

The Importance of Operating Systems: Front-Of-House Service Audits –

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An observation we note with our clients, time and again, is that standardized operating processes are a critical component of a food and beverage operation's long-term success. Standardized operating processes translate into operational consistency, and where service is concerned, consistency is just as important as food.

One way in which operators can improve service and enhance revenues and profits is by putting a front-of-house (FOH) service audit system in place for service staff. Front-of-house service audits, when properly employed, can help create a memorable experience for your guests, enhance server training, manage staff expectations and increase repeat business.

We discuss each of these areas below; identifying immediate and longer-term benefits from instituting a FOH service audit process:

Create a Memorable Experience for the Guest

While guests may not be able to pinpoint exactly what it is that makes great service great, they know that they've experienced it. Setting high standards for your service staff will help them to create that great service memory for your guests.

Enhance Server Training

By asking your service team members to perform a service audit, you can ask them to help pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses in your restaurant's service delivery system. Then, your staff members can be part of the brainstorming process for how to deliver even better service, more consistently.

Manage Staff Expectations

When employees know that they will be held to a standard, they're more likely to delivery on that standard. Let your staff know what you expect of them by using an audit to benchmark against their service skills. Then make sure to reward those members of your team who deliver. When your service employees know what you expect of them, they're more likely to meet those expectations.

Increase Repeat Business

It is a well-known fact in the restaurant industry that guests return as much for great food as they do for great service; in fact, some researchers emphasize that between the two, poor service is a greater dissatisfier than mediocre food. Your customers will keep coming back when they've experienced superior service on a consistent basis.

Using a Front-of-House Service Audit form is a good way to begin critically analyzing the service component of your business. Taking the time to put a front-of-house service audit process in place is a step worth considering if your restaurant requires a high level of your involvement in day-to-day operations, delivers inconsistent service to your guests, or has higher than expected service staff turnover.

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