The Seven Steps of Service are guidelines to follow with each table. The key to each interaction with your guests is to ask open-ended questions every time you go back to the table. An open-ended question is one that the guest cannot answer “yes” or “no” to.

The words “You Guys” should never be used to refer to our guests.

1) Greet Your Table – When your table has been seated, you need to greet them within two minutes. This will assure the guests that they are recognized and “into your flow”. They can relax and not wonder who their server is. Let them know your name, and recite any specials for the day/evening. A great open-ended question at this point might be, “How is the weather out there?” or “How is your vacation going?”

2) Take the Drink Order – DO NOT ask “Would you like something to drink?” (that is a close-ended question, or one they could easily say no to). Ask an open-ended question, like “Can I get you an iced tea or a glass if wine?” List their drinks in order as they go around the table. Try to do this in an order so that you’ll remember who ordered which drink. Nothing is worse than a server auctioning off items on the delivery. “Who ordered the Coke?” is not acceptable. Let them know that you’ll return shortly with their beverages and take their appetizer order. Suggest an appetizer to them, describing a few details about it.

3) Appetizers – After setting down the last drink on the table, ask which appetizers they would like to try (OPEN-ENDED). Try to take/write them in the same order they ordered the drinks to help you remember who gets what on delivery. At this point, some guests prefer to order their meal, and others like to take their time and wait for their appetizers first. To find out how they want to proceed, ask! If they want to wait, take the order when you are finished setting down the appetizers. If they want to order now, keep writing!

4) Meals – Clear the appetizer dishes away and reset the silverware. Clean silverware is a must! “What can I bring for you?” or “What would you like this evening?” are great meal ordering questions (OPEN-ENDED). Remember to ask which sides they want with their meals when appropriate and what temperature they want their beef. Be sure to check
if any drinks need to be refilled at this point. Deliver hot meals with all condiments.

5) Check Back – This is the most important step! So many restaurants fail here. After about two minutes, or when everyone at the table has had a chance to taste their meals, stop by the table and ask “How does your______ taste?”, “Is your steak cooked the way you like it?”, or “What else can I bring for you?”

6) Clear Dishes & Tell About Dessert – Notice we don’t say “Ask if they want dessert.” We automatically assume that our guests are all going to want to try our delicious desserts. Between the homemade Blueberry Pie, the wonderful parfaits and famous Ice Creams, your guests are bound to order one of them at least to share.

7) Present the Check – After the last guest has finished dessert, bring the check (always in a check presenter) to the table. Unless one of the guests has signaled you to give it to them, place the check nearest to the center of the table and let them know you will return shortly to pick up their payment. Keep an eye on the table as you pass, looking for payment inside the presenter. Process the change or credit card promptly, and return it to the table as you thank them sincerely for their visit.

Throughout the guests’ dining experience, it is also important for you, the server, to be sincere. If you really care that they have a great time, they will remember it and be back for more.