needs of a particular differently-abled person, ask him. He is the best person to tell you how to best provide service. A simple, "Mr. Jones, please let me know how I can best serve you," will usually suffice.

It is the club's firm desire to provide the same outstanding dining experience to every member and guest. If you are unsure what to do to provide that experience, check with your supervisor.

Discussion Points: Discuss each of the challenges above with your supervisor and work team to determine the best way to handle each situation. Also share your experiences in serving differently-abled persons with your work team so that all may benefit.

Take Away: Food service employees must be familiar with various challenging situations and be prepared to handle them appropriately.



#25

The Challenges of Food Service – 2

There are challenging situations associated with food service operations. Here are some additional ones:

Upset member or guest. "The customer is always right," is an adage often given as a guide to follow when dealing with upset or angry patrons. But you must understand that in the service business, all concepts of right and wrong are irrelevant. There is only the member's perception of a problem. This is the only reality, and you have but one course of action – to positively influence that perception. By disputing the perceived problem, you only amplify and reinforce a member's annoyance.

First and foremost, when dealing with a complaint, do not become defensive. It's not easy, but if you allow yourself to put up your defenses, you'll send the wrong signals to the member, and you will never hear what he or she is saying. Try to mentally step back from the situation and realize that the member is not attacking you personally, though it may seem that way (see *Teachable Moments #42 and 43*).

Whatever has happened up to the point of the complaint is unimportant compared to what you are about to do. Take a deep breath if necessary. Focus all your attention on the member to find out what he or she is really saying. Do not assume you know what the complaint is. Listen patiently and sincerely. Ask questions to ensure you understand. Be sympathetic. The problem is the club's, not the member's, and you must do everything in your power to resolve the situation.

Offer to replace the item or correct the problem within the limitations of your authority. If you cannot offer a satisfactory solution yourself, excuse yourself and immediately seek the assistance of your supervisor. In all cases, do not offer a negative answer to the member before you have consulted your supervisor or manager on duty. Remember, no matter what has occurred the goal is to make certain that the member is satisfied.

Incorrect or mistaken order. Mistakes are made in taking and placing orders. Regardless of whose error it may be, you must accept the "blame" for the mistake. By trying to blame the member, you only embarrass him or her. By trying to blame the kitchen or others, you only embarrass yourself. If a mistake is made, apologize immediately and cheerfully offer to correct it.

Spills. No matter how careful you are, you will at some time spill food or a drink on a member or guest. In most cases members will want to wipe up any spills on their own clothing. Be as helpful as you can. Get your supervisor as soon as possible so he may personally apologize to the member or guest and take such action as is necessary to solve the problem.

Discussion Points: Discuss each of the challenges above with your supervisor and work team to determine the best way to handle each situation. Also share your experiences, both good and bad, with your work team so that all may benefit.

Take Away: Food service employees must be familiar with various challenging situations and be prepared to handle them appropriately.



#26

Rules of Engagement

While many members appreciate and enjoy their interactions with staff, even engaging in playful banter and teasing with their favorite employees, there are also those members who expect a more formal level of service. It is also often the case where the member who likes to “play” with employees when in the bar after a round of golf, does not want the same level of engagement when family and friends are present. The challenge then is to assess each service situation and gauge the member’s mood and interest in engagement. Here are some of the factors involved:

Time of Day and Day of Week. The time of day can have a great deal to do with a member’s interest in engagement. Some members are not morning people and don’t appreciate noise, exuberance, or conversation early in the morning. If a member has his nose in the paper, he probably doesn’t want any more than polite and efficient service. On the other hand, Friday night cocktail hour is a time of conviviality and sociability, and you might expect a more playful interaction.

Occasion. Dr. and Mrs. Jones celebrating their anniversary will probably appreciate discreet service with as few interruptions as possible. Service should still be prompt and attentive, but servers should take their cue from the intensity and privacy of the couple’s conversation. Conversely, a group of ladies coming in for lunch after a morning of tennis are probably keyed up and looking forward to a fun time together. The same group while entertaining a renown speaker for their lecture series would expect a more distant and detached approach. The businesswoman entertaining clients may want formal, correct, and efficient service with as few interruptions as possible so she can conduct her business in a manner that reflects well on herself and her club.

Members in the Party. The makeup of a member’s party will have a lot to do with the level of engagement. A group of members and guests just off the golf course are probably more ebullient, particularly if someone shot his low round, had an eagle, or sank a forty-foot putt to win the match. On the other hand, a member hosting his aged parents for Mother’s Day Brunch is not there to engage with employees. It is also possible that a member who comes in alone for a drink may interact with staff very differently than when he is with his wife and children.

Past Experience. There is no better predictor of the future than experience. If a member has always been reserved and formal, employees can expect that he will continue to be so. However, John, the single junior member, is casual, relaxed and always enjoys playful repartee with the bar staff. No doubt he will be that way when he stops in after work for a few drinks. However, should John arrive with a date, he may not want the same level of engagement from the bartender.

As see from these examples, there is no foolproof way of knowing how a member will act, react, or interact with the friendly engagement of employees. It’s up to the employee to assess the mood of the member. Most people have a good sense of when someone wants to interact with them. Employees should always hold back until a member makes it clear by initiating a greater degree of contact. If in doubt, an employee should go no further than being courteous, polite, and friendly.

Discussion Points: Discuss the above situations and others to determine the best approach to engaging with members. Share experiences and best practices with your work team.

Take Away: Employees must take the engagement cue from members and act accordingly.



#27

Showtime

“Show Time” – The time at which a catered event is to start or when guests start arriving. More importantly, from our perspective – The time when all set up must be completed and staff standing tall and ready to “rock and roll.”

A great deal of planning and organization goes into the preparation for each catered event at the club. The clubhouse manager or catering manager has already met with the event host, selected or designed menus, reserved space for the event, ensured that all necessary equipment, supplies, and beverages are on hand to support the event, and scheduled the staff necessary to carry it off with flawless execution.

The chef and his staff have planned the production of all food ensuring sufficient stock is on hand to meet the needs of the event. The food has been carefully prepared with great attention given to event timing to ensure that food is ready for service at its peak of flavor and freshness.

Guests are assembled, some coming many miles to attend the event. The host is understandably nervous that all go according to plan. Much planning and expense are on the line. Everything is ready.

How do we make sure we meet everyone’s expectations? Basically, there are four things we must do to meet the expectations of our members and guest.

- We must be organized in both our planning and execution of the event.
- We must be well-trained to deliver high quality service in all aspects of the event.
- We must work as a team. Kitchen and service staff must understand their respective responsibilities, execute them efficiently, be prepared for the unexpected, and help each other out whenever necessary.
- We must have positive attitudes and a strong commitment to service. We should smile easily and often, and look for ways to be helpful to members, guests, and fellow employees.

The tables are set, the room decorated, and lights dimmed, the food ready to go, the music just right, the guests are beginning to arrive, looking forward to the occasion. The staff is prepared – standing by, ready to give remarkable service. The doors open. Here they come. It’s Showtime!

Discussion Points: Share your own catering experiences, both good and bad, with your work team so that everyone can learn valuable lessons.

Take Away: The two keys to successful catered events are thorough and timely preparation and proper execution with outstanding service.



#28

Selling with Knowledge and Enthusiasm

Some years ago my boss and I were on a trip to Nevada to visit our newest club. During the visit, we had an opportunity to eat at a cozy Italian restaurant by the name of Luciano's. While the food was great, it was the service that blew me away. Let me tell you why.

After we were greeted and seated, our waiter, a middle-aged man, approached the table. He immediately sensed our good mood and engaged us in pleasant and humorous banter. While presenting the menu, he described the daily specials in a graphic and mouth-watering way (with excellent Italian pronunciation) and ended by saying we should try the mussels as they just came in fresh that afternoon. Of course, we agreed and ordered a couple of dozen steamed in wine, garlic, and butter. After taking our dinner order, he suggested a wonderful Chianti that was the perfect complement to the meal.

As I observed our waiter, he moved from table to table with a wonderful ease, engaging the patrons in conversation, suggesting appetizers, entrees, and wines. He seemed to wait on every table and was supported by a crew of young assistants. He was so good at what he did and seemed to know so much about the restaurant's offerings that I assumed he must be the owner. Certainly, he took a proprietary interest in every table and his many tempting suggestions probably boosted every check by 30-40% – what better way for an owner to ensure his restaurant's success!

After dinner, he again worked his magic by suggesting and describing the fresh, made-from-scratch Cannoli. His coup de grâce was to suggest Lemoncello as an accompaniment for the dessert. Thankfully, my boss was picking up the check!

As we left, I complimented him on his service and asked his name. It turned out he was Irish and was the waiter, not the owner. I was stunned, not just that an Irishman could be so Italian, but that he was so effective based upon his knowledge of the restaurant's offerings and his obvious interest in and enthusiasm for the food.

Discussion Points: Discuss the story above and the things the server did right to make the meal memorable. What things do you do that have the same effect? Share stories and successes with your fellow team members so that everyone can learn from your experiences.

Take Away: The more you know about your club's menus and the food and beverage offered, the better able you are to enhance members' enjoyment of their meal. Your knowledge and enthusiasm can make all the difference.



#29

The F&B Pre-Shift Meeting

Is a pre-shift meeting really necessary? Compare a pre-shift meeting with professional athletes whose jobs require peak performance, both individually and as a team, in an environment where “winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing!” Without fail, these athletes huddle for a few moments before every game to renew their commitment to each other and their mission to win. In the service business the game is every day, every shift, and the need for success is just as important. So yes, a pre-shift meeting is an absolute necessity in the food and beverage operation. Here are some of the things that can be covered in a food and beverage pre-shift meeting:

Proper Dress and Grooming. Is everyone in proper dress or uniform? Do they have the right footwear and their nametags? Does everyone meet the club’s grooming standards? These basic standards are critical to a professional operation. What gets checked, gets done!

Reservations. Who’s coming in for dinner tonight? Do we know their likes, dislikes, and preferences? Have they made any special requests? Is it a celebratory occasion? Double check the member database to see if the meal could be for a birthday or anniversary?

Special Parties. Are there special parties scheduled for tonight in the dining room? Have they made any special requests? Do they have a limited or set menu?

Daily Specials. Go over the [Menu Item Selling Sheets, PCPM Form 484](#), for any special items. Will the chef do a tasting and explain items and recipes? Cover any wine pairings with specials. Are there special appetizers, desserts, specialty drinks, wines by the glass, wines by the bottle? Review pricing for these, which POS key to ring them on, and discuss ideas to suggest.

Review Pronunciation of any unfamiliar or foreign food terms or product names.

Upcoming Club Events. Review details of events such as Sunday Brunch, Fine Dining Nights, Wine Tastings, Luau at the pool, so that servers can provide information and promote to diners if asked.

Review Daily Sales Targets so everyone knows if the club is on track to meet budget. Review any ongoing contests or sales incentives.

Kudos, Recognition, and Complaints. Review any positive feedback to celebrate successes and extraordinary service by individual servers. Cover any complaints received with lessons learned or to brainstorm solutions.

Membership Familiarization. Short, ongoing review of members, their preferences, special occasions. Show pictures, if available. If member data is reviewed incrementally each day, over time servers will have a greater familiarity with the full membership. In particular, cover information on new members.

Basic Service Focus. Cover any items servers should focus on such as getting member numbers on charge slips, quick pick up of hot items from the line, not over stacking the dishwasher station, etc. By focusing on one basic item each day, servers are continually reminded of the basics of our business.

Questions, Comments, Feedback. Servers should always be made to feel comfortable in asking questions, making suggestions, and providing feedback from their serving experiences.

Take Away: The pre-shift meeting is an essential discipline in meeting standards, training staff, and reviewing dining options.



#30

Promoting a Richer Dining Experience

If you consider most menus, diners have a choice of appetizers, entrees, desserts, wines, and specialty alcoholic drinks. Most go out to eat with a specific entrée in mind. What they have not thought about, and will not think about until they sit at the table is, what might go well with their entrée? Here is the opportunity to suggest an enhancement to their meal! The server can “sell” members on the idea that this or that accompaniment will add to their dining experience.

But as any veteran salesperson knows, “you can’t sell what you don’t know!” Given that we hire bright, outgoing, but often young and inexperienced people to work as servers, how do we give them the necessary knowledge to suggest enhancements to various menu items? Further, recognize that food and beverage is an inexhaustible body of knowledge not easily mastered in a lifetime.

While this presents a challenge, it is not insurmountable with a little organization and effort. By using pre-shift meetings, Menu Item Selling Sheets, and *Food and Beverage Training on the Go* topics, you can give your servers a strong foundation in the necessary knowledge to confidently make suggestions (see *Teachable Moments #55 and 56*).

But in addition to providing servers the knowledge to suggest, it’s helpful to give them the incentive. Most people are competitive by nature and simply need the appropriate motivation and feedback to pursue a goal. The following steps help provide the incentive for your service team to make suggestions to members’.

- **Benchmarking.** Break your revenue projections for food and beverage down into volume and average sale. For example, if you know from history that your average check for dinner is \$18.53, you can divide your projected revenue for dinner for a given period by the average check to see how many dinners you will have to sell. If your budget is \$25,000 for February, then you must sell 1,349 dinners to reach your goal. You can further break down the goals into weekly or daily targets. By benchmarking your appetizer, dessert, wine, and specialty drink sales, you can likewise determine the current average sale for each and compute a target figure for the number of each you must sell. If you’ve not previously benchmarked, your first few months’ targets may not be very accurate or realistic, but you can adjust them as you gain experience.
- **Establish Realistic Goals and Track Results.** Use your benchmark numbers to establish goals for future operating periods for appetizers, desserts, wines, and specialty drinks. Post those goals prominently in the pantry or other central location for your servers to see. Break your monthly goals for each category into daily goals. Then challenge your servers to surpass those daily goals. Every day post the previous day’s and the month-to-date results so each server can monitor the team’s progress toward the goal.

Discussion Points: The more servers know about the menu offerings and dining benchmarks, the better able they are to suggest accompaniments for a meal and increase the average check. Unless you have a staff of knowledgeable “foodies,” they need to be taught about the food and beverages you serve.

Take Away: Suggesting is a discipline built upon information, knowledge, and feedback.



#31

Increasing the Average Check

Every food professional knows that the way to increase revenues short of increasing the number of customers is by increasing the average check. This is particularly important in the club business where each club has a finite number of members and cannot attract the wider audience of the general public. But in a private club setting, we must keep in mind that we are there to promote a memorable dining experience for our members, which we can do by offering appropriate suggestions of dining accompaniments.

- **Teach Servers to Suggest.** Use your pre-shift meetings to continually train your servers about the food and beverage products you serve. This means appetizer and dessert tastings and teaching them about wines, liqueurs, and spirits in general and especially those that you offer. Equipped with this knowledge they will be far more comfortable in suggesting meal accompaniments. Encourage them to use their new knowledge to meet and exceed goals!
- **Provide Servers with Product Knowledge.** Use Menu Item Selling Sheets prepared by the chef to educate servers about all items on the menu. These selling sheets should include ingredients; flavorings (herbs and spices); cooking times; portion sizes; special distinguishing characteristics such as vegetarian, organic, farm fresh, kosher, heart healthy; country or locale of origin; presence of dairy products or possible allergens such as peanut oil, shellfish, etc.; method of preparation (e.g., sautéed, pan fried, roasted, deep fried, etc.); types and preparations of sauces; and any other pertinent information of interest. Lastly, the chef should include his suggested wine accompaniment for appetizers, entrees, and desserts.
- **Continue Tracking Daily Sales against Goals.** Design contests or offer prizes to those who sell the most. At minimum publicly recognize those who contribute the most to goals.
- **Continue Benchmarking Your Sales.** Not only is this historical data helpful in setting goals and projecting future business, but the detailed benchmarks you keep this year will help you budget your sales for next year. Lastly, there will be a clear record of the progress you've made in increasing sales – certainly, a nice thing to have when you meet with your supervisor at your next performance review.

Charles A. Coonradt, in his wonderful book, *The Game of Work*, explained how people will work incredibly hard for no compensation to lower their golf handicap, beat their best time in a 10k race, or improve their bowling average. The same desire to improve oneself or improve one's performance can be demonstrated at work if people simply get measurable feedback on their performance in a timely manner. The key to measurable feedback is knowing past performance (easily acquired in a business setting by benchmarking) and then setting challenging goals for future performance.

Increasing your average check is one of the easiest things a club can do to improve its food and beverage bottom line. The additional revenue helps overcome the high fixed cost in food operations and will bring more margin to the bottom line.

Take Away: Suggesting and increasing the club's average check is a discipline built upon information, knowledge, incentives, and feedback.



#32

Suggesting for a Richer Dining Experience – 1

Dining offers many opportunities to offer suggestions as can be seen from the following list:

- **Beverages.** Offering beverages is the usual way to start a meal. In addition to offering non-alcoholic beverages such as water, tea, lemonade, and sodas, many diners will want an alcoholic beverage, so be prepared to suggest a wine, beer, or cocktail.
- **Cocktails.** There are a host of creative cocktails for any taste and occasion. The heyday of cocktails was in the Forties and Fifties, but these retro drinks are making a comeback. Many times, the person who would routinely order a Vodka and Tonic might be induced to try a refreshing Tom Collins, Sea Breeze, Banana Daiquiri, or other mixed drink. Talk to your bartender about his or her suggestions. Learn about a new cocktail each shift, and in no time, you'll have a large repertoire to suggest.
- **Wine by the Glass.** Diners who don't want a bottle of wine for either consumption or cost reasons, can be tempted to have a glass of wine. In addition to house wines, many clubs offer upscale or premium wines by the glass. Ensure you're familiar with what wines are available by the glass and are able to entice members to try them by knowing where they come from, what they go with, their flavorings and aromas, sweetness or dryness, and reputation for quality.
- **Appetizers.** Appetizers are a great way to start a meal, usually taking less time to prepare, allowing diners to snack on something while thinking about what entrée they want, and they go well with cocktails or other beverages. As you're taking drink orders, suggest appetizers to go with them. Another great way to sell appetizers is to offer a medley or sample of several appetizers that the entire table can share with their drinks.
- **Soups and Salads.** Most clubs will offer a variety of soups and salads, with light, refreshing ones in hot weather and more hearty offerings in the winter. Many diners will opt for just a soup or salad or maybe a soup and salad combination. Often, if your soup, salad, and dressing offerings are creative, you can interest diners in a cup of soup or a salad by enticing descriptors and your wholehearted recommendation.
- **Desserts.** Your club will offer a variety of desserts for those with a sweet tooth. Like appetizers they are often shared. Be prepared to tempt your diners with mouthwatering descriptors and don't forget everyone's often overlooked favorite – ice creams.
- **Liqueurs.** Club carry a wide assortment of liqueurs that make wonderful after-dinner drinks. Many are world-famous for their proprietary flavorings and recipes, and have been around for decades, even centuries. They are great served neat, on the rocks, or even over a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Make a point of becoming familiar with these; just make sure you pronounce their names properly.
- **Cognac, Brandies, Ports** make great after-dinner beverages. Again, familiarize yourself with those your club carries and be prepared to recommend them after dinner with coffee service.
- **Espressos, Cappuccinos, Specialty Coffee Drinks.** Many clubs offer specialty coffees and after dinner drinks made with coffee. Don't hesitate to suggest these to those diners who want to linger at the table over conversation.
- **Sparkling Wines and Champagnes.** These wines are usually associated with celebratory occasions, so be aware if someone is celebrating a birthday, anniversary, or other occasion.

Take Away: The more you know about the club's food and beverages, the better able you will be to make dining suggestions to members and guests.



#33

Suggesting for a Richer Dining Experience – 2

Suggesting is a proven means of increasing dining room average checks and overall food revenues while providing members and guests with a richer, more enjoyable dining experience. Many diners will tell you that they enjoy and appreciate a knowledgeable server who can suggest additional or alternative accompaniments to their usual dining fare. Instead of another routine meal in the club dining room, your knowledge and enthusiasm for the food and beverages we offer can help turn the meal into an evening to remember.

So, what can you do to help the club's bottom line while simultaneously enhancing service to members. The simple answer is to become as knowledgeable as possible about everything the club serves while enthusiastically suggesting various food and beverage items. Here are tips to help you do just that:

- **Know Your Menu and All Beverage Offerings.** You can't suggest what you don't know. Take it upon yourself to learn as much as you can about each menu item. Ask the chef about the food, how it's prepared, what ingredients are in each item, and what their favorite items are. Do the same with the bartender. Make sure you know the house and premium brands of liquor, as well as all the beers the club carries. Educate yourself about wines. Read and study bottle labels – often they will have descriptors you can use to help describe wines or beers.
- **Pay Close Attention During Pre-Shift Meetings.** If the club is not using Menu Item Selling Sheets, PCPM Form 484, suggest they use them to better educate you and your co-workers. Make sure you know everything about every menu item, so you can creatively describe them to diners.
- **Record and Rehearse.** Take notes and ask questions. Ask the chef for creative adjectives and descriptors for menu items and daily specials. Make notes and create phrases to use when describing items. Rehearse these so that they come easily to you when reciting them at tableside.
- **Show Excitement and Enthusiasm when Describing Items.** Put some enthusiasm into your descriptions by voice inflection and body language when presenting to members. Avoid deadpan delivery and a monotone voice. Practice your delivery with fellow team members. Take the cue from professional broadcasters – note how they move their heads for emphasis and modulate their voices when delivering the news.
- **Be Prepared to Make Recommendations.** A diner will often ask his server, "What do you like?" Make sure you have several recommendations for appetizers, soups, entrees, and desserts, as well as beers and wines. Even if you haven't tasted all the items on the menu, ask other servers and kitchen staff what they like best and don't hesitate to use their recommendations. The worst answer is "I don't know." It indicates a lack of interest in your club's food and your job as a server.

Take Away: The more you know about the club's food and beverages, the better able you will be to make dining suggestions to members and guests.



#34

Suggesting for a Richer Dining Experience – 3

Use Proper Pronunciation. Nothing identifies you as a rookie more quickly than mis-pronouncing food and beverage terms. Many wines, proprietary liqueurs, and cooking terms are European and in the language of origin. Pronouncing these names and terms properly marks you as a professional and inspires confidence in the diner when you make a recommendation. If you're unfamiliar with a name or term, check with your fellow servers or supervisors.

Selling is a Numbers Game. Not everyone will agree to your suggestions, but the more you make, the more who will, particularly if the word gets out that you're knowledgeable about food and beverage. Let's just say that one out of every ten members you suggest to, says yes. Say you serve 2,000 diners in a month, so 200 say yes. Say the average increase in each diner's check is a conservative \$5 – that's \$1,000 in increased sales every month, or \$12,000 a year. If all 6 full time servers can do the same – that's an additional \$72,000 in F&B sales for the club. Then let's say you get so good at suggesting that 2 out of 10 say yes. You do the math; it's impressive!

But Suggesting is not Just about Numbers. Suggesting additional and alternative choices to members and guests is not just about making more money for the club; it's about enhancing diners' experiences by getting them to try new things, to expose them to the richness and variety of culinary tradition. Most, if not all, diners appreciate the suggestions of knowledgeable, imaginative, and enthusiastic servers. Very few would ever be offended, and the reason any might, probably has more to do with your methods than the fact that a suggestion was made.

Never, Ever “Hard Sell.” If you recognize that the most important thing you're doing is providing members and guests with a richer dining experience, not selling cars on commission, you'll never offend diners by pushing too hard. Make a suggestion. If not accepted, move on. You'll quickly learn who is open to your suggestions and when someone is set on their own choices.

Sensory Descriptions. Develop a repertoire of descriptors that augment the menu description. Examples include “fresh-made,” “made-from-scratch,” “farm fresh,” “chef's own,” “fresh-baked,” “locally grown,” “just in today,” “refreshing” for light, cool, summertime fare, “hearty” for winter soups and chili, “tender” for steaks and chops, etc. The only requirement is that your descriptors be accurate. Check with the kitchen about each item and then get creative.

Geographical Descriptions. Certain geographical regions are known for their products such as Wisconsin cheeses, Vermont maple syrup, Virginia hams, Chesapeake Bay oysters, Maine lobsters, Napa Valley wines. When appropriate, let people know where their meal comes from. Even if an item is not famous, using its locale of origin gives it a cachet. If your chicken is free-range from Mr. Jones' Windsong Farm, describe it by name – free-range Windsong Farm chicken.

Don't Forget the Kids. There are also opportunities to delight the children, though your suggestion should be to the parents, as not all parents may want their kids to have sugary desserts. Suggest other entrees besides those on the kid's menu. Serve smaller portions of regular entrees at a cheaper price, suggest specialty kid's non-alcoholic beverages, and, of course, desserts.

Take Away: The more you know about the club's food and beverages, the better able you will be to make dining suggestions to members and guests.



#35

Suggesting Spirits for a Richer Dining Experience

Know Your Premium Brands. The easiest ways to increase the average check is to suggest your premium brands of alcohol. Not only must you know and correctly pronounce their names, but you should know what makes them special. Things you need to know include: the age such as a 12-year-old scotch, proprietary flavorings as in single malt scotches or the 10 ingredients in Bombay Sapphire gin, or quality of production such as in Belvedere vodka being distilled four times.

Beers. For many years, there was a great consolidation of local and regional breweries that resulted in a handful of dominant companies offering very similar products. In recent years, though, there has been an explosion of small, niche breweries offering well-crafted, artisanal beers of unique tastes. The more you know about beer varieties such as stout, ales, lagers, and pilsners, and the specific brands you carry, either bottled or on tap, the better able you are to suggest a beer with a meal. Often, a member or guest will ask what beers you carry. This is the perfect opportunity to ask them whether they like a lightly flavored or more robust beer, and then suggest one of your premium brands. The key to success is knowledge. Talk to your bartender for ideas, search online for information, or buy any one of recently published beer guides.

Wines. Wines present an almost infinite body of knowledge to truly master, but servers can start with the basics such as grape varieties, countries and locales of origin, wine terminology, and common wine descriptors. As with any other body of knowledge, start small, learn the basics, and learn something new every day or week. In time you'll be a fount of knowledge and can become your club's "go-to-person" for wine information.

Wine Pairings. Certain wines go best with different foods. The basic rules are: **Sparkling wine and Champagne** – appetizers, wild game, caviar, roasted almonds, oysters, and fruit; **Rosé wine** – ham, turkey, sausages, and pork; **White wine** – seafood, poultry, shellfish, veal, cream sauces, mild cheeses, and light dishes such as salads; **Medium-bodied red wine** – pork, wild game, lamb, blackened fish or poultry, pâté, mild cheeses; **Full-bodied red wine** – steak, roast beef, blackened red meat, heavier dishes, cheeses from mild to sharp; **Dessert wines** – fruits, pastries, simple desserts; **Dry sherry** - appetizers and soups; **Port and sweet sherry** – after dinner and with cheeses.

Liqueurs. The terms cordial and liqueur are synonymous. There are many opportunities to suggest with liqueurs. Cordials are alcoholic beverages prepared by mixing and redistilling various spirits (brandy, whisky, rum, gin, or other spirits) with certain flavoring materials, such as fruits, flowers, herbs, seeds, barks, roots, peels, berries, juices, or other natural flavoring substances. Cordials differ from all other spirits because they must contain at least 2½ % sugar by weight. Most cordials contain up to 35% of a sweetening agent. Liqueurs can be consumed straight up, on the rocks, diluted with water, mixed with sparkling water as a spritzer, or served over ice cream. Make sure you know the major flavorings of each.

Cognac, Brandies, Sipping Whiskeys, Ports make superb after dinner drinks. Suggest these when it's apparent that the diners are going to linger at the table over coffee or conversation. Make sure you know what brands you carry and learn as much as you can about each.

Take Away: The more you know about the club's food and beverages, the better able you will be to make dining suggestions to members and guests.



#36

Engaging Members

Most club employees will interact with members on a regular basis as part of their jobs. There are a number of things you must do to ensure that you engage members properly and successfully:

Be Prepared. No matter what your job is you must be prepared to meet, greet, and serve members professionally and efficiently. This requires that you be prepared for each encounter with members. For food servers this means that you know and efficiently execute all requirements of your position and that you are thoroughly familiar with all food service techniques, as well as the food and beverages your club serves.

Mental *Mise en Place*. *Mise en place* is a French phrase defined as "everything in place." The phrase is used in a culinary sense to refer to organizing and arranging all ingredients that a cook will require to prepare menu items. In a broader sense it can be taken to mean that all food service employees, both front and back of house, have done all the work necessary to be ready to prepare and serve food. But being prepared mentally is just as important completing all side work. Mental *mise en place* means that you are familiar with all food and beverage products your club offers and have the right attitude and enthusiasm to deliver high levels of service to members.

Smile and Desire to Help. A winning smile and desire to help are bedrock requirements of service.

Name and Preferences. As we have said repeatedly, knowing members' names and dining preferences is a major reason people join clubs.

Stand Erect. Your posture and body language say a lot about your confidence and service attitude. When interacting with members, stand confidently erect with head held high. Providing quality service is something you should be proud to do.

Be Confident. Members are not impressed by retiring, servile (submissive, subservient, fawning, obsequious, toadying people. They'd much rather interact with confident and competent individuals who take professional pride in what they do.

Make and Keep Eye Contact. Always make and keep eye contact while speaking with members. They are not impressed by shy, timid, and insecure employees.

Speak Slowly, Distinctly, and Confidently. When speaking with members, particularly when reciting daily specials, speak slowly, distinctly, and with confidence. You may refer to notes, but don't read them verbatim. Spend some time rehearsing the particulars of each special, so you can describe them confidently while making eye contact with everyone at the table. Speaking too fast is a clear sign of nervousness and will often require members to ask you to repeat what you said because they didn't understand you.

Gauge Level of Engagement. Take your cue from members as to how much engagement they want with you. Do not presume familiarity no matter how often you've served a particular member.

Demonstrate Your Knowledge and Competency. When you demonstrate both knowledge and competence in all you do, you favorably impress those you interact with. This is true not only in your work at the club, but also in life.

Take Away: How you engage with members will determine the quality of service and their attitude about you personally and the club.



#37

Sample Menu Item Selling Sheets

Private Club Performance Management

Menu Item Selling Sheet

The Menu Item Selling Sheet is used to educate servers about the menu items offered in the club's dining room. The more information and knowledge servers have about the food and beverage items offered, the better able they are to suggest options and alternatives to members and guests, as well as to increase average checks.

Menu Item: *Wine Braised Veal Shanks*

Main Ingredients:

Veal shanks, bacon, butter, onion, carrot, celery, garlic, white wine

Flavorings (herbs and spices): *Garlic, bay, thyme, sage, salt and pepper, white wine*

Portion Size: *1 Veal Shank*

Cooking / Prep Time *10 minutes:*

Special Characteristics: None
 Vegetarian Locally Grown
 Organic Heart Healthy
 Kosher Other:

Accompanying Sides:

*Garlic Mashed Red Potatoes
Fresh Greens du Jour*

Possible Allergens: None
 Dairy Gluten
 Peanut Oil MSG
 Shellfish Other:

Cooking Method:

Sautéed Roasted
 Pan Fried Boiled
 Deep Fried Smoked
 Steamed Other: *Braised*

Product Origin:

Country: _____
 State: *North Carolina*
 Locale: *Creekside Farms*

Sauces: None, or **Main Ingredients:** *Cooking reduction, flour, white wine*

Suggested Descriptors:

*Bone-in Richness of Flavor, Fall-off the Bone Tenderness,
Melt-in-Your Mouth, Glazed with White Wine Reduction,
Complex Flavorings of Braised Veal, Vegetables, and
White Wine*

Suggested Wine Pairings:

*Cavalloto Barolo
Chateaufneuf du Pape
Any hearty red wine – Bordeaux, Cabernet, Merlot*

Suggested Appetizer(s):

Gorgonzola and Pâté Medley

Suggested Dessert(s):

Drambuie Bread Pudding or Crème Brûlée

Chef's Notes:

Veal Shanks is a great opportunity to sell a body of hearty red wine!

Server Notes:

Teachable Moments



#38

Dining Service Tips – 1

Station Cleanliness. Even if others are responsible for cleaning the dining room, double check the floor, table, and chairs to make sure they are clean for members and guests. Take action as necessary.

Table Settings. Double check your tables to make sure the previous shift set the tables properly and all settings are complete, tableware wiped down, glassware clean, napkins properly folded, salt and pepper shakers wiped down and full, sugar caddy clean and stocked, and any other table detail checked.

Highchairs and Booster Seats. Make sure they are clean and ready to go during service. When you are seating a party is not the time to discover they're not properly cleaned and sanitized.

Work as a Team. Servers can accomplish so much more when working as a team than they can individually. Think of your co-workers whenever you do something. If something needs to be done, just do it, regardless of who noticed it.

Clean Up Spills and Clean as You Go. Spills must be cleaned up immediately as they present a slip and fall hazard. Keep your stations clean as you go. If you make a mess in the kitchen or pantry, clean it up.

Use Serving Trays. Always use serving trays when serving cocktails and beverages. This applies to alcoholic drinks, coffee, tea, and any other beverage where the glass or cup is not preset on the table. When serving beverages on tables without cloths, always place a bevnep or coaster on the table first.

Learning Member Names. Check reservations so you can match names with faces. Whenever members sign charge tickets, again reinforce your memory by matching names to faces. Ask co-workers who a particular member is if you don't know – somebody must know!

Critical Information. Never approach a table without knowing daily specials, how they're prepared, and prices; appetizer(s) of the day; soup(s) of the day; wines by the glass; special desserts; specialty drinks; and any other detail of the day's offerings. Without this information you'll surely embarrass yourself.

Carry your Necessary Tools. Always carry a pen, dup pad, daily food notes from pre-shift meeting, wine key, and a clean service cloth. Even if your establishment is non-smoking, matches are necessary for those members who wish to step outside for a smoke and come in handy for lighting candles and sterno.

Side Work. Make sure you fully complete all necessary opening and closing side work. The idea is to be completely ready for any service need during the meal. Likewise, your closing duties will prepare the dining room for the next shift and ensure the cleanliness and sanitation of the dining room and pantry.

Take Away: Food service is detail-intensive. Remind yourself periodically of these details.



#39

Dining Service Tips – 2

Check Linen. Make sure table linen does not have a “sour” smell. If so, replace it and notify your supervisor. Also ensure there is an adequate supply of clean linen to meet expected levels of business.

Responsible Beverage Service. It is against the law to serve underage individuals or to over-serve anyone. Be aware of anyone who is drinking heavily. Watch for slurred speech, inability to focus eyes, loss of motor skills, or blank expressions. Alert management to any potential problem.

Condiments. Before the meal period check any condiments that are served to tables in their original bottles to ensure bottles are clean. If not, wipe down with a clean damp cloth. This applies to various condiments such as ketchup, mustard, steak sauce, hot sauces, etc.

Dishwash Station. Do not over stack dishwash station. It'll just result in breakage and spills. Try to help out if possible or make your supervisor aware of the developing problem.

Music. Music can be a pleasant accompaniment to any meal, but it can also be a source of irritation if played too loud or if the music is inappropriate to the crowd, the mood, or the occasion. Most clubs subscribe to a music service that provides a wide variety of music. Selecting the most appropriate music for particular meal periods is an important element of establishing ambience. Classical or contemporary jazz is often a good mix for evening meals, while lunch music can mix more popular, light contemporary or classic rock. Regardless of selection, playing the music at an appropriate volume is of absolute importance. Managers should establish guidelines for musical selections and volume for each meal period.

Lighting. Setting the appropriate lighting level is an important element of establishing the ambience in the dining area. The lighting level will be determined by the time of day, weather outside, ambient light from the windows, the meal period, the mood you are trying to achieve, whether of not candles or votive lights are used on the tables, and any ancillary lighting such as wall sconces, etc. Most dining rooms are equipped with rheostat switches for their lights so that the lighting level can be adjusted. Make sure to check the lights before each meal period to make sure the lighting level is appropriate to the occasion.

Sun Glare. Many clubs have dramatic views from the dining room, sometimes overlooking the 18th green or a lake. While these views add much to the diners' experience, they can also be a source of irritation when the bright sun shines into their eyes. So, when the sun gets low, pay attention to whether or not it is shining in anyone's eyes. Close the blinds or drapes until the sun sets lower, then reopen them so members and guests can again enjoy the view. Your consideration will be greatly appreciated.

Take Away: Food service is detail-intensive. Remind yourself periodically of these details.



#40

Dining Service Tips – 3

Table Clearing. While it's impossible to clear tables noiselessly, it is the hallmark of a quality establishment to clear conscientiously, taking the time and care to stack dirty dishes quietly and remove soiled flatware purposefully instead of slinging it around. Whenever you clear a table, focus on what you're doing and be aware of the noise you are making. The care you take will enhance the members' dining experience.

86'd Items. When the kitchen announces a menu item as "86'd," i.e., runs out of a particular item, servers must pass the word to other servers as quickly as possible. There is nothing more disappointing to a diner who has ordered an item that is no longer available. Spreading the word allows a server to mention such items when announcing and describing featured items to a table.

In the Weeds. Getting "in the weeds" can happen anytime without warning no matter how prepared servers are. While experienced servers know how to kick into overdrive and dig yourself out, it's also important to let your supervisor and fellow servers know. While you may think they should be able to see when you need help, don't make this assumption. They're focusing on their own tasks and may not notice. Remember that we are all part of a team – and teammates are there to help. Usually, being in the weeds passes as quickly as it comes upon you and often all you need is a helping hand for just a few minutes.

Be Alert. Always keep an eye on your tables. You can usually tell if someone at a table needs something as they will be looking around or trying to get someone's attention. Check back with your tables frequently to see if everything is alright or if you may get them something else. Be sensitive, though, to diners who are engaged in deep discussion or are enjoying a romantic evening together. They may not appreciate constant interruptions. Always take your cue from the diners.

Ordering by Memory. It's always impressive when a server takes orders by memory, though not everyone is able to do this. Usually, a server would not have the confidence to do this until they have been working awhile and are thoroughly familiar with all aspects of food service. If you are comfortable enough to try this, start small by doing it with tables of two. Once your confidence is up, try it with larger tables.

Take Away: Food service is detail-intensive. Remind yourself periodically of these details.



#41

Service Recovery

Despite our best efforts, situations will inevitably arise when members are dissatisfied with service and/or products offered. Whether we feel the problem is legitimate or unwarranted is of no consequence. The member is not satisfied, and our only concern is changing the outcome by making a speedy and gracious recovery to the member's complete satisfaction.

To better aid in making a recovery, PCPM has developed a Seven Step Process, which can be divided into two distinct phases. Steps 1 through 4 constitute the On-the-Spot Fix, while steps 5 through 7 make up the Long-Term Repair aimed at correcting the underlying cause of the service failure. Therefore, when a member approaches you with a complaint or concern, here's what you do:

1. **Focus** – stop what you're doing and focus entirely on the member and what he is saying.
2. **Listen** – carefully to fully understand the nature of the problem. Recognize that the problem is not always the one that is being brought to your attention; for example, the complaint may be about the food, but the real issue is slow service. Sometimes you must read between the lines or recognize the issue is larger or maybe different than the one being complained about.
3. **Apologize** – a sincere apology is absolutely necessary. We the club and you personally are sorry for any service failure, so we should never be shy about or slow to fully apologize. After apologizing, tell the member what you are going to do to correct the problem. If the member still seems dissatisfied, enquire what we might do to make it right.
4. **Make It Right** – quickly, efficiently, and discreetly to avoid any embarrassment to the member.
5. **Assurance** – after the situation has been made right, approach the member when convenient and let him know that the matter will be addressed formally by management.
6. **Notification** – if the failure is serious enough or the member does not seem fully satisfied, notify your supervisor, department head, or manager on duty so she can also approach the member to discuss the situation and apologize.
7. **Report** – When you have time, but no later than the end of your shift, fill out a [Service Issue Resolution, PCPM Form 180](#), describing the problem, your assessment of the underlying cause, your efforts to recover, and the member's mood after recovery. This form is used to more formally address the problem and gives management an opportunity to call the member after the fact to apologize again and discuss the issue further.

Unfortunately, in the club business, there will always be mistakes and failures, but what has gone wrong is done and is not nearly as important as what you do next. Managers and servers should discuss recovery techniques frequently and share stories of both successful and unsuccessful recoveries so that everyone can learn from our experiences.

Discussion Points: Discuss service failures that you are familiar with and their outcomes. Then discuss the seven steps in the club's service recovery process. Consider how a consistently applied recovery policy can defuse potentially damaging situations.

Take Away: There will always be service problems in a club operation. The key in all such instances is the service recovery.



#42

Sample Service Issue Resolution Form

Private Club Performance Management

Service Issue Resolution

Name: *Jennifer Hansen* Department: *Food and Beverage*

Job Title: *Server*

Date/Time of Issue or Incident: *Sat, 8/16, 6:20 p.m.* Location: *Main Dining Room*

The Service Issue Resolution form is to be used to learn lessons from service issues involving customers. The form must be filled out anytime an employee uses his authorization to spend money to resolve an issue, whether by "comping" a meal or service, providing a token or apology, or doing something special for a customer. It may also be used anytime an employee witnesses a potential service problem or has an idea to improve service or service delivery.

Name(s) of Customer(s): *Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jones and two children*

Describe Service Issue or Incident:
Mr. Jones ordered his NY Strip Steak rare. When Mr. Jones cut into his steak, it was cooked medium. In checking with the kitchen I discovered that John Thompson picked up the wrong plate and served Mr. Jones' steak to one of his tables. It took the kitchen ten minutes to prepare another steak. Mr. Jones was not happy since they were on their way to the movies.
Continue on back if necessary

Contributing Factors to Issue or Incident
As busy as we were Saturday night, we did not have an expeditor. At the time I picked up my order there must have been six other orders in the window. An expeditor may have prevented the problem.

Resolution of Issue or Incident:
I "comped" Mr. Jones' meal and brought complimentary desserts for his children while he was finishing his dinner. I overheard Mr. Jones tell his wife that this was the second time in the past month that his steak had not been prepared as he ordered it.

Recommend Follow-up Phone Call: Yes No by whom: GM Dining Room Manager

Suggested Process Improvement to Avoid Future Issues:
In addition to an expeditor on all busy nights, why don't we order some plastic markers to put into the steaks to indicate the degree of doneness? It might preclude servers picking up the wrong orders.

Employee's Signature: *Jennifer Hansen* Date: *8/16/18*

Supervisor's Signature: *Michael Rienzi* Date: *8/17/18*

Teachable Moments

Take Away: Always learn from mistakes.



#43

Defense and Offense – 1

Offense and defense are words of opposite meaning, yet often linked together. Their obvious meaning is demonstrated on the football field. One team attacks an area defended by another, trying to reach the goal. The purpose of the defense is to stop the attack, to defend their territory, to protect the goal. Though these terms have most often been applied to armies at war, they can also be used to describe less-physical competitions such as a game of chess. What characterizes each of these examples is a conflict or competition.

Two words derived from these terms are the adjectives offensive and defensive. The dictionary defines offensive as:

- Unpleasant or disagreeable to the senses; obnoxious, disgusting.
- Causing anger, resentment, giving offense; insulting.

Defensive means:

- Carried on for the purpose of defending against attack or danger.
- Having an attitude of defense.

Everyone has heard the phrase “a good offense is the best defense.” This idea is especially useful on battlefields, football fields, and even chessboards. By keeping your opponent so off balance by relentless attacks, he has no time or resources to plan attacks against your positions. In this way your offense becomes your defense.

People have natural tendencies. Whether inborn or created by longstanding habit, they are part of our make up and we express them without thinking. One such habit is the tendency to personally associate ourselves with that which we do. Just as the farmer has a proprietary interest in the fields he labors so hard to till and harvest, we all identify with our organization or place of work. A corollary to this sense of association is the natural inclination to protect that which we consider our own or with which we are associated.

So, it is natural for us to feel pride in our work and place of employment. When someone attacks it with criticism, disparaging remarks, or complaints, the natural tendency is to defend it, to assume a defensive attitude. This is all well and good unless you depend upon that someone’s goodwill for your livelihood. When you work in the service industry, you literally cannot afford to become defensive.

When you become defensive, many things happen physiologically and psychologically. Adrenaline starts flowing; you tense up, ready to repel any further attack; your heartbeat and respiration quicken. Likewise, your mind races ahead to your next move or response so you don’t hear what is being said and you don’t focus on the moment. Subconsciously knowing that a good offense is the best defense you become antagonistic; you raise your voice; you develop an attitude; you become abrupt and huffy with the other person. At this point, without even knowing it, you have become offensive; that is by definition, “causing anger, resentment, giving offense; insulting.”

Discussion Points: Consider the points made above and how you naturally react to complaints. Recognize how offensive this is to someone with real or perceived concerns.

Take Away: Service employees cannot afford to become defensive when responding to member complaints.



Defense and Offense – 2

How can you avoid the natural tendency to become defensive? The first step is to be aware that you become defensive when criticized or listening to a member complaint. Notice the giveaways. Are you tense and nervous? Do your hands shake or your voice quaver? Do you feel a tightness in your chest? Do you raise your voice? Any of these symptoms reveal your defensiveness.

Realizing this, what can you do about it? First, understand two important things:

- Complaints are not usually directed at you, so don't take them personally. Allow some distance between yourself and the complaint. Not too much, though; you must show a sincere concern to resolve the problem.
- When a member complains, there is, in his mind, a problem. Whether we think there is a problem or not is immaterial. Furthermore, because of the nature of the service profession, the problem is ours. When considered in this light, the member is doing us a favor by making us aware of the problem. We should be appreciative and thankful instead of defensive.

In addition, there are some things you can do when confronted with a complaint.

- Where there is no conflict, there is no need for offense and defense. Don't allow a conflict to arise. Disarm the situation by cheerfully accepting our problem. Listen carefully to what the member is saying. Apologize sincerely for our shortcomings. If you can solve the problem, cheerfully and quickly do so. If you can't, get a manager who can.
- If you find yourself becoming nervous or defensive, take a deep breath. The inflow of oxygen will help quiet your system and the moment you take to breathe has a calming effect on your nerves.
- If you find yourself losing control, try to leave the room on some pretext. If you are a server, tactfully excuse yourself "to check with the kitchen." Once there, take a deep breath and get control of yourself. Try to put the member's anger into perspective. It's not the end of the world. Resolve to overcome that anger. Take another deep breath and go back to the member.
- Go on the offensive in a positive way. Take control of the situation. Ask pertinent questions about the problem. Take notes as necessary. This taking ownership of the problem demonstrates a proprietary concern and a desire to correct the problem.
- While apologies must always be given, remember that easy apologies and facile excuses do not impress. Our actions speak louder than our words.
- Be sincere. You should have a sincere desire to help any member with a need or concern. If you don't, you're in the wrong business.

Two things you must never do:

- Pass the buck or evade responsibility. You may not have created the problem, but now that it's been brought to your attention, you need to resolve it.
- Don't become defensive. It is not us against the members. We're on their team!

Responding to member complaints is one of the most difficult things we face in the service profession, but when we avoid becoming defensive, we often can create a turnaround situation where the problem is solved, and the member satisfied. There is no more satisfying situation in service.

Take Away: By being aware that there is never a need to be defensive when responding to a complaint, employees must handle it in a more positive way.



#45

Are Your Service Apologies at Risk?

In *Service Recovery* we outlined a method by which club employees can make a gracious and effective recovery from any service failure. Step 3 of this process is the apology. We the club and you the employee are sorry for any service failure, so we should never be slow to apologize.

While it never occurred to me that employees should be taught how to apologize, I caught two items this past week – one on television and the other on the Internet – that made me realize that there are “apologies” and then there are “effective apologies.”

Here’s the detail: Laurie Puhn, a relationship mediator, appeared on a cable news network to critique the recent apology of Steve Jobs for problems with the newest Apple iPhone’s signal reception. In her comments, Ms. Puhn said that there are four elements to an effective apology:

1. Don’t minimize your failing or error. Make a big deal out of it – as it is to the unhappy member. Say something like, “Mrs. Smith, “I realize how much our slow service delayed you . . .”
2. Apologize for the inconvenience caused. “. . . I’m so sorry we have inconvenienced you and your guest.”
3. Offer something to make amends. “As a further apology, I won’t be charging you for your orders.”
4. Say that you hope to have the opportunity to re-earn their trust. “I hope you’ll come back after your tennis match so I can serve you properly.”

A few days later an Internet headline *The Perfect Apology – The ONE Word That Destroys It!* caught my eye. I followed the link to Kate Nasser’s The People-Skills Coach. Here’s what she had to say:

“As The People-Skills Coach, I start this post with the assumption that you are willing to take ownership of the impact your actions and words have on others. You are ready to deliver the perfect apology!

Well, the perfect apology is found in simple sincerity and the ONE word that destroys it is ... **IF**

- I am sorry **IF** I hurt you. **IF?** Do you own it or not? Do you care to rebuild my trust or not?
- I am sorry **IF** that came across as ... **IF?** You are aware that it came across badly so why waver?
- We are sorry **IF** we have not met your business needs. **IF?** We wouldn’t be discussing it otherwise.

Your intentions don’t matter much if a team member or a customer is offended by what you have said or done. Rebuild the trust with a sincere apology as soon as you are aware of his/her reaction.

Replace **IF** with **THAT** or **FOR** and see the difference.

- I am sorry **FOR** the impact this had on you.
- I am sorry **THAT** came across as ...
- We are sorry **THAT** we have not met your business needs. We will ...

Why does this little change make a big difference to others? Because it is clear that you are putting their needs ahead of your pride. Simple sincerity makes for the perfect apology.”

It’s clear from these two news items that apologies may not be the simple matter we’d imagined.

Take Away: Practice these apology skills so they come naturally when needed. Without practice there’s a good chance you’ll forget in the stress of the moment.



#46

Beverage Cart Service Tips

Drive the cart backwards around the course so that you are always approaching players from the opposite direction.

You may not under any circumstances solicit tips. However, if insisted upon by the member or guest, you may graciously accept a tip offered to you.

Get out of the cart when anyone approaches. Do not remain seated when speaking to a member or guest. Do not let approaching members see you slouched on the seat with your feet up.

Be cheerful, upbeat, and friendly to everyone at all times.

Speak to members. Be engaging. Develop your own “patter” or phrases that you’re comfortable with in speaking to members. For example:

- “Good afternoon, gentlemen! What may I offer you?”
- “It’s hot today! How about some iced water?”
- “I’ve got some hot coffee to warm you up on this chilly morning!”

Cheerfully greet any players. If you know their name, greet them by name, i.e., Mr. Smith or Dr. Jones. Refer to the copy of the Tee Sheet to help recognize members by name.

Be prepared to tell them what you have on the cart. This means keeping track of your inventory. Don’t ever be in a position of offering a particular brand and then apologizing because you’re out of it.

When a member signs a charge slip, make sure you can read the name. If you can’t, ask them politely to tell you their name. Once you associate a name with a face, make an effort to remember the name in the future. Print the member’s name on the charge slip. After they have signed their charge slip, thank them, and wish them a good day or a great round, etc.

Practice good golf etiquette when driving the cart.

- Stop for groups who are hitting the ball. Always stop a good distance away.
- Avoid being in the field of vision of players who are hitting the ball as this may distract them during their swing.
- Allow your engine to shut off when players are hitting. The noise may also prove to be a distraction.
- Do not talk if players are hitting or putting. If asked a question by a member while others are hitting, answer quietly so as not to disturb play.
- Pay attention. Be knowledgeable. Be prepared to answer any questions a member or guest may have.
- Act as a fore caddy for golfers. In other words, watch their shots and point out the location of any errant golf balls that are out of the fairway or in the deep rough.
- If you find any clubs, umbrellas, caps, or other lost items on the course, turn them in to the golf shop.
- Pick up any trash you may find on the golf course.

Take Away: Golf is the primary reason many members join a club. A quality golfing experience is important to players, so do your part in providing outstanding service.



#47

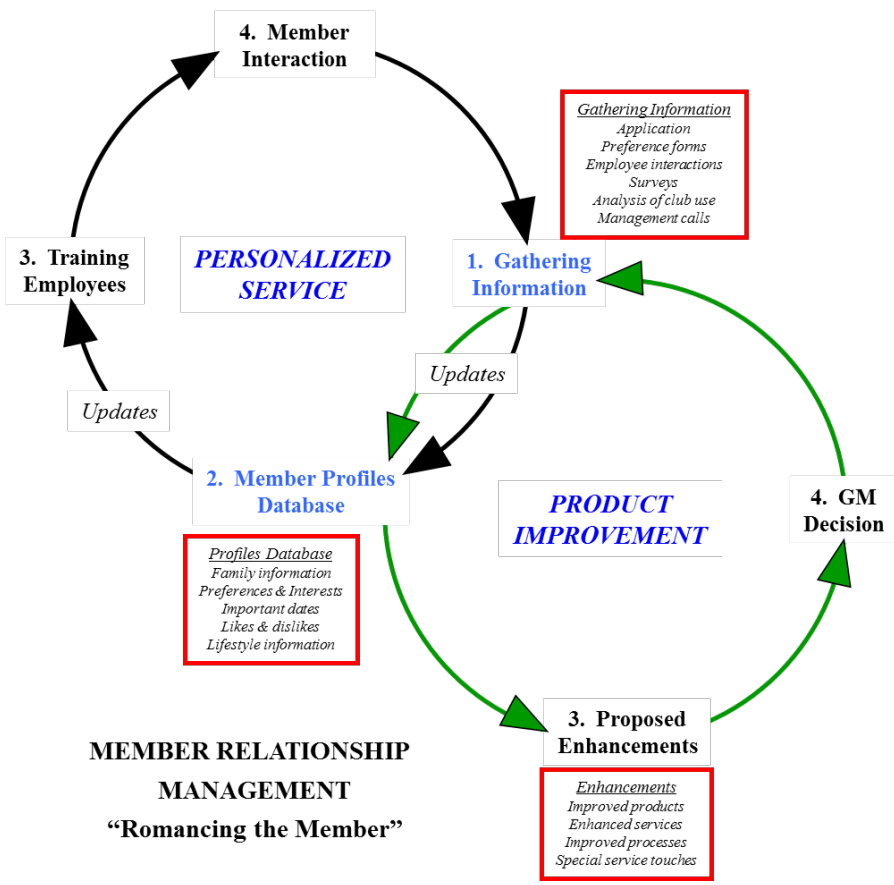
Romancing Your Members

Teachable Moments

What makes marketing a numbers game is the lack of specific information about individuals. But with the rapid growth in computing power and data capture, it is now possible to know each of your customers far better. And that information provides the power to romance your members.

To paraphrase Dr. Paul Temporal and Martin Lott from their book, Romancing the Customer, Maximizing Brand Value through Powerful Relationship Management, "Instead of focusing on your product, focus on your members. By building up a body of information on each member, you increase the degree of tailoring of your product or service and, in the process, strengthen the emotional bond between the member and your club."

Ultimately, "[Member] Relationship Management builds strong [relationships] by creating the right blend of organization, systems, and processes that allow your people to understand your [members] as individuals, and potentially tailor every interaction . . . to their specific needs." What does this mean for us in the private club business? Simply, the more we know our members, the more we understand their needs, the better able we will be to provide the individualized service that they join clubs to receive.



Member Relationship Management builds and institutionalizes a system that replicates the personalized service that was the hallmark of the best "Mom & Pop" operations of old. Such service was based upon the trust and accumulated knowledge of years of day-to-day contact and personalized service.

Take Away: Employees have the opportunity through their daily interactions with members to learn more about their individual preferences. Building up this store of information is at the heart of providing personalized service.



#48

Sample Service Ethic

All employees are expected to engage with members to make them feel welcome and comfortable whenever they come to the club. So how do you do that? Here's one club's approach to ensure all understand what's expected of them.

"Our members and guests:

- **Know them like family.**
- **Greet them like long, lost friends.**
- **Treat them like Rock Stars.**

**If you remember these three simple statements,
you'll always have the right Service Ethic in mind."**

What do we mean when we say, "Know them like family?"

- First, you must learn their names and use them at all times. This takes some effort but is an effort you must make.
- Next, you want to learn their habits and preferences so you can anticipate their needs and desires. If Mr. Jones always wants his scotch neat, then you should have it ready for him when he sits down.
- Lastly, you need to always read the situation. How you interact with an exuberant group of golfers just off the course will be entirely different from Dr. and Mrs. Smith coming in to celebrate their anniversary. Read the situation and assess your level of engagement accordingly.

How do you ensure you "Greet them like long, lost friends?"

- Your greetings must always be warm and sincere.
- You should be genuinely pleased that members are coming in to support the club. Make sure you convey that pleasure.
- First impressions will often determine everything that follows. Get everything started on the right foot by the quality of your greeting.
- Remember that there is a fine line between warm, friendly service and familiarity. Members are not your buddies, and you must maintain a professional distance.
- Always send members off with a sincere farewell and a "thank you" for coming in.
- The last impression you make will be the one they remember until their next visit.

What does it mean to "Treat them like Rock Stars?"

- The club will continually be looking for ways to provide "over the top" service touches, but you also have the opportunity to do the same with the service you provide everyday.
- Be alert for opportunities to do the unexpected, to wow members. Be creative and create memories they won't soon forget.

Take Away: How you interact with members has a direct bearing on their experience at the club.



#49

Special Service Touches

There are many small, yet special touches that demonstrate your commitment to service. This list is by no means all-inclusive and is simply meant to inspire all employees to come up with their own “special touches.”

- Beverage cart and snack bar attendants – Use a clean towel to wipe off beverage cans before handing them to members.
- Beverage cart and bag, range, and cart attendants – On hot days offer players a wet towel. Wring excessive water out of towel before handing it to them.
- Beverage cart attendant – If you are out of a product that a particular member wants, make a point of getting some the next time you pass the Turn House. When you see the member again, inform him or her that you now have the requested item.
- Golf course marshal and beverage cart attendant – If appropriate when raining, offer your umbrella to a member who does not have one. You can get it back later.
- Course maintenance staff, marshal, and beverage cart attendant – If a player hits a shot into the woods and you see where it went, wait there and point it out for him or her.
- Course maintenance staff, marshal, and beverage cart attendant – If you find a golf club on the course, backtrack to see if anyone in the previous few groups lost a club. If you cannot find the owner, call the Pro Shop to tell them you found a club, the type and make of the club, and where it was found. Turn the club into the Pro Shop the next time you pass by.
- Dining room servers – Use a saucer as a splash guard when refilling beverages at tables.
- Dining room servers – Use a spray bottle of diluted lavender or lilac scent to spray just a hint of aroma on clean tablecloths as tables are set.
- Dining room servers – When someone temporarily leaves the table, pick up their napkin off the table and drape it over the back of their empty chair.
- Groundskeepers, golf course maintenance staff, housekeepers – Do not run equipment, power tools, or vacuum cleaners when members are present. This demonstrates your alertness and desire not to disturb members’ enjoyment of the club and its facilities.
- Housekeeping staff – Check restrooms throughout the day, refresh them frequently, particularly during times of heavy use. Vacate restrooms when members and guests wish to use them.
- Pool and activity staff – Have ice water available during hot weather to keep everyone hydrated. Also keep extra sun block and bug spray on hand for those who forget to bring their own.
- Bag, range and cart attendants – Meet and greet arriving guests by name, if possible. Introduce yourself and inform guests whether others in the party have arrived and where they are. Point out the practice area, then escort (preferred method) or direct them to the pro shop or locker rooms. Inform them of 90° rule for the day, Soft Spike policy, how much time until tee off, and whether the beverage cart is running.

Take Away: There are many creative ways to demonstrate your commitment to service.



#50

Wow Factor – 1

No one but a few creatures of inviolable habit likes the “same ol’, same ol’,” yet that’s what many clubs serve up month after month, year in and year out. Why not try a different approach that will “wow” our members? Let’s make “wow factors” a part of our club’s traditions.

What is a “wow factor”? It’s anything, usually unexpected, that causes members to say or think, “Wow, that’s really neat!” or “Wow, I didn’t expect that!” or “Wow, that’s impressive!”

Wow factors are characterized by their unexpectedness and as such any particular wow factor cannot become part of the club routine. They are executed for one-time or short-term effect. They are also characterized by being unusual – either cutting edge or just out-of-the-ordinary. They can be extravagant and expensive, but these should be few and far between. Most wow factors should be small scale, inexpensive, and momentary, that is, of short duration as in one day, one evening, or one event.

The key to making wow factors is to challenge club employees to come up with a specified number of wow factor ideas for their areas of the operation – say 10 new ideas for the coming busy season. Each idea should be briefly described on paper – what it is, how it will be done, what items need to be purchased, any talent that needs to be contracted, any associated labor cost, and an overall estimated cost. Then all department heads should meet with the General Manager in a brainstorming session to discuss, settle on, and schedule the roll out of each wow factor.

Here are a handful of ideas to give you a sense of the program:

- Complimentary mini-trio sampler of desserts or appetizers for all diners on a given night – this is also an excellent way to test, preview, or market new menu items.
- Free soft-serve ice cream or smoothies for the kids (of all ages) at the pool on a hot summer day. An alternative would be to arrange for the local ice cream truck to pull up in front of the pool with music playing. Everyone gets their specialty ice cream treat and the club pays the bill.
- Flowers for all the ladies dining on some non-special night just for the surprise effect. Google search “special days” for calendars of unusual celebrations and holidays.
- A giveaway of a sleeve of golf balls to each golfer on a busy Saturday morning; handed out by the Head Golf Professional on the first tee for maximum effect.
- Free mini-pizzas in the lounge on an unexpected evening.
- A themed ice carving for a ladies’ luncheon.
- Complimentary and unusual hors d’oeuvres for the weekly card game in the men’s lounge.
- Face painting or a clown or a balloon artist at the next children’s event.
- Complimentary wine for no special reason. A great way to clear out dead stock or showcase new wines.

Take Away: Keep the club fresh and interesting for members with wow factors. Brainstorm with your work team for wow factor ideas.



#51

Wow Factor – 2

As mentioned in *Wow Factor - 1*, the key to the wow factor is its unusual nature and unexpectedness. Several tips:

- Execute wow factors where they will have the most effect – food and beverage areas, golf areas, locker rooms, spa and fitness areas, special events, activities, aquatics, tennis.
- Plan, budget, and schedule. Formalize the program enough so that the wow factors are spread out and spread around. Always have a budget. Say you budget \$500 per month for club-wide wow factors. The cost to the club is \$6,000 per year – not an inconsequential amount but think of the benefit to member pleasure and even employee morale.
- Wow factor ideas are everywhere. Borrow from other establishments or something you saw on vacation. The Internet is a treasure trove of ideas. Google search words or phrases such as “Fun,” “Fun Ideas,” “Fun Activities,” “Fun Recreational Activities,” and “Inexpensive Activity Ideas” and you’ll get a sense for how many resources are out there.
- To keep your costs down, get together with vendors for freebies. Many would be thrilled to get some exposure to your members for their products and services. Just make sure you prominently give them credit for their donations.
- Once you’ve used a particular wow factor, save the concept for some future time. Avoiding routine doesn’t mean never doing it again, just doing it again when unexpected. Over time, you’ll develop an extensive list of wow factors that can be deployed for maximum effect at some future moment.
- Keep your wow factor strategy, plans, and schedule under tight wrap. Don’t ruin the surprise with “loose lips.”
- Let your members do the talking about the wow factor, not you or the club staff. Act like nothing special is going on while the members “buzz” about the unusual and unexpected. Certainly, you may acknowledge a wow factor when asked about it, but act like it’s no big deal, just some little thing that happened “spontaneously.”

There are hundreds of websites offering unusual and fun ideas. Get your department heads and fellow employees excited by searching out the most unusual activities, events, or ideas. Your members will still ask, “What have you done for me lately?” but they’ll be delighted by the unexpected moments, and you and your fellow workers will be energized by the fun of “giving” these special gifts to your membership.

Take Away: Keep the club fresh and interesting for members with wow factors. Brainstorm with your work team for wow factor ideas.



#52

The Super Service Employee - 1

For those of us who eat out with any regularity, we've all had the experience, unfortunately too rarely, of being waited on by what I call a "super server." From the moment she approaches the table we know we're in for a treat. Sparkling with personality, she overflows with knowledge about the food, beverages, and accompaniments. She immediately sizes up our interest in engagement and calibrates her contacts accordingly. She speaks with confidence and authority, questioning us regarding our preferences and without hesitation recommending what she thinks we'll enjoy. The best of the best can unerringly take and serve orders without benefit of pen and dup pad.

Such extraordinary individuals are worth their weight in gold. Not only do they serve with flair and expertise, but they sell, thereby increasing the average check, while making a distinctly favorable impression of competence and professionalism that brings diners back again and again. This is true in restaurants as well as in private clubs where diners appreciate the recognition and special touches that a super server adds to the dining experience.

Far more frequently, we've experienced the norm of service – undertrained, inexperienced employees who may understand the basics of service, but little more. Often lacking in knowledge, personality, and attitude, their service may meet minimum expectations but seldom inspire the diner to sample the extras – appetizers, desserts, wines, and specialty drinks – which enhance the overall dining experience. If truth be told, these employees are doing no service to their employers and in many cases are doing outright harm by driving customers away.

The often-repeated maxim for employers "to hire for personality and train for technique" encompasses a basic truth. Attitude, personality, and engagement seem to be inborn skills and are difficult to teach. While training can provide service skills and knowledge, thereby increasing a server's confidence and maybe even engagement skills, the best service employees possess an indefinable quality that is difficult, if not impossible, to replicate.

Given the dearth of these extraordinary service employees, they should be recognized and compensated for the rare skills they possess. Too often though, their presence on an employer's staff is viewed as simple good fortune with little or no effort made to differentiate them from the common herd. The result is that in short order they move on to greener pastures where their talents are more fully appreciated. When this happens, the loss to the establishment is often more than can be appreciated. Not only has the employer lost a super server, but a money-maker, an ambassador, and an example for less accomplished co-workers. And everything said about food servers applies just as much to super service employees in other areas of the club.

So why don't we recognize and reward super service employees for their special abilities. I suspect it's a combination of cost consciousness, a lack of appreciation for their true gifts, an unwillingness to move beyond the status quo, and a fear of exchanging real costs for what may be seen as intangible benefits.

Take Away: Super Service Employees are worth their weight in gold and should be highly sought after by private clubs.



#53

The Super Service Employee - 2

The following assessments are not based on any kind of scientific sampling or study; rather they are based on my experiences in over 35 years of hospitality management in hotels, clubs, and resorts in numerous positions in every area of the country. I simply ask that readers validate my statements with their own managerial experiences.

Super service employees tend to be:

- Educated and intelligent, whether possessed of formal degrees or self-taught,
- Intellectually curious and knowledgeable about anything that touches their lives. They want to know why, enjoy learning new things, are alert and aware of their surroundings (an important attribute for any service employee), and are often ardent readers,
- Artistic or creative, pursuing their own creative interests,
- Counter-culture or living an alternative lifestyle,
- Possessed of an independent streak, quick to challenge rules that don't make sense or poor leadership, and unwilling to put up with "Mickey Mouse BS,"
- Highly mobile and, therefore, quite willing to leave if not treated well or valued as an individual.

While these are broad generalities that can be disproved by any specific case, in job after job I've come across these individuals. In the early days of my career, I often felt them to be a challenge to my knowledge and authority; yet I came to recognize their extraordinary talents, often finding their complaints and criticism of management and my leadership to be valid. By engaging them in dialogue, taking the time to explain my decisions and directives, and being willing to listen to them and treat them with respect, I became a better leader and they, indispensable contributors to my efforts.

But where are such employees to be found? Again, my experience indicates that super service employees are abundant in big cities, college towns, and near artistic/creative communities, though this does not in any way preclude suburban locales, small towns, and rural or remote areas. I was somewhat surprised to find such employees while managing at a remote desert resort, as people of an artistic or counter-culture bent sometimes prefer quiet, rural settings in which to live.

My assumption, then, is that you will find such people almost anywhere and simply need to establish your operation as the kind of establishment that values them and their unique gifts and then seek them out.

Take Away: Recognizing some of the characteristics of special individuals, private clubs should make special effort to find, employee and retain Super Service Employees.



#54

The Super Service Employee - 3

What Do Super Service Employees want and need?

The easy answer is that super service employees want what every employee wants, that is, to be treated well, trained and supported in their jobs, competitive compensation, and for some, particularly the older employees with families – benefits. What sets the super service employee apart is that they have valuable skills and a lower threshold for departure if their needs are not met.

Beyond these basic needs are some other preferences:

- A more mentally challenging work environment to engage their intellectual curiosity. They dislike boring, monotonous work. It's the very reason some are attracted to the adrenaline rush and stimulation of fast-paced service positions.
- A greater sense of participation and contribution. They want to feel like what they do makes a difference or contributes in a meaningful way.
- Many want flexible schedules to allow for the pursuit of education or their creative interests.
- Recognition by management and customers of their value and contribution.
- Compensation appropriate to their skills. If they get paid the same as less competent and productive employees, they'll quickly go elsewhere.
- Some want opportunities for advancement, particularly as they grow older and take on the financial responsibilities of home and family, with greater concern for their economic security.

What they don't want is:

- To be treated as if they and the work they do doesn't matter,
- To work in chaotic, stressful environments where a few carry the workload and others screw off without consequences,
- To deal with managers who are all wrapped up in their egos and authority, caring more about position and perks than performance,
- To be ignored and not have their ideas and input listened to, and
- To be hassled and jerked around by an aloof management that doesn't recognize or interact with them as individuals.

Given their special skills, intelligence, work ethic, and overall contribution, super service employees deserve to be accorded status and respect for their clearly superior work and contributions. Yes, they want financial rewards, but more than anything such individuals want to be treated with respect and honored for what they do.

Take Away: Recognizing some of the characteristics of special individuals, private clubs should make special effort to find, employee and retain Super Service Employees.



#55

The Super Service Employee - 4

By analyzing and considering the wants and needs of super service employees, it is possible to set up programs to attract and retain them. In simplest terms it boils down to respect, status, meaningful work, and enhanced compensation. In particular I would focus on the following:

- Establishing consistent Service-Based Leadership at your business. The underlying premise of Service-Based Leadership is leaders at all levels who recognize the essential task of serving all constituents, including employees. Weak or self-serving managers will drive them away.
- Implementing employee empowerment which is a natural extension of Service-Based Leadership. Empowered employees are enlisted as partners in the company's effort to improve the operation and provide high levels of service. Super service employees want and need this enhanced participation and contribution.
- Improving communications with employees. All employees, but especially the super service ones, want to know what is going on and how the operation and direction of the enterprise affects them.
- Mentoring employees. Curious and intelligent, super service employees appreciate the time and effort made in giving them the big picture and a deeper understanding of the workings of the operation.
- Creating "master" service positions that recognize higher skill levels and greater knowledge. The job descriptions for these positions must clearly lay out those distinguishing skills, characteristics, and duties that warrant more responsibility and higher compensation. Such master positions can then become the aspiration of new or less accomplished employees.
- Creating a clear career path of knowledge, skill development, and certification which allows other employees to set their sights on the more highly regarded and compensated master level.
- Assigning master level employees the task of teaching and training those who aspire to the higher level. Such tasking serves the super service employees' need for participation and contribution while improving the overall skill level of other employees.
- Challenging super service employees to engage in creative project work such as taking a larger role in training, creating more effective training programs, formulating and executing customer relationship management strategies, and establishing a "wow" factor program to impress customers.

Recognizing and rewarding super service employees. Ensuring they know they are appreciated. This not only serves their needs, but demonstrates to other employees their value, thereby motivating others to follow their example.

- Rewards should also be tangible, such as:
- Higher pay based on their higher levels of performance and contribution.
- Incentive opportunities based on clearly defined performance benchmarks.
- Preference in scheduling.
- Education opportunities to further enhance job skills, knowledge, and opportunity.

None of these solutions is easy to implement and will certainly add costs to the operation, but I believe the current employment paradigm is far more damaging to success and remains a significant "hidden" cost of operations.



#56

Service-Based Leadership

“With Service-Based Leadership, the attitude and primary motivation of the leader is service to others—to members, to employees, to shareholders. This approach to leadership naturally creates relationships—the deep and abiding bonds that sustain the efforts of the club. This outward focus of the leader sets up a dynamic where:

- Employees are continually recognized.
- There is an open flow of ideas, opinions, and information.
- Initiative and risk are highly regarded.
- Problem discovery and solution is a focus while placing blame is unimportant.
- Every employee feels energized and part of the team and is valued for his or her contribution.
- Prestige is derived from performance and contribution, not title or position.
- Members are treated well because employees are treated well.
- The energy and initiative of all employees is focused on the common effort.

With Service-Based Leadership, you will find that service to both internal and external customers is effortless. Less energy is expended in processing complaints, grievances, and conflicts. Work is more fun, and everyone's job is easier.”

Leadership on the Line

Discussion Points: Service-Based Leadership is a particularly effective style of leadership for the service industry, and this can be summed up by the following statement:

“Employees can only provide quality service if they are properly served by the leadership, example, and support of their leaders.”

What things must leaders do to serve their employees?

Why are these things so critical to a leader's success and that of the club?

Why is a leader's example so important?

What are the consequences of not properly serving the needs of employees?

Take Away: To be an effective leader you must serve your employees by providing them the proper tools, training, resources, and daily support to do their jobs effectively.



#57

Employee Empowerment

The aim of Service-Based Leadership is to empower employees at all levels to think and act in alignment with your company's values as they serve the needs of all constituencies—owners, customers, and other employees. Ultimately, employee empowerment is the end result of Service-Based Leadership.

Instead of the traditional view that employees are easily replaceable elements in an organization, people who must be trained to do narrow, well-defined tasks and who must be closely watched and supervised at all times, the concept of empowerment says that today's more educated and sometimes more sophisticated employees need and want to contribute more to their employer and workplace. Yet many businesses marginalize their employees by refusing to listen to them and by failing to let them contribute to the enterprise in any meaningful way.

Further, highly successful companies who engage their employees in developing work processes and continual process improvement have discovered that these empowered employees make indispensable partners in delivering service. Not only do they have a greater stake in the enterprise and are more fully committed to and responsible for their work, they actually equate their purpose and success with that of their company.

So, what are empowered employees and how can they help your business meet its Mission and Vision? In the simplest terms empowered employees are viewed as full-fledged partners in your quest for high levels of quality and service. They are encouraged to think, act, and make decisions on their own based on guidelines defined by the company.

Leaders must understand that empowerment is not something bestowed on employees like some magical gift from management. The leaders' role is to establish both the environment and atmosphere where employees feel their empowerment and are emboldened to make decisions, knowing they have the support and backing of their leaders.

The major role that leaders make in empowering their employees is to create a culture where employees are valued and recognized as vital resources of the enterprise. They must also understand that to be successful with employee empowerment, employees must fully sense the company's commitment to such empowerment; simply saying that employees are empowered, does not make it so. Leaders at all levels must do more than talk the talk.

While employee empowerment may be seen as a desirable practice by management, it ultimately comes about only with the recognition by employees that they are empowered. This means that the focus of leaders must not be on what employees are doing to achieve empowerment, but on what they themselves are doing to promote and enable it.

Discussion Points: What might you do to institute a formal process of employee empowerment to resolve member service issues. What steps should be taken? What obstacles would prevent you from doing it? How can these obstacles be overcome?

Take Away: John Tschohl, founder of the Quality Service Institute, said, *"Empowerment is the most critical skill an employee can master, and a company can drive in order to lure and keep customers."*



#58

Mastering the ABCs

As children we all mastered our ABCs, the basic building blocks of language and learning. The term “ABCs” has long since come to signify the basics of any endeavor.

All of us who work in our industry recognize that the profession is made up of mastering the many basics of hospitality and service. Even in an enterprise as seemingly complex as food service, it is the execution of the basics that underpins our efforts and ultimately leads to success.

Of all the things I’ve learned in my hospitality career spanning over 35 years, the ultimate discipline of success is the necessity of executing the basics well.

While there are many innovative, cutting-edge ideas to improve the products, service, and performance of your operation, you must build these enhancements onto a foundation of the basics.

With these thoughts in mind, I’d like to commend to you the most basic, yet ultimate service discipline – that as you contemplate the many ways to add service and value to your club, you must always focus your attention and that of your entire staff on the ABCs, that is ...

Accomplish the Basics Consistently

Discussion Points: Service is not rocket science, but there is much that needs to be done right every day and every time. List some of the basics that must be done right every time and how these basics foster quality and consistent service.

Take Away: In the detail-intensive world of club operations you must be disciplined enough to consistently accomplish the many basics of service every day.



#59

A Direct Line to Food and Beverage Profits – 1

Several years ago, my club was selected to field test the Food and Beverage Training on the Go program. Initially, the program was met with some resistance from the front of house staff. They felt that the program was another monotonous program whereby the dining room managers preach F&B mechanics to them for what seemed like hours. Upon the staff's recommendation, I changed the program's delivery and made it involve the servers and bartenders more than the dining room managers.

In this new delivery, the servers studied a pre-determined module and then they were charged with presenting it to the rest of the staff. This was the key to making the program work. Now, servers would become teachers and would instruct their "class" in the pre-shift meetings. There was no way to avoid having to teach a module as we required busboys, hostesses, servers, and bartenders alike to instruct a class twice a month.

At first, the restaurant staff was enthralled by the alcoholic beverage information, especially the histories of liquors and wines. This is the easiest part to teach because the 18-24-year-olds seem to have an interest in learning about alcohol. After they taught the beverage portion, we focused on foods and specifically our restaurant's menu. With the help of our chef, we were able to discuss the history of our menu choices, which wines would complement which entrees, and how to sell the daily features. After the beverage and food modules were taught, we moved on to other important issues such as the steps of service, flow of the dining room, recovery techniques, etc. In the end, 94 modules were taught over a 16-month period. Some of the more important modules were repeated. After completing the modules in order, we have now begun to teach them in random order and allowing the staff to choose the module they wish to teach.

Once the program was instituted and the bugs were worked out, several amazing things happened in our restaurant. The first noticeable change was in the demeanor and confidence of the front of house staff. Almost instantly, they became more comfortable discussing foods and beverages with members and guests and with making recommendations. Their newly gained knowledge of the preparations and histories of the food and beverages helped them to become more confident in their ability to answer members' questions. They looked forward to being asked about the history or preparation of certain items and the social interaction that was created when these questions were asked.

The second noticeable change was that our front of house staff turnover rate declined. Our servers enjoyed coming to work and were not as apt to move on to another restaurant opportunity. The restaurant staff felt more a part of the club and they enjoyed getting to know members more personally through their social interaction. The staff no longer felt they were 'going through the motions while waiting for the next new restaurant to open in the area.'

The third and most noticeable change was in the number of appetizers, desserts, and after-dinner drinks sold during the dinner shifts. Just by gaining knowledge of these items, servers were able to discuss daily specials, suggestively sell at every table they were working. The increase in the a la carte average check was immediate. The servers' confidence created an aura of professionalism and also caused a competitive nature in the restaurant. Personal bets were being made to see who could up-sell the most wine or desserts. Managers started offering a complimentary dessert to the server who sold the most after-dinner drinks. The front of house staff loved the competition and it drove our sales to levels not seen in the past.

Chris Conner, formerly General Manager, The Peninsula Yacht Club

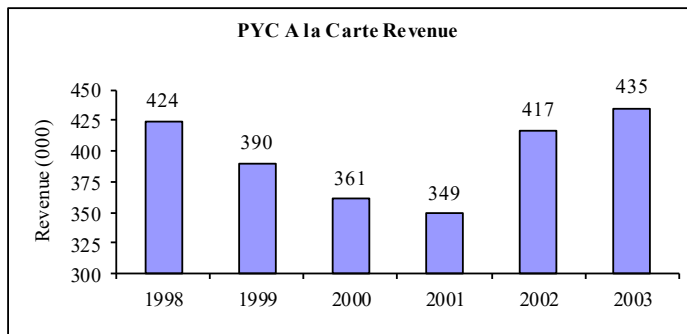


#60

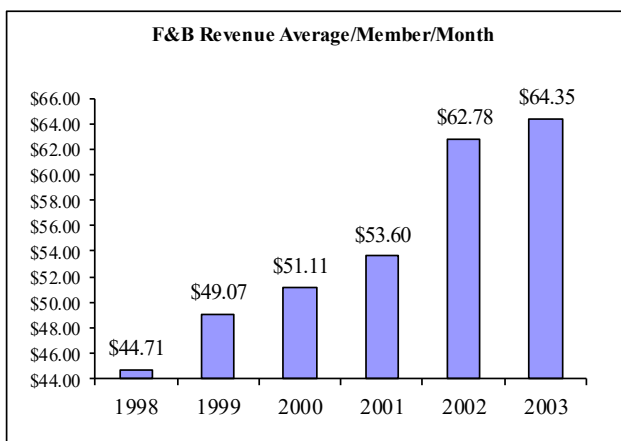
A Direct Line to Food and Beverage Profits – 2

At the start of implementation, the club's restaurant was experiencing a four-year decline in a la carte business. This decline was, at the time, blamed on the poor economy before and after September 11th and a declining membership level. In hindsight, these were only excuses for a more prominent problem.

Although the club's membership level was declining, the average food and beverage revenue per member was holding steady at the 5-year average and the cover counts did not show a decline either. Therefore, members were using the restaurant at a consistent rate in 1999, 2000, and 2001 up until 9/11.



What we noticed when looking at the revenue data was that the average check per member had declined drastically. The data told us that members were continuing to dine in the restaurant at a steady rate, but they were spending less on each visit. Our a la carte menu prices had not fluctuated during this period, so it led me to believe that we were doing something different in the dining room or, as I found out later, we were not doing some things that we had done in the past.



The program was started in October of 2001. Almost immediately, the average check increased, and the number of appetizers and desserts increased as well. Soon after, our alcoholic beverage sales increased, especially wine by the bottle, which shot up 200%. In 2002, the program really took off. By the spring of 2002, the up-selling competitions began, and revenue increases were seen in appetizers, daily specials, desserts, after-dinner drinks, wine by the bottle and wine by the glass. For the 2002 year, the average F&B revenue per

member increased 15% to \$62.78 per month. The trend continued in 2003 with revenues continuing to increase in 2004.

It is without question that implementing the Training on the Go program has had and continues to have a direct positive effect of restaurant revenues at the Peninsula Yacht Club. If you think this program could help your club, visit the Hospitality Resources International website and download the Food and Beverage Training on the Go program. It is a sure-fire way to increase your restaurant's revenues.

Chris Conner, formerly General Manager, The Peninsula Yacht Club



#61

How to Get the Best from Your Service Team

There has been much discussion in the business and popular press about the work ethic, attitudes, and commitment of younger employees and the challenges faced by employers in getting the best efforts from these workers. While there are certainly some markedly different societal and cultural trends in today's workforce, leadership skills are still the primary means of positively influencing employees to better performance.

W. Edwards Deming, American statistician, professor, author, lecturer, and consultant who made significant contributions to Japan's reputation for innovation and quality, famously said, "*The worker is not the problem. The problem is at the top! Management is the problem!*" So when you look for the reasons why you seem to be forever dealing with people problems and service issues, look to your management team's leadership and the manner in which they interact with their employees.

Here are some of the basic things that can make all the difference in getting the best from your service team:

- The manner in which you hire and onboard them.
- The organizational values you define for them.
- The culture of service you immerse them in – service not only to members, but to each other.
- The consistency of leadership provided to them throughout all departments of the operation.
- The example their leaders set for them in all they do and that all leaders are equally dedicated to the club's mission and focus on service.
- The way you establish and communicate your expectations for them.
- The quality of training you provide them.
- The fact that their leaders are continually engaged with them; that management is accessible, listens to their issues, concerns, and suggestions.
- The way that their leaders do not tolerate problem employees or bad attitudes that degrade the efforts of others.
- The ongoing recognition and positive reinforcement given them for superior performance.
- The fact that their leaders see them as integral to the success of the club and all it does.

Not one of the above requirements is anything more than common sense and represents the way all people would like to be treated in their jobs.

Take Away: To ignore employees' basic needs condemns you, your management team, and your club to constant issues and problems, not the least of which is ongoing high levels of turnover and poor service execution.



#62

Additional Resources

To further assist you in your quest for quality and service we offer additional resources available on the Hospitality Resources International website:

[Leadership on the Go](#) – 54 topics that can be used for discussions at staff meetings, as reading for managers, or to explain the club's leadership style to newly hired managers and supervisors. The perfect tool for teaching a consistent, service-based style of leadership.

[Organizational Values on the Go](#) – A proven training tool to constantly and consistently remind your management team of the club's underlying values. These 58 values topics in a wire-bound book can be used for discussions at staff meetings, as reading for managers, or to explain the club's values to newly hired managers and supervisors. Includes topics on Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Operating Standards.

[Food Service Management on the Go](#) – Another On the Go Training tool in a spiral-bound book containing 138 best practice topics to remind and reinforce the necessary disciplines in running a high-quality and high-performing food service operation. In addition to well-known practices, this collection contains a number of innovative ideas to improve and transform the most challenging part of your club operation.

[General Food and Beverage Knowledge Training Manual](#) – A 44-page training manual that familiarizes servers with basic and common food and beverage terms. This knowledge will make your servers more confident in dealing with members and guests. Perfect for self-study or group led instruction. Formatted in MS-Word to allow easy customization.

[Food and Beverage Training on the Go](#) – 96 topics covering F&B knowledge, information, and skills. Perfect for brief training sessions during pre-shift meetings.

[Alcoholic Beverages on the Go](#) – 136 training topics covering beer, wine, and spirits to help train your servers to suggest.

[The Power of Employee Empowerment](#) – This 27-page wire-bound guidebook explains the concept of employee empowerment and what it takes to achieve it. A great training tool for managers at all levels and a perfect complement to Service-Based Leadership training.

Take Away: Delivering high quality service is a multi-disciplinary endeavor requiring knowledge, information, techniques, and the application of a wide variety of management disciplines. On the Go Training provides this material in short, easy-to-absorb lessons in a cost-effective way .

About the Author

Ed Rehkopf is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and received a Master of Professional Studies degree in Hospitality Management from Cornell's School of Hotel Administration. During his long and varied career, he has managed two historic, university-owned hotels, managed at a four-star desert resort, directed operations for a regional hotel chain, opened two golf and country clubs, worked in golf course development, and launched a portal web site for the club industry.