

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



893 Restaurant Owners Need to Eat Their Own Food

Question. Do you think the owner of a restaurant should eat their own food? If you answered that question with a “yes,” the second question is, “Why?” We’ll answer that one, next, on The Extra Point.

I’ve mentioned numerous times that I’m the son of a waitress. My mom was a good one, working at busy popular restaurants for many years. She knew how the front and back of an eatery should work. She taught me that consistency was everything, from the service to the quality of the food. Especially, the quality of the food.

She told me that a good share of her customers came in looking for a certain meal. It might be a regular menu item or a special, but the odds were good their taste buds were begging for something specific when they walked through the door.

If the meal didn’t measure up to their memory of the last time they enjoyed it, that could result in the customer deciding not to come back for a while.

So, once again, the question: Why should a restaurant owner or manager eat their own food? Yes, to make sure of the consistency.

My mom worked the dinner hours because the money was better, and she said the cooks, wait staff, and the managers would all eat before they started their shift.

They worked it out, so everybody got a bite or two of a lot of things, and the reason for that was to test the consistency. If something wasn’t right, they would be the first to know and could sound the alarm.

So, the waitress’s son has a teenage son, and therefore, I visit several of Guam’s fast-food restaurants on a regular basis. I’m not going to mention any names today, but some folks who

own or manage one of these places need to start eating their own stuff. Here’s a few examples.

1. My son likes a certain burger at one specific place. He orders it regularly. It doesn’t always taste as hot and fresh as he expects. That’s a disappointment. Food that likely sits in a warming bin for a little too long, doesn’t taste the same as something that just came off the grill. My son is thinking “just off the grill,” not the warming bin.

2. At a burger restaurant, my boy will usually order the meal, which includes fries and a drink. We almost always visit one particular location of this chain due to convenience. When we do, the fries are almost always stale. Not so in their other places, but just this one location.

We now ask for fresh french fries with our order. It takes a little longer, but since starting to make that request, the fries have been better.

3. My son will usually order the same drink, everywhere he goes. At one location of a certain chain, the mix of the drink is always off. They don’t have enough of the drink syrup, versus the water. The drink is simply tasteless.

After the third or fourth such occurrence, I emailed the owner and told him about it. I got a fast reply, with him saying the problem would be fixed. He said to let him know the next time we came by, and he’d give us a free drink.

We went back a day or two later. I forgot to let him know we were there. Sadly, the problem was the same.

(Con’t.)

About a month after I'd sent the initial email, we visited again. While in the drive-thru, I messaged the owner, saying we were there if he wanted to make good on the freebie.

When we got to the window, we were told we had a free drink coming. They would even upgrade to the largest size. Since I was a bit thirsty as well, that would be perfect. My son and I would share.

We paid, then picked up the food. I took the first sip of the drink and — the problem was the same, no taste. We were both disappointed.

I didn't tell my friend, the owner. If he's listening this morning, this is the first he'll know about it.

I'm not picking on just the fast-food guys. I've seen inconsistency in sit-down restaurants, too. That said, these fast-food outlets feature systems that are built around the idea of providing consistency. Not just every time in a Guam location, but every time in every location they have, wherever that may be.

To all my manager and owner friends, I had a front row seat on the restaurant business growing up. My mom taught me how it's supposed to be. I'm just sayin', eat your own food and drink your own drinks. If you're not currently using them, bring in "mystery shoppers" to sample your food and service.

I have no doubt that you get it right almost all the time. The question is, is "almost all the time" going to work for you?

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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