

WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER

The ***SERVICE THAT SELLS!*** Workbook

Food Service

PENCOM
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Contents

Let's Get Started	1
How to Use this Workbook	1
To Sell Is To Serve	3
The Art of the "Soft" Sell	3
Salespeople vs. Order-takers.....	4
Section One: Product Knowledge	6
Role Play	9
Action Plan.....	9
Section Two: Caring Behavior	10
The Seven Steps of Service Excellence.....	11
Step One: Look at Me	11
Step Two: Smile at Me	11
Step Three: Talk to Me	11
Role Play	11
Step Four: Listen to Me	12
Step Five: Thank Me	12
Step Six: Remember Me	12
Step Seven: Invite Me Back.....	12
The Name Game	13
Recognize Your First-Time Guests.....	13
Clean Up Your Act.....	14
Action Plan.....	16
Section Three: Precision Service	17
1. Initial Contact	17
Role Play	18
2. Entrance	18
3. Greeting and Seating.....	18
Role Play	19
4. Bartender/Cashier.....	19
5. Dining Room/Table Condition.....	19
6. Buser.....	19
7. Server	20
Role Play	20
8. Manager.....	20
9. Food	20
10. Restroom.....	21
11. Check Presentation.....	21
12. Farewell.....	21
Action Plan.....	24

Section Four: Sales Performance	25
Pencom Nod	25
Role Play	26
Use Your Sales Props	27
Use the Right Words	28
Descriptive Adjectives	28
Role Play	28
Words That Sell	29
The Word “Try”	30
Role Play	31
The Word “Feature”	31
The Word “Popular”	31
Suggest Mid-Priced Items	31
Always Offer a Choice	31
Suggest Favorites	32
A Shared Sale Beats No Sale	33
Sell within the Zones	33
1. Greeting and Beverage Zone	33
2. Appetizer Zone	34
3. Entree Zone	35
4. Dessert Zone	35
Action Plan	36
 Final Action Plan	 37
And One Last Thing	40
Pencom International Products	44

Section Three: Precision Service



Guests appraise your restaurant whenever and wherever they come in contact with you, your co-workers or the operation itself. Identifying and properly managing your responsibilities at these “Customer Contact Points” – also known as the “Cycle of Service” – will help you produce your share of positive impressions.

The elements of *Caring Behavior* discussed in the previous section will comfort and possibly even delight guests, but they’ll lose confidence fast if your service delivery ever gets sloppy. Were you able to greet the table within a minute? Did you get the orders right? How was the pace and flow of meal? Did you reconcile the check quickly?

What you’re striving for is *Precision Service*. It’s the kind of service that generally goes unnoticed by guests because you and other staff members who visited the table have handled everything, from “hello” to “come back and see us,” without a hitch.

The following Customer Contact Points are based on the chronological experience guests would have visiting a typical restaurant. Your contact points may be different or nearly identical. Read each one carefully, determining your role at each point in the Cycle of Service and how to execute it seamlessly.

1. Initial Contact

First impressions are lasting. The initial contact usually occurs over the phone. A guest calling to get directions, for example, should be greeted with a pleasant voice, and given prompt, accurate instructions and a rundown of upcoming promotions.

Our suggestion? Smile when you talk on the phone. You sound friendlier. And don’t abandon guests on hold.

Other questions guests might ask:

- Can you tell me about your menu?
- Can I make a reservation?
- What’s today’s lunch special?
- Which credit cards do you accept?





A guest calls in and asks for directions from the airport. In the space below, write what you'd say.

NOTE: Be prepared to role play this scenario with your manager or trainer.

2. Entrance

Imagine yourself entering *your* establishment. How does it look?

Is there trash or debris outside on the way to the front door? Is there an exterior light bulb burned out? Are there cigarette butts, toothpick wrappers, dirty napkins or other litter scattered about?

Pick them up before guests see them. If they come across dirt or debris in a public area, they naturally start doubting the cleanliness of the kitchen.

3. Greeting and Seating

The first employee guests often meet is the host, hostess or greeter. Is that person hiding behind the stand or opening the door for guests as they enter, smiling, welcoming them, learning and using their names?

If you're a greeter, you should never wait for guests to approach. Go to them, anticipating their arrival. Be ready at the door with a cheerful smile and a supply of menus. Make eye contact and use a greeting that suits the guests. They'll appreciate the individual attention.

Whoever seats the guests should pull out chairs, then open and present a menu to each person. It's beneficial to make specific food and beverage recommendations at this point, planting the seed for future sales.





In the space below, write what a greeter or seater could say to guests to plant the seed for a dessert sale.

NOTE: Be prepared to role play this scenario with your manager or trainer.

4. Bartender/Cashier

Bartenders (if your restaurant has a bar) should quickly acknowledge guests with a smile, instead of deciding to wash those dozen glasses first. They must know all the beer, wine and cocktail selections, recognize opportunities to upgrade orders and suggest appropriate food.

Cashiers (if your restaurant has them) should make eye contact, smile and ask departing guests if they've enjoyed their meal. It's best to avoid the question "How was everything?" It tends to come off sounding routine and insincere. A quick glance at the guest check would lead to a better approach: "How was your Southwestern Skillet?"

5. Dining Room/Table Condition

Tabletops and chairs should be wiped down and dried thoroughly. Don't you just hate to sit at a table and discover your hand resting in a mystery substance that some careless server or buser had failed to clean? Crusted stains, sticky salt shakers and dust don't inspire return visits.

Make sure menus, table tents and other props are free of spots and stains, and in good shape. The table should be set with precision and consistency from one table to the next. Look at the surrounding area, too. Is the floor clean or covered with bread crumbs? Guests should never be seated until the table is ready to go.

6. Buser

Busers or service assistants should smile and be friendly. If asked for directions to the nearest bathroom or telephone, they should respond cordially, not just jerk their thumbs in the general direction. And they should never leave the dining room or kitchen empty-handed. Full hands in, full hands out.



7. Server

As you've learned throughout this workbook, servers should see themselves as service-oriented salespeople, not order-takers. You can spot order-takers a mile away just by the manner in which they greet their guests: "Kelp you?" or "Ready?"

As a salesperson, it's your job to *guide* guests through the menu, suggesting items as you go. You should also try to find out a little something about your guests – where they're from, where they work – and, most important, learn, remember and use guests' names.



In the space below, describe how you'd go about learning guests' names.

NOTE: Be prepared to role play this scenario with your manager or trainer.

8. Manager

Managers are salespeople, too. They should recommend specific drinks or food, point out promotions and featured items and survey as much action in the restaurant as possible. They should be *visible* to servers and customers, touching every table, seeking out a stranger.



9. Food

Check back within two bites to make sure the food suits each guest. While you're at it, scan the table for condiments needed – mustard, mayo, a knife, more napkins, etc. – *before* the guest has to ask.

If someone sends back food he or she ordered, for whatever reason, ask any others at the table if you can take their food, too, keeping it hot until the mistake has been resolved. That way everyone can eat together. Your guests will see that you care about their experience and that you're trying to make the best of the situation.

If it's okay with management, follow the "service resolution plus one" approach. Don't charge the guest for the dish that replaced the unsuitable one and throw in a free dessert or perhaps a certificate that can be used the next time the guest comes in.

10. Restroom

Why do you need to keep the restrooms clean? Because it's the sign of a clean restaurant, and in a clean restaurant, people buy more. It's that simple.

It's difficult to suggest and sell a dessert to guests who have just visited a filthy bathroom after enjoying their entrees. Even if it's not your job, help keep the restroom in check, wiping water off the sink tops, restocking supplies, picking up paper and keeping the area tidy whenever you're in there.

11. Check Presentation

Check presentation, during which you present the bill and thank guests for their patronage, may be the most important Customer Contact Point. Why? Because you can handle the previous 10 perfectly, then blow it big time by taking too long to deliver the tab or – worse – taking too long to reconcile it and bring back the guest's change or credit card slip to sign.

Don't put the check down, then disappear into some remote sidework area. Remember: Check down? Check back! After all, guests are deciding your tip at this point.



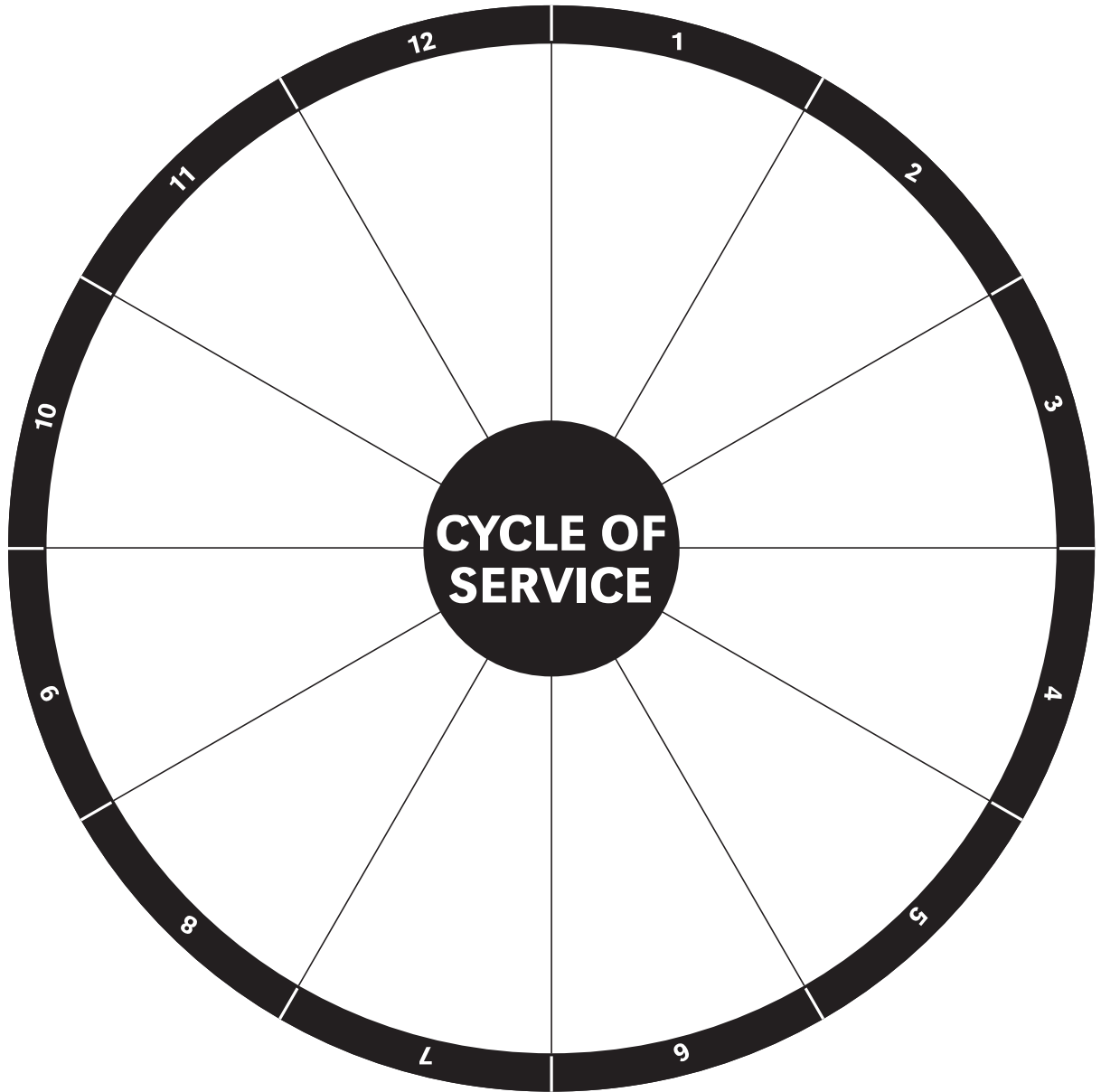
12. Farewell

This is the critical final step of internal marketing. The effective farewell has two objectives: appreciating the guests on this visit and inviting them back for a return visit.

Example: *"Thanks, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Grant. Come back and see us Friday night for all-you-can-eat ribs."* They'll smile as they walk out, and the guests coming in will notice those smiles and look forward to their experience.



As a review, fill in the Cycle of Service below. You can use the steps already discussed or add ones that seem more appropriate to your restaurant.





Now that you've determined the differences or similarities between your Cycle of Service and our version, let's examine the behavior that leads to service excellence. What would you have to do in each of the following Customer Contact Points to ensure a great experience for your guests?

Initial Contact – How should you sound on the phone?

Entrance – What can you do to help tidy up the entrance?

Greeting and Seating – How can the greeter plant the seed for future sales?

Bartender/Cashier – If your restaurant has a bar, how can the bartender make “regulars” out of “strangers?”

Dining Room/Table Condition – What should you wipe down when cleaning a table?

Buser – How should the bus staff direct guests to the restroom?

Server – How can you be a salesperson rather than an order-taker?



Manager – What should managers do to be visible to guests?

Food – How soon should you check back on food you've served?

Restroom – What is your role in keeping the restroom clean?

Check Presentation – What should you do after you've presented the check?

Farewell – How can you make sure guests leave happy?



There are many ways you can put to work what you've just learned about *Precision Service*. But, for now, determine the three best ideas you picked up in this section and write them below.

The Three Best Ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

At the end of *The Service That Sells! Workbook for Foodservice*, you'll be transferring these ideas to a Final Action Plan, which outlines your time line and game plan for improving your sales and service delivery with the strategies that work best for you.