

A Bit of Advice to Restaurant Staff from an Expert: Pay Attention to Details

(resource material provided by SkillsUSA Maryland 2010 Food & Beverage Service contest chair)

1. Not acknowledging guests with eye contact and a smile within 30 seconds. First impressions count!
2. Not thanking the guests as they leave. Last impression!
3. Not remembering the guests' likes and dislikes!
4. Not opening the front door for guests.
5. Silverware set askew on the tables.
6. Tabletop that isn't picture perfect.
7. Forks with bent tines.
8. Unevenly folded napkins.
9. Chipped glassware.
10. Tables not completely set when guests are being seated.
11. Dead or wilted flowers on the tables.
12. Tables that are not leveled.
13. Salt and pepper shakers that are half empty.
14. Salt or sugar crusted inside the shakers.
15. Carelessly placed items on the tables.
16. Table linen with small holes, rips or burns.
17. Clutter or junk. Watch the trays, gueridons [small tables], etc.
18. Pictures on walls not leveled.

19. Tables not properly cleared.
20. Burned-out light bulbs.
21. Clattering dishes. Be quiet!
22. Dropping china, silverware or glassware.
23. Murky or smelly water in flower vases.
24. Wobbly tables or chairs.
25. Broken chairs.
26. Needing to be center of attention. Give the ego a break!
27. An "I'm doing you a favor" attitude.
28. Socializing with certain guests while ignoring others!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
29. Being too familiar or excessively chatty.
30. Having a visible reaction to the amount of the tip.
31. Ignoring obvious attempts to get attention.
32. Making light of a guest's complaint.
33. No sense of humor.
34. Orders that arrive incomplete.
35. Not acknowledging guests as soon as they're seated.
36. Not providing service to tables in order of their arrival.
37. Wrong pacing: meal service too fast or too slow.
38. Not providing a place for meal debris -- e.g., shells!
39. Food sitting visible on gueridon [small table].
40. Necessary condiments that don't arrive with food.
41. Lack of eye contact.

42. Talking to the order pad.
43. Not repeating each item as the guest orders.
44. Not naming each item as you serve.
45. Addressing the woman as "the lady." (Times are changing!)
46. Thumbs on the plate during service.
47. Stacking or scraping dishes in front of guests.
48. Approaching a table with another table's dirty dishes.
49. Entering the guests' conversation without invitation.
50. Interrupting or asking questions while a guest's mouth is full.
51. Handling silverware by the eating surfaces.
52. Holding glasses by the bowl or rim.
53. Language that is too formal or casual.
54. Asking men for their orders before asking women.
55. Not having total focus when at the table.
56. Giving guests the feeling of being "processed."
57. Not really listening when spoken to.
58. Being too hurried to be attentive.
59. Not establishing rapport with the guests.
60. Appearing stressed or out of control.
61. Not bringing something the guest requests.
62. Providing inconsistent service. (Dig down, you can do it.)
63. Not bringing a replacement (sugar, butter, etc.) before taking the empty one away.
64. Not removing extra place settings.

65. Inability to answer basic menu questions.
66. Not knowing what brands are carried at the bar.
67. Placing a cocktail napkin askew or upside down.
68. Not warning about hot plates or beverages.
69. Dropping plates instead of presenting them.
70. Not bringing all the service ware needed for the menu item.
71. Serving with an elbow in the guest's face.
72. Inconsistent service methods.
73. Not refilling water or coffee.
74. Not moving with the "speed of the room."
75. Not checking back within a few minutes of serving the course.
76. Not visually checking on each table regularly.
77. Not clearing one course completely before serving the next (e.g., toast, finger bowls).
78. Removing plates before all guests are finished.
79. Clearing plates without permission.
80. Not clearing plates promptly.
81. Vanishing waiters.
82. Not continuing to service the table once you have presented the check.
83. Watching while the guest completes the credit card slip.
84. Dribbling wine on the table while pouring.
85. Resting the wine bottle on the rim of the glass.
86. Spilling food or beverage.
87. Wet, stained, or incorrectly added checks.

88. Poor personal sanitation practices (touching, scratching, etc.).
89. Standing around doing nothing.
90. Using poor grammar when addressing a guest.
91. Pointing in the dining room.
92. Rattling pocket change.
93. Walking past items dropped on the floor!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
94. Answering a question with a question.
95. Soiled or ill-fitting uniforms.
96. Filthy footwear.
97. Slouching or poor posture.
98. Distracting accessories.
99. Obvious hangovers.
100. Bandages on hand.
101. Smelling like cigarettes.
102. Excuses for anything -- anytime.
103. Personal conversations loud enough for guests to hear.
104. Whining or complaining.
105. Arguments or displayed anger.
106. Flirting with guests.
107. Speaking in incomplete sentences.
108. Not serving hot food hot.
109. Cold bread or rolls stale around the edges.
110. Incomplete orders.

111. Improperly chilled wine or beer.
112. Drinks without a stirrer or straw.
113. Improper glassware.
114. Dried-out or slimy fruit garnish.
115. Lukewarm coffee.
116. Overly strong or weak iced tea.
117. No fresh glass with a fresh drink.
118. Water, iced tea or coffee not promptly refilled.
119. Coffee in the saucer!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
120. Pouring anything from a stained container.
121. Awkward, improper or inept wine service.
122. Popping a champagne cork.
123. Pouring regular coffee into a cup instead of decaf.
124. Not getting the order right the first time.
125. Serving the wrong drink.
126. Not serving wine promptly.
127. Dirty or spotted flatware.
128. Crumbs on chairs.
129. Details Details Details
130. **SMILE**

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