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# DO THE MATH: TABLE TURNOVER

## Measure and maximize your rates



Every operator wants to get the optimal number of table turns during any given shift. Obviously the more customers you serve, the better for your bottom line. And the less time customers have to wait for a table, the better the chance they'll rate your restaurant as delivering a great guest experience. Technology can also help (like POS systems and tableside payment), as can staff training. But the first step is paying attention! So if your grasp on your table-turn numbers is a little wobbly, begin with the exercise below.

During the dinner period, tables usually flip 3 times (every 1-½ hours) for a family restaurant; figure 2 hours for fine dining and 1 hour +15 minutes for a casual venue.

## TABLE TURNS

**# OF PARTIES / # OF TABLES = TURNOVER RATE**

First, choose your time period, e.g. 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. (5 hours)

No. of parties served during that period:

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No. of tables occupied during that period:

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**TURNOVER RATE**

FOR EXAMPLE:

- 20 parties, 5 tables
- 20 / 5 = 4 turns during a 4-hour period

### TICK, TICK, TICK:

- Are servers getting to each table within 1 minute after seating?
- Is staff having issues turning tables during certain times?
- Are certain sections/servers turning more slowly than others?
- Are dishes being cleared as each guest finishes, rather than all at once?

### ASK, ASK, ASK:

- Does staff query whether guests are returning, thus saving time explaining the menu?
- Are servers making tradeoffs with check average (e.g. missing the chance to upsell dessert)?
- Could you invite customers to move to the bar for a free drink, and free up their table?



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# FRONT OF HOUSE CHECKLIST

## OPENING CHECKLIST

- Turn on lights and music.
- Turn on P.O.S. system.
- Sign in or punch in.
- Refill receipt paper.
- Check uniforms for cleanliness.  
Put on gloves and face coverings.
- Clean and sanitize menus.
- Take count of money in register.
- Sweep, vacuum and sanitize floors.
- Position chairs and stools to welcome customers.
- Clean and sanitize chairs, stools, tables and bar area.
- Clean and sanitize windows, doors and door handles.
- Check light bulbs to make sure all are operational.
- Check customer bathrooms for cleanliness and that they are stocked.
- Make sure service trays and tray jacks are clean and sanitized.
- Set beverage stations with clean glasses and flatware.
- Make sure tables are set for service.
- Check reservation list and look for special requests by customers.
- Check with kitchen to make sure all menu items are available and daily specials.
- Check to make sure to-go and delivery area is stocked and ready.
- Check to make sure parking lot, to-go spots, etc. are clean and ready.
- Turn over the sign to show you are open.
- Assign team member to check in and put away incoming deliveries.

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# FRONT OF HOUSE CHECKLIST

## CLOSING CHECKLIST

- Flip the sign to close.
- Clean and sanitize door and windows.
- Clean and sanitize menus, chairs, stools, tables and bar etc.
- Refill condiments and napkins.
- Empty and clean water pitchers and iced tea and coffee machines.
- Clean, sanitize and wipe down glasses and flatware.
- Empty trash, clean and sanitize cans and replace bags.
- Clean and sanitize bathroom sinks and counters.
- Print end of the day report.
- Close out register.
- Clean and sanitize floor areas.
- Make sure no food is left out.
- Check any cooler temperatures to make sure they are 40 degrees or less.
- Make a note for opening crew of needs to address.
- Clean and sanitize trays and tray jacks.

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# WAITSTAFF TRAINING

Is your program up to speed – and effective?



Even if you have a plan in place, it's probably time to revisit, because customer expectations are now higher than ever for restaurant service. Just as important: The benefits of thorough, on-point training. Higher check averages, more positive online reviews – training is relevant to several critical components of your business success. So make a new commitment to review and upgrade your training program.

**HOW CAN YOUR SERVERS' SKILL SET BE IMPROVED?**

## STICK AROUND!

Staffers who are well trained are also more engaged on a daily basis – and thus more likely to stay with you longer.



### "BUT I THOUGHT..."

- Are job duties clearly communicated?
- Are expectations of job success spelled out?
- Do servers understand the tone you want them to take with customers?
- Are you using several types of training to convey information and reinforce knowledge? (e.g. job-shadowing, demos, written/visual aids, role-playing)

### "THAT HAS NUTS?"

- Do servers know the important details about allergens in dishes?
- Do they also understand the attributes of dishes, such as grilled vs. baked?
- Can servers answer questions about portion size, from number of scallops to how big the entrée salad is?

### "WHAT SPECIAL?"

- Are you keeping waitstaff up to date on LTOs and menu changes, including pricing?
- Can servers describe mouth-watering sides, sizzling plates and layers of chocolate ganache, to upsell customers?