50 Cheat Codes Every Service and Hospitality Worker Wishes They Knew

1. The Golden Rule: Treat customers how you’d like to be treated.  
Example: If you were a guest, you’d appreciate a warm greeting and attentive service, so provide that to your customers.

2. Memory Triggers: Use mnemonic devices to remember regulars' preferences.  
Example: Associate a regular’s name with their favorite drink, like “Tom” with “Tom Collins.”

3. Anticipate Needs: Always stay one step ahead of your customers.  
Example: Refill water glasses before they are empty or bring extra napkins when serving messy dishes.

4. Efficiency in Movement: Never move without a purpose; carry something to or from every trip.  
Example: When heading to the kitchen, take dirty dishes with you, and bring out new orders on your way back.

5. Workstation Setup: Always set up your station the same way for consistency and efficiency.  
Example: Keep condiments, utensils, and order pads in the same place every shift.

6. Learn the Menu: Know every item and ingredient by heart to answer questions confidently.  
Example: If a guest asks about allergens in a dish, you can immediately inform them of any potential issues.

7. Non-Verbal Communication: Master the art of reading body language.  
Example: If a customer keeps looking around, they might need something, so approach and ask if they need assistance.

8. Team Signals: Develop subtle signals with coworkers to communicate needs and issues silently.  
Example: A subtle nod or hand signal can indicate to a coworker that you need help with a table.

9. Handling Complaints: Always listen, empathize, and offer a solution quickly.  
Example: If a customer complains about a cold meal, apologize sincerely and offer to replace it immediately.

10. Up-Selling Techniques: Suggest add-ons or upgrades subtly to increase sales.  
Example: Recommend a premium wine pairing with their meal or suggest adding a side salad.

11. Stay Calm Under Pressure: Practice deep breathing techniques to stay composed.  
Example: When the restaurant is busy, take deep breaths to maintain a calm demeanor and handle orders efficiently.

12. Personal Space Awareness: Respect personal space to make customers feel comfortable.  
Example: Avoid hovering too close when taking orders or checking on tables.

13. Check IDs Carefully: Always double-check IDs to ensure legal service of alcohol.  
Example: Verify the date of birth and look for signs of tampering on the ID before serving alcoholic beverages.

14. Sanitization Habit: Make sanitizing a continuous habit to ensure cleanliness.  
Example: Regularly sanitize high-touch areas like menus, door handles, and POS systems.

15. Dress Code Compliance: Always adhere to the dress code for professionalism.  
Example: Wear a clean uniform, proper shoes, and any required accessories like name tags.

16. Prioritize Tasks: Learn to prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance.  
Example: Serve hot food immediately to maintain its quality before refilling drinks.

17. Perfect Timing: Master the timing of checking on tables to avoid interrupting conversations.  
Example: Approach tables when customers have just received their food or are looking around for assistance.

18. Tech Savvy: Familiarize yourself with all POS and reservation systems.  
Example: Know how to split bills, apply discounts, and handle special orders quickly and accurately.

19. Know the Competition: Understand what competitors offer to highlight your unique selling points.  
Example: If a nearby restaurant is known for its craft beers, emphasize your establishment’s unique cocktail menu.

20. Special Requests: Remember that accommodating special requests can make a huge difference.  
Example: Offering a vegan option for a dish that’s normally not vegan can create a loyal customer.

21. Maintain Personal Hygiene: Always ensure personal cleanliness to avoid any discomfort to guests.  
Example: Keep nails trimmed, hair neat, and use deodorant to stay fresh throughout your shift.

22. Positive Attitude: Keep a positive attitude; it’s contagious and improves the work environment.  
Example: Smile often and maintain a friendly tone, even during busy or stressful times.

23. Know Your Regulars: Building relationships with regulars can lead to bigger tips and loyal customers.  
Example: Greet regulars by name and remember their usual orders.

24. Stay Updated: Keep up with industry trends and new service techniques.  
Example: Attend workshops or follow industry blogs to learn about new serving techniques or menu trends.

25. Cross-Training: Learn different roles to be more versatile and valuable.  
Example: Learn how to bartend if you’re a server, so you can help out during busy times.

26. Conflict Resolution: Learn basic conflict resolution techniques to handle disputes gracefully.  
Example: If two customers are arguing, calmly separate them and offer to move one party to another table.

27. Emergency Procedures: Know all emergency procedures like the back of your hand.  
Example: Be familiar with the location of fire exits, first aid kits, and know the protocol for medical emergencies.

28. Empower Yourself: Take initiative when you see something that needs to be done.  
Example: If you notice a spill, clean it up immediately rather than waiting for someone else to do it.

29. Follow Up: Always follow up with customers to ensure satisfaction.  
Example: After serving a meal, check back to ensure everything is to their liking.

30. Use Names: Use customers' names to make interactions more personal.  
Example: If a customer makes a reservation, greet them by name when they arrive.

31. Breaks and Hydration: Take regular breaks and stay hydrated to maintain energy levels.  
Example: Drink water during breaks and take short rests to recharge during long shifts.

32. Organizational Skills: Keep everything organized to improve efficiency and reduce stress.  
Example: Keep your order pads, pens, and any other tools neatly arranged and easily accessible.

33. Customer Privacy: Always respect the privacy and confidentiality of customers.  
Example: Never discuss a customer’s personal details or interactions with other guests or staff.

34. Continuous Learning: Never stop learning and improving your skills.  
Example: Enroll in online courses or read books on customer service and hospitality management.

35. Active Listening: Practice active listening to understand and fulfill customer needs better.  
Example: Repeat back orders to confirm accuracy and show you are paying attention.

36. Loyalty Programs: Promote loyalty programs to encourage repeat business.  
Example: Explain the benefits of your restaurant’s loyalty card to new customers.

37. Know Your Strengths: Identify and leverage your strengths to excel in your role.  
Example: If you’re great at multitasking, focus on handling multiple tables during busy periods.

38. Dress for Success: Always ensure your uniform or attire is clean and well-presented.  
Example: Iron your uniform before each shift and ensure shoes are polished and clean.

39. Mind Your Manners: Politeness goes a long way in making a good impression.  
Example: Always say “please” and “thank you,” and address guests respectfully.

40. Set Goals: Set personal and professional goals to stay motivated and focused.  
Example: Aim to improve your sales skills by up-selling more effectively each month.

41. Feedback Utilization: Use customer feedback to improve service quality.  
Example: If multiple customers mention slow service, work with your team to identify and address the bottlenecks.

42. Stay Humble: Humility and a willingness to learn can open many doors.  
Example: Accept constructive criticism from managers and peers graciously.

43. Time Management: Manage your time effectively to balance all tasks.  
Example: Create a checklist for your shift to ensure all tasks are completed efficiently.

44. Be a Team Player: Always support your team to create a positive work environment.  
Example: Help a coworker with their tables if they are overwhelmed, even if it’s not your responsibility.

45. Adaptability: Be adaptable to different customer needs and situations.  
Example: If a customer has a special dietary requirement, work with the kitchen to accommodate it.

46. Proactive Service: Offer help before being asked to show attentiveness.  
Example: Refill drinks or clear plates without waiting for the customer to request it.

47. Handling Tips: Learn the best practices for handling and reporting tips.  
Example: Keep accurate records of your tips and ensure you declare them according to your local regulations.

48. Mind the Details: Attention to detail can make a huge difference in service quality.  
Example: Notice if a customer’s napkin has fallen and replace it without being asked.

49. Customer Engagement: Engage with customers to create memorable experiences.  
Example: Share interesting facts about the menu items or the restaurant’s history to enhance the dining experience.

50. Leave Personal Issues at the Door: Always leave personal problems outside to maintain professionalism at work.  
Example: Focus on your tasks and interactions with customers without letting personal issues affect your demeanor.