



# Seven Ways Successful Servers Sell Using the Power of the Senses

**H**ow can you sell more without using words? Sure, great waiters paint pictures and use words that “taste” good, but they also masterfully use the power of the senses to create impulse buying.

## Create a display case

Guests often buy off the next table as much as the menu. Bet you’ve seen table-shopping guests crane their necks and ask, “What’s she having over there?” Or, “I don’t know what that is, but that’s what I want.” Consider how the mere sight of a bottle of Silver Oak Cab on one table sends signals of sharing, celebration, and romance to another. Or, how a tiramisu slyly whispers, “Go ahead, forget about the diet.”

## Seductively carry dishes through the dining room

Years ago, super waiter Wayne Anderson of D.C.’s Capital Grill taught me how to playfully flaunt and taunt by carrying dishes “slow and low.” I learned that, when I paraded our signature Shell Bowl (while a waiter at Paolo’s of Georgetown), it was like saying, “See they bought one, why not you?” Sashay cool dishes and drinks to evoke an “Excuse me, what’s that?” to trigger a boatload of sales.

## Make a show

Take a page out of Nancy Oak’s Boulevard in San Francisco. Chef-gazing guests seated at the open kitchen counter find dishes like the “Honey Crisp Apple, Walnut & Little Gem Salad” hard to resist. And, you only have to ask a bartender what happens when she shakes, rattles, and pours a 20



Cane Mojito or Grey Goose Martini. When she makes one, she’ll have to make two more because guests shop with their senses.

## Take guests on a tour

While dining at Thomas Kelleher’s Per Se in NYC, our waiter arranged for Hilton execs and me to tour its gleaming, lavishly equipped kitchen. With front row seats, we watched the culinary team’s perfectly choreographed performance. Choreograph your performance by walking guests to the pizza oven, raw bar, barbecue pit, lobster tank, dry aged steak display, or sushi bar. And, don’t overlook the kids — they’re your assistant salespersons.

## Don’t forget sound

Ring a glass to propose a Veuve Clicquot toast. It’s sure to evoke a Pavlovian response from nearby guests. And, it’s no mistake that the Ruth’s Chris tag line is: “Our steaks are seared to perfection at

1800 degrees and topped with fresh butter so they sizzle all the way to the table.” Steaks, fajitas, and other sizzling, fizzing dishes and cocktails triple engage with the power of sight, sound, and smell.

## Offer a taste

When a couple is on the fence about ordering either a glass or bottle of luscious, supple, and soft Girgich Hills Estate Merlot, pour both a taste. And, when guests fight over ordering a bottle of Pinot Noir or Sauvignon Blanc, respond with, “Why not get a bottle of each?” Then bring two glasses for each guest, and watch how the white drinkers sneak a taste of the red — and vice versa. Offer shot glass samples of local Flying Dog Blood Orange IPA. Taste can be more powerful than the most eloquent description.

## Go techie

To capture iPhone-enamored

guests, a recent client purchased iPads and loaded them with a slideshow of desserts, cordials, and coffees. It doubled the sales.

In the end, using the power of sight, sound, smell, and taste is the perfect way to engage, entice, and entertain. Guests find the allure of “sense selling” irresistible — while you maximize sales and boost your tips.

**BOB BROWN**, president of Bob Brown Service Solutions, [www.bobbrownss.com](http://www.bobbrownss.com), was rated the #1 speaker at this year’s National Restaurant Show. Pioneer of Marriott’s Service Excellence Program, he has worked with clients such as Disney, Hilton, Morton’s of Chicago, Nordstrom, Olive Garden, and Ritz Carlton and works internationally with the prestigious Burj Al Arab in Dubai. He has appeared on the Food Network and is author of *The Little Brown Book of Restaurant Success*, selling over 100,000 copies worldwide. Contact Bob for keynotes, breakouts, and workshops at 571-246-2944 ©Bob Brown Service Solutions 2016.