03

SENSE OF URGENCY & GROW TOGETHER

5ft / 10ft Rule · Wait Management · Difficult Moments · Guest Recovery

Goal: Bring Sense of Urgency to life in every corner of the building. Restock before you're asked. Clear before you're told. Respond to every Hands call like it's yours to own. The floor runs because you ran it, and the guest never sees the work behind it.

OTM DAY 3 — SENSE OF URGENCY & GROW TOGETHER

The guest on the wait list should feel just as taken care of as the guest being walked to their table. Move with urgency. Manage the door before it manages you. And remember, how you seat, rotate, and communicate determines whether the whole team can do their best work tonight. When you Own the Moment at the host stand, you pull everyone higher with you.

10 feet: eye contact or a nod. 5 feet: warm verbal connection. Every guest feels seen, even the ones waiting on their name to be called.

Wait Management — The Honest Host

The Standard

- Give honest, specific wait times — not 'shouldn't be long'
- Update the guest proactively — don't make them ask
- Offer bar seating and cocktails for waiting guests
- Use the wait as an opportunity to build the experience, not apologize for it
- Call guests by name when their table is ready — always

What Not to Do

- Never inflate wait times to manage expectations — guests respect honesty
- Never let a guest stand at the door without acknowledgment — even if you're on the phone
- Never seat out of rotation because a guest is impatient — it buries your server
- Never be cold or transactional during a long wait — this is where you earn it

Difficult Moments — OTM Under Fire

The host stand is the most exposed position in the building. Every guest sees you. Your energy is the restaurant's energy. This is where composure is built, one difficult situation at a time.

Reservation Not Found

- Stay calm — never make the guest feel at fault
- Check the system thoroughly before asking the guest to wait
- Offer a solution immediately: bar seating, wait list, call the manager
- If it's our error, own it and fix it, don't explain it

Frustrated Guest on Arrival

- Lean into warmth before you offer solutions, connection first, then logistics
- Never match their energy — composure is contagious
- Call the manager if the situation escalates — don't handle alone
- Turn the moment around before they reach their table

Walk-In During a Long Wait

- Give the accurate wait time — specific, not vague
- Offer bar seating if available — never let them just stand
- Keep them updated proactively — every 10 minutes minimum
- Make the wait part of the experience, not the obstacle to it

Menu Basics — What Every Host Should Know

You don't need to know every dish like a server. You need to know enough to build anticipation, answer basic questions confidently, and hand off with enthusiasm.

D A Y 3 C H E C K L I S T

Before Service

- ☐ Style Guide & Grooming Standards reviewed and approved

- ◻ Clock in

Tests:

- ◻ Menu Basics — Meat & Bread and Pizzas
- ◻ Start Strong, Guest Obsessed, Grow Together
- ◻ Floor Chart & Section Assignments
- ◻ Open Table Navigation
- ◻ POS Navigation

Score:_____(must be 90% or above to pass)

- ◻ Practice the send-off — farewell, invite back, genuine close
- ◻ Roleplay Act 3 – The sendoff with 3 servers/hosts. Get ready for the full experience!

Own the Moment — Day 3 Conversation

Along with your trainer discuss:

- ◻ What does sense of urgency actually look like at the host stand — especially when there's a wait? Walk through the difference between a host who disappears and one who keeps every waiting guest in their line of sight.
- ◻ The guest who is waiting should feel as taken care of as the guest being walked to their table. What does that require from you physically, visually, and verbally?
- ◻ Urgency isn't speed for its own sake. It's presence without being asked. When did you anticipate something today before the guest had to signal it — and when did you react instead of anticipate?

Prime Time

- ◻ Attend Shift Meeting
- ◻ Side Work & Host Stand Set Up with your trainer
- ◻ Practice entering a lead on TripleSeat with your trainer.
- ◻ Review Acts 1 – 3 with trainer
- ◻ During the shift practice completing all 3 Acts:
  - The Arrival:
  - Acknowledge within 10 seconds — eye contact, warmth, zero hesitation
  - Log all special notes immediately — celebrations, allergies, VIPs
  - Walk to table with confidence and genuine warmth — not a tour guide march
  - Full handoff to server — every note relayed before stepping away
  - The Experience
  - Walk guests to their table — never point, always lead
  - Set up the server with every note before you leave
  - Manage floor rotation
  - Keep the wait list current and communicated
  - The Send-Off
  - Acknowledge departing guests — smile, eye contact, genuine farewell
  - Ask how the experience was — then relay the feedback
  - Invite them back by name if you caught it
  - Leave them with a reason to return
- ◻ Practice Waitlist Management:
  - Wait time communicated honestly and specifically — not 'should be soon'
  - Bar seating offered for every wait — always
  - Guest updated proactively — they never have to ask
  - Guest called by name when table is ready
- ◻ POS Practice: along with your trainer, ring in 5 test orders.

After Service

- ◻ Discuss Bowls & Entrees
- ◻ Taste 1 Bowl & 1 Entree
- ◻ Log Tasting Notes
- ◻ Review Menu Basics — confirm comfort with answers
- ◻ Review and Prep for Final Test

→ **DISCUSS · THIS DAY'S 1-PAGERS: Host Phone Service · Road To Success · The 51%**

OTM Debrief — Sense of Urgency

"Did every guest in your line of sight feel acknowledged, even the ones waiting?"

- ◻ For Yourself: How did your preparation show up when things got complicated? Where did you fall back on instinct instead of knowledge?
- ◻ For the Guest: Did waiting guests feel like they were taken care of, or forgotten?
- ◻ For the Team: Did your composure under pressure stabilize the front door, or did the front door need to stabilize you?

Strengths:

_____

_____

Opportunities:

_____

_____

_____	_____	_____
Trainer	Trainee	Captain / GM

the smile on the other end

Phone service at the host stand

THE SCIENCE

The guest on the other end of the phone cannot see your face. They can hear it. Before you say a word, the shape of your expression is already changing the way your voice sounds and the way they feel about the call.

Research backs this up. Michigan State University Extension published findings on confident speaking that include one most people don't expect: smiling makes your voice more pleasant to listen to. Not because of the expression itself. Because of what it does physically.

When you smile, your facial and neck muscles change shape. That changes your vocal resonance, specifically the way sound moves through your throat and mouth. A 2008 study from the University of Portsmouth confirmed that people can detect a smile in someone's voice, and can even distinguish between different types of smiles, based on sound alone. The guest picks up on this without knowing why. They just feel more welcome.

HOW TO ANSWER THE PHONE

Every call starts the same way. Smile before you pick up. Your face shape when the line connects changes your opening tone before you say a single word.

Answer with this:

> *"Thank you for calling Standard Service, this is **[your name]**, how can I help you?"*

Your name matters. It turns a transaction into a conversation from the first second.

ROUTINE CALLS: PROCEED AS TRAINED

If the call is to make a reservation, start a large party request on TripleSeat, or place a to-go order, go ahead and proceed as trained. You have the tools and the knowledge to handle these from start to finish.

CALLS THAT NEED A MANAGER

For the following situations, your job is to collect the right information, reassure the guest, and make sure a manager follows up. Do not transfer the call. Do not put the guest on hold to find a manager. Collect the information below and let them know someone will be in touch shortly.

Guest Asking to Speak with a Manager

- ☐ Guest's full name
- ☐ Best call back number
- ☐ Brief message: what is the call regarding?
- ☐ Let them know: "A manager will give you a call back shortly, [name]. We appreciate your patience."

Guest Requesting a Receipt from a Previous Visit

- ☐ Guest's full name

- ☐ Best call back number
- ☐ Date and approximate time of the visit
- ☐ Last 4 digits of the credit card used
- ☐ Preferred delivery method: email address or cell phone number for text
- ☐ Let them know: "A manager will get that sent over to you shortly, [name]. Thank you for your patience."

In both cases:

Write it down. Repeat it back. Hand it to a manager immediately. The guest was told "shortly" and you are responsible for making that true.

OTM SELF REFLECTION: CONFIDENCE

"What did your opening tone communicate before the guest said a single word?"

For Yourself: Did you smile before you picked up? Were you fully present when the line connected, or still mid-task?

For the Guest: Did the guest feel like they reached someone who was glad to hear from them, or like they interrupted something?

For the Team: When you collected a message for a manager, did you hand it off with urgency, or did it sit on the stand?

road to success

Things go wrong. A plate comes out cold, a reservation gets lost, a guest waits too long. You have two options in that moment, you can hide from it, or you can own it. How we recover is the difference between frustration and lifelong impact. The mistake doesn't define us. What we do next does.

A mistake well handled.

the five a's

01 AWARENESS

The guest should never be the one to tell us something went wrong. See it first... read the table, feel the energy, catch it before it grows.

02 ACKNOWLEDGE

Name it out loud to the guest. No alibis, no blaming the kitchen, no hiding. "Your entree came out wrong, that's on us" builds more trust than pretending it never happened.

03 APOLOGIZE

Say the real words. "I'm so sorry, our mistake". Sincere and direct, with no excuse attached. An apology with a "but" in it isn't an apology.

04 ACT

Say what you're going to do, then do it fast. Make the fix the priority and follow through before they have to ask again. Sense of urgency tells the guest they matter.

05 ADD GENEROSITY

Write the great last chapter. Do something extra to thank them for their patience. Give more than the moment requires... and turn the problem into the reason they come back.

the story

In 1994, Danny Meyer... the restaurateur behind Union Square Cafe... was still beating himself up over a mistake his team had made.

He shared it with Stanley Marcus, the man whose family built Neiman Marcus right here in Dallas back in 1907. Marcus didn't flinch.

He told Meyer a line that reframed the whole game: the road to success is paved with mistakes well handled.

The lesson stuck. A mistake you own and fix can earn more loyalty than a flawless night ever could... because the guest remembers how you made it right.

That's why we don't fear the mistake. We own the recovery. The Five A's are how we do it, every time, on every shift.

otm self-reflection

FOR YOURSELF *Think of the last mistake you owned with a guest. Which of the Five A's did you skip... and what would you do differently next time?*

FOR THE GUEST *Did anyone leave tonight still holding a problem we never made right... or did we write them a great last chapter?*

FOR THE TEAM *Where did we catch a mistake early and recover as a team... and where did one slip because nobody owned it?*

the 51%

Danny Meyer built one of America's most respected restaurant groups on one hiring ratio: 49 percent skill, 51 percent heart. Service is the technical delivery. Hospitality is how it makes the guest feel. Service can be flawless and still forgettable. Hospitality is what they drive home talking about.

Service is the process. Hospitality is the memory.

the fundamentals

01 KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Service gets the order right. Hospitality makes the guest feel like their order matters. You need both, but only one of them creates a regular.

02 SERVICE IS THE PROCESS, NOT THE EXPERIENCE

Perfect steps of service earn you 49 points. The other 51 come from warmth, attention, and the feeling that you are glad they came. Nobody raves about adequate.

03 BE ON THE GUEST'S SIDE

Meyer calls it being an agent, not a gatekeeper. A gatekeeper protects the shop from the guest. An agent finds a way to say yes, and when the answer must be no, offers the closest yes we have.

04 FEELINGS OUTLAST FACTS

A guest will forget how long the entree actually took. They will never forget feeling rushed, ignored, or celebrated. You are managing feelings, not just food.

in the shop

- ✓ Steps of service are the foundation. You are the soul. Run the system fully, then bring the warmth only you can bring.
- ✓ A technically perfect shift with cold energy is a failed shift. We don't trade one for the other.
- ✓ Say absolutely like you mean it. Enthusiasm in your yes is free, and the guest feels the difference.
- ✓ When you have to say no, lead with what you can do. We can't do that, here's what I can do keeps you on their side.
- ✓ Walking away from every table, ask one question: what are they feeling right now? That answer is your scorecard.

otm self-reflection

FOR YOURSELF *Where was your service technically right tonight, and where was the feeling behind it missing?*

FOR THE GUEST *Which table felt the 51 percent from you? How do you know?*

FOR THE TEAM *Did your energy make the team's hospitality easier or harder tonight?*