



Shakey's Operational Coaching Playbook #2

Guest Service & Customer Experience

Purpose

Guest service is one of the most visible parts of the Shakey's experience. Great food matters, but the way guests are greeted, helped, checked on, and thanked often determines how they remember their visit.

This playbook is designed as a quick coaching guide for managers, franchise owners, and team leaders to help build stronger service habits, improve consistency, and create a more welcoming guest experience.

The standard is simple: Take care of the guest at every step, and the business will take care of itself.

The goal is not just to "meet the standard," but to create a guest experience that feels friendly, attentive, and worthy of a Premier Pizza Parlor.

1. First Impression: Arrival, Greeting & Phone Voice

What Premier Looks Like

Guests should feel welcomed as soon as they enter the restaurant. A warm greeting, eye contact, and an upbeat attitude help set the tone for the entire visit.

For take-out orders, the first impression often starts before the guest ever walks through the door. A friendly, warm voice on the phone is part of the guest's first experience with the restaurant and helps set the expectation for the rest of the visit.

Key Service Expectations

- Greet guests promptly and sincerely.
- Make eye contact and smile.
- Use a friendly, warm tone when answering the phone.
- Acknowledge waiting guests, even during busy periods.
- Open a second register when the line begins to build.
- Keep the front counter clean, organized, and guest ready.

Coaching Focus

A guest should never feel ignored. Even a simple, "Hi, we'll be right with you," helps the guest feel seen and valued. On the phone, tone matters just as much as the words being used.

2. Uniform and Grooming Standards

What Premier Looks Like

Appearance reflects the brand before a word is spoken. Clean uniforms and professional appearance help build guest confidence and reinforce the standard expected in a Premier Pizza Parlor.

Key Service Expectations

- Clean, proper uniforms are worn.
- Team members maintain a professional appearance.
- Aprons are worn in prep areas.
- Uniforms are neat, complete, and guest ready.
- Managers set the example and coach appearance standards before the shift begins.

Coaching Focus

Guests notice appearance immediately. Uniform and grooming standards are part of the first impression and help show pride in the restaurant, the team, and the brand.

3. Front-Counter Execution

What Premier Looks Like

The cashier should guide the guest through the order process with confidence, accuracy, and friendly service.

Key Service Expectations

- Be familiar with current promotions and menu items.
- Use suggestive selling when appropriate.
- Repeat the order back to confirm accuracy.
- Give clear next-step instructions after payment.
- Thank the guest and invite them to enjoy their visit.

Example Coaching Language

"Once the order is taken, repeat it back to confirm accuracy and walk the guest through their next steps. Let them know where to pick up their food, how the buffet works, or where plates are located so they feel informed and taken care of."

4. Fresh Plate Communication

What Premier Looks Like

Guests should be reminded to use a fresh plate each time they return to the Bunch of Lunch line. This needs to be communicated clearly and consistently.

Key Service Expectations

- Inform guests at the register.
- Reinforce the message in the dining room.
- Offer fresh plates during table touches and pre-bussing.
- Avoid allowing guests to reuse dirty plates at the buffet line.

Coaching Focus

Signage alone is not enough. Team members should actively communicate the fresh plate policy in a friendly, helpful way.

Example Phrases

- "Please use a fresh plate each time you go back up."
- "Can I get these plates out of your way and bring you fresh ones?"
- "Here are some fresh plates for your next trip up."

5. Dining Room Presence & Table Touches

What Premier Looks Like

Team members should be visible in the dining room, checking on guests, clearing plates, and making sure the room stays clean and comfortable.

Key Service Expectations

- Pre-bus tables throughout the guest visit.
- Check in with guests using simple, friendly questions.
- Keep tables, floors, condiment areas, and buffet areas clean.
- Respond quickly to guest needs.
- Stay aware of music volume, room temperature, and overall comfort.

Example Table Touches

- "How is everything tasting?"
- "Can I clear anything out of your way?"
- "Would you like some fresh plates?"
- "Would you like another beer??"
- "Don't forget to leave room for dessert.?"
- "Can I get you any more sauce?"

Coaching Focus

Dining room service is not just cleaning tables. It is an opportunity to connect with guests and prevent small issues from becoming complaints.

6. Game Area - Guest Awareness

What Premier Looks Like

The game area is part of the guest experience and should be monitored with the same awareness as the dining room and front counter. Guests, especially families and kids, should be acknowledged quickly and assisted without delay.

Expectations

- Guests are acknowledged quickly.
- Assistance is provided without delay.
- Game issues are responded to promptly.
- The game room stays clean, bright, and guest-ready.
- Redemption areas are organized and properly supported.

Coaching Language

Every area of the store impacts the guest experience. A clean, working, and well-monitored game area supports the family experience and helps prevent guest frustration.

Example Phrases

- "If you see a family standing near a game that is not working, do not wait for them to come to you. Walk over and help them."
- "The game area is not a separate part of the store. Guests there need just as much attention as guests at the counter."

7. Phone & Take-Out Service

What Premier Looks Like

Phone and take-out orders should be handled with the same care as dine-in guests. Accuracy, friendliness, and clear communication are key.

Key Service Expectations

- Answer the phone promptly and professionally.
- Use an upbeat greeting with the store name and team member's name.
- Speak clearly and patiently.
- Repeat the order back to confirm accuracy.
- Verify take-out orders before handing them to the guest.
- Wait for the guest's confirmation, such as a verbal response or head nod, before completing the handoff.
- Thank the guest and invite them back.

Example Phone Greeting

"Thank you for calling Shakey's[location], this is [name]. How can I help you?"

Take-Out Verification

Before handing out the order, confirm:

- Guest name
- Pizza size and type, such as toppings and type of crust
- Main items, sides, sauces, drinks, and special requests
- Correct number of boxes/bags

Verification Best Practice

When verifying a take-out order, pause and allow the guest to confirm the order before handing it over. A simple verbal confirmation or head nod helps ensure the guest heard the verification and agrees the order is correct.

Example Take-Out Handoff

"Let me verify your order with you: one large pepperoni pan pizza, one order of Mojos, and two ranches. Is that correct?"

Once the guest confirms, complete the handoff and thank them.

Coaching Focus

Many take-out complaints come from missed items or orders that were not verified before being handed off. A quick final check, along with guest confirmation, can prevent frustration and protect the overall experience.

8. Guest Recovery: BLAST Method

When something goes wrong, how the team responds can make the difference between losing a guest and earning their trust back.

BLAST Recovery Steps

B - Believe the Guest

Start by giving the guest the benefit of the doubt.

L - Listen

Let the guest explain the issue without interrupting.

A - Apologize

Offer a sincere apology for the inconvenience.

S - Satisfy

Take action to make it right within store guidelines.

T - Thank

Thank the guest for bringing the issue to your attention.

Example Response

"I'm sorry that happened. Thank you for letting us know. Let me take care of that for you."

Coaching Focus

The goal is not to argue or explain why the issue happened. The goal is to listen, own the moment, and recover the guest experience.

9. Final Impression: Thank You & Invitation Back

What Premier Looks Like

The guest's final impression is just as important as the first. A sincere thank-you helps complete the experience and leaves the guest feeling appreciated.

Key Service Expectations

- Thank guests as they leave.
- Invite them back.
- Make eye contact and acknowledge them sincerely.
- Keep the exit area clean and presentable.

Example Phrases

- "Thank you for coming in today."
- "Have a great day, we'll see you next time."
- "Thanks for visiting Shakey's."

Coaching Focus

A guest should leave feeling appreciated, not unnoticed.

Top Guest Service Opportunities to Watch For

1. Guests were not greeted promptly.
2. Uniform or grooming not to standards, are not guest ready.
3. No fresh plate communication.
4. Limited table touches or guest interaction.
5. Game area guests did not acknowledge or assisted quickly.
6. Take-out verification completed without guest confirmation.
7. Guests leaving without a thank-you or final acknowledgment.

Manager Follow-Up Checklist

During each shift, managers should observe and coach the following:

- Are guests greeted quickly?
- Are uniforms clean, complete, and professional?
- Is the cashier friendly and confident?
- Are phones answered with a warm, friendly tone?
- Are orders repeated back?
- Are guests being told to use fresh plates?
- Are team members visible in the dining room?
- Are tables being pre-bussed?
- Is the game area monitored and guest ready?
- Are game-area guests acknowledged and assisted quickly?
- Are take-out orders verified with the guest?
- Does the team wait for guest confirmation before handing out take-out orders?
- Are guest issues handled using BLAST?
- Are guests thanked before leaving?

Final Coaching Message

Guest service is built through small, consistent actions. A sincere greeting, a clean uniform, a warm phone voice, a table touch, a fresh plate reminder, quick game area assistance, a verified take-out order, or a simple thank you may seem small, but together they create the full Shakey's experience.

The standard is not just service, it is hospitality. Our goal is for every guest to feel welcomed, cared for, and appreciated every time they visit.