The Catering Institute™

Further Defining the Service Script

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Driving Relevant Catering Data to Restaurants

When making an investment in centralized catering programs, multi-unit restaurant operators are creating an opportunity to engage with customers through several touch points during the catering order and delivery process.

It has been found, however, that very few multi-unit restaurant operators have a comprehensive strategy that leverages the connections those key touch points present. This is done through the development of a service script at each point that builds on the confidence and trust that is a requisite for repeat business, while taking advantage of expanding relationships through focused efforts. That is, if the acquisition and relationship of the client is managed effectively.

Data suggests that multi-unit restaurant companies should expect the average catering customer to represent $15,000 in lifetime value, on average, bringing $3,000 in spend every year over a five-year lifespan.

There are a number of available opportunities to fully capture the lifetime value presented when guests interact with a service team in the following five steps of the order process:

- Call Center
- Online Ordering
- In-Store Sales
- Sales Manager
- Delivery

Call Center

From the MonkeyMedia Software experience in processing more than $1 billion in catering orders for multi-unit restaurant customers, catering decision makers who take advantage of the convenience and ease of call center ordering generally fall into two categories. They are either on the go with busy sales jobs that require traveling across their territory via car, or they serve in administrative functions and need help placing larger orders. While their customer category varies, their dependence on call center customer service representatives remains the same.

Both of these consumers are busy, influenced by the convenience of 1-800 dialing, and want their orders to be handled promptly and efficiently. They do not have time to look up individual restaurant phone numbers. They do not have the time or patience to be put on hold. They also do not want to put up with extensive phone trees and redirection. They want to get on and off the phone quickly and trust that their order will be there on time, every time.

One of the biggest breakdowns in the call center order process focuses on technology that is slow to bring up customer information, such as order history and billing account information. In this situation, one of the key advantages of centralization evaporates. This is because the perceived time saved from dialing the call center turns into too many questions and too much time getting the client information needed to start the order process. The lack of solid order processing technology leads to wasted money because of the time taken to look up the customer, or worse yet, have the customer repeat their account information that should be stored or readily available.

Now, that's enough for what destroys the call experience for those guests choosing the phone channel for order placement. It is important to concentrate on what

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happens when the touch point is leveraged to provide a world-class order experience.

The key contributor to a world class call center order experience is the almost instantaneous e-mail order confirmation. Trust and confidence are emphasized in the catering customer's mind when an order confirmation is sent by e-mail, affirming the details of the order and the restaurant charged with executing the order. The magic of technology provides a terrific foundation for trust and confidence in the brand, by easing the worries and stress of the catering consumer.

Online Ordering

So, what is important about the online order process and how can this touch point be leveraged? Generally, the online consumer values speed and convenience. They, too, are quite busy as administrators in busy office environments. They like the convenience of quick, sensible order logic. They do not want to participate in redundancy, extra steps or slow processing engines.

Great companies who take advantage of this touch point are defining a service script with an obsession to capture and respond to abandoned-order feedback. These companies also focus on order logic and the elimination of extra ordering steps. They have credit card information saved in the system and have an integrated "click-to-chat" technology that brings added value to those guests who have quick questions to ask during the order process.

Strategically, we know online orders cost pennies to process, while call orders cost dollars to process. Building a quick and efficient online ordering process through focus on this touch point can bring great economy to the catering equation. This is because online orders can be engineered to dominate phone volume when the consumer is served well and the experience is quick and easy. World class service is achieved in the consumers' mind when all the food shows up fresh and on time!

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In-Store Sales

The in-store catering experience and touch point is centered on customers who wish to by-pass online ordering and 1-800 phone options in favor of the neighborhood experience offered by an in-store manager or customer service rep. Research suggests these customers believe that someone in the restaurant can serve them better than remote centralized or online services could do.

So what is the best practice to leverage this touch point?

First and foremost, an energized, in-store restaurant staff that can promote the convenience of the 1-800 number and who can passionately and energetically recommend the online ordering URL are making a difference. The wise general managers who are investing in training, and leading their staff to this end, are seeing positive year-over-year sales growth

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results because online and phone solutions far exceed the capacity of the in- store team, and deliver ordering ease, convenience and consistent quality.

To further build awareness around the brand solution for catering is the use of in-store point of purchase (POP) and merchandising elements that are put in place as visual cues to promote online and call-center ordering. Assembled boxes for catered lunch events, stacked visibly for the consumer to see, are there with table tents and stanchions that provide affirmation to the consumer that the company is committed to catering. Couple that with a 1-800 number and an online ordering URL, and the catering-focused visual communication and 4-walls marketing platform is complete.

When a catering guest is standing at a counter, should they be given the 1-800 number and sent on their way? Or are they quoted the catering website URL and pushed to online ordering?

These actions are loaded with risk because the customer could abandon the inconvenience of an extra step and take their order to the restaurant next door. Therefore, scripting this important service step, in this instance, to have the restaurant staff member take the order, is the best way to positively leverage this touch point. Taking the order and then calling it in or faxing it to a call center, or entering it manually into a system, along with customer contact information required, assures that this new customer has been captured.

Follow-up steps can then be scripted to include email order confirmation and follow-up by a sales manager to bring awareness to 1-800 and online ordering options. Most importantly, the restaurant staff allows other scripted connection opportunities to occur as customer information is placed into the company database.

Sales Managers

The fourth touch point to consider is the sales manager. Many times, this sales manager is the first touch point in the process because they are focused on new customer acquisition and lead generation, and initiates contact through a sales blitz, in-office presentation, cold call, or in-store lead harvesting.

> *As operators, consistent management of the visibility of the sales team does not necessarily come easy. Customer connections must be managed and consistent sales activities broadly applied.*

Sincerity and the care of the human touch can be applied successfully when the script is delivered consistently across the team. As operators, consistent management of the visibility of the sales team does not necessarily come easy. Customer connections must be managed and consistent sales activities broadly applied. Restaurant operators are really good at managing what they see inside the four walls. If someone isn't active or busy, they find something for them to do or trim the labor by sending them home. However, in order to manage catering sales managers, who are working outside the restaurant, to make connections with new and existing catering customers, a restaurant operator must rely on systems, processes and technology to bring visibility to sales activity. The service script on this touch point takes shape when it is defined, for instance, that a sales manager must connect with all first-time catering

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customers and specifically script the quality of the conversation.

"Hello, I am the catering manager at _____, and I see that you ordered from us yesterday. How did it go? Was everything tasty and fresh? Did we arrive on time? Was everything delivered to your satisfaction? What kind of event were you having? Do you do those often? Are there others in the office I should talk to who order for similar events? Are there others in your building that may need catering from time to time?"

Capturing the connection and the results of the call into a sound Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software that documents the interaction, and ties it to the order and the customer's account, is requisite to executing the script and scaling it across the multi-unit restaurant environment.

Further defining the service script to include an expectation that catering sales managers connect with key clients or top spenders, who frequently generate orders and lapse users, or lost users, begins to allocate these resources appropriately. It can track performance through key indicators, such as the number of activities each week, number of first time order calls made, leads acquired and leads converted to sales.

From many years of experience selling and managing the selling process, MonkeyMedia Software knows that there is a direct correlation between high sales activity and growing catering sales. The companies that are establishing the service script and then holding teams accountable for measurable results are winning and being rewarded with new customer acquisitions and expanded relationships that interpret to double digit year-over- year catering sales growth.

Delivery

The final scripted touch point opportunity lies in the delivery. Here, the properly executed service script can not only affect the frequency and loyalty of the catering customer, but can also have major implications regarding delivery of a brand's promise!

The catering occasion is all about feeding groups. Many people in these groups have never interacted with a particular brand and many have never entered its restaurants. Interactions with the delivery representative from that company will absolutely impact each customer's decision to come into its restaurants.

> *"Scripting of the delivery touch point begins with a call to the guest expressing that the order is being prepped for delivery and includes a check on the delivery location while inquiring about any additional needs or surprise guests who may have shown up."*

Companies that recognize the value of this touch point are scripting the service to align with the role of a brand ambassador and realize this individual plays an important role in expressing the brand within the neighborhood community. From a position of gratitude to get paid for the service of bringing the restaurant's quality to people where they live work and play, they are training and developing the delivery driver with a service script that ensures the attendees of every group-catered event are impressed with the delivery connection.

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Uniforms are clean and the brand communicated in the apparel, and service and setup is clearly defined. Vehicles are maintained, clean and consistent with the core brand image. Order details are reviewed with the guest for accuracy and satisfaction and are checked before leaving. An emergency kit with extra utensils, condiments, cups and napkins are carried to satisfy extra needs. Menus are left behind as a cue to solicit future orders.

Really successful scripting of the delivery experience culminates with an exit from the delivery location to canvass other business in the delivery office building, school or neighborhood to generate leads. Sampling packs are loaded and ready for drop-off at these other offices. Expansion of the delivery connection to include scripted and planned sales outreach activity brings productivity to the investment in a great driver and adds differentiation to the brand experience.

Exhausting? Complex? Demanding? Yes, but the emerging and developing opportunity within the multi-unit restaurant community to take advantage of feeding people where they live, work and play requires an expertise and focus that is sometimes unique to operating, marketing and training skill sets.

Though this is a multi-unit restaurant catering opportunity, it is a very different business to sell and manage. Those who are expanding their knowledge and approach, while focusing executive leadership toward getting catering right, are making a big difference in same-store- sales comparisons, and creating increased cash flow on the balance sheet of their companies.

Let's talk catering!

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About The Catering Institute

The Catering Institute is a leading educator in takeout, delivery and catering, providing training, certification and consulting to restaurant operators and their teams.

The Catering Institute is a private, independent academic institution. Led by founder and CEO Erle Dardick, the faculty at the Catering Institute is passionate about helping brands excel at feeding their customers where they Live, Work & Play™.

Learn more:
www.cateringinstitute.com

Get Catering and Grow Sales!™

A Strategic Perspective for the Multi-Unit Restaurant Executive

By **Erle Dardick**

About Erle Dardick

Erle Dardick is a 17-year catering veteran, business turn-around expert and author, best known for helping multi-unit restaurant executives create successful catering revenue channels. Erle founded both MonkeyMedia Software and The Catering Institute. He is also the Author of "Get Catering and Grow Sales! A Strategic Perspective for The Multi-Unit Restaurant Executive."

About Wayne Alexander

With 16 years of experience and a hands-on style founded in operations and servant leadership, Wayne has established catering as a sustained accelerated growth platform. Through sales force talent development, organizational alignment in the multi-unit franchised environment, centralized call center management, and program development, Wayne reaches catering decision makers at their time of need.

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As Partners in Education, MonkeyMedia Software, PepsiCo Foodservice, and Catering Insights work with the Catering Institute, to help restaurant operators grow sales and increase profits by educating them to become experts at feeding their customers where They Live, Work and Play™.

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