

FROM THE TOP

Bad customer service means different things to different people across the spectrum of foodservice segments – fine dining, quick service, institutional and more. But what it means to diners in each of those segments results in the same thing – they need to find someplace else to eat. This is why educating employees in all segments about the how and why of good customer service is crucial.

Customer care

Indeed, getting employees to excel at customer service is largely a matter of communication – from the owners above to the customers below. “A good manager has pre-shift meetings and points out key service requirements every day,” says Spiegel.

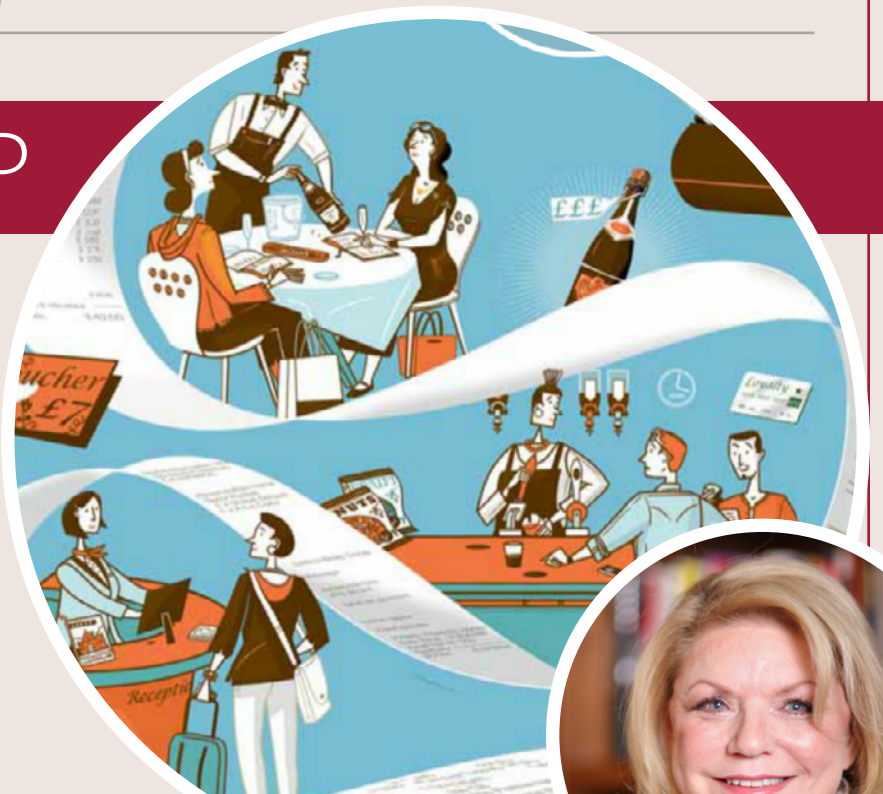
“He or she lets the service and kitchen staff know about reservations, catering or special events happening that day to be prepared for possible ‘rush’ or large parties,” she says.

“Typically, the chef will serve a tasting of the daily special and provide a description so that servers will know how to explain it to the guest. Also, make sure the tables don’t wobble!” says Spiegel.

Common fails

Naturally, guests expect the most when they are paying the most. Training is key. Every server must try each item on the menu.

Arlene Spiegel FCSI, president of Arlene Spiegel & Associates in New York City, has identified the components that make for bad customer service in full-service restaurants.



Arlene Spiegel, FCSI

cites the following examples of bad customer service in full-service restaurants:

- Not being greeted by the host
- Not having the server approach the table within one minute to get drink orders
- Not having the server ‘guide’ guests through the menu and wine list
- Not knowing which guests get each menu item they ordered – for example, auctioning off the food with cries of: ‘Who gets the salmon?’
- Not anticipating service ware, such as forgetting to bring the spoon before the soup arrives or not placing the steak knife before the steak arrives
- Not clearing the table completely after main course is finished
- Not bringing dessert and the after-dinner drink menu immediately upon clearing table
- Not refilling water glasses when they are two-thirds full
- Presenting the check before being asked and
- Not thanking guests upon leaving