



Stagger Sales: Sales Goals That Motivate Everyone on Your Team


There is always one server on the team who truly “gets” it. She out services and outshines just about everyone else on the team, and her sales reflect it. She's the one you want to keep around and the one you'd clone if you could. You need to reward her—or someone else will—but is her good example discouraging others in your team? If Superstar Server wins every sales contest (and numbers don't lie), soon the rest of your team will admit defeat without beginning to compete.

Instead of general sales goals, create incentives that reflect personal growth. With sliding scales, you'll reward those who are improving instead of just those who have the greatest number of sales. Here's how to get started:

- **Do the math.** Create a program—or effectively utilize your existing one—that allows you to average individual sales in various categories. For example, pull up all the appetizer sales Server A made in the last month. Develop weekly averages with considerations to weekend vs. weeknight shifts. Instead of comparing Server A's data with others, average only his numbers. Do the same for drinks,

desserts, add-ons or other items that you routinely request your team suggestively sell.


- **Go one-on-one.** Pull each server into your office and go over the numbers. Don't use this time to critique successes or offer suggestions for improvement. This is a time for “just the facts, ma'am.” Remember, your goal is not to scold servers for low performance levels, but to motivate them to improve. Print out these numbers and, on the same sheet, show the numbers for a five, ten and twenty percent increase. Then, ask servers to take the numbers home, look over them and bring them to your next sales meeting.

- **Rally together.** After all servers have their baseline data, hold a meeting and present your incentive program. Announce awards for those who reach their goals in each category (five, ten and twenty percent) and assign prizes accordingly (i.e., smaller rewards for meeting five percent, etc.). If you like, add regular bonuses for the largest number of sales, but keep the focus on personal improvement and watch motivation levels rise dramatically! 

Training Tip


The greatest test of a training session's effectiveness is its application in real life. Are your staff members able to take what they've learned and apply it in true service and sales situations? If you don't make sure they're using what they've learned, not only are you doing a disservice to yourself, you're damaging the credibility of your training program. Watch employees in real-life situations, and praise small accomplishments. When things go wrong and you see an employee implement the training incorrectly (or not at all!), don't let it go. Low standards produce low morale

and low levels of performance throughout your operation. Here's how to approach an employee who still needs help:

- Talk to him or her as soon as possible, but not in front of others.
- Focus on the technique or behavior, not the employee personally.
- Ask for the employee's input on solutions and implementation.
- Express confidence in the employee's ability to improve and execute the solution.
- Continue to follow up.
- Offer praise at the first sign of improvement. 

Put It To Work

Think of ways to involve every department when setting up sales, service or safety contests or incentives. Be certain that you identify everyone involved in the process of merchandising products, such as appetizers, to your guests. This list would include host staff, servers, bartenders, cooks, prep cooks and managers.

So what's in it for the prep cooks to make more appetizers? What's in it for the cooks to get the appetizers out quickly? What's in it for the host staff to consistently suggest appetizers to every guest they seat? If you're creating incentives and prizes for the waitstaff to sell more, remember that your kitchen staff may be thinking, “Why should I bust my butt when they win all the prizes?” Prep cooks can be rewarded for zero mistakes, kitchen crew for consistently getting the apps out in less than five minutes and servers for the number of appetizers sold. 

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