

## Personnel by jeff mowatt

### Phrases that Pay Increase Your Perceived Value



Quickly—name a phrase that, when frequently used by waiters and waitresses, increases tips by 12%. (Hint: It's not "please" or "thank you.")

Give up? The answer is, "for you." So, rather than saying to a client, "Would you like some more water?" the savvy professional would say, "I brought more water over *for you*." The client thinks, "Gosh, you did that *for me*, how thoughtful!" and tips accordingly; on average, 12% more.

That's what I call easy money. If you'd like more phrases and tips that increase your perceived value, continue reading.

#### Positive attitude

It's OK to be in a bad mood. Don't buy in to the conventional wisdom that a team member must bubble with enthusiasm to provide great service and high value. In the real world of upset clients, long hours and stress, all team members' enthusiasm occasionally will wear thin. Everyone has bad days. So, front-line professionals need to be trained on how to convey a positive, helpful attitude even when they're not having a "zippity-do-dah" day.

Here are several situations along with phrases that convey a powerful positive impression, no matter how stressed you may be.

#### A client asks for a new product and you don't know if your shipment has arrived.

Without training: "I don't know if it's in. I'll *have* to check."

With training: "I don't know if it's in, but I'll be *happy* to check *for you*."

The trained team member conveys a more positive attitude. The irony is that she didn't work any harder than the untrained worker; they both checked inventory.

However, the trained team member receives a lot more credit because she used better phrasing. What's more, she didn't have to *feel* happy or enthusiastic to get the extra credit. She just used wording that made a better impression on the client.

#### A manager, colleague or client asks you to complete a task.

Without training: "OK," "I'll try," "I'll do my best," "Uh-huh," or "Sure."

With training: "No problem."

"OK" or "sure" are adequate responses. However, who wants to be perceived as adequate? Imagine asking someone to do a series of difficult, inconvenient, unpleasant tasks who responds instead with, "No problem." This conveys the impression of a positive, confident person. Again, the person doesn't have to actually *feel* excited or *want* to do the task, but using the right phrasing creates that perception.

#### A client asks about a delivery date.

Without training: "We *might* be able to get it to you by *Wednesday*."

With training: "We'll *deliver* it by *Friday*."

The guideline is to underpromise and overdeliver. In this situation, if the delivery is made on Thursday, the untrained team member looks incompetent while the trained person appears to be a hero. Keep in mind it's not just your spa's reputation at stake, it's also your reputation. Make promises sparingly, and then keep them no matter what it costs you.

#### You're addressing a client.

Without training: Uses "miss," "ma'am" or "sir" frequently.

With training: Avoids using the above and instead uses the person's first name.

While you can never be too polite with a client, you can be too formal. When a team member addresses clients as "ma'am"



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