

Traits & Actions of a Super Supervisor

In a time-honored restaurant tradition, promotions come from within; bussers are promoted to servers, servers to shift leaders, and shift leaders become supervisors or managers. Having come up through the ranks, these new supervisors generally have good technical and people skills. What they need to be taught is how to be managers not, as one F&B director calls them, “waiters with keys.” When they first step into the position, few know what a manager’s job entails.

Jim Sullivan, the noted restaurant consultant, wrote in his Jan. 5, 2009, *Nation’s Restaurant News* column: “Training is sharing new skills or concepts via a facilitator. Development is applying and then improving on the new skills back on the job with a guide or mentor. A trainer can light the fire, and the manager keeps the flame fanned. Every supervisor is constantly training employees by their own actions.”

In our service training, we ask that all supervisors and man-

By David Rothschild

agers participate in a basic service workshop — either prior to the general training or together with their staffs. They have to be able to “walk the walk” as well as “talk the talk.” The staff needs to know that the supervisors are able to perform the job tasks they’re asking their employees to do.

For the training to be effective and successful on a long-term basis, supervisors and managers have to “buy in” to the policies that are being put in place and support the standard operating procedures that are to be implemented. Perhaps even more importantly, after we’ve done our training and are gone, they need to ensure that these standards and policies are understood, being followed and that rules are consistently applied. It’s up to them to hold the staff accountable on a day-to-day basis.

In our observations of staffs we’ve worked with — and other restaurants with high service standards — we’ve found that “Super” Supervisors/Managers are those who:

1. **SET THE TONE FOR THE RESTAURANT.** A restaurant is a reflection of the manager. Arrive at work cheerful, with a positive attitude, — and stay that way. It’s contagious! If you don’t want to be there, why should your staff?
2. **HAVE AN EVEN TEMPERAMENT.** Avoid raising your voice to the front-of-house or kitchen staff. Keep your cool, even when it’s hot.

3. DON'T LET PROBLEMS AFFECT WORK.

Leave your problems at home — they'll still be there when you're finished working. Remember the old adage, "A smile is part of the uniform."

4. MOTIVATE AND REWARD. Everyone needs to be "stroked" differently. Friendly competition can be beneficial to both staff morale and revenues.

5. TREAT EVERYONE FAIRLY. Don't show favoritism. Keep in mind that everyone has to make a living. When possible, rotate stations and, if necessary, shifts.

6. MAKE AN EFFORT TO STAY ON THE FLOOR. Paperwork, recordkeeping and accounting duties need to be taken care of before or after shift. No hiding out in the office!

7. ARE "HANDS-ON." LEAD BY EXAMPLE. Be ready and willing to help. Every job is important — don't be afraid to get your hands dirty. You should be able to do every job you're asking your staff to do. But utilize your time wisely. Bussing tables might best be left to someone else so you can concentrate on the big picture.

8. VISIT EACH TABLE. This makes guests feel welcome and important. Make sure there has been a check-back in case guests wish anything else.

9. EMPOWER STAFF. Allow servers to make quick decisions without having to involve a manager. Make staff aware of policies regarding how to handle guest concerns.

10. KEEP A LOG. Document, document, document! This keeps you from being caught off-guard and keeps everyone "in the loop."

11. SEEK STAFF INPUT. Learning is a continuing process. Some of the best ideas come from those in the "trenches."

12. MONITOR AND CORRECT SERVICE. During meal periods, be on the floor to observe, assist and correct service. Are bar trays being used to deliver beverages? Are underliners being utilized? Is appropriate spoken and body language being employed? Is the timing and pacing of each party's meal appropriate — without rushing guests or having long gaps between courses?

13. PROMOTE TEAMWORK. When everyone works together, more work gets done. Cooperate with back-of-house and remember that they're part of the team.

14. SUPPRESS RUMORS AND GOSSIP. Don't "bad mouth" guests — it'll come back to haunt you. Discourage staff from spreading rumors and gossip — it will only create ill-will.

15. TREAT ALL WITH RESPECT. Remember that today's busser is tomorrow's dining room manager. Never reprimand a staff member in front of another — or in front of a guest.

16. HOLD PRE-SHIFT MEETINGS. Discuss reservations and special requests; guests celebrating special occasions (and be sure to follow up); daily food and drink specials; staff concerns and suggestions.

17. GET TO KNOW THE STAFF. Know more about your staff than just what their jobs are. Take an interest in your staff as people.

Hopefully this list has "lit a fire" in your thought processes. Try to think of other ways your restaurant managers can become more effective at their jobs. Or that you, as a manager or supervisor, can be the best possible leader for your front-of-house team. Remember, managers aren't born; they're trained, mentored and nurtured. The better your property's top F&B management equips and educates those who operate your restaurants, the more likely you'll keep them around for a number of years. **NAC**

David Rothschild is co-owner of EATiQuette, a Phoenix-based restaurant service training company specializing in on-site, certificate programs for casino food & beverage departments. He can be reached at (602) 569-2051 or David@EATiQuette.com. You can read David's previous Native American Casino articles on EATiQuette.com by using the "articles" link on the home page.

 **PINNACLE**
FURNISHINGS



*"Keeping Your Players
In the Game Longer"*



10970 N. HWY. 211 ENR, APOKALIK, NC 28315
PHONE 910-944-0909 FAX 910-944-0920
www.pinnaclefurnishings.com