



Career Development Skills & Workshops

Team Module

**The Art of Selling**

**Employee name:**

**Pub:**



## Career Development Skills & Workshops

### Selling

The skills and knowledge you will gain:

- ✓ The different types of selling
- ✓ What suggestive selling is and how to use it
- ✓ Words that sell
- ✓ Savvy menu knowledge
- ✓ Reading your customer

### Introduction

**As a team member living and using the team values at every opportunity allows you to focus on what we as a team and company believe in.**

*Team values:*

*"We always want our customers to go home happy. Special requests are what we do best."*

*"We care about the provenance and treatment of our food so we can deliver quality dishes for our teams to serve and our customers to enjoy."*

*"Our aim is to keep the community at the heart of everything we do."*

*"Progression and the development of our teams is our number one priority, creating a great working environment for them and an enjoyable experience for our customers."*

*"Preparation is the key - always prepare for success."*

**For our customers to leave happy having had the best service experience it's important to master service skills, good menu knowledge and also have an understanding of how selling is an integral part of our business.**

**It seems rather harsh to link selling with hospitality and a quality customer experience but it doesn't have to be the hard selling that you might have encountered in retail outlets or the text book scripted selling used at payment points such as "would you like 3 for a £1?" which can be annoying and awkward.**

**Selling in our business is probably better put as guiding and recommending which allows the customer to make informed choices as well as helping to make the business profitable.**

This workshop will give you the knowledge, understanding and skills to be confident at selling and promoting our food and drinks offer whilst giving a relaxed but professional service experience.

#### **What to expect:**

- ✓ Some reading and exercises for you to practice and complete within this workbook.
- ✓ Practical assignments to complete.

#### **Who will be your mentor and what can you expect from them?**

Your mentor is there to coach you through the learning and can help with any questions you have. They are there to support you but not to carry out the assignment – that's down to you to show off your talents! Your mentor will be a person who is competent in the skills and knowledge you need to gain.

#### **How long do I have to complete my workshop?**

You may take as long as you need to complete the exercises and read the information so you are comfortable and able put your learning into practice.

For the practical assignments you will have time assigned throughout your working week to complete them.

So let's get started, remembering our team value, *"Preparation is the key - always prepare for success."*

## Types of selling

Within our business there are a number of different phases you may have heard relating to selling menu items or beverages to customers. Different companies use slightly different terminology depending on the style of business but essentially there are 3 types that have clear objectives:

1. **Upselling** - Used to trade up a person's chosen item to a more expensive version e.g. a medium or larger size which in turn increases the customer's individual spending often referred to as average ticket spend or spend per head. Examples of this are when coffee shops ask you "is that a large?" when you ask for a coffee or in bars when you ask for a gin and tonic you may be asked "is that a double or can I get you a double?"

2. **On selling or add-on selling** - Used to encourage the customer to add an additional item to their chosen selection which again increases the individuals spend and the businesses revenue. For example in a coffee shop when you order a hot chocolate you may be asked if you want cream and marshmallows with it or perhaps at a fast food retailer, if you would like a side of coleslaw or portion of fries to go with your chicken burger. Again the customer has already made their choice so the sales objective is to increase their spend by an "add-on".

3. **Suggestive selling** - Suggestive selling is using the power of suggestion to manifest an idea in the customer's mind of something they would enjoy or want. It is not asking if they would like to add a side salad or bread to their chosen dish. This would be classed as an add-on. Suggestive selling is using your menu knowledge and words to give the customer choice along with personal recommendations. Of course the desired outcome is exactly the same – to increase SPH – but it's done in such a way that the customer receives a friendly professional and knowledgeable experience which in turn should mean they go home happy.

Upselling and add-on selling are often perceived as the same thing by many fast food retailers. However suggestive selling is very different from these and once you understand how you can use it, you will enhance your customers experience giving you confidence to promote and be proud of what you do!

So now you know the different types of selling techniques think of two retail or food environments where you have seen the selling style being used:

*Upselling:*

1

2

*Add on/ on-selling:*

1

2

*Suggestive selling:*

1

2

Thinking about your *current service style* how often do you think you may use any of the above techniques?

*(Don't worry if you circle never – just be honest!)*

Upselling:                    never – occasionally – sometimes – regularly – always

Add-on selling:            never – occasionally – sometimes – regularly – always

Suggestive selling:        never – occasionally – sometimes – regularly – always

For any techniques you have circled “sometimes or above” give an example of each:



## Suggestive selling

Suggestive selling *is making subtle statements that lead people to decide on their own to buy things you want to sell.* It is not pushing particular items on them.

Letting the customer have the thought on their own makes them feel they are in control.

People have a negative reflex towards being sold something. On the other hand they will gladly buy something that they determined on their own that they wanted.

The art of suggestive selling is to create the idea in their mind while allowing them to take credit for the idea. It also prevents you from looking like a salesperson. A skilled server or bartender is one who sells without the customer being aware that they are selling them anything. In fact suggestive selling is about giving guidance and recommendations.

### How to think of suggestive selling rather extra sales

Think of it this way:

***If you were having friends over for dinner at your home and money were no object, wouldn't you offer them drinks and nibbles before dinner, or wine with dinner? And how about desserts? Of course, you would. You would more than likely offer them a choice as well as explaining what the dishes are and perhaps where you managed to get a certain lovely local product from. Will they always accept your offer? No, of course not because they will make their own minds up but you will give have given them the information to make their decision.***

It's no different with your restaurant and pub customers; they are your guests.

70 % of customers don't know what they will order when they go to a restaurant.

*You have the ability to make suggestions and recommendations to them in relation to food and beverages taking into account their individual needs. You are offering them starters or perhaps small plates to share, drinks and a pudding because you want them to enjoy their experience and having these items is part of it.*

Remember... a great server or bartender provides their guests with what they want by guidance and subtle recommendations.

## Words that sell

Words are your most powerful sales tool. The picture you can paint in a customer's mind through your words is very powerful. Use the right words to paint the right picture for the right customer and you will increase your spend per head.

### Words that paint a picture

Any adjective you use should clarify the picture of the item the customer has in their mind. Words like "awesome" or "incredible" or even "delicious" are too generic, over used and do not bring the picture into focus for the guest.

Here's a good tip to help you focus on the right type of words to use...

*Do not use any word that could be used in the same context to describe a car.*

Instead picture the dish in your mind and think of words you would use to describe it. Use words like “tender” or “rich” or “sweet” to help paint the picture in their mind.

### **Words that inform**

Each word you choose should give the customer more information about the meal. Specific descriptive words will help guide the undecided into the decision.

- Use words that emphasize the strengths of the meal such as earthy puy lentils with a hint of wild garlic.
- Describing the flavour combinations of unusual dishes can help sell them e.g. Pan fried Seabass with harissa, gives the dish sweet and spicy flavours with subtle aromatics.
- Let them know steaks are local, organic or aged or that the fish is landed by day boats and MSC approved.

### **Words based on the table**

Looking at the people at the table will give you guidance on what items to sell and which words to choose.

- A table of businessmen maybe much more receptive to descriptions of dishes as “rich” or “buttery.”
- A table of ladies stopping in for lunch might want to hear about dishes that are “light” or “fresh.”
- A group of friends maybe catching up so much that suggesting sharing plate’s maybe an ideal way for them to eat whilst chatting and enjoying themselves.

Trying to convince someone to buy something they have no interest in will waste your time and do nothing to secure the trust of a customer in your guidance or recommendations.

### **Time to practice...**

Using your pubs current menu pick out 3 main courses and 3 starters.

Think of words you would use to describe the dish to a customer who has never eaten it before.

*Write your answers below:*

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.



## Opening conversations

When you interact with your customer for the first time it's an opportunity to show your knowledge and start to use the suggestive selling technique.

But first think about the answer you would give to the following question:

"Can I get you a drink?"

What was your immediate thought?

The commonly used statistic in restaurants is that suggesting *a specific* glass of wine, cocktail, or starter will increase the sales of that item by ten to twenty percent. This is compared to walking up to a table and asking them, "what can I get you to drink?"

Why do you think this is?

Well firstly using the word "drink" is too generic and potentially kills your opportunity of suggestive selling. It also triggers the thoughts of a beverage more like a soft drink, tea or coffee rather than perhaps saying some cocktails to start or some wine, which provokes thoughts of other options and can help to open up a discussion where you can give suggestions.

## Savvy menu knowledge

The Executive chef and Head chefs spend a lot of time designing the dishes for the menu making sure they have great eye appeal, they taste spot on and operationally work for the kitchen team and the FOH to serve. However they also place a lot of energy into ensuring that *each dish is profitable* so that every time the item is sold the revenue from the sale will turn into profit.

As a server or bartender you don't need to know any more detail than this but you do need to be menu savvy and know which dishes not only are crowd pleasers always delivering to the customer but importantly which ones make the best profit. By knowing this you can help to increase your own average spend per head but also help to maximise the profit from a potential food or drink sale.

This isn't to say that you should only promote these dishes, particularly if a customer gives signs they want something completely different but it's another part of the suggestive selling tool box that helps the Head Chef and the pub to make their profit targets whilst still giving your customer a great guest experience.

Profit margins do fluctuate depending on the cost of ingredient and if the HC makes changes to them so it is always good to ask your HC for the top margin dishes he would recommend you try to sell.

The HC will give you these in percentage terms and as they concentrate on the cost of the food to make the sale the lower the percentage the better. For example:

chocolate pudding (COS) – 30%  
ice cream (COS) – 25%  
apple and pear crumble (COS) – 24%

The crumble gives the best profit return.

## Time to practice...

Using your current menu ask the Head Chef for a convenient time you can speak to him/her about the best margin dishes.

Take notes of the **top 5 starters, mains and puddings** that he/she would recommend you have in your suggestion lists providing that they match your customer's profile.

*(Use this blank page to make notes)*



## Reading your customer

Good communications skills will help you to read your customers and understand what they want. You'll find more information on Great Customer Communications within module 14 - Core Team but below is a reminder as the simple things that can often be overlooked or forgotten when you are busy:

### Eye contact

Take the extra moment possibly with just eye contact to let your customer know that you are there to look after them during their visit as opposed to head down recording their order and hurrying off to process it during a busy shift.

### Smile

Remember a genuine welcoming smile opens the door and speaks volumes about your service style, approach and openness as a server or bartender. Customers naturally go to restaurants to enjoy the food and atmosphere, not to see sad or indifferent faces around them.

### Greetings

A cheery professional welcome is always a good start. First impressions count; the customer will make up their mind about you within 30 seconds and can set the tone for their visit. Remember even if they are not in your section always acknowledge them.

### Listening skills

When you're talking to your customers and using your suggestive selling language make sure you listen to them. Just because the suggestion of a dish is not to their liking doesn't mean you can't recommend one that is. Listen to their feedback, holding eye contact so they can see you are engaged and want to help them. Take on-board their comments and recommend alternatives. If necessary ask them what sort of dishes they like; spicy, light, fish or shell fish etc. then you can guide them towards dishes they may prefer.

**Well-done!** You've completed the workbook.

Remember you have all the knowledge you need to help you carry out your practical assignment within your workbook.

### Practical Assignment

1. **Make a list of 4 personal recommendations for cocktails and wine by the bottle. You should consider the following when making your personal list; eye appeal, taste, food pairing, customer price points and COS percentages.**
2. **Using two of your colleagues to help with a role play, practice your suggestive selling technique. Use your list of descriptors you prepared on page 5 to help you. Ask your mentor to sit in to be able to give you feedback.**
3. **3 day challenge- over the course of 3 days pick 4 mains and 4 starters that you really like and are comfortable at promoting using suggestive selling. At the end of the 3 days ask you manager to pull off a report to show how many of each of the items you have sold compared to the previous 3 equivalent days.**

*Remember our team value, "Preparation is the key - always prepare for success!"*

#### Assignment Feedback

*GMs Comments:*

*Area Managers Comments:*