

OVER AND ABOVE

Going over and above the call of duty is something that our culture has been rewarding since the beginning of time. Presidents give awards for it. Policemen and fireman as well as regular citizens receive commendations for it. Exactly what “**it**” is cannot be clearly defined but we all know that whatever it was they were supposed to be doing, they did much, much more than what was expected in the given situation.

Those eating establishments that pride themselves on great service command *and get* higher prices for their offerings because they understand that the most valuable component, second only to food quality, is quality of service. Conversely, we, as consumers, *expect* to pay more when we patronize a place that is known for great service. The concept is that not only will you get 150% from the staff and management, but everything you paid for and more. These type concepts not only add value to the experience but guarantee a positive outcome. You know going in that any problem which might arise will be handled in a more than fair and professional manner. No questions asked!

From the manager on down to the busboy, those working at your business, regardless of how small or large it might be, are obligated to provide all patrons with a certain level of service. They must recognize that there are other places your customers could be spending their valuable time and hard earned dollars besides in your establishment. Customers time and money spent in your establishment are the “must have” commodities you need to run a successful operation.

When there is a complaint of any kind, it should be addressed promptly, and most importantly, to the *complete* satisfaction of the patron, regardless of who is right or wrong and regardless of what it may cost you in terms of dollars and cents. It is not enough for the waitstaff to hear a mumble or two about a dish without a response. It is bad business to ignore a dissatisfied look from a customer. Any discontent not properly addressed means one thing and one thing only. They, more than likely, will not be coming back regardless of how great everything else was. This is better known in my book as **restaurant suicide**.

Webster's dictionary defines a manager as, "someone who is in charge of a business".

By immediately funneling all concerns and problems to the person "in charge" and having that person respond in the proper way, you can insure that *those* disgruntled customers involved will more than likely return.

A few weeks ago, I was at a restaurant with my wife and a small glass of wine was spilled by a member of the waitstaff reaching across our table. The manager immediately came over, apologized, replaced the drink, guaranteed payment for the dry cleaning along with saying, "THE MEAL IS ON THE HOUSE"! I thought the apology and maybe a drink or dessert would suffice, but this manager, in my opinion, went over and above. I heard the patrons commenting how they loved the place for those type reasons and swore allegiance to return.

Keeping customers coming back happens as a result of a combination of positive things that they experience while at your business. Treating every customer in a way that makes them feel valuable and important sounds like a bit much, but it is those things which are in the category of going over and above. If ownership and staff commit to this philosophy, your profits will surely increase.