



QUICK

SERVICE THAT SELLS!

TM

The Art of Profitable Hospitality for Quick-Service Restaurants

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1

What Customers Want





Can't Even Give It Away

A customer steps to the front of the line, still studying the menu board. Something catches his eye. "I'll try your new Chicken Adventure Combo, please." He hands over his money and the cashier hands him a tray.

"Next, please," she says.

"Wait," says the customer. "Don't I get a free Big Adventure cup with this?"

Annoyed, the cashier replies: "Well, sir, you need to tell me that you want the cup when you place your order."

"But your sign says, 'Free cup with the purchase of a Chicken Adventure Combo.'"

"Yeah, but our manager said we have to ring it in with the order or our inventory gets all screwed up."

"But it's free. Why can't you just give me a cup now?"

"I could, but we'd have to start all over. Do you really want me to ring it up again ... just for a free cup? C'mon, sir, I have other customers waiting."

"But the only reason I ordered the combo is for the free cup."

"Well, next time you'll know. Next, please."



The Great Eight

It's surprising how often quick-service customers get mistreated. If it's not a missing Big Adventure cup, it might very well be turtle-slow service delivery, order mix-ups in the drive-thru, food not cooked to order, not getting one's money's worth, signature items not as good as the last time, inattentive cashiers, unclean floors and tables, and an overall lack of warmth emanating from every nook and cranny in the restaurant.

Customers aren't too demanding. All they really want is what you've suspected all along — a quick bite to eat. But they can get that anywhere. Why should they choose your place over the others? You may serve great food, but nobody goes into this business to serve bad food. It takes a little more than crispy fries and tasty toppings to succeed. It takes:

Speed. It's your customers' number one demand. But you can't ignore their other demands just to deliver the order within the expected three to five minutes. Once you factor in the other elements that ensure customer satisfaction, speed becomes all the more difficult to maintain.

Accuracy. Getting it right, just as customers ordered it. A limited menu and the nature of the quick-service business suggests your products are easier to prepare — and prepare to specifications — than those at full-service restaurants.

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That's not necessarily so when the clock's ticking, the lines are long and you're an employee or two short in the kitchen.

Quality. High quality is a given. It's what you advertise, it's what customers expect, so it had better be what you deliver. That means hot food hot, cold food cold, the freshest, best-looking, best-tasting meal you can provide. So why do so many of the signature items that quick-service restaurants serve rarely match in quality what's depicted in point-of-sale displays and lighted menu boards?

Value. If customers wanted a steak, they'd spend the extra time and money to get one. We're talking burgers, burritos, chicken, subs and pizza here. In the eyes of customers, there's no excuse for high prices or poor quality. That's why it's critical to control your costs. If you raise prices a nickel, customers may find someplace else to dine.

Consistency. Customers remember many of the visits — good or bad — made to your restaurant. In their minds, however, your operation is only as good as the last meal eaten there. They want the same or better food and service at the same location and from one location to the next.



Service. From the person at the counter to the voice in the drive-thru speaker, employees are your operation's PR representatives. Every action they

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take has an impact on customer satisfaction. Whether it's positive or negative depends on your staff's training and execution.

Atmosphere. Clean, friendly, fun and inviting. If customers see employees dawdling or rough-housing while lines remain long and messes stay messy, they'll begin the slow-burn: "How much of my four dollars pays their wages?"

Personalization. Nobody wants to feel like a wallet with a person attached. Most customers crave personal attention. A smile. Eye contact. Conversation. When a cashier recommends a menu item that would make a meal taste better, the customer appreciates the gesture and the operation appreciates the increase in sales. Both sides come out winners.



One for All and All for One

You can work your tail off to please every customer that comes in the door, but you'll be doomed in the long run if you don't fully enlist the help of your staff. Lack of enthusiastic employee involvement within the service-delivery system is the number one reason operations fail to satisfy their customers.

What customers want — speed, accuracy, quality, value, consistency, service, atmosphere and

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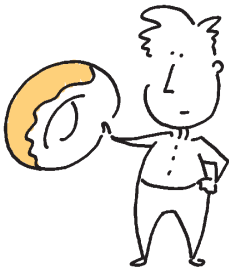
personalization — comes as no surprise to most quick-service owners, operators and managers. But communicating that knowledge to employees is a whole different enchilada. Even in the few instances when the message does get across, employees often don't stick around long enough to use it.

What's the solution? Reading this book is a good start. Inside are countless ways to train your staff to be better, faster, friendlier, more consistent, more caring ... more profitable than ever before.

By the time you're finished discovering how to give customers what they want, you'll be so far ahead of the competition that you'll have the time and profits to think about what *you* want — perhaps a new car or a vacation to Hawaii.

But not so fast. There are a few things you should understand about this book:

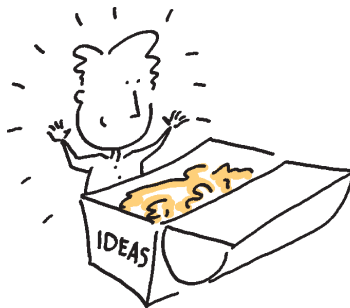
- The quick-service industry is difficult to define. For purposes here, it includes every burger joint, taco casa, sub shop, donut shop, espresso stand, ice cream parlor, hot dog cart and pizza delivery place around.
- It's impossible to incorporate menu examples of every variety. If you donut shop operators see the words "burger" and "burrito," for example, just mentally substitute the words "twist" and "fritter."



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The thrust of the tip, technique or discussion should remain intact.

- Read the book through first, then go back and make a list of the 15 or so best ideas. Other managers, assistant managers and hourly shift leaders in your operation should do the same.
- At your next management meeting, have everyone read their lists. Using a flip chart, list and prioritize in order of importance the ideas most pertinent to your operation. Set a timetable for implementation of each idea you choose to use and assign a manager to see each task through completion.
- Afterward, provide a copy of the book to every new manager, assistant manager and shift leader your operation hires. Make it required reading.



2

SPEED





You Call This Fast Food?

A man pulls up to the drive-thru window to get his order. “Sir, we’re just waiting on your fries,” says the cashier. “Would you mind pulling into the first space on the left ahead? We’ll bring them right out.”

“You want me to park and wait? This is the drive-thru.”

“Please, sir. It’ll just be another minute. We need to help everyone behind you.”

“Haven’t the people behind me ordered fries?”

“Well, yes, sir. Some have.”

“So they don’t have to wait, but I do?”

“Well, no. They’ll have to wait, too.”

“Will they have to pull into a space, too? How many spaces have you got up there?”

“Um, three, sir.”

“Three spaces? This happens often enough that you need to keep three cars waiting? Don’t you call this fast food?”

“Please, sir ...”

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“No, I won’t pull into a space. That would just encourage you to go slower.”

“Well, never mind, sir. You won’t need to,” the cashier says, handing over a bag. “We’ve spent so long discussing this that your fries are ready.”



Pick Up the Pace

You have three to five minutes to make customers happy, which is longer than the typical prime-time TV commercial and shorter than it would take a customer to defrost a frozen burrito picked up at the grocery store.

That’s an awfully thin margin of error. Yet customers expect your staff to be able to do it — day in and day out. Irrational? Maybe. But, hey, they call it fast food and fast food is what they expect.

If customers had the time for a sit-down dinner, there are plenty of other establishments that could fit the bill. But they’ve chosen your place, allotting 300 seconds of their valuable time to get what they want. Can your staff deliver? No question.

So why do things fall apart? Because you and your staff are trying to meet customers’ many *other* demands simultaneously. They