

THESIS

THE EFFECT OF THE SERVING STAFF ON RESTAURANT
SELECTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Submitted by

Jodie Barr

Department of Marketing

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado
Spring, 1990

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

October 12, 1989

WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY JODIE BARR ENTITLED THE EFFECT OF THE SERVING STAFF ON RESTAURANT SELECTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE.

Committee on Graduate Work

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Adviser [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Department Head

ABSTRACT OF THESIS
THE EFFECT OF THE SERVING STAFF ON RESTAURANT
SELECTION AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY

This study was conducted to describe and determine the relationship between the serving staff in restaurants and restaurant customer loyalty. A telephone survey based on a random sample of Fort Collins households was conducted to determine the relative importance of the serving staff in the continued selection of a restaurant, the personality and skill areas of employees considered important by customers, and factors affecting attitudes toward restaurant employees.

Results of the survey indicated that the serving staff is one of several factors influencing restaurant customer loyalty. Customer loyalty was found to rest on a balance of food quality, service quality, atmosphere and price/value perceptions. The quality and quantity of service were found to be critical factors capable of eliciting both compliments and complaints, thereby warranting extra attention from owners, managers, and employees in an effort to gain a competitive edge.

Jodie Barr
Department of Marketing
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523
Spring 1990

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <u>Chapter</u> | | <u>Page</u> |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| I | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| | The Need for Research | 3 |
| | The Research Goal | 4 |
| | Project Objectives | 5 |
| II | THE LITERATURE | 6 |
| | Introduction | 6 |
| | Compliments and Complaints | 6 |
| | Eating Away from Home | 11 |
| | Quality Service | 11 |
| III | METHODOLOGY | 15 |
| | The Survey | 15 |
| | The Frame and Sample | 16 |
| | Analytic Procedures | 17 |
| IV | FINDINGS | 18 |
| | Restaurant Selection | 18 |
| | Breakfast | 18 |
| | Lunch | 20 |
| | Dinner | 25 |
| | Customer Satisfaction | 28 |
| | Quality Service | 29 |
| | Demographics | 30 |
| | Age | 30 |
| | Household Size | 30 |
| | Marital Status | 34 |
| | Occupation and Hours Worked | 34 |
| | Household Income | 34 |
| | Sex | 34 |
| | Demographic Differences | 40 |
| | Comparison with the Literature | 40 |
| V | SUMMARY | 42 |

| <u>Chapter</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|----------------|---|
| VI | CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 45 |
| | Relative Importance of the Serving Staff in Restaurant Selection 45 |
| | Personality and Skill Areas of Employees . 45 |
| | Factors Affecting Attitudes 46 |
| | Type of Training Resources Needed 46 |
| | Research Implications 47 |
| | Marketing Application 47 |
| | REFERENCES 49 |
| | APPENDIX A - THE QUESTIONNAIRE 50 |
| | APPENDIX B - FREQUENCY COUNT AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION TABLES 58 |
| | APPENDIX C - SUMMARY OF WHY CONSUMERS CHOOSE OR DON'T CHOOSE A RESTAURANT . . 78 |

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

For more than twenty years, Americans have been spending an increasing share of their food dollars on meals and snacks consumed away from home. The National Food Review (Foodservice Trends, 1987)¹ reported that as of 1985, about one third of all meals and snacks were eaten away from home which accounted for 43 percent of total food dollar expenditures; an increase of 39 percent since 1960. A 1988 survey by Restaurants & Institutions reported that lunch was the most popular meal eaten away from home. Lunch accounted for 37.3 percent of all meals eaten away from home, while 29.3 percent were dinners, 12.2 percent were breakfasts, and 24 percent were other occasions such as snacks (Bertagnoli, Quinton, Weinstein, 1988).

Factors associated with the increase in the food-away-from-home market are the aging of the population, rising incomes, and increases in two-income and single parent households. While Americans, age 25 to 44, eat away from home more frequently than any other group, the 1986 CREST Household Report found restaurant use by people age 50 and over to be rising at a faster than average rate. It is forecast that the

¹ References are indexed alphabetically

number of individuals in this group will grow 23 percent by the year 2000, compared with growth of 14 percent for the rest of the population. With this group accounting for half of U.S. discretionary income, it is expected that their interest in convenience foods and dining away from home will continue. These expectations are supported by a Restaurants & Institutions report stating that 33.1 percent of all consumers ate away from home more often in 1988 than in 1987.

Interest in convenience has caused the number of fast food establishments to expand rapidly, taking market share away from their more conventional restaurant competitors. Market share for fast food restaurants rose from 5 percent in 1958 to 32 percent in 1985. In contrast, market share for conventional restaurants, lunchrooms, and cafeterias declined from 54 to 42 percent over the same period. Clearly the food-away-from-home market has grown considerably and is still growing, making it an important and interesting area for research.

The remainder of this paper will focus on the serving staff in the restaurant industry. The serving staff will be defined here as the personnel that the customer has regular contact with when dining in a restaurant. Included in this group are waiters, waitresses, other servers, bus people, bartenders, hosts, hostesses, and management.

The Need for Research

The National Restaurant Association reported an estimated shortfall of 200,000 restaurant workers in 1988. Managers report receiving fewer qualified job applicants and even fewer applicants for hourly positions. Managers also report that personnel turnover has increased and jobs are staying vacant longer. The current labor shortages are most severe in the East and the Midwest.

To respond to these shortages, managers are taking a variety of actions. Thirty nine percent have reported improved training and 33 percent expect to do so in the near future. Thirty one percent of managers have increased starting wages and 23 percent expect to do so. Sixteen percent of the managers surveyed reported having expanded recruiting efforts and another 23 percent expect to expand their recruiting. Doug Biederbeck, General Manager of the Fog City Diner in San Francisco said "We're going to take a very hard look at pre-hiring practices ...[and probably] spend more time checking references, and, once we've hired someone, spend more time on training." ("The Restaurant Challenge", 1988)

Leading restaurant operators see managing the serving staff, both management and crew members, as their biggest single challenge. Ray Lindstrom, President of Restaurants Unlimited Inc. in Seattle, says that hiring and retaining the right people is the key to continuous delivery of increasingly

higher standards of service to increasingly sophisticated customers. ("The Restaurant Challenge", 1988)

If more time and money is to be spent on hiring and training of restaurant personnel, it becomes important to know whether changes in sales can be associated with customer perceptions of and experiences with employees. To what extent is customer loyalty a function of the behavior of a restaurant's employees [e.g. a server's tableside style]?

The severity of the labor shortage and its implications for hiring and training of employees indicates a need for specific valid information on the association between restaurant employees, customer perceptions, and customer loyalty. Employers will benefit from this information by making more effective hiring decisions and improved design of training programs. Information available in industry literature is general in describing the actions, image, and the experiences with employees that most influence people to become repeat restaurant customers.

The Research Goal

The goal of this project is to describe and determine the relationship between the serving staff in restaurants and restaurant customer loyalty.

Project Objectives

Four objectives have been set out to be met in accomplishing the research goal:

1. To determine the relative importance to consumers of various characteristics of the serving staff in the selection of a restaurant.

2. To determine the personality and professional skill areas of a restaurant employee that are important to the customer in the repeated and continued selection of a restaurant.

3. To determine specific factors that affect the attitudes or changes in attitudes of customers toward restaurant personnel.

4. To determine the type of employee education and training resources needed to improve and/or maintain positive attitudes of customers toward the serving staff in restaurants.

CHAPTER II
THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The primary management emphasis in United States restaurants 50 years ago was on table service. The quality of food was of secondary concern. During the past twenty years, management emphasis has shifted dramatically to food and the kitchen, with atmosphere and decor being of secondary importance. Today, as the restaurant market becomes more saturated and competition becomes more fierce, restaurant operators are turning back to service and personnel strategies as the critical points of differentiation for defining their competitive edge. (Frumkin, 1988).

Compliments and Complaints

A 1978 National Restaurant Association survey of food service executives (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988) found the quality of service to be a "critical" variable, capable of eliciting both compliments and complaints. Customers are sensitive to the quality of service that is acceptable. The zone of customer indifference to service is narrow. Since service is highly dependent on an establishment's personnel, service level consistency reflects the natural variability of

human endeavor, and restaurants often have difficulty maintaining consistent levels of service performance. The following factors were critical in restaurant evaluation: helpful attitude of employees, food quality, quality of service, and quantity of service.

The 1978 NRA survey of food service executives (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988) found other patterns in the compliments and complaints. Critical factors can elicit either compliments or complaints. "Dissatisfiers" represent factors that will generate complaints if certain minimum performance standards are not maintained. Dissatisfiers will neither be noticed nor complimented if high performance levels are achieved. An example is parking. Customers will be quick to complain if parking is difficult to find but will barely notice if they always find an easy place to park.

"Satisfiers" were identified as factors in which an unusually high performance generated compliments, but average performance or the absence of the factor did not cause dissatisfaction or elicit complaints. An example of a satisfier would be large food portions. Whereas critical factors are both a management threat and an opportunity, satisfiers represent a clear opportunity to distinguish the restaurant and rise above the competition (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988).

The most frequent complaints and compliments are customer motivators (Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988). The factors on which customers will go out of their way to comment are those most

considered when deciding whether or not to return to a particular restaurant. Exhibit 1 shows the top 10 complaints and compliments from the 1978 NRA survey of food service executives.

More recently, the 1988 "Tastes of America" survey by Restaurants and Institutions found loyalty to be a common characteristic of U.S. consumers. Almost 77 percent of people surveyed said they visited a "favorite" restaurant when eating away from home. Retired couples and households of four or more exhibited the greatest amount of loyalty and 45 percent of respondents said they went to an old standby at least 85 percent of the time. The decision to return to a restaurant rested on a balance of food, service, atmosphere, and price/value. (Bertagnoli, Quinton, Weinstein, 1988)

Alternately, consumers tried a new restaurant on an average of 23.3 percent of occasions. Singles and young couples tried a new restaurant most often, at least 27 percent of the times they ate away from home.

"Tastes of America" (Bertagnoli, Quinton, Weinstein, 1988) found that two thirds of all respondents complained about service. Exhibit 2 shows the top 10 responses of consumers when asked; "what irritates you most in restaurants?"

A 1987 survey of 2,000 consumers by Adweek's Marketing Week (Doyle, 1987) also found service to be the number one complaint. Respondents felt that few restaurants provided

Exhibit 1 - NRA 1978

Frequent complaints and compliments in restaurants

Complaints

1. Availability of parking
2. Traffic congestion in establishment
3. Quality of service
4. Price of drinks, meals, and other services
5. Noise level
6. Helpful attitude of employees
7. Food quality and method of preparation
8. Spaciousness of establishment
9. Hours of operation
10. Quantity of service

Compliments

1. Quality of service
 2. Food quality and method of preparation
 3. Helpful attitude of employees
 4. Cleanliness of establishment
 5. Neatness of establishment (tie)
 6. Size of portions (tie)
 7. Employee Appearance
 8. Quantity of service
 9. Responsiveness to complaints
 10. Price of drinks, meals, and other services
-
-

Source: The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration
Quarterly, Feb. 1988, p.46

Exhibit 2 - "Tastes of America", 1988

What irritates consumers most in restaurants

| | <u>1988</u> | <u>1987</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Rude personnel | 69.2% | 47.0% |
| Not worth price | 64.2 | 47.1 |
| Poor quality food | 58.1 | 47.1 |
| Noise/loud music | 57.9 | 47.9 |
| Wait for table, service, food, check | 52.8 | 41.5 |
| Smoking | 51.5 | 48.4 |
| Being rushed | 46.8 | 30.1 |
| Lack of cleanliness | 46.7 | 25.1 |
| Wait in line for food | 37.8 | 26.9 |
| Feeling crowded | 36.4 | 25.6 |

Source: Restaurants & Institutions, December 9, 1988, p.78

both good food and good service consistently. Exhibit 3 lists the survey's most frequently voiced complaints.

A 1986 Gallup Poll of public opinion asked people to rate the services they received on a 10 point scale (Gallup, 1987). Exhibit 4 shows how people rated service in restaurants.

Eating Away from Home

When "Tastes of America" determined the reasons that people dined away from home, service was rarely mentioned. Regional differences in responses throughout the country were present. The top reasons for dining away from home in the Northeast were: "relaxation," "to try a new restaurant," "increase menu variety," "and enjoy a nice atmosphere." Reasons for eating away from home in the South were "convenience" and "close to work or home". Responses from the Midwest included "a special occasion" and "to meet with friends". The reasons for eating out in the West were: "don't want to cook," "enjoy going out with the family," "to be waited on," "and for a business occasion."

Quality Service

According to food industry consultant William B. Martin, quality service consists of two major factors: "service procedures", and the "service staff's personality" (Martin, 1986). "Service procedures" has seven major components: flow of service, timeliness, accommodation, anticipation,

Exhibit 3 - Thumb's Down to Eating Out, 1987

Most frequently voiced complaints about restaurants

- Poor quality and quantity of service.
- Poor quality of food and food preparation.
- Portion sizes that for the most part are inappropriate and inflexible.
- Not enough care taken for consumers who care about nutrition, health and calories.
- Too much grease and salt in the food: poor overall sanitation.
- Long waits for seats, service and the check.
- Getting cold food that is supposed to be hot.
- Boring menus and a lack of variety.
- Negative attitudes - especially toward women.
- Running out of regular and special offerings.
- Inconsistency between available food, preparation and service.

Source: Adweek's Marketing Week, October 5, 1987, p.17

Exhibit 4 - The Gallup Poll, 1986

"We would like to learn a little more about people's impressions of services they receive."

1 = quality of service is poor
 10 = quality of service is very high

| <u>Rating of Service</u> | <u>Percent of Respondents</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 10 | 7% |
| 9 | 13 |
| 8 | 26 |
| 7 | 21 |
| 6 | 14 |
| 5 | 10 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 1 |
| 1 | * |
| No opinion | 2 |

*Less than 1%

Source: The Gallup Poll, March 9, 1987, p.59

communication, customer feedback, and supervision. The service staff's personality has nine major components: attitude, body language, tone of voice, tact, naming names, attentiveness, guidance, suggestive selling, and problem-solving.

These 16 dimensions of quality of service vary in importance according to the type of restaurant. Martin sees the key to quality service as a properly trained and monitored serving staff.

When the 1986 Gallup Poll interviewers asked for the criteria that determine quality service, 21 percent responded with "courtesy". The second most frequent response, at 18 percent, was the ability of the server to satisfy the customer's needs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The Survey

A telephone survey based on a systematic and random sample of households in Fort Collins was conducted in April of 1989. Telephone surveys were chosen over mail surveys and personal interviews for the following reasons:

1. A large number of responses can be generated quickly.
2. Local telephone directories are inexpensive and easily obtained.
3. Local telephone calls are inexpensive.
4. Response rates are higher than for mail surveys.
5. The telephone interviewer can clarify questions and probe for responses.

Twenty three students from the Business Research Methods course at Colorado State University conducted the survey. They were uniformly trained on the interpretation of survey questions; how to fill out the questionnaires; and on telephone interviewing techniques, e.g. vary the time of day during which calls are made and try three call-backs before substituting for non-respondents. Each student completed 20 interviews.

A copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A. The questions asked were designed to fill gaps in information identified in the literature review and to verify information from nation-wide surveys for the Fort Collins area. Questions dealt with restaurant selection and customer loyalty. Responses to questions illustrate how and why customers choose restaurants in which to eat. Responses also identified factors that motivate people to become repeat customers.

Questions were also asked that dealt more specifically with service and the serving staff in restaurants. Responses to these questions determined the specific kinds of services and attributes of restaurant personnel preferred by customers.

Demographic questions were asked in an effort to classify the respondents for purposes of statistical analysis and market segmentation determinations.

The Frame and Sample

A probability sample was selected from Fort Collins households using listed telephone numbers. According to census data, Fort Collins has approximately 37,000 households of which 20 percent are unlisted or have no phone. For the purposes of this project, it was assumed that no major differences exist between Ft. Collins households with listed phone numbers and those without.

Four hundred and sixty surveys were completed from a household population of 37,000. This sample resulted in a +/- 4.5 percent sampling error at a 95 percent confidence level

(Tables for Determining Sample Size and Sample Error, 1975). The sample size computation used a proportion of 0.5 because the actual survey questions dealt with attributes instead of variables. The White & Yellow Pages telephone directory for Ft. Collins by USWest Direct dated December 1988/1989 was used as the frame for this survey.

Analytic Procedures

Completed surveys were edited and coded for computer analysis. Lists of answers were generated from the responses to the open-ended questions and used for uniform coding. The data were then analyzed using the SPSS-PC software package (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

A frequency count and percentage distribution for each question provided an overview of responses. Common responses with low frequencies were combined into categories for further analysis. Selected questions were then cross - tabulated with each of the demographic questions to determine associations between sub groups on the issues of restaurant selection and service. Helpfulness attitude ratings were correlated with the number of times eaten out, dollars spent, household income and age. Analysis of variance was used to compare helpfulness attitude ratings with reasons for eating out, satisfaction areas, and frustration areas.

Inferences were drawn from the findings to generate recommendations for restaurant owners and managers regarding employee education and training.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Results of the survey describe the relationship between the serving staff in restaurants and restaurant customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is defined in terms of a customer's frequency of visits to a particular restaurant. The restaurant a consumer eats at most frequently will be defined as his or her favorite restaurant. "Respondents" and "customers" are used interchangeably as the sample is representative of the population.

Restaurant Selection

Breakfast

Slightly more than half (51.9%) of the 460 respondents ate breakfast most frequently in a total of 10 restaurants. The largest market share for a breakfast restaurant was 15.7 percent of customers. During the past two weeks, the average respondent eating breakfast away from home ate once in their favorite restaurant and spent an average of \$6.94. Good food was the most important reason for selecting a breakfast restaurant (see Table 1). This reason was given by 32.5 percent of people eating breakfast away from home. Large menu item selection was the second most important reason (11.1

Table 1. What is the most important reason you eat breakfast there?

| Response | Percent |
|-------------------|---------|
| Good food | 32.5 |
| Large selection | 11.1 |
| Good service | 7.7 |
| Service Related | 8.0 |
| Personnel Related | 4.6 |

percent). Seven percent of the people who reported eating breakfast away from home mentioned good service as their most important specific reason for choosing a restaurant. A total of 12.6 percent of this group mentioned either service or personnel as the most important reason they chose their favorite breakfast restaurant. Service and personnel accounted for 12.7 percent of the "other" reasons for choosing their breakfast restaurant.

The majority of people rated the helpfulness attitude of employees at their favorite breakfast restaurant at above average, as shown in Table 2. The largest group of respondents, 25.0 percent, rated the helpfulness attitude of employees at the breakfast restaurant they patronized most frequently at 8 on a scale of 0 to 10 and another 15.2 percent rated helpfulness at 9. These ratings indicated that while service and personnel factors were not often directly given as reasons for eating in a restaurant, they were factors influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Lunch

Twenty nine percent of the 460 respondents ate lunch most frequently in a total of 10 restaurants. The largest market share by any one restaurant was 8.3 percent of consumers, indicating that the lunch market was competitive among a larger number of restaurants than was breakfast. Three hundred thirty eight (338) customers ate lunch in a total of

Table 2. Helpfulness Rating (Breakfast).

| Mean | Std Dev | Minimum | Maximum |
|------|---------|---------|---------|
| 7.89 | 1.46 | 1 | 10 |

Source: Appendix B, Table 20

87 restaurants compared to 324 customers who ate breakfast in a total of 43 restaurants.

People ate lunch in their "favorite" restaurant more frequently than they did breakfast. The average respondent ate lunch at their favorite restaurant 1.9 times (compared with 1 time for breakfast) in the past two weeks and spent an average of \$6.26 per meal. Twenty one percent of respondents ate in their favorite lunch restaurant once in the past two weeks and 33.2 percent ate there at least twice.

Table 3 shows that 27.2 percent mentioned good food as the most important specific reason for choosing their favorite lunch restaurant and another 10.6 percent mentioned the type of food on the menu. "Fast servers" was mentioned by 5.3 percent. Ten percent of people who ate lunch away from home mentioned either service or personnel factors as the most important reason they chose a lunch restaurant and an additional 11.2 percent mentioned service or personnel as a secondary reason for choosing a restaurant.

The helpfulness attitude ratings for employees in restaurants at lunchtime were slightly lower than those for breakfast, as shown in Table 4. More people rated employees at 5 and 6, while fewer people gave ratings of 8 or 9. Combined with the lower frequency of service and personnel factors as reasons for choosing a restaurant, the helpfulness ratings would indicate that the serving staff was a less important factor in customer satisfaction and loyalty for lunch occasions than for breakfast.

Table 3. What is the most important reason you eat lunch there?

| Response | Percent |
|-------------------|---------|
| Good food | 27.2 |
| Type of food | 10.6 |
| Fast servers | 5.3 |
| Service Related | 4.1 |
| Personnel Related | 6.5 |

Table 4. Helpfulness Rating (Lunch).

| Mean | Std Dev | Minimum | Maximum |
|------|---------|---------|---------|
| 7.7 | 1.6 | 1 | 10 |

Source: Appendix B, Table 26

Dinner

More people ate dinner away from home than any other meal. Ninety one percent of the sample reported having a favorite restaurant in which to eat dinner. Forty four and a half (44.5) percent of the respondents ate dinner most often in a total of 10 restaurants. The largest market share for any one dinner restaurant was 10.7 percent of respondents. People ate dinner at their favorite restaurant almost as often as breakfast. During the past two weeks, the average consumer eating dinner away from home ate in their favorite restaurant once. The average check was for \$23.35 including dinner for 2.66 people. The largest group of respondents, 34.6 percent, reported spending \$11 to \$20 on the dinner check and 49.3 percent last had dinner at their favorite restaurant with one other person.

The two most important reasons that people mentioned for selecting a restaurant for dinner, good food (32.8 percent), and type of food on the menu (15.6 percent) are shown in Table 5. Good service was mentioned as the most important specific reason by 5.0 percent of respondents. However, good service was the most frequently mentioned specific "other" reason for choosing a restaurant for dinner.

People rated the helpfulness attitude of employees at their favorite dinner restaurant higher than for either breakfast or lunch (see Table 6). Over 15 percent gave employees a rating of 10. The helpfulness ratings would

Table 5. What is the most important reason you eat dinner there?

| Response | Percent |
|--------------|---------|
| Good food | 32.8 |
| Type of food | 15.6 |
| Good service | 5.0 |

Table 6. Helpfulness Rating (Dinner).

| Mean | Std Dev | Minimum | Maximum |
|------|---------|---------|---------|
| 8.22 | 1.39 | 1 | 10 |

Source: Appendix B, Table 33

indicate that good service is a significant factor in customer satisfaction and loyalty for restaurants at dinnertime.

Customer Satisfaction

When asked about restaurants in Fort Collins, 42.2 percent of the respondents reported a restaurant in which they would never eat. Eighty four different restaurants in Ft. Collins were mentioned. The least popular restaurant was mentioned 16 times (3.4 percent). The two reasons specifically mentioned most often for not eating at a particular restaurant were "lousy food" and "poor service". In general, 59.8 percent of people who knew of a restaurant in which they would never eat said that the food was the reason. Service or personnel factors were mentioned by 30.4 percent of this group as the reasons they would not eat in a specific restaurant. While service and personnel factors were not often mentioned specifically as the reasons for choosing a breakfast, lunch, or dinner restaurant, they were major factors in causing a customer to avoid a restaurant.

Service was mentioned as both a source of satisfaction and a source of frustration. Respondents were much more likely to complain about bad service than compliment good service. Good service was mentioned by 16.5 percent of respondents as a source of satisfaction experienced in a restaurant. Poor service, slow service, a long wait for seats, and rude wait staff were the four most frequently mentioned sources of frustration experienced in a restaurant.

Quality Service

Survey respondents were asked to define "good quality" service and to identify the specific personality traits and specific services that make up "good quality" service. The four most frequently mentioned specific definitions of good quality service were: attentiveness to the customer, pleasant help, politeness, and quick service. Other definitions of good quality service involved timeliness of service and the server's attitude. Respondents expressed a desire for restaurant servers who are friendly, outgoing, and pleasant. The skills most frequently mentioned as missing in servers were politeness, attention, and interpersonal skills.

When asked the specific services the restaurant server should provide, 23 percent of the respondents said that the server should fill their needs. The second most frequently mentioned service, 13.7 percent, was that the server should bring refills. To accommodate small children, consumers expressed a desire for restaurant employees to provide high chairs and a separate children's menu; and seat families with children in a separate section of the restaurant. To accommodate senior citizens, restaurant employees should offer discounts, provide services to everyone equally, and provide assistance with chairs when being seated.

In order to compare past research and the present study, the respondents were asked about specific services that were mentioned as important in the review of the literature. The

majority of customers expressed a desire to be told the server's name, be offered wine and cocktail suggestions, and to receive a visit at their table from the manager. A majority of those surveyed for this project reported a desire for the manager to be in evidence in the restaurant, be offered menu suggestions, to receive drinks before ordering food, and for complaints to always be handled by a manager. Fifty four percent of those asked preferred that the server take payment of the bill and 20.1 percent preferred to pay a cashier. Consumers were divided as to whether or not it is desirable for the chef to appear in the dining room and whether it is helpful or rude for the server to interrupt conversation to check on drinks.

Demographics

Demographic data were gathered to form a descriptive profile of the respondents to the survey. The modal profile of respondents is shown in Table 7.

Age

Ages of respondents are detailed in Table 8. The average age of the survey respondents was 37 years old. A comparison of the ages of the sample with the Fort Collins population shows the sample to be representative of the population.

Household Size

The number of people living in each household is detailed in Table 9. No attempt was made to define "household". The

Table 7. The modal profile of the survey respondents.

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Age | 25-34 | 26.5% |
| Household Size | 2 people | 35.7 |
| Marital Status | Married | 58.3 |
| Occupation | Professional | 25.4 |
| Hours worked per week | 0 | 33.5 |
| Household income | \$15,001-\$20,000 | 20.9 |
| Sex | Female | 58.0 |

Table 8. Respondents' Age.

| | Percent | Projections | |
|--------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| | | Age | Percent |
| Under 25 | 23.7 | 18-24 | 25.7 |
| 25 - 29 | 12.4 | 25-34 | 23.2 |
| 30 - 34 | 14.1 | | |
| 35 - 39 | 13.9 | 35-49 | 15.6 |
| 40 - 49 | 17.2 | | |
| 50 - 65 | 9.3 | 50 and over | 15.9 |
| 65 and over | 8.9 | | |
| Refused | 0.4 | | |
| Average Age: | | <u>37 years old.</u> | |

Source: Sales & Marketing Management Projections for Ft. Collins for 1988

Table 9. Household Size.

| | Percent | |
|---------------|---------|------------------------------|
| One person | 12.6 | |
| Two people | 35.7 | |
| Three people | 21.5 | Average number in household: |
| Four people | 17.8 | <u>2.87 persons.</u> |
| Five people | 8.9 | |
| Six people | 2.2 | |
| Seven or more | 1.3 | |

largest group of respondents (35.7 percent) live with one other person. The average number of people living in a household for the sample was 2.87.

Marital Status

The marital status of respondents is detailed in Table 10. Over half of the sample (58.3 percent) was married.

Occupation and Hours Worked

The largest groups of respondents were in the professional category (25.4 percent) and the student category (19.3 percent). A third of the sample reported working zero hours per week and 27.6 percent work between 31 and 40 hours per week. Occupations of the sample are detailed in Table 11 and Hours Worked are detailed in Table 12.

Household Income

Household income before taxes is detailed in Table 13. Again, no definition of "household" was given. The largest group of respondents (20.9 percent) reported their total household income for 1988 between \$15,001 and \$20,000. The average household income was \$30,587.

Sex

As can be seen in Table 14, 58 percent of the respondents were female and 42 percent were male.

Table 10. Marital Status.

| | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Single | 33.0 |
| Married | 58.3 |
| Either Divorce or Separated | 4.8 |
| Widowed | 3.0 |
| Other | 0.9 |

Table 11. Occupation.

| | Percent |
|--|---------|
| Professional, Technical and Managerial | 25.4 |
| Clerical and Sales | 12.2 |
| Service | 8.3 |
| Student | 19.3 |
| Housewife/husband | 7.8 |
| Machine Trades | 2.6 |
| Structural Work | 3.5 |
| Retired | 8.3 |
| Unemployed | 2.6 |
| Miscellaneous | 9.3 |
| Refused | 0.7 |

Table 12. Hours Worked per Week.

| | Percent | |
|-------------|---------|--------------------------------|
| 0 | 33.5 | |
| 1 - 20 | 1.3 | |
| 21 - 30 | 8.0 | Average hours worked per week: |
| 31 - 40 | 27.6 | <u>25.2 hours.</u> |
| 41 - 50 | 11.7 | |
| 51 and over | 8.0 | |

Table 13. 1988 Household Income Before Taxes.

| | Percent | Estimate* | |
|------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| | | Income | Percent |
| Less than \$15,000 | 13.0 | \$10,000 to \$19,999 | 25.5 |
| \$15,001 to \$20,000 | 20.9 | | |
| \$20,001 to \$27,000 | 8.0 | \$20,000 to \$34,999 | 26.3 |
| \$27,001 to \$35,000 | 10.4 | | |
| \$35,001 to \$50,000 | 15.4 | \$35,000 to \$49,999 | 15.5 |
| Over \$50,000 | 17.4 | \$50,000 and over | 12.7 |
| Refused | 14.8 | | |
| Average Household Income: \$30,587 | | | |

* Source: Sales & Marketing Management Estimate for
Ft. Collins for 1988

Table 14. Respondents' Sex.

| | Percent |
|--------|---------|
| Male | 42.0 |
| Female | 58.0 |

Demographic Differences

The study found no significant differences among demographic groups regarding reasons for selecting a restaurant, attitudes toward restaurant employees, definitions of good quality service, and specific services desired. The sample reflected a homogeneous market with regard to perceptions of and attitudes toward human resources in restaurants.

Comparison with the Literature

Results of the survey reaffirm the results of the 1978 National Restaurant Association survey of food service executives. Quality of service was again found to be a critical variable, capable of eliciting both compliments and complaints. The results also confirmed the helpfulness attitude of employees, food quality, and quantity of service as critical factors. Quality issues mentioned most frequently dealt with the courtesy of servers and the timeliness of service. Quantity issues dealt with the attentiveness of servers and the completeness of service.

Results of the survey showed Fort Collins to be comparable to the national sample by confirming the results of the 1988 "Tastes of America" survey by Restaurants and Institutions. The restaurant "employee" was found to be one of several factors contributing to restaurant selection and customer loyalty. The decision to choose or return to a

restaurant in Fort Collins rested on a balance of food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and price/value perceptions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The current labor shortage has caused restaurant owners and managers to spend increasing amounts of time and money on hiring and training restaurant personnel. Therefore, the goal of this project was to determine and describe the association between restaurant employees, customer perceptions, and customer loyalty. To accomplish this goal, four objectives were set:

1. To determine the relative importance to consumers of various characteristics of the serving staff in the selection of a restaurant.

2. To determine the personality and professional skill areas of a restaurant employee that are important to the customer in the repeated and continued selection of a restaurant.

3. To determine specific factors that affect the attitudes or changes in attitudes of customers toward restaurant personnel.

4. To determine the type of employee education and training resources needed to improve and/or maintain positive attitudes of customers toward the serving staff in restaurants.

Information was gathered through use of a telephone survey. A random sample of four hundred and sixty households in Fort Collins with listed telephone numbers was interviewed regarding restaurant selection, customer loyalty, and customer service. The information gathered was then coded for computer analysis. Frequency counts, percentage distributions, cross-tabulations, correlations, and analysis of variance were used to summarize and describe the data in a meaningful way.

Respondents to the survey indicated that a restaurant's food was the most important reason for repeatedly selecting a particular restaurant. Service was mentioned as both a source of satisfaction and a source of frustration. Respondents were much more likely to complain about bad service than compliment good service. "Lousy food" and "poor service" were the most frequently mentioned reasons for never eating in a particular restaurant. "Good quality" service was described as both attentive and timely; and respondents expressed a desire for friendly, pleasant servers.

Demographic data showed the respondents of the survey to be a representative sample of the Fort Collins population. The study found no significant differences among demographic groups regarding reasons for selecting a restaurant, attitudes toward restaurant employees, definitions of good quality service, and specific services desired.

A comparison with the literature showed Fort Collins to be comparable to the national sample. The helpfulness attitude of employees, food quality, and quantity of service

were confirmed as critical variables in customer satisfaction. Customer loyalty was confirmed as a balance of food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and price/value perceptions.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Relative Importance of the Serving Staff in Restaurant Selection

The serving staff is one factor among several influencing restaurant selection and customer loyalty. Other factors are food, atmosphere, price, and convenience. Exceptionally high quality service was noted by customers as a reason for the continued selection of a restaurant. The relative lack of mention of service and "employee" as the most important reasons for selecting a restaurant could be caused by the attitude that service is relatively unimportant; the quality of service usually falls within a "zone of indifference" and is therefore not noticed; or customers adjust their expectations and perceptions according to the service they receive. Exceptionally poor service or rude treatment will, however, cause an awareness by customers of restaurant service and be a major factor in causing customers not to repeat their patronage.

Personality and Skill Areas of Employees

The personality traits that managers and owners should look for during hiring interviews were described by

respondents as "friendly", "outgoing", and "pleasant". The uniform conviviality dimension of the service staff as a whole can lead to the perception of consistently high quality service. Hiring interviews can also be used to discover which potential hires have the skills most desired by customers to try to minimize training time and costs. Skills to look for are the ability to maintain a positive attitude, courtesy and good manners, interpersonal skills, and the ability to concentrate and pay attention.

Factors Affecting Attitudes

As the quality and quantity of service are major sources of customer satisfaction and frustration, they will have a definite impact on restaurant selection and customer loyalty. Customers both compliment and complain about service indicating that it is a motivator in selection decisions. Customers want service that is attentive and timely. Poor service, including a rude wait staff and long waits, will be both noticed and remembered, thereby negatively affecting customer loyalty.

Type of Training Resources Needed

The critical aspect of customer service indicates a need for restaurant managers to focus on employee training programs that promote good quality service which reduces the frustrating experiences that cause customers not to return. Training should focus on attentiveness to the customer,

timeliness and completeness of service, and a courteous attitude.

The employee should concentrate on maintaining a consistently high quality of service over time. Special requests should be accommodated and the occasional disaster should be called to the attention of a manager immediately. In the event of a culinary or service disaster, every attempt must be made to keep the customer from going away angry or frustrated.

Research Implications

Additional research surveying the opinions of restaurant managers and employees would be useful to determine whether they have the same definitions of quality service as their customers. The personality traits of restaurant employees that are preferred by customers could be compared with the traits and qualities managers look for when making hiring decisions. Special services that customers desire for themselves, seniors, and small children, could be compared with the services managers and employees feel they should offer. Results of such comparisons could be used by restaurant management to better design their service offerings to suit their specific clientele.

Marketing Application

Results of this survey can also be used by restaurant managers to further define their marketing mix and concentrate

on a market segment. While location often is fixed, price, product, and promotion are usually flexible. Restaurant managers can define their product as a combination of specific foods with specific services in a specific atmosphere. For example, a restaurant catering to the growing proportion of senior citizens in the population could be designed to offer a choice of portion sizes and prices with no salt and low cholesterol options, coupled with large print menus, staff trained to assist with seating and to speak loudly, in an atmosphere that includes sufficient lighting and features straight back chairs instead of booths. Promotion efforts could focus on the entire packaged product to reach this specific group of customers. A similar restaurant concept using a packaged food, service and atmosphere product could be developed for families with children and fine dining restaurants. Restaurants that try to have something for everyone could consider a separate section in which to seat families with small children.

REFERENCES

- Bertagnoli, Lisa; Quinton, Brian; and Weinstein, Jeff, "Tastes of America", Restaurants & Institutions, December 9, 1988, pages 42-82.
- Cadotte, Ernest R. and Turgeon, Normand, "Key Factors in Guest Satisfaction", The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, February, 1988, pages 45-51.
- Costello, T., "Customers do not live by food alone: they have to be courted.", Nation's Restaurant News, March 7, 1988, page 46.
- "Don't Turn Your Back on Service", Restaurant Business, May 20, 1988, page 141.
- Doyle, Mona, "Thumbs Down to Eating Out", ADWEEK's MARKETING WEEK, October 5, 1987, page 17.
- "Foodservice and the Labor Shortage", National Restaurant Association Current Issues Report, 1988.
- "Foodservice Trends", National Food Review, 1987, pages 10-25.
- Frumkin, Paul, "Operator Solutions", Restaurant Business, May 20, 1988, pages 142-145.
- Gallup, George Jr., "Public Opinion", The Gallup Poll, 1986, page 59.
- Martin, William B., "Defining What Quality Service is for You", The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, February 1986, pages 32-38.
- Sales and Marketing Management, 1988 Survey of Buying Power, August 15, 1988, pages C30-C32.
- "The Restaurant Challenge", Nation's Restaurant News, May 30, 1988, page F12.
- Tables for Determining Sample Size and Sample Error, National Research Foundation Press, 1975, page A-35.

APPENDIX A
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

ID NUMBER _____

NAME OF INTERVIEWER _____

Restaurant Selection and Customer LoyaltyTelephone Number _____Address _____

(Good Morning) (Good Afternoon) (Good Evening)
I am _____ (first name) _____, a marketing student at Colorado State University. I am working on a class research project and would like to ask you several questions about restaurants.

This should take about ten minutes. (Thank you)

1. What one restaurant do you patronize the most frequently for breakfast?

2. How many times in the past two weeks do you recall eating breakfast at (name of breakfast restaurant)?

3. What is the most important reason you eat there?

4. Is there any other reason that you eat there? (probe)

5. How much money do you usually spend on a breakfast, including tax and tip, at (name of restaurant from Q1)?

6. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 the lowest rating and 10 the highest rating, how would you rate the helpfulness attitude of this restaurant's employees?

7. What one restaurant do you patronize most frequently for lunch?

8. How many times in the past two weeks do you recall eating lunch at (name of lunch restaurant)? _____
9. What is the most important reason you eat there?

10. Is there any other reason that you eat there?

11. How much money do you usually spend on a lunch, including tax and tip, at (name of restaurant from Q7)?

12. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 the lowest rating and 10 the highest rating, how would you rate the helpfulness attitude of this restaurant's employees? _____

13. What one restaurant do you patronize most frequently for dinner?

14. How many times in the past two weeks do you recall eating dinner at (name of dinner restaurant)?

15. What is the most important reason you eat there?

16. Is there any other reason that you eat there?

17. The last time you ate at (name of restaurant from Q13), what was the total amount of the check?

18. How many people did this amount include? _____
19. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 the lowest rating and 10 the highest rating, how would you rate the helpfulness attitude of this restaurant's employees?

20. Are there any restaurants in Ft. Collins in which you would never eat? (if yes, get names)

21. Why wouldn't you eat there?

22. What is your biggest source of satisfaction when eating in a restaurant?

23. What is your biggest source of frustration when eating in a restaurant?

24. What type of services should the server be able to offer you as a customer if you were to ask?

25. How do you define good quality service in a restaurant?

26. What do you mean by (terms used in answer to Q25)?

27. What types of skills do you think are missing in restaurant servers?

28. What type of personality should a restaurant server have?

29. What type of services should restaurant employees be able to offer senior citizens should they ask?

30. How should restaurant employees accommodate families with small children?

31. Is it desirable or undesirable for the manager or owner to be in evidence in the restaurant?

- [1] _____ Desirable
 [2] _____ Undesirable
 [3] _____ Don't care
 [4] _____ Depends on _____

32. Do you think that it is helpful or rude for the server to offer menu suggestions to indecisive customers?

- [1] _____ Helpful
 [2] _____ Rude
 [3] _____ Doesn't matter

33. Is it desirable or undesirable for the server to bring drinks before taking your food order?

- [1] _____ Desirable
 [2] _____ Undesirable
 [3] _____ Doesn't matter
 [4] _____ Depends on how hungry I am

34. Do you prefer that the server take payment of the bill and bring change to the table or do you prefer to pay a cashier?

- [1] _____ Server take payment
 [2] _____ Pay at cashier
 [3] _____ Doesn't matter

35. Do you think that it is desirable or undesirable for complaints to always be handled by a manager?

- [1] _____ Desirable
 [2] _____ Undesirable
 [3] _____ Doesn't matter

36. Do you find it desirable or undesirable to be told the server's name?

- [1] _____ Desirable
 [2] _____ Undesirable
 [3] _____ Don't care

37. Is it desirable or undesirable for the chef to appear in the dining room from time to time?

- [1] _____ Desirable
 [2] _____ Undesirable
 [3] _____ Don't Care
 [4] _____ Depends on _____

38. Do you think that it is helpful or rude for the server to offer wine and cocktail suggestions?

- [1] _____ Helpful
 [2] _____ Rude
 [3] _____ Doesn't matter

39. Do you think that it is helpful or rude for the server to interrupt conversation to check your drinks?

- [1] _____ Helpful
 [2] _____ Rude
 [3] _____ Doesn't matter

40. Do you think that it is desirable or undesirable for the manager or owner to stop by tables to check on the quality of your dining experience?

- [1] _____ Desirable
 [2] _____ Undesirable
 [3] _____ Don't care

41. Now, just for classification purposes, would you tell me which of the following age groups are you in? (read choices)

- [1] _____ Under 18
 [2] _____ 18-24
 [3] _____ 25-29
 [4] _____ 30-34
 [5] _____ 35-39
 [6] _____ 40-44
 [7] _____ 45-49
 [8] _____ 50-54
 [9] _____ 55-59
 [10] _____ 60-64
 [11] _____ 65 and over
 [0] _____ Refused

42. Including yourself, how many people live in your household? (do not read)

- [1] _____ 1 person
- [2] _____ 2 people
- [3] _____ 3 people
- [4] _____ 4 people
- [5] _____ 5 people
- [6] _____ 6 people
- [7] _____ 7 or more
- [0] _____ Refused

43. What is your present marital status? (read choices)

- [1] _____ Single
- [2] _____ Married
- [3] _____ Either Divorced or Separated
- [4] _____ Widowed
- [5] _____ Other

44. What is your occupation? _____

45. How many hours per week do you work? _____

46. Which of the following categories best represents your total 1988 household income before taxes, including all members of your household who are employed? (read choices)

- [1] _____ Less than \$15,000
- [2] _____ \$15,001 to \$20,000
- [3] _____ \$20,001 to \$27,000
- [4] _____ \$27,001 to \$35,000
- [5] _____ \$35,001 to \$50,000
- [6] _____ Over \$50,000
- [0] _____ Refused

47. Record respondent's sex.

- [1] _____ Male
- [2] _____ Female

Thank you very much for your assistance with this project, and have a good day.

APPENDIX B
FREQUENCY COUNT AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION
CONSUMER RESTAURANT SURVEY, 1989

Questions in Tables 15 through 39 were asked of all respondents. Percents are calculated on 460 respondents unless otherwise specified.

Table 15. What one restaurant do you patronize the most frequently for breakfast?

| Restaurant | Frequency | Percent | Market Share |
|------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| 115 | 51 | 11.1 | 15.7% |
| 42 | 47 | 10.2 | 14.5 |
| 164 | 29 | 6.3 | 9.0 |
| 69 | 28 | 6.1 | 8.6 |
| 37 | 22 | 4.8 | 6.8 |
| 136 | 18 | 3.9 | 5.6 |
| 89 | 15 | 3.3 | 4.6 |
| 65 | 13 | 2.8 | 4.0 |
| 48 | 8 | 1.7 | 2.5 |
| 128 | 8 | 1.7 | 2.5 |
| all others | 85 | 18.5 | 26.2 |
| No Answer | 136 | 29.6 | |

Table 16. How many times in the past two weeks do you recall eating breakfast at this restaurant?

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| 0 | 270 | 58.7 |
| 1 | 101 | 22.0 |
| 2 | 52 | 11.3 |
| 3 | 21 | 4.6 |
| 4 | 11 | 2.4 |
| 5 - 1 | 5 | 1.0 |

Table 17. What is the most important reason you eat there?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent (n=324) |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Good food | 106 | 32.7 |
| Large selection/variety | 36 | 11.1 |
| Quality of food | 33 | 10.2 |
| Inexpensive/cheap | 29 | 8.9 |
| Good service | 25 | 7.7 |
| Atmosphere in general | 21 | 6.5 |
| Price is right considering what you receive | 18 | 5.5 |
| Food tastes good | 17 | 5.2 |
| Convenience in general | 14 | 4.3 |
| Close to home | 13 | 4.0 |
| Misc. (detailed in Table 54) | 145 | 44.7 |
| No answer | 2 | 0.6 |

Table 18. Is there any other reason that you eat there?

*10 most frequently mentioned responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent (n=324) |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Good food | 35 | 10.8 |
| Atmosphere in general | 23 | 7.1 |
| Inexpensive/cheap | 18 | 5.6 |
| Good service | 18 | 5.6 |
| Price is right considering what you receive | 17 | 5.2 |
| Food tastes good | 13 | 4.0 |
| Large selection/variety | 12 | 3.7 |
| Friendly personnel | 12 | 3.7 |
| Quality of food | 10 | 3.0 |
| Close to home | 8 | 2.5 |
| Misc. (detailed in Table 55) | 50 | 15.4 |
| No | 78 | 24.1 |

Table 19. How much money do you usually spend on a breakfast, including tax and tip?

| Dollars | Frequency | Percent (n=324) |
|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 - 3 | 45 | 13.9 |
| 4 - 6 | 155 | 47.8 |
| 7 - 9 | 46 | 14.2 |
| 10 or more | 73 | 22.5 |
| No answer | 5 | 1.5 |

Table 20. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 the lowest rating and 10 the highest rating, how would you rate the helpfulness of this restaurant's employees?

| Rating | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 2 | 1 | 0.2 |
| 3 | 3 | 0.7 |
| 4 | 6 | 1.3 |
| 5 | 13 | 2.8 |
| 6 | 23 | 5.0 |
| 7 | 54 | 11.7 |
| 8 | 115 | 25.0 |
| 9 | 70 | 15.2 |
| 10 | 39 | 8.5 |
| No answer | 136 | 29.6 |

Table 21. What one restaurant do you patronize most frequently for lunch?

| Restaurant | Frequency | Percent | Market Share |
|------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| 89 | 28 | 6.1 | 8.3% |
| 170 | 21 | 4.6 | 6.2 |
| 57 | 15 | 3.3 | 4.4 |
| 35 | 12 | 2.6 | 3.6 |
| 52 | 10 | 27.2 | 3.0 |
| 7 | 9 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| 152 | 9 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| 3 | 8 | 1.7 | 2.4 |
| 24 | 8 | 1.7 | 2.4 |
| 101 | 8 | 1.7 | 2.4 |
| 115 | 8 | 1.7 | 2.4 |
| all others | 202 | 43.9 | 59.5 |
| No Answer | 122 | 26.5 | |

Table 22. How many times in the past two weeks do you recall eating lunch at this restaurant?

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| 0 | 210 | 45.7 |
| 1 | 97 | 21.1 |
| 2 | 69 | 15.0 |
| 3 | 31 | 6.7 |
| 4 | 19 | 4.1 |
| 5 | 10 | 2.2 |
| 6 | 8 | 1.7 |
| 7-14 | 16 | 3.5 |

Table 23. What is the most important reason you eat there?

*10 most frequently mentioned responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent (n=338) |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Good food | 92 | 27.2 |
| Type of food (Mexican, etc.) | 36 | 10.6 |
| Convenient location | 33 | 9.7 |
| Inexpensive/cheap | 32 | 9.5 |
| Convenient in general | 24 | 7.1 |
| Large selection/variety | 22 | 6.5 |
| Quality of food | 22 | 6.5 |
| Fast personnel | 18 | 5.3 |
| Close to work | 17 | 5.0 |
| Atmosphere in general | 16 | 4.7 |
| Misc. (detailed in Table 56) | 165 | 48.8 |

Table 24. Is there any other reason that your eat there?

*10 most frequently mentioned responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent (n=338) |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Good food | 40 | 11.8 |
| Good service | 20 | 5.9 |
| Fresh vegetables | 18 | 5.3 |
| Close to work | 18 | 5.3 |
| Inexpensive/cheap | 17 | 5.0 |
| Atmosphere in general | 13 | 3.8 |
| Fast personnel | 11 | 3.2 |
| Price is right considering what you receive | 11 | 3.2 |
| Large selection/variety | 10 | 2.9 |
| Convenient in general | 9 | 2.7 |
| Misc. (detailed in Table 57) | 105 | 31.1 |
| No | 114 | 33.7 |

Table 25. How much money do you usually spend on a lunch, including tax and tip?

| Dollars | Frequency | Percent (n=338) |
|--------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 - 3 | 51 | 15.1 |
| 4 - 6 | 187 | 55.3 |
| 7 - 9 | 53 | 15.7 |
| 10 - 15 | 41 | 12.1 |
| More than 15 | 8 | 2.4 |

Table 26. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 the lowest rating and 10 the highest rating, how would you rate the helpfulness attitude of this restaurant's employees?

| Rating | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 2 | 2 | 0.4 |
| 3 | 2 | 0.4 |
| 4 | 10 | 2.2 |
| 5 | 18 | 3.9 |
| 6 | 42 | 9.1 |
| 7 | 55 | 12.0 |
| 8 | 104 | 22.6 |
| 9 | 63 | 13.7 |
| 10 | 45 | 9.8 |
| No Answer | 119 | 25.8 |

Table 27. What one restaurant do you patronize most frequently for dinner?

| Restaurant | Frequency | Percent | Market Share |
|------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| 01 | 45 | 9.8 | 10.7% |
| 24 | 32 | 7.0 | 7.6 |
| 3 | 31 | 6.7 | 7.3 |
| 131 | 20 | 4.3 | 4.7 |
| 130 | 15 | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| 47 | 13 | 2.8 | 3.1 |
| 52 | 13 | 2.8 | 3.1 |
| 18 | 12 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| 173 | 12 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| 183 | 12 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| All others | 217 | 41.1 | 51.5 |
| No Answer | 38 | 8.3 | |

Table 28. How many times in the past two weeks do you recall eating dinner at this restaurant?

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| 0 | 195 | 42.4 |
| 1 | 163 | 35.4 |
| 2 | 69 | 15.0 |
| 3 | 21 | 4.6 |
| 4 | 8 | 1.7 |
| 5 | 2 | 0.4 |
| 8 | 2 | 0.4 |

Table 29. What is the most important reason that you eat there?

| *10 most frequently mentioned specific responses: | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Response | Frequency | Percent |
| Good food | 151 | 32.8 |
| Type of food(Mexican, etc.) | 72 | 15.6 |
| Quality of food | 62 | 13.5 |
| Atmosphere in general | 35 | 7.6 |
| Price is right considering what you receive | 24 | 5.2 |
| Food tastes good | 23 | 5.0 |
| Good service | 23 | 5.0 |
| Large selection/variety | 21 | 4.6 |
| Inexpensive/cheap | 18 | 3.9 |
| "all you can eat" | 9 | 1.9 |
| Misc.(detailed in Table 58) | 170 | 36.9 |
| No Answer | 37 | |

Table 30. Is there any other reason you eat there?

| *10 most frequently mentioned specific responses: | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Response | Frequency | Percent |
| Good service | 39 | 8.5 |
| Good food | 35 | 7.6 |
| Atmosphere in general | 32 | 6.9 |
| Price is right considering what you receive | 22 | 4.8 |
| Inexpensive/cheap | 21 | 4.6 |
| Quality of food | 12 | 2.6 |
| Friendly personnel | 12 | 2.6 |
| Close to home | 11 | 2.4 |
| Type of food(Mexican, etc.) | 10 | 2.2 |
| Large selection/variety | 8 | 1.7 |
| Misc.(detailed in Table 59) | 115 | 25.0 |
| No | 167 | 36.3 |

Table 31. The last time you ate at this restaurant, what was the total amount of the check?

| Dollars | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| 1 - 10 | 74 | 16.1 |
| 11 - 20 | 159 | 34.6 |
| 21 - 30 | 90 | 19.6 |
| 31 - 40 | 40 | 8.7 |
| More than 40 | 43 | 9.3 |
| No Answer | 46 | 10.0 |

Table 32. How many people did this amount include?

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 1 | 41 | 8.9 |
| 2 | 227 | 49.3 |
| 3 | 50 | 10.9 |
| 4 | 60 | 13.0 |
| 5 | 20 | 4.3 |
| 6 | 11 | 2.4 |
| 7 | 3 | 0.7 |
| 8 | 3 | 0.7 |
| 12 | 1 | 0.2 |
| No answer | 44 | 9.6 |

Table 33. On a scale of 0 to 10 with 0 the lowest rating and 10 the highest rating, how would you rate the helpfulness attitude of this restaurant's employees?

| Rating | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| 1 | 1 | 0.2 |
| 2 | 2 | 0.4 |
| 3 | 1 | 0.2 |
| 4 | 3 | 0.7 |
| 5 | 12 | 2.6 |
| 6 | 15 | 3.3 |
| 7 | 66 | 14.3 |
| 8 | 130 | 28.3 |
| 9 | 121 | 26.3 |
| 10 | 70 | 15.2 |
| No answer | 39 | 8.5 |

Table 34. Are there any restaurants in Ft. Collins in which you would never eat?

| Restaurant | Frequency | Percent |
|------------|-----------|---------|
| 89 | 16 | 3.4 |
| 53 | 12 | 2.6 |
| 47 | 11 | 2.4 |
| 174 | 11 | 2.4 |
| 37 | 10 | 2.2 |
| 52 | 8 | 1.7 |
| 115 | 8 | 1.7 |
| 44 | 7 | 1.5 |
| 23 | 5 | 1.1 |
| 101 | 5 | 1.1 |
| All others | 112 | 24.3 |
| No | 266 | 57.8 |

Table 35. Why wouldn't you eat there?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent (of 194) |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Lousy food | 88 | 45.4 |
| Poor service | 36 | 18.6 |
| Dirty | 21 | 10.8 |
| Slow service | 12 | 6.2 |
| Too expensive | 11 | 5.7 |
| Food quality too low for the price | 11 | 5.7 |
| Too much grease | 10 | 5.2 |
| Clientele | 9 | 4.6 |
| Rude wait staff | 8 | 4.1 |
| Don't like the menu | 8 | 4.1 |
| Misc.(detailed in Table 60) | 69 | 35.6 |

Table 36. What is your biggest source of satisfaction when eating in a restaurant?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Good food | 124 | 27.0 |
| Quality of food | 90 | 19.6 |
| Good Service | 76 | 16.5 |
| Avoid cooking at home | 48 | 10.4 |
| Atmosphere in general | 29 | 6.3 |
| Food tastes good | 27 | 5.9 |
| Pleasure of dining out | 20 | 4.3 |
| No dishes to do afterward | 19 | 4.1 |
| Price is right considering what you receive | 19 | 4.1 |
| Relaxed atmosphere | 18 | 3.9 |
| Misc.(detailed in Table 61) | 167 | 36.3 |
| No Answer | 3 | 0.7 |

Table 37. What is your biggest source of frustration when eating in a restaurant?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Poor service | 130 | 28.3 |
| Slow service | 108 | 23.5 |
| Long wait for seats | 51 | 11.1 |
| Rude wait staff | 27 | 5.9 |
| Lousy food | 18 | 3.9 |
| Cigarette smoke | 14 | 3.0 |
| Noisy children | 12 | 2.6 |
| Food quality too low for the price | 11 | 2.4 |
| Music too loud | 8 | 1.7 |
| Cold food | 7 | 1.5 |
| Misc.(detailed in Table 62) | 54 | 11.7 |
| No answer | 20 | 4.3 |

Table 38. What type of services should the server be able to offer you as a customer if you were to ask?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Fill needs | 106 | 23.0 |
| Bring refills | 63 | 13.7 |
| Menu item selection | 44 | 9.6 |
| Speed up service | 42 | 9.1 |
| Information on daily specials | 35 | 7.6 |
| Information on preparation methods | 35 | 7.6 |
| Menu substitutions | 26 | 5.7 |
| Whatever I ask | 22 | 4.8 |
| Clean the table | 20 | 4.3 |
| Recommend food | 19 | 4.1 |
| Other Responses (grouped) | | |
| Special requests | 54 | 11.7 |
| Food service and timing | 48 | 10.4 |
| Server skills and attitude | 32 | 6.9 |
| Information | 30 | 6.5 |
| Miscellaneous | 22 | 4.8 |
| No Answer | 59 | 12.8 |

Table 39. How do you define good quality service in a restaurant?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Attentiveness to customer | 175 | 38.0 |
| Pleasant help | 137 | 29.8 |
| Politeness | 130 | 28.3 |
| Quick service | 127 | 27.6 |
| Prompt | 95 | 20.7 |
| Server checks back often | 94 | 20.4 |
| Don't come by so often as to be annoying | 65 | 14.1 |
| Makes you feel welcome | 51 | 11.1 |
| Friendly attitude | 51 | 11.1 |
| Keep water glasses filled | 44 | 9.6 |
| Other responses (grouped) | | |
| Food service and timeliness | 107 | 23.3 |
| Server skill and attitude | 56 | 12.2 |
| Server accuracy | 53 | 11.5 |
| Greeting and Seating | 39 | 8.5 |
| Satisfied feeling | 26 | 5.6 |
| Cleanliness | 24 | 5.2 |
| Knowledgeable | 19 | 4.1 |
| Miscellaneous | 15 | 3.3 |
| No Answer | 12 | 2.6 |

Questions in Tables 40 through 46 were only asked of a split sample of 221 respondents so all frequencies are expressed as a percentage of 221.

Table 40. What types of skills do you think are missing in restaurant servers?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Manners/Politeness | 31 | 14.0 |
| Attention | 21 | 9.5 |
| Interpersonal | 21 | 9.5 |
| Consideration | 12 | 5.4 |
| Communication | 11 | 5.0 |
| Speed | 10 | 4.5 |
| Memory | 9 | 4.0 |
| Knowledge of preparation methods | 9 | 4.0 |
| Not trained well in general | 9 | 4.0 |
| Other responses (grouped) | | |
| Server attitude | 32 | 14.5 |
| Communication skills | 13 | 5.9 |
| Knowledge | 12 | 5.4 |
| Organization | 11 | 5.0 |
| Physical skills | 2 | 0.9 |
| No Answer | 83 | 37.6 |

Table 41. How should restaurant employees accommodate families with small children?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Provide high chairs | 67 | 30.3 |
| Separate children's menu | 47 | 21.3 |
| Seat in a separate section | 47 | 21.3 |
| Provide booster seats | 45 | 20.4 |
| Provide activities | 25 | 11.3 |
| Seat away from other tables | 22 | 10.0 |
| Help parent | 11 | 4.6 |
| Get kids' food out first | 9 | 4.0 |
| Bring crackers | 9 | 4.0 |
| Same service for everyone | 8 | 3.6 |
| Other responses (grouped) | | |
| Food service | 17 | 7.7 |
| Physical accommodations | 16 | 7.2 |
| Entertainment | 8 | 3.6 |
| Attitude of employees | 7 | 3.2 |
| Miscellaneous | 4 | 1.8 |
| No Answer | 48 | 21.7 |

Table 42. Do you find it desirable or undesirable to be told the server's name?

| | Percent |
|-------------|---------|
| Desireable | 63.8 |
| Undesirable | 6.8 |
| Don't care | 29.4 |

Table 43. Is it desirable or undesirable for the chef to appear in the dining room from time to time?

| | Percent |
|-------------|---------|
| Desireable | 26.7 |
| Undesirable | 24.0 |
| Don't Care | 37.1 |
| Depends on | 12.2 |

Table 44. Do you think that it is helpful or rude for the server to offer wine and cocktail suggestions?

| | Percent |
|----------------|---------|
| Helpful | 78.7 |
| Rude | 6.8 |
| Doesn't matter | 14.5 |

Table 45. Do you think that it is helpful or rude for the server to interrupt conversation to check your drinks?

| | Percent |
|----------------|---------|
| Helpful | 48.4 |
| Rude | 35.7 |
| Doesn't matter | 15.8 |

Table 46. Do you think that it is desirable or undesirable for the manager or owner to stop by tables to check on the quality of your dining experience?

| | Percent |
|-------------|---------|
| Desireable | 85.1 |
| Undesirable | 9.0 |
| Don't care | 5.9 |

Questions in Tables 47 through 53 were only asked of a split sample of 239 respondents so all frequencies are expressed as a percent of 239.

Table 47. What type of personality should a restaurant server have?

*10 most frequently mentioned specific responses:

| Response | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Friendly | 104 | 43.5 |
| Outgoing | 49 | 20.5 |
| Pleasant | 35 | 14.6 |
| Smiling | 17 | 7.1 |
| Jovial | 14 | 5.9 |
| Courteous | 14 | 5.9 |
| Easygoing | 14 | 5.9 |
| Helpful | 13 | 5.4 |
| Slow to anger | 11 | 4.6 |
| Professional | 10 | 4.2 |
| Other responses (grouped) | | |
| Convivial | 37 | 15.5 |
| Calm and conservative | 27 | 11.3 |
| Humorous | 15 | 6.3 |
| Efficient | 14 | 5.8 |
| Miscellaneous | 5 | 2.1 |
| No answer | 1 | 0.4 |

Table 48. What type of services should restaurant employees be able to offer senior citizens?

| *10 most frequently mentioned specific responses: | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Response | Frequency | Percent |
| Discounts | 92 | 38.5 |
| Same services to everyone | 40 | 16.7 |
| Help with chairs | 26 | 10.9 |
| Smaller portions | 25 | 10.5 |
| Make room for walkers and wheelchairs | 22 | 9.2 |
| Low salt menu items | 16 | 6.7 |
| Large print menus | 15 | 6.3 |
| Specials | 12 | 5.0 |
| Extra care | 11 | 4.6 |
| Help with wheelchairs | 10 | 4.2 |
| Other responses (grouped) | | |
| Physical help | 24 | 10.0 |
| Special seating | 13 | 5.4 |
| Food service | 13 | 5.4 |
| Special requests | 9 | 3.8 |
| Attitude of employees | 7 | 2.9 |
| Miscellaneous | 3 | 1.3 |
| No answer | 47 | 19.7 |

Table 49. Is it desirable or undesirable for the manager or owner to be in evidence in the restaurant?

| | Percent |
|-------------|---------|
| Desireable | 70.3 |
| Undesirable | 6.7 |
| Don't care | 18.0 |
| Depends | 5.0 |

Table 50. Do you think that it is helpful or rude for the server to offer menu suggestions to indecisive customers?

| | Percent |
|----------------|---------|
| Helpful | 89.5 |
| Rude | 5.9 |
| Doesn't matter | 4.6 |

Table 51. Is it desirable or undesirable for the server to bring drinks before taking your food order?

| | Percent |
|----------------|---------|
| Desireable | 72.4 |
| Undesirable | 11.3 |
| Doesn't matter | 10.5 |
| Depends | 1.3 |

Table 52. Do you prefer that the server take payment of the bill and bring change to the table or do you prefer to pay a cashier?

| | Percent |
|---------------------|---------|
| Server take payment | 54.0 |
| Pay at cashier | 20.1 |
| Doesn't matter | 24.7 |
| Depends | 1.3 |

Table 53. Do you think that it is desirable or undesirable for complaints to always be handled by a manager?

| | Percent |
|----------------|---------|
| Desireable | 67.8 |
| Undesirable | 17.6 |
| Doesn't matter | 11.3 |
| Depends | 3.3 |

APPENDIX C
SUMMARY OF WHY CONSUMERS CHOOSE OR
DON'T CHOOSE A RESTAURANT
CONSUMER RESTAURANT SURVEY, 1989

Table 54. The most important reason for eating in a breakfast restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent (n=324) |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Food | 227 | 70.1 |
| Convenience | 58 | 17.9 |
| Price | 51 | 15.7 |
| Service | 26 | 8.0 |
| Personnel | 15 | 4.6 |
| Atmosphere | 51 | 15.7 |
| Drinks | 1 | 0.3 |
| Miscellaneous | 23 | 7.1 |
| No answer | 2 | 0.6 |

Table 55. Other reasons for eating in a breakfast restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent (n=324) |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Food | 95 | 29.3 |
| Convenience | 28 | 8.6 |
| Price | 35 | 10.8 |
| Service | 20 | 6.2 |
| Personnel | 21 | 6.5 |
| Atmosphere | 60 | 18.5 |
| Miscellaneous | 14 | 4.3 |
| No | 78 | 24.1 |

Table 56. The most important reason for eating in a lunch restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent (n=338) |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Food | 224 | 66.3 |
| Convenience | 98 | 29.0 |
| Price | 47 | 13.9 |
| Service | 14 | 4.1 |
| Personnel | 22 | 6.5 |
| Atmosphere | 23 | 6.8 |
| Drinks | 1 | 0.2 |
| Miscellaneous | 38 | 11.2 |

Table 57. Other reasons for eating in a lunch restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent (n=338) |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Food | 98 | 29.0 |
| Convenience | 42 | 12.4 |
| Price | 32 | 9.5 |
| Service | 21 | 6.2 |
| Personnel | 17 | 5.0 |
| Atmosphere | 39 | 11.5 |
| Drinks | 2 | 0.6 |
| Miscellaneous | 24 | 7.1 |
| No | 114 | 33.7 |

Table 58. The most important reason for eating in a dinner restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Food | 373 | 81.1 |
| Convenience | 24 | 5.2 |
| Price | 45 | 9.8 |
| Service | 25 | 5.4 |
| Personnel | 20 | 4.3 |
| Atmosphere | 66 | 14.3 |
| Drinks | 8 | 1.7 |
| Miscellaneous | 46 | 10.0 |
| No Answer | 37 | 8.0 |

Table 59. Other reasons for eating in a dinner restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Food | 89 | 19.3 |
| Convenience | 24 | 5.2 |
| Price | 49 | 10.6 |
| Service | 42 | 9.1 |
| Personnel | 21 | 4.6 |
| Atmosphere | 63 | 13.7 |
| Drinks | 14 | 3.0 |
| Miscellaneous | 24 | 5.2 |
| No | 167 | 36.3 |

Table 60. Reasons for never eating in a particular restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent (n=194) |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Food | 116 | 59.8 |
| Price | 22 | 11.3 |
| Service | 48 | 24.7 |
| Personnel | 11 | 5.7 |
| Atmosphere | 24 | 12.4 |
| Miscellaneous | 53 | 27.3 |

Table 61. The biggest source of satisfaction when eating in a restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Food | 283 | 61.5 |
| Convenience | 11 | 2.4 |
| Price | 26 | 5.7 |
| Service | 114 | 24.8 |
| Personnel | 35 | 7.6 |
| Atmosphere | 88 | 19.1 |
| Miscellaneous | 93 | 20.2 |
| No Answer | 3 | 0.6 |

Table 62. The biggest source of frustration when eating in a restaurant.

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Food | 35 | 7.6 |
| Price | 16 | 3.5 |
| Service | 300 | 65.2 |
| Personnel | 27 | 5.9 |
| Atmosphere | 24 | 5.2 |
| Miscellaneous | 38 | 5.0 |
| No Answer | 20 | 8.3 |