

Today's Restaurant

THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

VOLUME 24

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As mask mandates spread...

Training provides restaurateurs with de-escalation strategies



Foodservice Training Portal, a leading provider of online learning tools for the foodservice and hospitality industries, is pleased to announce the public release of its newest course, Smart Tactics eStart™. Using recommendations and de-escalation protocols from leading crisis management organizations and law enforcement, this online micro-training provides de-escalation strategies for restaurants and foodservice employees to use when dealing with and adhering to mask protocols.

Customer mask mandates are spreading among states across the country. At the same time, viral videos and news reports of anti-mask customer outbursts reveal another threat to worker safety created by COVID-19. Employers risk liability for not protecting their workers from customer harassment based on race or other characteristics protected by federal civil rights law. According to Baruch Fellner, a veteran workplace safety lawyer who represents employers for Gibson Dunn

& Crutcher, "Employers could insulate themselves from OSHA citations related to customer outbursts over mask policies by adopting virus-protection protocols that mirror guidelines from the CDC and industry standards."

Foodservice Training Portal provides this type of training through its existing Healthy Habits eStart™ course. Healthy Habits eStart™ is online infectious disease awareness training for employees that uses CDC, FDA and NIH recommendations & protocols to educate on best practices in the foodservice and restaurant workplace. The course provides staff with critical information to respond to and prevent the spread of viral illness- the common cold, flu and COVID-19/Coronavirus.

Now, as a companion to Healthy Habits eStart™, Foodservice Training Portal is releasing Smart Tactics eStart™. The CDC recommends that people wear face coverings while in public to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. However, 16% of U.S. adults said they hardly ever or have never worn a mask inside a store or other business during the past month, according to the Pew Research Center. Foodservice employees are left to deal with potential customer abuse, difficult conversations

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Waters Edge Wineries signs Florida franchise expansion agreements

Rancho Cucamonga, CA – Waters Edge Wineries®, an innovative urban winery system bringing the cultural experience of wine to communities across the country, has recently announced it has signed a new agreement with existing owner Hayes Wineries LLC, to open two additional Waters Edge Winery & Bistro locations in Tampa, and St. Petersburg. These locations will join 11 others currently open and operating throughout California, Colorado, Ohio, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Montana and Texas. Owned and operated by real estate developer Mike Hayes, Waters Edge Winery & Bistro of Tampa and Waters Edge Winery & Bistro of St. Petersburg will both open in 2021, bringing unique experiences to wine lovers on Florida's West Coast.



to providing these communities with a new wine bar and bistro that is perfect for individual tastings, small group outings, private events and more. Under Mike's leadership and guidance, we know these new locations will be fun, inspiring settings for those who live in or are visiting Southwest Florida."

Following a successful career as a real estate developer in Illinois and Florida, Hayes became interested in pursuing a new venture in the wine industry, which led him

to sign his first Waters Edge Winery franchise agreement in January 2020. Through that agreement, he is currently developing his Jacksonville, Illinois location, which

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"We are excited to continue our expansion across Florida, working closely with Mike and his team to bring the Waters Edge Wineries concept to Tampa and St. Petersburg next year," said Ken Lineberger, president and CEO of Waters Edge Wineries. "We look forward

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Customer service myths: If you believe them, you're in trouble

John Tschohl ♦ Restaurateur and founder of BellyMelly

If I were to ask 100 CEOs to define customer service, I would guess that 97 of them would say this: Customer service is providing the customer with service that is fast, accurate, and courteous. While those are indeed elements of customer service, there is more to it, so much more.

Customer service is a moving target; it is whatever the customer thinks

it is. That includes quality products, convenience, competitive prices, timely responses, reliability, a personal touch, and knowledgeable employees. Customer service means doing what you say you will do and doing it when, if not before, you say you will do it. It is operating on the belief that no transaction is complete unless the service customers receive is sufficient

enough to motivate them to return.

Most CEOs and other executives don't fully understand customer service and its huge impact on sales and profits for their organizations. They don't understand what they should (and shouldn't) do in order to provide the best possible service to their customers. In fact, many of them have false beliefs when it comes to customer service.

Here are three myths that hamper organizations throughout the world in their efforts to provide exceptional customer service and, in the process, to attract and retain customers:

2. The more you pay employees, the more committed they will be to customer service.

Increasing employees' pay will do nothing more than eat into your organization's profits. I've addressed this myth for more than three decades to clients throughout the world, stressing to them that money is not a motivator. It will not change an employee's behavior. If you doubled every employee's salary tomorrow, it would not improve customer service, and in 30 days you'd be out of business. If you have employees who do not provide good service, who are not committed to taking care of your customers, what you pay them will not change the way they operate.

So, you're probably asking, what will motivate my employees to provide better customer service? The answer is this: Recognition. There is no stronger motivator than positive reinforcement and public praise. Think of it this way: If you are a parent trying to teach your young child to put away his toys at the end of the day, what do you think will be the stronger motivator—a dime each time he does so, or constant praise, especially in front of family and friends?

If you recognize the efforts of your employees who go above and beyond to take care of your customers, they will seek continued recognition by improving the service they provide. A \$200 bonus would be gone in a day or two, but a word of praise will live on indefinitely. Recognition is the most powerful motivational tool you have—use it.

3. Your employees are empowered.

This is more than a myth; it's a delusion for most managers and executives. Empowerment means that your employees have the authority to do whatever it takes to immediately solve a customer's problem—to the satisfaction of the customer, not the organization.

In order to empower your employees, you must train them and give them the skills they need to take such good care of your customers that they wouldn't think of doing business with

So, you're probably asking, what will motivate my employees to provide better customer service?

1. Adding employees improves customer service.

You can add all the people you want, but it won't improve your organization's customer service. More doesn't necessarily equal better. Too many organizations have too many under-performing employees; you need to weed them out. In developing countries, the typical company has at least 25 percent more employees than it needs.

If you have 50 employees and add 50 more, all you've done is double your workforce. But, if you have 50 employees who are focused on customer service, who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and have positive attitudes, you will have a winning team. If you train those employees in the art of customer service and support that training by giving them the tools they need to take good care of your customers, you will see your sales and profits skyrocket.

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My Friend's Place Deli announced strategic partnership with Goliath Consulting Group

Atlanta-based brand partners with restaurant experts to expand through franchising and additional opportunities

Atlanta, GA – For more than 40 years, My Friend's Place Deli has been an Atlanta staple offering a variety of fast, healthy meals including sandwiches, wraps and salads. Today, the brand announces its partnership with Goliath Consulting Group to strategically grow throughout metro-Atlanta and the entire Southeast.

"My Friend's Place is excited to have the strategic affiliation with Goliath Consulting Group. This will allow us to grow the brand at a faster rate with the team's resources to support the new units," says Sergio Valentin, Sr., president and CEO of My Friend's Place.

My Friend's Place Deli is well-positioned for today's business environment with a focus on takeout and delivery including curbside service. As franchising is seeing renewed interest across the U.S, the brand offers an affordable franchise investment. Another benefit of the franchise is the limited hours of operations with most locations closing by 3 p.m. This allows the franchisee to maintain a healthy work/life balance fitting with the brand's core value of supporting healthy lifestyles.

The partnership with Goliath Consulting Group brings a wealth of franchise experience led by Jay Bandy, president of Goliath Consulting Group, and Reggie Coachman, partner and



Jay Bandy

chief consulting officer of Goliath Consulting Group. Bandy's experience includes time with BLIMPIE Subs and Salads when the brand grew from 100 to 2000 locations, and experience at RTM Restaurant Group and McDonald's Corporation. Coachman's resume includes leadership roles at several corporate franchise systems including Arby's, Church's, Schlotzsky's and Cinnabon.

"We are thrilled to be working with My Friend's Place and are confident in the potential of the growth of this concept. We'll be helping the brand at a corporate and unit level with marketing,

culinary and operational support. Our goal is to double the number of units in the next 12-18 months and accelerate growth further in 2022," says Bandy.

Work has already begun with the new partnership focused on looking at new locations in metro-Atlanta. Goliath Consulting Group also has started preliminary discussions with potential franchisees and restaurant operators. The ideal franchisee candidate has an entrepreneurial spirit and the desire to provide a healthy, balanced dining option to the community.

Those who are interested in more

information on franchising can contact Reggie Coachman at 832.387.7691 or email him at Reggie.Coachman@GoliathConsulting.com.

About My Friend's Place Deli: The first My Friend's Place location was opened in Sandy Springs, Georgia in 1980 by Rosalind and David Katz. Recognizing the area's need for a restaurant that would provide fast, healthy meals, they began with a simple menu of homemade Egg, Chicken and Tuna Salads, though the menu has evolved vastly over the years. By 1990, the concept had grown in the number of stores throughout the metro Atlanta area and based on the success of the concept and the desire to maintain a high level of service, the company turned to franchising.

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anyone but you. Don't handcuff your employees with cumbersome policies and procedures. Give them the authority to bend and break the rules in order to serve your customers.

It takes a miracle to get employees to make empowered decisions because they think they will get fired if they make a mistake. Let them know that it's OK to make a mistake in the process of providing exceptional customer service. Without empowered employees, you will never be a service leader.

Don't underestimate the power of customer service. Exceptional service builds loyalty, which in turn builds profits. **TR**

About John Tschohl: John Tschohl is an internationally recognized service strategist, is founder and president of Service Quality Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Described by USA Today, Time, and Entrepreneur as a customer service guru, he has written several books on customer service and has developed more than 26 customer-service training programs that have been distributed throughout the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge.

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