

Handling the Wait List

Talking points:

Welcome to Hoss's...

"We are busier than we anticipated, so we have a short wait this evening. Thank you for coming in tonight, may I have your name and how many are in your party."

"Seems like everyone arrived at the same time this evening, Let me put your name on our wait list and it should be about 15 minutes"

"We do have a wait this evening of about 20 minutes, but as always we do our best to get you seated as soon as possible"

"several large parties walked in this evening, we will have a wait of about 30 minutes, Please feel free to look over our menu while you wait."

"We want you to have the best service, so we have a short wait this evening about 10-15 minutes."

"It's a busy night (day), we are happy to see everyone, to do the best job for you we are going to place you on our wait list, it should only be about 30 minutes."

"We had a large party this evening and our Kitchen is very busy so we are asking our guests to wait about 10 minutes so that we will be able to give you a great meal."

"We do have about a 25 minute wait this evening, may I have your name and how many in your party. I do have some crayons and coloring sheets for the children."

Then deliver on the promise

When seating guests – always thank them for waiting, thank them for being patient, thank them for coming in, thank them for their business (choose one)- always be appreciative of our guests, they pay your paycheck

Procedure:

Seating:

Rethink the zones in your restaurant. We suggested setting up zones across the restaurant, so that you are using tables and booths from one side wall to the other. Seating in this manner avoids the alcoves of booths being seated together and the look of a wide open dining room.

Also do not use the ends (seating near banquet rooms or windows)

When you pull servers, make sure to seat outside the "designated zone" and communicate this with the servers. In these situations usually two to four servers are left on and it is easier for them to communicate and pick up tables wherever they are seated on their side of the dining room. This also helps when starting to get busy that you do not look like you have a wide open dining room.

At times we need to think outside the box and set the illusion of more guests in the dining room.

Staffing:

It is hard to think about business differently after 30 years. Make sure we staff correctly and servers are not overwhelmed with tables. Six table zones- if capable to pick up additional they may or you should revert to wait list, don't allow them to tell you if they are capable, use your judgement

Creativity can be key, using DRC or DRM, prep person that serves, students that can only work limited hours may help to staff during volume times – limited time that you need additional servers

Hiring those that come from a similar concept, full service that understand timing will help run business efficiently and will help teach current staff set higher expectations.