HOST/ESS HANDBOOK

The host/ess position is one of the most important jobs in the restaurant. You are the first and last person our guests have contact with. A huge smile and warm, genuine, heartfelt, welcome is the first thing we want our guests to receive when they enter The Park Tavern. Our guests are measuring us the minute they walk through the door or call on the phone. Upon leaving, you are our last point of contact, bidding them a fond farewell, and extending a sincere invitation for their return is the final step in having them return, and recommend us to others. We are counting on you to convey our deep sense of gratitude and genuine desire to please to all of our guests.

Greeting every guest when they enter the restaurant is very important. They should feel as though you are happy to see them. Making them feel special and welcome sets the tone for their dining experience. A good example for greeting a guest is “Good afternoon/evening, welcome to The Park Tavern how many in your party?” If you are busy with other groups, make sure to at least acknowledge new guests. Say hello, and tell them you will be with them momentarily. Do not let guests stand by the door wondering if anyone knows they are there. They are the reason we exist, and should be treated as such. It equally important to say goodbye to them as they are leaving, thank them for dining with us, and invite them back. We want to make all of our guests feel special. In doing so, they will want to return to The Park Tavern over and over again, and encourage others to do so as well.

The order in which the servers are seated is equally important. As a Host/ess, you control the flow of the restaurant. Avoid over seating the servers. If this is not possible, please make sure the server and manager are aware of the situation. If a server gets over loaded it affects the entire restaurant. There is a chance that mistakes will be made on orders, which affects the kitchen. A table may get overlooked, causing other servers to get over loaded trying to pick up the slack. All of this ultimately affects our guests, and this is not how we want them treated. Keeping track of how many guests any one server is responsible for will help everyone. Use a seating chart and cover count sheet to avoid problems. By keeping this information current you can see where potential problems may arise; and you can take steps to avoid them. Good communication with servers and management will help to ensure that are guests are always well taken care of.

The front area of the restaurant is also the responsibility of the host/hostess. It should be kept clean and organized. The entrance needs to be extremely clean at all times. The hostess stand needs to be stocked in an orderly fashion with all the items needed for your shift. This includes clean menus, a seating chart, and a cover count sheet, directions to the restaurant, nightly specials, and a calendar of upcoming events.

The phone needs to be answered in a timely fashion (no more than three rings), with a pleasant greeting. “Good afternoon/evening, thank you for calling The Park Tavern, this is __________, how can I help you.” Try to smile when you speak on the phone, believe it or not you can hear a smile over the phone. Always remember, there is a guest on the other end of the phone. Be courteous and helpful, we want these people to have a pleasant experience with The Park Tavern even over the phone. If you cannot answer the phone - “Thank you for calling The Park Tavern, this is ____________, are you able to hold one moment?” The caller is not to remain on hold for longer than 1 min. You are responsible for the call, until you are certain the call has been successfully transferred. If you cannot find the recipient for the call or you do not see the call picked up in 1 min. or less, you are to ask the caller if they would like to continue to hold, or leave a message. If they choose to leave a message, get their name and phone number and ensure that it is delivered. Staff members are not to get personal calls during their shift unless it is an emergency. Again, take a message and give it to the person when they’re not busy.

There are times when you will be asked to help in other areas, such as checking the rest rooms to make sure they’re presentable, and polishing silverware for example. Keep in mind that if it helps better serve our guests, it helps you. We are all on the same team, and if we want to succeed, we have to work together.

Do not underestimate your importance. You are the first and last impression our guests have.
Do not underestimate your importance. You are the first and last impression our guests have about us. Be polite and helpful on the telephone. Greet every guest warmly, and make him or her feel special. Say goodbye and thank all guests for joining us; invite them to return. Keep your area clean and organized. Help out where needed and we will be head and shoulders above our competition.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Establishing a friendly “neighborhood” atmosphere.
2. Building a repeat clientele through name recognition.
3. Greeting, welcoming and bidding farewell to all guests.
4. Inquiring as to quality of the guest experience.
5. Managing guest flow through the restaurant.
6. Maintenance and management of the front door area.
7. Sanitizing and setting all tables.
8. Coordinating seating, wait sheets and table turns.
10. Being the ultimate check of guest satisfaction.
11. Make it special! Let servers/managers know about special occasions or if they are full time guests.

**PRIDE**

Our philosophy is to do things right or not at all. By serving great food and drink in a warm and friendly atmosphere, you will be able to take pride in working here. Everything on our menu is fresh and of the highest quality. Having good product knowledge and understanding the proper way to deal with situations is very important.

**FIRST AND LASTING IMPRESSION**

As soon as they enter our establishment, your job is to make everyone feel welcome by projecting genuine warmth and friendliness towards each guest. The same warmth should be exuded when answering the phone. The guest’s departure is just as important as their arrival. All guest’s should be acknowledged and thanked as they leave our restaurant. You’re only as good as your last impression!!

**BE A PROFESSIONAL**

It is important to maintain a sincere, enthusiastic attitude throughout your shift. Handling difficult situations under pressure and in front of guests will occur, and both are very important parts of your job. Be polite and helpful, while always maintaining control. If you feel a situation has the potential to get out of hand, alert a manager right away. If you suspect a guest is not 100% satisfied, please get a manager right away, and let the guest know you are doing so. Additionally, in every business, problems exist – remember it is never appropriate to “air ours out” in front of guest’s.

**GREETING THE GUEST**

**SMILE!!!** Always face the door. Say “please” and “thank you” when speaking with guests. When greeting a guest, look them in the eye and say “Hello, welcome to The Park Tavern.” Ask them how many are in their party and the name of the party.

**HANDLING A WAIT**

When our restaurant goes on a wait, the manner in which the guests are treated when they first come through our doors not only determines their first impression of us, but also whether they will be willing to wait. Often the tone of your voice will make a guests visit more comfortable.
and inviting.

Always volunteer the wait time after taking the guests name and number of people in their party. Avoid making guests feel that they are “on their own”. Reassure them that you will be sure to call them as soon as their table is ready. Direct them to an area where they will feel comfortable waiting. Remember this is an opportunity to go the extra mile. If a guest cannot wait, suggest that they sit at the bar and order food. When a guest absolutely cannot wait offer carry out and make sure they get everything they need. If they are not willing to do any of those options, thank them for coming and offer a time they can come back for a reservation. Always tell our guests what we can do for them, rather than what we cannot.

THE WAIT

Quoting times to guests is critical; not only do you have to be accurate, but you also have to make them feel comfortable and confident in your ability.

Record the time the party arrived and the time you quoted them.

If the person’s name is common, or you already have the same name on the list, ask for a first name or initial, and explain that you have the same name twice.

Guests with reservations are seated when half of the party has arrived, regardless of how many in the party are there. Please let a manger know when the party arrives, and a manger will make the call as to whether or not to seat the party.

If you call a party that is on a wait and they are incomplete, ask if they want to be seated now, or wait for more of their party to arrive. Assure them that if they choose to wait, they will get the next available table when they are ready.

SEATING A PARTY-

YOU MUST CALL OVER THE HEAD SET WHEN YOU SEAT A PARTY!

We do not want to be yelling people names throughout the restaurant. Our goal is to seat a table 45 seconds after the previous party has left. By using accurate descriptions, being 3 to 4 names ahead and communicating with the backwaits, you will be able to control the wait list.

Always acknowledge the guests by name before seating them. Make sure that the party that you take to the table is the party the hostess intended you to take. Let the hostess know which party you are seating. Step lively when seating the party but make sure you keep the guest’s pace. Elderly and disabled guests may need a little more time. Engage the guests in conversation as you are walking them to their table. Ask if they have been to The Park Tavern before. If they have, thank them for returning, ask what their favorite dishes are. If it is their first time, thank them for coming; suggest some of your favorite things.

Lay a chit on the table. Double-check the table and chairs to assure they are clean before you let the guests sit down. Never seat a dirty table under any circumstances. Allow guests to sit before placing their menus on the table. Consolidate your time by getting silverware and menus or checking for cleared tables on your way back from seating parties.

Thank the guests for waiting, using their name if possible. When seating parties, proper distribution throughout the restaurant is very important, especially at the beginning and end of a shift. Give each server the same amounts of parties when not on a wait. They should be rotated until we are on a wait. Large parties will also be rotated until we are on a wait.

Our system is set up so a server can handle three tables at a time. Try to avoid seating two
Our system is set up so a server can handle three tables at a time. Try to avoid seating two consecutive parties in the same station and never triple seat a section. The standards of The Park Tavern can be jeopardized if the restaurant is not seated properly. When a station is double or triple seated, the server cannot give the guest the quality service we strive for. The kitchen is also greatly affected by improper seating. Communication with your expeditor is very important. Keep them aware of the seating situation and the wait time.

Never hesitate to grant a guest’s request to sit in a particular area or in a certain server’s section.

**Not on a wait:** If the guest does not like the table you have taken them to, without hesitation, simply ask them where they would feel more comfortable, and seat them there. You must communicate this to the server responsible for the table, and make sure the guest is greeted. Until the table is greeted, the guest is your responsibility. Depending on where we are in rotation, you may have adjust the rotation so you are distributing tables fairly.

**On a wait:** If we are on a wait, inform the guest that you will be happy to accommodate them, but as we are on a wait, you will have to check to make sure that we another table for them. Return back to the host stand, check with the coordinator. If another table is not available, let the guest know, and give them the option of being seated right now, or waiting for a more preferable table. Let them know, that if they chose to wait, we will give the next available table of their choosing.

Between the lunch and dinner rush, the restaurant is “zoned”. This means that a portion of the wait staff goes off duty while the remaining servers cover the entire dining room. Servers will now have 6 to 8 tables in their sections, but should never be waiting on more than four tables at a time. Be sure to alert servers when their “zone” has been seated. We must adhere to our high standards at all times.

When a party requires an extra chair, high chair or booster seat, have it at the table before seating them.

When walking around the restaurant, be aware of any debris on the floor. Help keep the restaurant clean and pleasant for our guests.

**MISCELLANEOUS HOST POINTS**

**Beverages**

Guests may not bring beverages into our restaurant or bar. Guests may also try to leave our establishment with drinks. It is your responsibility to keep drinks (especially alcoholic beverages), glassware and bottles from leaving the building. If a problem arises, get a Manager immediately.

**Cleanliness/Manicuring**

The Host-stand and area around it must be kept clean and organized at all times. Keep the windows clean, floor free of trash and waiting area free of glassware. Personal beverages are not allowed at the Host stand.

**Guest Feedback**

If the opportunity permits, ask departing guests open-ended questions about their meal and dining experience. Accept comments in a genuine manner. If their comments are not positive, let them know you will get a Manager right away. If they refuse to speak with a Manager, do everything in your power to get some sort of contact information, and assure them that you will
relay their thoughts and then follow through immediately.

**Disabled and Elderly Guests**

When seating a disabled or elderly guest, keep in mind where they will be most comfortable. Try to give them the most appropriate table close to the front door. Be sure to take them the shortest route to their table.

When we are on a wait and a disabled person comes in, inform them that we are able to seat them at the next available table if they desire. Be careful, as guests may be sensitive to their age or disability. Make sure that if they are waiting, they have a seat so that they can be comfortable.

**Parties of One**

Occasionally, people eat alone. Never greet a party with “Just one?” or a similar comment. Parties of one should be seated at a two-top table if possible. Suggest the bar if they are comfortable.

**Employee’s Dining in the restaurant**

All off duty employees dining in the restaurant will be seated by a Host/Hostess as if they were a regular guest. Under no circumstances should an employee ever request, or be given special treatment such as being moved up on the list.

**Employees (Servers) questioning seating**

No employee should ever discuss with you why a particular party was or was not seated in a particular section. All questions regarding seating should be directed towards a manager. Please report anyone who is bothering you about seating to a manager right away.

**GUEST POINTS OF FRUSTRATION**

We have all had unpleasant dining experiences when our expectations were not met. There are many different personalities out there, each with their own unique needs, there are however a few things that every guest sees as a point of frustration. At The Park Tavern we are committed to ensuring that these things do not happen

1. No one at front door when a guest arrives
2. Not greeting a guest when they enter the restaurant.
3. Looking bored or disinterested. Playing with a cell phone.
4. Not having table ready for a reservation at the reserved time
5. Misquoting a wait time to be seated.
6. Being seated at a dirty table, or an improperly set table.
7. Not being greeted in a timely fashion after being seated.
8. Eating at a table that has not been cleared of unneeded items (i.e. dirty silverware, empty glasses, etc.).
9. Staff does not yield right of way to guests.
10. Walking away from a table when everyone hasn’t even made it to the table yet
11. Not knowing directions to restaurant
12. Not knowing managers names or which one is working
13. Leaving someone on hold for excessive periods.
GUEST POINTS OF EXHILARATION

There are things we can do that go beyond our basic service standards. This will ensure that our guests remember what a great dining experience they had with us. Most of these things are simple acts of kindness and awareness, but they go a long way towards building repeat business.

1. Open the door for guests when possible, and always be on the look for guests with limited mobility.
2. Address guests by name when appropriate.
3. Know our menu.
4. If you notice that a guest is looking around like they need something, offer assistance.
5. Help keep every table manicured. When you walk by a table and notice that there are unneeded items, ask if you can get them out of their way. Be as unobtrusive as possible.
6. Walking guest towards the restrooms.
7. Accept responsibility when things aren’t going well (do not hide when there are difficulties). Ask for help!
8. Don’t ever leave someone on hold for more than 1 min. at a time.
9. Overall sense of Hospitality. Being surrounded by people who enjoy what they are doing, taking pride in themselves, the products and each other. Witnessing people who are professional in what they do but are still having Fun.