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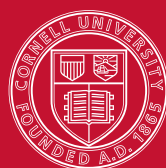
## MegaTips 2

Twenty Tested Techniques to Increase Your Tips

### Cornell Hospitality Tools

Vol. 2 No. 1, March 2011

by W. Michael Lynn, Ph.D.



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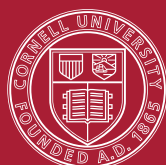
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# Mega Tips 2

## Twenty Tested Techniques to Increase Your Tips

by Michael Lynn

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**A**pproximately two million waiters and waitresses in the United States depend on tips for their income. These servers would benefit from knowing and using techniques to increase their tips. This manual offers twenty such techniques. All twenty techniques listed here have been experimentally tested and found to increase tips. Not all the techniques work for all servers in all situations, but many are universally applicable. The techniques are as follows: use makeup (for waitresses); wear something unusual; introduce yourself by name; squat down next to the table; stand physically close to the customer; touch the customer; smile; compliment the customer's food choices; repeat the order back to the customer; build the check with suggestive selling; entertain the customer; forecast good weather; write "thank you" on the check; write a patriotic message on the check; draw a picture on the check; call the customer by name; use tip trays with credit card insignia; give the customer candy; provide tipping guidelines; and play songs with pro-social lyrics. The techniques are described in detail, together with the experiments that demonstrate their effectiveness and the reasons I think they work.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Michael Lynn**, Ph.D., the Burton M. Sack Professor of Food and Beverage Management at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, is a nationally recognized expert on tipping (wml3@cornell.edu). He has a total of 45 papers either in press or published on this topic. His work on tipping has been covered by ABC's 20/20, BET's Nightly News, and NPR's Morning Edition, as well as by *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, and numerous other newspapers and radio programs around the world. A former bartender, busboy, and waiter, he received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the Ohio State University in 1987 and has taught in the marketing departments of business and hospitality schools since 1988.

Much of the information in this booklet has previously appeared in articles published in the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* and its predecessor, the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*. Used here with permission.

Michael Lynn, "Seven Ways to Increase Your Servers' Tips," *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (June 1996), pp. 24-29. [Translated into Spanish and reprinted in *Alta Hotelaria*, Septiembre-Octubre 1996, pp. 17-23.]

Michael Lynn, "Tip Levels and Service: An Update, Extension, and Reconciliation," *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 6 (December 2003), pp. 139-148.

Michael Lynn and Michael McCall, "Techniques for Increasing Servers' Tips: How Generalizable Are They?," *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (May 2009), pp. 198-208.

# MegaTips 2

## Twenty Tested Techniques to Increase Your Tips

by Michael Lynn



**A**pproximately two million people work as waiters or waitresses in the United States. That is nearly 1 percent of the nation's adult population. These servers depend on voluntary gifts of money (or tips) from their customers for most of their income. However, few servers are given instruction in ways to increase the tips their customers leave. Most servers are left to learn the “tricks of the trade” from experience or from other servers. This booklet is written for those servers—it provides instruction in the psychology of tipping as well as specific techniques that can be used to earn larger tips.

This edition of *MegaTips* updates and expands the original in several ways. First, and most important, six new Mega-Tips have been added for a 40-percent increase in content! Just like the existing MegaTips, these new techniques have been scientifically proven to increase tips. Second, I present new data on the technique of squatting down next to the table, because this is not a universally accepted approach. It turns out that this technique is ineffective and may even backfire when used on a particular group of people. Read the relevant MegaTip (number 4) to find out who those people are. Third, a table summarizing the experimental research on tipping was added so you can see at a glance how effective these techniques are. Finally, I have also added a response to common criticisms of the earlier manual, and I also expressly solicit feedback from readers while sharing some of the feedback I received on the earlier manual.

The techniques described below were mostly tested in low to mid-priced, casual-dining restaurants. Thus, these techniques should work in Applebee's, Bennigan's, Bob Evans, Bucca di Beppo, Chi-Chi's, Chili's Grill & Bar, Cracker Barrel, Denny's, Friendly's, Hard Rock Café, International House of Pancakes, Joe's Crab Shack, Lone Star Steakhouse & Saloon, Max & Erma's, Olive Garden, On the Border, Outback Steakhouse, Pizza Hut, Pizzeria Uno, Red Lobster, Ruby Tuesdays, Shoney's, TGI Friday's, and similar establishments. It is not clear how well the techniques would go over or work in more upscale dining establishments like Morton's or Ruth's Chris Steak House. In fact, many of the techniques would be inappropriate in the more formal atmosphere of fine-dining restaurants.

The last four techniques will require management approval or involvement—to approve or provide the credit card tip trays, after dinner candy, tipping guides, and background music required of those techniques. However, most of the techniques in this booklet are simple, easy to copy behaviors that you can do on your own. You do not have to change your personality or engage in some elaborate and difficult routine to make these techniques work. So read on! You will be surprised how easy the road to bigger tips really is.

### Note to Skeptics

Although the techniques presented here have been scientifically tested, and the evidence supporting their effectiveness is described along with the technique, some readers will have doubts. The simplicity of the techniques can be misleading. It just doesn't make sense to some people that simple little behaviors can have such a big effect on the amount of money that other people give away. For those readers unpersuaded by the scientific evidence, I provide

## The MegaTips

1. Use makeup (for waitresses)
2. Wear something unusual
3. Introduce yourself by name
4. Squat down next to the table
5. Stand physically close to the customer
6. Touch the customer
7. Smile
8. Compliment the customers' food choices
9. Repeat the order back to the customer
10. Build the check with suggestive selling
11. Entertain the customer
12. Forecast good weather
13. Write "Thank You" on the check
14. Write a patriotic message on the check
15. Draw a picture on the check
16. Call the customer by name
17. Use tip trays with credit card insignia
18. Give the customer candy
19. Provide tipping guidelines
20. Play songs with pro-social lyrics

\*Note: Newly added megatips are shown in color.



the following testimonial sent to me by Joshua Ogle—a restaurant worker who found one of my earlier articles on ways to increase tips and shared that article with his co-workers.

Here's how it all happened: I was browsing around the Cornell website, Hotel School section, and came across your article. I read it, acknowledged it as a nice piece, and continued reading through the site. When I went to work (I work at a restaurant called Texas Roadhouse), I started to notice, after reading your paper, that people kept on and kept on complaining about not making lots of tips. I remembered some of the tips that you had in the paper, and I looked around to see if I saw people doing what you said worked: writing messages on the back of checks, using check-holders with credit card symbols on them, etc. I told a few people about the ideas, and two said that they would try some stuff out, because they were tired of making no tips. The other couple said that they were fine how they were and that the information in the article was “bull crap.”

So, Bailey and John (their names, naturally) proceeded to follow your teachings, and at the end of the night, both came out between 8 and 10 percent higher in tips. I'd say that's very impressive, and they thought the same, but the others who did not believe me said it must just be a coincidence. Bailey and John, again the following night, brought in more tips than they had been before. Then the others started talking to each other, and giving hints to each other, and telling about how I'd told them about it, etc. So, I went to the site, printed it off, and hung it up on our nightly news board, for everyone to see. Of course, I gave complete credit to you (I printed it with full “Cornell” symbols at the top, as well as your name on it and whatnot), and people have thanked me about once a week since then, about three months ago. Overall, everyone was happy and definitely saw an increase, thanks to you.”

Skepticism is good—it keeps you from falling prey to empty promises. However, too much skepticism can also make you miss out on worthwhile opportunities. That almost happened to some of Joshua's coworkers. Those who decided without evidence that my article was “bull crap” and refused to try the techniques would have continued making lousy tips if some of their less skeptical coworkers had not been willing to give the techniques a try and then shared their experiences. Don't let the fate that almost befell those skeptics happen to you. Keep your skepticism intact, but read about these techniques with an open mind and, above all, give them a try! The techniques are easy to implement and you got this booklet free of charge, so what have you got to lose?

### *Megatip #1 (For Waitresses): Use Cosmetics*

People generally respond more positively to physically attractive individuals than to less attractive ones, and men even more than women value physical attractiveness in the opposite sex. Thus, it is not surprising that several researchers have found attractive waitresses earn larger tips than less attractive waitresses. (Existing data cannot rule out the possibility that physical attractiveness increases the tips of waiters too, but it does suggest that any such effect is much weaker than the effect on waitresses' tips.) These findings suggest that waitresses can increase their tips by using cosmetics to enhance their physical attractiveness.



Celine Jacob and several of her colleagues tested this possibility in a restaurant in France. They had a beautician apply facial make-up to two waitresses (who were 19 and 20 years old) on ten randomly selected days out of twenty and assessed the effects of this treatment on the tips the waitresses

received during the twenty lunch shifts studied. Wearing make-up did not affect the waitress' tips from female patrons but did increase their tips from male patrons. The percentage of males leaving a tip increased from 34 percent in the no-makeup condition to 51 percent in the makeup condition, and the average amount left by those male tippers increased from €1.11 to €1.40.

The lesson of this study is straightforward. If you are a waitress, makeup makes for more tips.

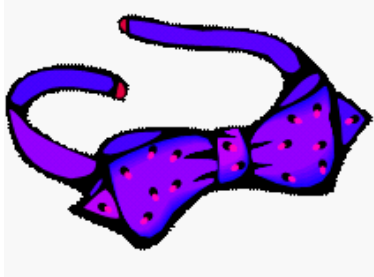
### *Megatip #2: Wear Something Unusual*

Although servers must usually wear a uniform at work, many add unique elements of clothing, jewelry, or other adornment to their uniforms to stand out and make customers perceive them as an individual person rather than a faceless member of the staff. I still remember one waitress at a New York City restaurant who waited on me several years ago. She wore a goofy hat that no one else in the restaurant was wearing. Wearing that hat made the waitress seem more interesting and personable, and it increased the tip I left. Similar effects of adornment on tipping were observed in a study by Jeri-Jayne Stillman and Wayne Hensley.

Six waitresses at an upscale restaurant agreed to record information about their dining parties for four nights and to wear a flower in their hair for two of those nights. Which two of the four nights the flower was worn was determined randomly for each server. Each night, those waitresses in



the flower condition were “provided a selection of flowers from which one was chosen for the evening.” The results indicated that the waitresses’ tips increased from about \$1.50 per customer (or diner) in the control condition to about \$1.75 per customer in the flower condition. They earned 17



percent more simply by wearing flowers in their hair.

The results of this study suggest that (if possible) you should wear something special or unusual when you work. Whether it is a flower in your hair

(or as a boutonniere), a loud tie, or a funny button, wearing something that stands out as unusual will personalize you to your customers and will result in larger tips. However, take care not to wear things with political, religious, or otherwise controversial messages and meanings so as not to offend those customers with different points of view.

### Megatip #3: Introduce Yourself by Name

Many servers introduce themselves by name when greeting their customers. If done properly, these introductions make the server seem friendly and polite and make the customer feel more empathy for the server. Both of these effects should increase tips. Kimberly Garrity and Douglas Degelman tested this expectation in an experiment conducted at a Charlie Brown’s restaurant in southern California.



Two-person parties coming to the restaurant for Sunday brunch were included in the study and were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. In the name condition, a waitress approached her tables, smiled, and said, “Good morning. My name is Kim, and I will be serving you this morning.

Have you ever been to Charlie Brown’s for brunch before?” In the no-name condition, the same approach, smile and greeting were used except that the waitress omitted her name. This manipulation had a large and statistically significant effect on tips. The waitress received an average tip of \$3.49 (15%) when she did not give her name and received an average tip of \$5.44 (23%) when she did give her name. This waitress earned almost \$2.00 more from each table when she introduced herself by name!

The results of this study suggest that you should introduce yourself by name to your tables. Of course, these self-introductions need to be made with a genuine and pro-

fessional attitude. Surly or insincere introductions are likely to backfire. The words “Hi, I’m \_\_\_\_, and I will be serving you this evening” can be irritating if said in an uncaring or automatic way. However, if you introduce yourself in a sincere and professional way, customers should leave you larger tips.

### Megatip #4: Squat Next to the Table

Most servers stand throughout the service encounter. However, some servers squat down next to the table when interacting with their customers. Squatting down next to a table does several positive things—it increases the congruence between the server’s and customers’ postures, brings the server’s eye level down to the customers’ eye level (which facilitates eye contact), and brings the server’s face closer to the customers’ faces. Research on nonverbal communication has found that postural congruence, more eye contact, and greater proximity are associated with greater rapport and liking. Consumers report that they tip friendly servers more than they do less friendly servers, so squatting down next to the table should increase tips. Kirby Mynier and I tested this expectation at two restaurants in Houston, Texas.

A Caucasian waiter at a Mexican restaurant and an Asian waitress at a Chinese restaurant flipped coins to randomly determine whether they would squat down or stand during their initial visits to tables. Otherwise, the servers tried to treat all their tables identically. As expected, squatting down significantly increased the tips of both servers. The waiter received an average tip of \$5.18 (15%) when he remained standing throughout the service encounter and received an average tip of \$6.40 (18%) when he squatted down during his first visit to the table. The corresponding numbers for the waitress were \$2.56 (12%) and \$3.28 (15%).



Overall, the servers received approximately \$1.00 more from each table that they squatted next to. This is a substantial payoff for a simple behavior. I must note that squatting down next to a table is too informal for fine-dining restaurants, but if you work at a casual-dining establishment, you should squat down next to your tables or even pull out a chair to sit at the table when taking orders.

Keep in mind, however, that not all customers will welcome such proximity and informality. Gina Leodoro and I found that squatting next to or sitting down at the table increased a white waitress’s tips from white customers but

slightly decreased her tips from black customers. I believe that African Americans prefer to maintain greater interpersonal distances during social interactions than do Whites and that squatting or sitting at the table may have violated the Blacks' but not the Whites' personal space. Of course, the waitress's race may have also played a part in these results. Clearly, you need to exercise some judgment about whether or not a given table will welcome such behavior, but the research described above suggests that squatting next to the table is generally welcome and will result in higher incomes for those servers willing to do it.

### *Megatip #5: Stand Close to Customers*

Those servers who are unable or unwilling to squat next to tables can still increase their rapport with and tips from a table simply by standing closer to the customers. Proximity signals interpersonal liking and previous research had found that people comply with small requests more when the requester stood physically close to them than when he or she stood further away, so it is likely that physical proximity would increase tips as well.



Celine Jacob and Nicolas Gueguen tested this expectation by having five waitresses at three different restaurants in France vary their proximity to the customer and record the tips they received from those customers. Based on a random determination, the waitresses stood either closer than typical (.5 feet, or .15 meters), normal distance (1.5 feet; about .5 meters), or farther than usual (2.5 feet; about .75 meters)

from their customers when taking the food order; otherwise the waitresses followed normal proximity and service protocols.

Results indicated that greater physical proximity while taking the food order does increase tipping. The customers in this study were more likely to leave a tip when the waitresses stood one-half foot away (43% tipped) than when they stood one and one-half feet away (31% tipped) or two and one-half feet away (23% tipped). Furthermore, the tipping customers left larger tips when the waitresses stood closer than normal (average tip of €1.41) than when they stood a normal distance from the customers (average tip of €1.17) or a farther than normal distance (average tip of €1.15).

While it is true that Southern Europeans (like the French) generally maintain smaller personal spaces than do North Americans, I believe Jacob and Gueguen's results would also be found in the United States, because squat-

ting down at the table, which also increases perceived proximity, has been shown to increase tips in the U.S., as described previously. When using this technique, however, servers should be aware that Hispanics maintain smaller personal spaces, while Asians and Blacks maintain larger personal spaces than do Whites. Thus, I would recommend standing very close to the table when serving Hispanics and Whites, but would recommend maintaining a greater distance from the table when serving Asians and Blacks.

### *Megatip #6: Touch Customers*

Touching is a powerful form of interpersonal behavior that can communicate affection, appreciation, aggression, dominance, or social support, as well as other meanings depending on the context in which it occurs. In commercial settings, casually touching customers has been shown to increase the time they spend shopping in a store, the amounts that they purchase, and the favorability of their store evaluations. These positive effects suggest that being touched may also increase the tips that customers leave their servers. April Crusco and Christopher Wetzel tested this possibility at two restaurants in Oxford, Mississippi.



Three waitresses at two restaurants randomly assigned their customers to one of three touch conditions. Customers either were not touched, were casually touched on the shoulder once for about one and a

half seconds, or were casually touched on the palm of the hand twice for about half a second each time. All touches occurred as the waitresses returned change to their customers at the end of the meal. Eye contact was avoided during this time.

The effects of the touch manipulation were significant. Customers left an average tip of 12 percent when they were not touched, as compared to 14 percent when they were touched once on the shoulder and 17 percent when they were touched twice on the palm of the hand. Subsequent research conducted by various other researchers has demonstrated that: (1) casually touching customers increases the tips of both male and female servers, (2) touching increases tips more when waitresses touch the female members of mixed-sex dining parties than when they touch the male members of those dining parties, and (3) touch-

ing increases the tips of young customers more than those of older customers.

The results of these studies suggest that you should reach out and briefly touch your customers. Many servers will feel uncomfortable with this recommendation—fearing that customers might object to being touched. However, the research suggests otherwise. Furthermore, researchers have found that many subjects whose behavior has been influenced by touches are unaware that they have been touched. This being the case, you may find that the benefits of briefly touching customers more than outweigh the slight risks involved.

### **Megatip #7: Smile at Customers**

Smiling is a well-known tactic of ingratiation and social influence. It is a rare person who hasn't heard the standard, "When You're Smiling (The Whole World Smiles with You)," popularized by Louis Armstrong in 1929.<sup>1</sup> Research has confirmed the cultural wisdom on smiling and has found that smiling people are perceived as more attractive, sincere, sociable, and competent than are unsmiling people. These interpersonal effects of smiling suggest that servers may be able to increase their tip earnings by smiling at their customers. Kathi Tidd and Joan Lockard tested this possibility at a cocktail lounge in Seattle, Washington.



Customers sitting alone in the lounge were used as subjects. The waitress who waited on these customers randomly assigned half of them to receive a large, open-mouth smile and the other half to receive a small, closed-mouth smile. Those customers receiving a small smile left an average tip of 20 cents, while those customers receiving a large smile

left an average tip of 48 cents. This represents an increase of 140 percent!

The average bill and tip sizes in restaurants are typically much larger than in cocktail lounges, so smiling probably will not have quite as dramatic an effect on the tips of restaurant servers as it did on the tips of the cocktail waitress in this study. However, these results do indicate that smiling increases tips. You should try giving customers big, open-mouthed smiles and see how much your tips improve.

### **Megatip #8: Compliment Customers' Food Choices**

Complimenting people makes them feel good and enhances their liking for the source of the compliment. It has also

<sup>1</sup> Composed by Larry Shay, Mark Fisher, and Joe Goodwin. The earlier, similar concept was "laugh and the world laughs with you," first written by the Greek Horace, and later set as a poem by Ella W. Wilcox in 1883.

been shown to increase people's compliance with small requests. These effects suggest that complimenting customers may also increase the tips they leave.

John Seiter has tested this expectation in two studies of restaurant tipping. In those studies, restaurant servers either complimented their customers' food choices or did not and recorded the tips left by both sets of customers. Dining parties were randomly assigned to conditions by having the server pull one of two pennies from his or her pocket; if the selected penny had been marked then the server complimented the customers' food order and if the penny selected was unmarked then the server did not compliment the customer. The delivery



of the compliments differed across the two studies. In the first study, which included only two-person parties, the server complimented the first person to order by saying "You made a good choice!" and complimented the second person by saying "You did good too!" In the second study, after everyone at the table had ordered, the server said either "You made a good choice!," "You both made good choices!," or "You all made good choices!," depending on how many people were at the table.

In both studies, customers tipped more when complimented. In the first study tips increased from 16.4 to 18.9 percent of the bill, and in the second tips increased from 18.8 to 20.3 percent of the bill. In the latter study, however, this effect was moderated by the number of people in the dining party such that compliments increased tips more when the dining party was small, presumably because complimenting all the choices of large groups seemed less genuine.

Complimenting customers' food choices is an easy way to increase tips. It also supports the restaurant's marketing efforts and reinforces customers' positive perceptions of the restaurant's food, so your manager should particularly appreciate and approve of this technique. So ingratiate yourself with both your customers and manager by complimenting customers on their food choices.

### **Megatip #9: Repeat Customers' Orders**

Being mimicked or copied can be irritating when it is obvious and prolonged. That is why mimicry is so popular among children as a means of tormenting their siblings. However, researchers have found that briefly and subtly imitating or mimicking others increases those others' liking for and interpersonal closeness to the imitator. This suggests

that servers may be able to increase their tips by subtly mimicking their customers' verbal behavior. Rick van Baaren and his colleagues tested this possibility at a restaurant in the Netherlands.

Two waitresses randomly assigned their customers to either a mimicry or a non-mimicry condition. In the mimicry condition, the waitresses literally repeated customers' orders when taking those orders. In the non-mimicry condition, the waitresses did not repeat the orders but did indicate that they got the order by saying things like "okay!" or "coming up!" Mimicry increased the number of customers who left a tip from 52 percent in the non-mimicry condition to 78 percent in the mimicry condition. It also doubled the average tip of those leaving tips from 1.36 Dutch guilders in the non-mimicry condition to 2.73 Dutch guilders in the mimicry condition!



Tipping practices are much different in the United States than in the Netherlands, so mimicry may not produce quite as dramatic an effect in this country as it did in the Netherlands. However, human nature is basically the same everywhere, so that study does suggest

that you can increase your tips to some degree by repeating your customers' orders. Given the low cost of this behavior, it is certainly a tactic worth trying.

### **Megatip #10: Sell, Sell, Sell!!!**

It is customary to tip waiters and waitresses 15 to 20 percent of the bill size and national surveys indicate that about 75 percent of restaurant patrons do base their tips on a percentage of the bill. Thus, dollar-and-cent tip amounts increase with bill size. In fact, a recent review of research on tipping found that bill size was twice as powerful as everything else combined in determining the size of tips left by different dining parties! This means that the best way for you to increase your tips is to increase your sales.

During a slow shift, sales can be increased through suggestive selling. Thus, you should recommend appetizers, liquor, wine, expensive entrée selections, and desserts during slow shifts. Although many servers will see the link between suggestive selling and bill sizes as obvious, others will question the ability of servers to substantially alter their customers' orders and expenditures. That question was addressed in an experiment by Suellen Butler and William Snizek. They had a waitress at an upscale, "fancy" dining restaurant in the northeastern United States try suggestive selling on alternate

weeks of a six-week period. In the suggestive selling condition, the waitress did the following things as described by the researchers.

Upon initial contact with the group the waitress suggested, "Would anyone care for a drink?" After consumption of the first cocktail, groups subject to manipulative treatment were asked to consider a second cocktail. These initial steps were followed by the waitress-researcher prompting the group for the dinner order asking first who would care for an appetizer. During the process of ordering dinner, the waitress recommended to the undecided certain items. At this point the most expensive items were always promoted. The waitress checked back twice during the consumption of the main course ... at which time the waitress promoted further consumption of liquor. Finally, upon completion of the main course the waitress suggested dessert or after dinner drinks.



Following these procedures increased the average tab by 25 percent. That translates into a similar increase in tips! Thus, you can earn more money during a slow shift by practicing suggestive selling.

During a busy shift, however, suggestive selling may be counter-productive because add-on sales may increase the customer's meal duration and slow down table turnover. Your total tips at the end of the shift depend on your total sales. Since entrées are more expensive than appetizers and desserts, you should avoid suggestive selling of appetizers and desserts in favor of turning tables quickly as long as new customers are waiting to be seated. When turning tables is not possible, then sell more appetizers and desserts.

### **Megatip #11: Entertain Customers**

People go to restaurants for entertainment as well as for food. That is why restaurants have a long history of hiring musicians and singers to perform in their dining rooms. It is also why recent years have seen the creation and spread of a whole new class of "eatertainment" and theme restaurants, such as Chuck E. Cheese, Hard Rock Café, Planet Hollywood, and Rainforest Café. Regardless of whether you work in one of these theme restaurants, your customers want to be entertained, and that desire gives you an opportunity to earn larger tips. Research indicates that servers who recognize and satisfy their customers' needs for entertainment are tipped more than those who do not.

In one study conducted in France by Nicolas Gueguen, waiters and waitresses at a bar gave half their customers a card with the following joke written on it:

An Eskimo had been waiting for his girlfriend in front of a movie theatre for a long time and it was getting colder and colder. After a while, shivering with cold and rather infuriated, he opened his coat and drew out a thermometer. He then said loudly, "If she is not here at 15, I'm going!"

Forty-two percent of those customers getting the joke card left a tip, as compared to only 25 percent of those not getting the joke card. Moreover, those who did tip left more in the joke-card condition (average tip of 23 percent) than in the no-card condition (average tip of 16 percent).



In another study conducted by Bruce Rind and David Strohmets, a New Jersey waitress gave half of her customers a card with

the following words:

Finished files are the result of years of scientific study combined with the experience of many years.

She encouraged the customers to count the number of "Fs," which is more of a challenge than you might think because of the F at the end of the word "of" (which in addition to being at the end of the word is pronounced as a v). Thus, customers were often surprised when the waitress told them the correct number of Fs was six. They also gave her larger tips than those customers not given a card—an average tip of 22 percent versus an average tip of 19 percent.

As these studies testify, you don't have to be Robin Williams to entertain your way into a bigger tip. So, collect jokes or simple puzzles to share with your customers and let the entertainment begin!

### **Megatip #12: Forecast Good Weather**

Sunny weather puts people in a good mood, and people in a good mood leave bigger tips than those in a bad mood. Even the prospect of sunny weather tomorrow elevates people's moods. This suggests that servers who live where the weather is highly variable can increase tips by telling their customers that sunny weather is on the way. To test this idea, Bruce Rind and David Strohmets had a waitress at a mid-priced Italian restaurant in New Jersey write a weather forecast on the backs of some of her checks but not others. The favorable weather forecast read:

The weather is supposed to be really good tomorrow. I hope you enjoy the day!

The waitress received an average tip of 22.2 percent when she forecast good weather and an average tip of 18.7 percent when she made no forecast. That is a 19-percent increase!

Although you should not lie to customers, you should try to profit from favorable weather forecasts. Simply keep up with the local weather forecast and remind your customers that good weather is on the way when the forecast really is positive. You can try giving these forecasts orally, but I would recommend writing them on the check as was done in this study. Speaking is quicker and easier than writing, but spoken words can be easily missed or ignored while written ones cannot. In addition, part of the effectiveness of the written forecasts in the study described may have depended on the perceived effort of the server—if so, you will want to duplicate that effort.



### **Megatip # 13: Write "Thank You" on Checks**

Savvy servers write "Thank you" and sign their names on the backs of checks before they deliver the checks to their customers. These expressions of gratitude may increase the perceived friendliness of the server, which would increase tips because consumers tip friendly servers more than they do unfriendly ones. Expressions of server gratitude may also make customers feel obligated to earn that gratitude by

leaving larger tips. Whatever the mechanism involved, expressions of gratitude seem likely to increase the tips servers receive.

Bruce Rind and Prashant Bordia tested this expectation at an upscale restaurant in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

A waitress conducted this study by randomly assigning her lunch customers to one of three conditions. On the back of the check, she wrote either nothing, "Thank you," or "Thank you" and signed her name. As expected, this manipulation significantly affected the size of the waitress's tips. She received an average tip of 16 percent when nothing was written on the back of the check and she received an average



tip of 18 percent when she wrote “Thank you” on the back of the check. Adding her signature to the thanks produced the same level of tips as the thanks alone.

Since there is little downside to expressions of gratitude, you should always write “Thank you” or some comparable message on the backs of your checks. To avoid time pressures during busy shifts, you can write these messages on your checks before customers arrive. Doing so will only take a few minutes of your time and should increase your tip income.

### **Megatip #14: Write a Patriotic Message On Checks**

Patriotic fervor varies across individuals, but most people feel some degree of love for their home country. Expressing a love of country is therefore one way to highlight your similarity to your native customers and should increase the tips they leave you.

John Seiter and Robert Gass tested this possibility in a study conducted several months after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. They had two waitresses in Utah place messages on their checks according to one of four conditions, and record the resulting tips. The



four message conditions, which the waitresses determined randomly, were: (1) a no-message control, (2) a handwritten “Have a Nice Day” message accompanied by a smiley-face sticker, (3) a handwritten “God Bless America” message accompanied by an American flag sticker, and (4) a handwritten “United We Stand” message accompanied by an American flag sticker. Assignment to conditions was done just before delivering the check, so the waitresses were unaware of the study condition during most of their interactions with the dining parties.

Customers in the “United We Stand” and “God Bless America” conditions left larger tips than those in the “Have a Nice Day” and control conditions. The amounts were 19.9 percent for “United We Stand,” and 17.9 percent for “God Bless America,” compared to 15.9 percent for “Have a Nice Day” and 15.5 for no message. Supporting the idea that patriotic messages increase tipping through their effects on perceived similarity is the fact that the “United We Stand” message had slightly (but not significantly) stronger effects than the “God Bless America” message, because the “United We Stand” message should have evoked greater feelings of unity or similarity.

The effects of patriotic messages on tipping observed by Seiter and Gass were probably heightened by the wave of patriotic feelings following the 9/11 attacks. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the potential to turn patriotism into tips.

Servers in less patriotic regions of the country may want to limit their use of this tactic to times of heightened national patriotism, such as times of war, terrorist attacks, national elections, or national holidays. However, servers in regions of the country where patriotism is particularly strong, like in many “Red States,” should be able to increase their tips with patriotic messages all the time. In sum, evoking patriotic feelings in your patrons will encourage them to leave you more bills with pictures of patriots, such as Washington, Lincoln, Hamilton, and Jackson.

### **Megatip #15: Draw Pictures on the Check**

Occasionally, waitresses will draw a “smiley face” on the backs of checks. These drawings are likely to have several effects on consumers. First, they may personalize the server to customers and thereby increase customers’ empathy for the server. Second, drawings of “smiley faces” may communicate to customers that the server is happy to have served them, which would ingratiate the server to the customer. Finally, seeing “smiley faces” drawn on checks may simply make customers smile and improve their moods. All of these potential effects suggest that drawing a “smiley face” on the backs of checks will increase tips. Bruce Rind and Prashant Bordia tested this possibility in a study conducted at the same upscale Philadelphia restaurant that was the setting for their “Thank you” research.

A waiter and a waitress at the restaurant conducted



this study on their lunch customers. Half of these customers received a check on which the server had drawn a “smiley face” and half received a check without the drawing. The assignment of a table to conditions was made at the end of the customer’s meal, when the majority of the service had already been rendered, and the

server was ready to deliver the check. At that time, the server randomly determined the condition the table was assigned to and either drew a “smiley face” on the check or did not.

This manipulation significantly affected the waitress’s tips, but not those of the waiter. The waitress received an average tip of 28 percent when nothing was drawn on the check and received an average tip of 33 percent when she drew a “smiley face” on the back of the check. Drawing a “smiley face” increased the waitress’s tips by 17 percent! However, no comparable effect was observed for the waiter. He received an average tip of 21 percent when nothing was drawn on the check and received an average tip of only 18

percent when he drew a smiley face on the back of the check. This decrease in tip size was not statistically significant, but it suggests that drawing a “smiley face” may actually backfire for waiters. Perhaps “smiley faces” are too emotional and feminine to seem normal coming from waiters.

The results of this study suggest that waitresses can improve their tips by drawing “smiley faces” on their checks, while waiters (as well as waitresses) can always draw other pictures on their checks. For example, servers at an upscale seafood restaurant could make a simple line drawing of a lobster on the backs of checks. These other drawings should serve as well as smiley faces to personalize servers and elevate customers moods. Therefore, they should also increase tips. Consistent with this reasoning, one study conducted by Nicolas Gueguen at a bar in France found that drawing a picture of the sun on checks increased the percentage of customers leaving a tip from 21 percent to 38 percent. The drawing also increased the average size of the tips that were left from 19 percent of the bill to 26 percent.

The lessons from this research are clear. You do not need to be Picasso to draw larger tips from your customers. So pick up a pencil and start doodling!

### *Megatip #16: Call Customers by Name*

Calling people by their names tells them that they are considered important. Most people find such recognition flattering and enjoyable. Thus, servers should get larger tips when they call their customers by name. This expectation was tested by Karen Rodrigue at several restaurants in Kansas.

The study focused on customers paying by credit



card. Waiters and waitresses randomly assigned those customers to a name or a no-name condition. In the name condition, the servers noted the customers’ names on their credit cards and thanked them by name (e.g., “Thank you Mr. Jones”) when

returning the credit cards and charge slips. In the no-name condition, servers thanked the customers without mentioning their names.

Customers left an average tip of 14 percent in the no-name condition and an average tip of 15.4 percent in the name condition. Saying two words—the customer’s name—increased the servers’ tips by 10 percent. This finding suggests a new answer to the old question “What’s in a name?” That answer is “bigger tips.”

### *Megatip #17: Use Tip Trays with Credit Card Insignia*

Restaurants often post signs informing customers that credit cards are accepted. These signs and other displays of credit card insignia can be seen on restaurant doors, windows, counters, menus, table tents, tip trays, and cash registers. Research has found that simply seeing these insignia increases consumers’ willingness to spend money. This effect may be due to the fact that credit card insignia are so often present when consumers buy things that they have become conditioned stimuli that elicit spending.

Alternatively, credit card insignia may remind consumers of the availability of credit and thereby increase their perception of their own spending power (even when they intend to pay with cash). Regardless of the explanation, the effect suggests that servers may receive larger tips when credit card insignia are present at the table than when these insignia are not present. Michael McCall



and Heather Belmont tested this hypothesis at two establishments—a family restaurant and a café—in upstate New York.

The presence of credit card insignia was manipulated in these establishments via tip trays, some of which had credit card emblems on them and some of which did not. These tip trays were randomly mixed, and servers were instructed to take a tray as needed from the top of the stack. At both establishments, customers tipped significantly more when the bill was presented on a tip tray containing a credit card emblem. Tips increased from 16 percent of pre-tax bills at the restaurant to 20 percent and increased from 18 percent of pre-tax bills at the café to 22 percent. This effect was not due to an increased use of credit cards to pay the bill. In fact, all of the café’s customers paid cash. Simply seeing the credit card insignia on the tip trays caused customers to tip an additional 25 percent at the restaurant and 22 percent at the café.

In light of these results, you should ask your manager to replace plain tip trays with trays that contain credit card emblems. These tip trays can be obtained at little or no cost from credit card companies and using them will increase your tips.

### *Megatip #18: Give Customers Candy*

People generally feel obligated to reciprocate when they receive gifts from others. Servers can benefit from this by giving their customers after-dinner mints or candies. Upon receiving such gifts, most customers will feel a need to reciprocate and should do so by increasing their tips. David Strohmets and his colleagues tested this expectation in two studies.



One study conducted in Ithaca, New York, found that giving customers fancy chocolates increased tips from 15 percent of the bill to 18 percent. The second study, conducted in New Jersey, found that gifts of Hershey assorted miniature chocolates also increased tips. The highest tips were received when the server gave dining parties one piece of candy per person and then spontaneously offered them a second piece per person. In that condition, the average tip was 23 percent of bill size as compared to an average tip of 19 percent when no candy was given.

These findings suggest that you should “sweeten the till” by giving your customers after dinner candies of some kind. If your restaurant does not supply mints or candies to be given to customers, you should ask your manager to start doing so or at least to let you procure and distribute them yourself. Hershey’s Kisses can be purchased at modest cost and the investment should more than pay for itself.

### **Megatip #19: Provide Tipping Guidelines**

Social norms in the United States call for tipping 15 to 20 percent of the bill size in restaurants. However, people cannot comply with this norm if they are not familiar with it or do not know precisely what concrete behaviors it requires. This is an important point because surveys indicate that approximately 30 percent of the adult population in this country is unaware of this norm. In addition, many people who are aware of the restaurant tipping norm may have difficulty calculating the appropriate percentages. These considerations suggest that tips might be increased by providing customers with tipping guidelines that describe the normative expectations and help with tip percentage calculations.

Several studies examining the effects of providing such guidelines on tipping behavior have produced mixed results. However, a careful examination of these studies reveals some patterns that are enlightening.

In one study, David Strohmets and Bruce Rind had servers at a Tex-Mex restaurant in New Jersey distribute tipping guidelines to half of their customers (randomly selected) and to record the tips all their customers left. The tipping guide in this study was a 3 by 5 inch card with: the heading “Helpful Calculations,” a column of numbers labeled “Bill Size,” which ranged from \$10 to \$100 in \$5 increments, three adjacent columns spelling out the amount of 15 percent, 20 percent, and 25 percent of those bill sizes, and three lines of text that said “15% for adequate service,” “20% for better-than-average service,” and “25% for outstanding service.” This tip guide reduced the number of really high

and really low tips, but did not affect the average tip (20% in both conditions).

In a second study, John Seiter and his colleagues had two waitresses at a Utah restaurant randomly assign their customers to receive tipping guidelines or not and to record the customers’ tips. In this study, the tipping guidelines consisted of tip calculations printed on the check showing amounts equal to 15 and 20 percent of the customers’ bill. In contrast to the study described earlier, this calculation assistance increased the average tip from 16.3 percent to 18.7 percent of the bill.

In a third study that helps to make sense of these conflicting findings, Ekaterina Karniouchina and her colleagues presented college students with one of three restaurant service scenarios describing low, average, or high service quality. After reading the scenarios, subjects were presented with a credit card slip showing a total sales of \$40 and containing either no tip guidelines, a calculation of 15 and 20 percent tips, or the norm reminder that “Quality service is customarily acknowledged by a gratuity of 15% to 20%.” All subjects were then asked how much they would leave in dollars and cents as a tip on that bill in the scenario as presented. Results indicated that the two guidelines had different effects and that those effects depended on service quality. Compared to the no-guideline condition, the norm reminder increased tips when service was average and decreased tips when service was poor (it did not affect tips when service was excellent). In contrast, the calculation assistance increased tips when the service was average and even more when service was excellent, but had no effects when service was poor.



Together, the results of these studies suggest that consumers do use tipping guidelines when they are provided. However, the effects of those guidelines on tips depend on the nature of the guidelines and the quality of service provided. If guidelines suggest 15 percent for adequate service, 20 percent for above average, but not exceptional service, and 25 percent for exceptional service, then they reduce the number of low and high tips but do not affect tip averages. If guidelines remind people that tips should reflect service quality, then they increase or decrease tips depending on the quality of service delivered. If guidelines simply provide calculation assistance with no reference to service quality, then they increase the relationship between service and tip size such that average tips increase as long as service is not poor.



Since providing calculation assistance (with no reference to service quality) increases tips as long as service is not poor, servers at restaurants with point of sale systems that allow such calculations to be printed on the bottom of sales receipts should take advantage of that feature. Managers should allow servers to do this because it not only increases their employees' incomes, but also strengthens the connection between tip size and service quality, thus increasing the financial incentive for servers to provide better service. Servers at restaurants whose POS systems do not have the capability of printing tip calculations might consider doing the math themselves and hand printing "15% = \$0.00 and 20% = \$0.00" on their checks. However, it is possible that customers will perceive handwritten tip calculations differently than the presumably automatic machine generated tip calculations and may react differently as a result. So, if you do want try hand writing tip calculations on your checks, do it randomly for some customers and not others and keep records of your tips to make sure it is having the desired effect.

### **Megatip #20: *Play Songs with Pro-social Lyrics***

Music is said to be able to "soothe the savage breast."<sup>2</sup> Whether that is true, music has been shown to influence consumer behavior. For example, one study found that sales of French wines increased when a wine store played French classical music on its sound system, and sales of German wines increased when it played German classical music. Could music have similar effects on tipping? If so, what kinds of music should increase tips?



Celine Jacob and her colleagues thought that the answer to the first of these questions was yes and that the answer to the second question was songs with pro-social lyrics that expressed empathy. To test those expectations, they had numerous judges help

them identify and select popular French songs that had pro-social or empathic lyrics as well as songs that had neutral lyrics. They then convinced a restaurant in France to let them randomly determine what type of music was played over the sound system for each lunch and each dinner period over 36 days. One-third of the time, the restaurant's normal music was played, one-third of the time, the music with neutral lyrics was played, and one-third of the time the music with pro-social lyrics was played.

The restaurant's customers were more likely to leave a tip when songs with pro-social lyrics were played than when

<sup>2</sup> Often misquoted as "savage beast," the phrase comes from the 17th century play "The Mourning Bride," by William Congreve.

the other types of music were played. Thirty-five percent tipped in the pro-social lyric condition, versus 24 percent in each of the other two conditions. Moreover, those who gave a tip left larger amounts when pro-social lyrics were playing. The average tip was €1.38 in the pro-social lyrics condition versus €1.21 and €1.22 in the other two conditions.

Unfortunately, as a server you cannot determine what type of music is played on the restaurant sound system, since that is management's prerogative. However, you can encourage your manager to find and play music with predominately pro-social or empathic lyrics. Be sure to explain how increasing tips through the use of such music would benefit him or her by contributing to happier employees, lower turnover, and possibly more satisfied customers. To help with the persuasion effort, you might also try creating a CD with such music yourself and giving it to the manager for consideration.

### **How to Conduct Your Own Tests**

The techniques for increasing tips described above have all been tested and found to be effective. I have no doubt that many of these techniques will work for you, too. However, there is no guarantee that every technique will work as well for you as it did for the servers in the studies presented here. Each person, restaurant, customers, and situation will be different. Therefore, you may want to test the techniques yourself to identify those that are most effective for you and your circumstances. You may also have your own ideas about how to earn larger tips and want to test those ideas. Here's how to do this.

The size of tips varies from one customer to the next, from one work shift to the next, and even from one month to the next. This variability in tip sizes makes it difficult through casual observation alone to be certain about the effectiveness of techniques for increasing tips. If you try a technique on one customer but not another, or on one work shift but not another, any differences (or absence of differences) in tips could be due to this natural variability in tips rather than to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the technique. Therefore, you should conduct systematic experiments to test these techniques.

To conduct a true experiment, you need to randomly determine when to use the technique (called the treatment condition) and when not to use it (called the control condition). You saw me use those terms throughout this booklet. Random assignment distributes the various other factors that affect tipping evenly across the treatment and control conditions, so you can be certain that any large difference in tips between the treatment and control groups is caused by the technique being tested. The easiest way to do random assignment is to flip a coin—heads you use the technique, tails you don't. This can be done on a customer-by-customer

Summary of experiments on restaurant tipping

Megatip		Average Tip		Percentage Increase in Tip
		Control Treatment	Experimental Treatment	
Wearing Facial Cosmetics	Male customers	€1.11	€1.40	26%
	Female customers	€1.09	€1.10	—
Wearing a Flower in Hair		\$1.50 per person	\$1.75 per person	17%
Introducing Self by Name		15%	23%	53%
Squatting Down Next to Table	Study 1: Waiter	15%	18%	20%
	Study 2: Waitress	12%	15%	25%
	Study 3: White Waitress			
	Black Customers	13%	12%	—
	White customers	18%	21%	12%
Standing Close to Customer		€1.16	€1.41	22%*
Touching the Customer	Study 1	12%	17%	42%
	Study 2	11%	14%	27%
	Study 3	15%	18%	22%
	Study 4	12%	15%	28%
	Study 5	€0.24	€0.28	17%*
Smiling		20¢	48¢	140%
Complimenting Customers' Choices	Study 1	16%	19%	15%
	Study 2	19%	20%	5%
Repeating Order Back to Customer (Dutch Guilders)	Study 1	f1.76	f2.97	69%
	Study 2	f1.36	f2.73	100%
Suggestive Selling (tip estimated at 15% of bill size)		\$1.25 per person	\$1.53 per person	23%
Entertaining Customer	Study 1: Tell a Joke	16%	23%	40%*
	Study 2: Give a Puzzle	19%	22%	18%
Forecast Good Weather		19%	22%	18%
Writing "Thank You" on Check		16%	18%	13%
Writing patriotic message		15%	19%	22%
Drawing a Picture on Check	Study 1: Drawing smiley face			
	Waiter	21%	18%	—
	Waitress	28%	33%	18%
	Study 2: Bartender drawing sun	19%	26%	37%
Calling Customer by Name		14%	15%	10%
Using Tip Trays w/ Credit Card Insignia	Study 1: Restaurant	16%	20%	25%
	Study 2: Cafe	18%	22%	22%
Giving Customer Candy	Study 1	15%	18%	18%
	Study 2	19%	23%	21%
Providing Tipping Guidelines	Study 1: Norm and Calculation Assistance	20%	20%	—
	Study 2: Calculation Assistance	16%	19%	15%
	Study 3:			
	Calculation Assistance	\$6.37	\$6.86	8%**
	Norm Reminder	\$6.37	\$7.00	10%**
Playing Songs with Pro-social Lyrics		€1.22	€1.38	13%*

\* These reported increases in tip sizes refer to tips by those leaving tips. In other words, tips of nothing were excluded from the average tip size. However, the manipulations also increased the percentage of customers who left a tip, so the total effects of the manipulations on tipping are greater than the reported percentage increase.

\*\* These are the increases when service was average. Under poor service, neither type of guideline improved tips. Under excellent service, only calculation assistance improved tips.

basis if you want, but then you must keep a record of how much each customer tipped. Although this sounds involved, it is the fastest way to get enough data for a meaningful test. You will need at least 30 (preferably 50) dining parties in each condition. You should be able to obtain those records in just a few work shifts.



Another approach is to flip a coin to randomly assign entire work shifts to either the treatment or control conditions. You will need to have at least 10 (preferably 20) work shifts in each condition, so this approach will take longer to finish. However, it does have the advantage of

allowing you to treat every customer the same way on any given day. It also allows you to keep daily records of your tips rather than on a customer-by-customer basis, so this is the easiest experiment to perform.

Once you have the data, you can simply compare the average tips in the treatment condition with those in the control condition. If the difference is large enough, you may be satisfied with that simple comparison. However, if the difference is modest, you may legitimately wonder whether it is caused by the technique being tested or by chance. You will have to do a statistical test to answer that question. If that is more than you want to do, I would be happy to perform such a statistical test for any server who sends me their data along with a description of how they conducted the study. Just send contact information and a copy of your records to me at Statler Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853, or e-mail the information to me at WML3@Cornell.edu. Even if you decide not to conduct a systematic test, I would love to hear about your experiences using these tip enhancing techniques, so please write or e-mail me.

### Response to Critics

Since the first version of *MegaTips* was released, I have heard two primary criticisms. (1) The MegaTips are obvious, and servers already know and use these techniques. (2) The research supporting the effectiveness of these techniques is too limited because it typically involves only one or two servers at one or two restaurants. Despite the fact that these critiques seem to contradict one another, I have taken them seriously and recently published an article in the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* that addresses them. In that article, I report on an internet survey of over 1,500 current and former servers from across the country.

One of the things I asked the servers was how often they used each of the techniques in *MegaTips*. Their responses are

summarized in Exhibit 2 (on the next page). As you can see, over 50 percent of servers never or only sometimes engage in the suggested tip-inducing behaviors. Only suggestive selling is practiced frequently by 70 percent or more of the servers (often because this is a restaurant policy). These findings suggest that either the tip enhancing techniques are not as obvious as many critics claim or many servers willingly forgo the use of techniques that they know will increase their tips. Personally, I think it's more likely that servers just don't know about these techniques.

In addition to asking the servers how often they used each of the MegaTips, I asked them how their tips compared to those of the other servers where they worked. I then looked to see whether the frequency with which servers used each of the techniques was related to the size of their tips as compared to



the tips of their colleagues. The results, which controlled for region of the country, whether the respondent was a current or former server, years experience as a server, server sex, server race, and server age, are reported in Exhibit 3 (also on the next page). While the correlations are not large, which means that many other factors also influence tip size, they are all positive and statistically significant. In other words, servers who said they used these techniques frequently also said they got larger tips than did servers who said they used the techniques less frequently, and the strength of this relationship was too large to be due to chance. These correlational findings do not prove that engaging in the behaviors increased servers' average tips, but experimental evidence that the behaviors causally increase tips already exists and is described in this manual. What the results of this study do indicate is that those effects are not limited to the small samples of servers and restaurants used in the experimental research. The effects of these behaviors on tip size generalize to a large and diverse sample of servers working at a large number of different restaurants from across the country.

### Send Me a Post!

When you do try these techniques, please send me an e-mail to let me know how they worked for you. Just to repeat, e-mail me at WML3@Cornell.edu. Here is some of the feedback I have received to date.

I've been a server for over 2 years now. I remember vividly the first day and the woman who asked me in a kind voice if I was new. As of now, and with no lack of modesty, I can say I am a fantastic server. All due to those things mentioned in your article "Mega Tips: Scientifically Tested Techniques to Increase Your Tips."

**EXHIBIT 2****Percentage of restaurant servers reporting the use of tip-enhancing behaviors**

Behavior	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the Time
Draw Pictures on Check	72.9%	15.1%	6.2%	5.8%
Touch Customers	50.0%	36.8%	8.9%	4.4%
Forecast Good Weather	49.3%	34.8%	13.2%	2.8%
Wear Flair	58.0%	22.6%	8.9%	10.5%
Squat Next to Table	47.4%	28.7%	13.5%	10.4%
Call Customer by Name	22.0%	42.4%	25.7%	9.8%
Write "Thank You" on Checks	39.8%	20.1%	12.6%	27.4%
Tell Jokes or Stories	8.4%	49.3%	31.5%	10.8%
Complement Customers' Choices	6.6%	33.3%	44.0%	16.1%
Repeat Customers' Orders	5.6%	30.1%	33.5%	30.8%
Smile	7.0%	23.4%	34.9%	34.7%
Introduce Self	17.0%	18.0%	12.2%	52.8%
Suggestive Selling	5.7%	21.8%	30.7%	41.8%

Note: Based on an internet survey of 1,500 servers.

**EXHIBIT 3****Correlation of tip-enhancing behaviors with restaurant servers' tips**

Technique	Partial-correlation Coefficient*	Probability that correlation occurs by chance
Tell Jokes or Stories	.22	Less than 1 in 1,000
Squat Next to Table	.18	Less than 1 in 1,000
Call Customer by Name	.18	Less than 1 in 1,000
Touch Customer	.16	Less than 1 in 1,000
Up Sell	.15	Less than 1 in 1,000
Smile	.15	Less than 1 in 1,000
Complement Customers	.14	Less than 1 in 1,000
Predict Good Weather	.11	Less than 1 in 1,000
Write "Thank You" on Checks	.09	Less than 1 in 1,000
Draw on Checks	.08	Less than 1 in 100
Wear Flair	.07	Less than 1 in 100
Introduce Self	.05	Less than 1 in 20
Repeat Order	.05	Less than 1 in 20

\* Correlation after controlling for region, current employment as a server or not, years experience, server sex, server age, and server race.

Back when I was a budding undergrad, I read that article and thought it was amusing but I recently came upon it again, a whopping 4 years later, and I can draw many connections in my own serving behavior to the things mentioned in that article. In fact, I actually describe things like entertaining patrons, smiling, repeating orders, and bending to be at level with the table when I am doing orientations and training new servers!—*SJ*



I have just come home from work and I wish to truly thank you. I found some of your research on line: “How to make bigger tips,” and it really works. I live and work in a small town and the tips have never been that good. I actually am a great waitress. I smile, watch my tables, check up on them, refill drinks before they are asked for,

drop off napkins and ketchup before they are asked for and I admit when I’ve made a mistake. But I’m always struggling to just get 15 percent, and I’m not the youngest, thinnest, or prettiest by far. I read what you have tested two days ago on MSN and thought—what the hell... I went to the dollar store, bought some mints, a santa hat, and a pin. My, what your advice has done for my Christmas! I’m not doing anything different than before with the service I’m giving—but it’s just that little extra that makes the difference! When I dropped off the bill tonight I put a candy for each person at the table, then when I bring back the change I ask if anyone would like another piece of candy. I have had a lot of surprised faces! I will try out more of your research in the new year! Thank you so much! —*HCM*

... I am writing to you in regards to your booklet titled “Mega Tips” which I have been reading and enjoying very much! I found your informative post while researching studies performed on waiters/food servers. So far, the information you have provided has been more fascinating than anything I have found. ... I am a Psychology graduate from San Diego State and currently a food server that works in a “family style” restaurant in Florida for the past few years, and have worked in the food industry in Greece and California for high end establishments... Today at work, I experimented with drawing a sun on the checks of customers. It increased my tips in a significant way. I will continue to try out the different techniques and just wanted to thank you for sharing your work.... —*G* ■

To continue the dialogue and let me know how these MegaTips worked for you, contact Mike Lynn at [WML3@Cornell.edu](mailto:WML3@Cornell.edu).

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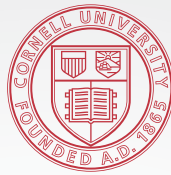
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