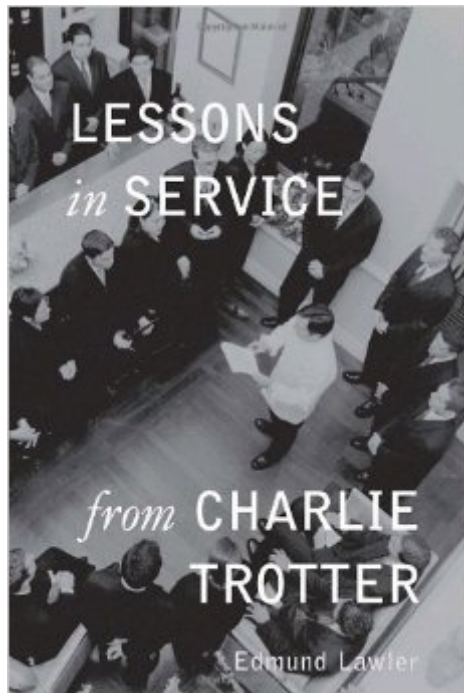


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# Lessons In Service From Charlie Trotter



## Synopsis

In the second book in the Lessons from Charlie Trotter series, the lauded chef shares his strategies for success in this guide on how to give the ultimate dining experience. As winner of the James Beard Foundation's Outstanding Restaurant Award, Charlie Trotter and his service staff run what many consider to be America's finest restaurant. But it's not just about food in this renowned Chicago hot spot. It's about a subtle relationship between food, wine, ambiance, and service—a relationship Trotter has perfected by hiring passionate staff with the ability to surpass his incredibly high standards. In LESSONS IN SERVICE, journalist Edmund Lawler reveals the secrets behind Trotter's unequalled success and shows other businesses how to improve their levels of service. From unconventional motivational techniques, staff empowerment, and mentoring to role playing, preservice meetings, and an obsessive pursuit of excellence—Trotter leaves nothing to chance. The service is a nightly ballet that leaves guests feeling pampered, educated, and of course, wonderfully satisfied. Follow the advice of Charlie Trotter, and no matter what your business, your customers will keep coming back again and again. • Charlie Trotter's was nominated for the James Beard Foundation's 2001 Outstanding Service Award, and the restaurant received the Beard Foundation's Best Restaurant in America Award in 2000. • Charlie Trotter's books have sold over 300,000 copies.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My business career has been in the service industry, so I've read a lot of books about giving brilliant

service - books full of fine phrases, but they don't show "who has to do what to whom" to make it happen. Ed Lawler's book really shows you how to make it happen. Lawler evidently lives in the real world. He has got inside "Charlie Trotters restaurant" - one of the legends of good service way beyond Chicago. But this is not a "hymn of praise" sort of book, it's open about the problems, challenges and shortcomings as well. His starting point is that good service is an accumulation of little things done right, and he goes right into what those little things are. Example: Chapter 5 Learning the Ropes shows how role play and feedback are far more effective than a service manual, how shadowing by a senior mentor actually works, how to use complaint and compliment letters in staff meetings. Chapter 6 has some great stuff on treating first time customers well and returning customers differently (because you know their preferences). A unique feature of this book is the section on getting backroom staff to collaborate seamlessly with front of house people (page 128-141). The 12 point checklist on page 141 is a gem - applicable across the whole service industry. A minor nitpick is that the quote from Dostoevsky appears twice, but aside from that, the book is excellent. I have never eaten in Trotters restaurant myself, but reading this book, I can practically taste the food and feel the atmosphere. I thoroughly recommend this book

While I've never had the privilege of dining at Charlie Trotter's famed Chicago eatery, I was absolutely enthralled with the vivid portrait journalist Edmund Lawler paints in "Lessons in Service from Charlie Trotter." This is Lawler's second outing in Trotter's famed kitchen; his previous book, "Charlie Trotter's: A Pictorial Guide to the Famed Restaurant and Its Cuisine," is another great behind-the-scenes look at the culinary master. But instead of focusing on bread and circuses this time out, Lawler effectively pulls away the curtain to reveal just how Trotter continues to stay in the upper echelon of culinary masters. From managerial techniques to customer satisfaction, "Lessons" gets to the heart of Trotter's business, and how he has managed to stay at the top of his game since 1987. The book is helped immensely by reactions from Trotter's service staff, leaders in the restaurant industry and the chef himself, who believes that empowerment and a keen eye on every detail is the key to success in any business. While some may unjustly dismiss this book as "just another restaurant guide," many of Trotter's techniques (especially those about first impressions at an interview) are germane to most any business where service is the No. 1 priority. Sure everyone knows that the customer is always right, but if Lawler's book is any indication, Trotter knows how to make customers feel "right" more than anyone else in the business.

Among the many differences between Charlie Trotter and a thousand other gifted chefs, the one

that sets his Chicago landmark apart from the crowd is fierce attention to service, as Edmund Lawler points out in this wonderful survey of the Trotter philosophy. Waiters at Charlie Trotter's have no manual, but they strive to follow the Golden Rule - treat customers as you would be treated, not just in general, but in every tiny circumstance. Not only that, but Lawler also points out, Trotter's senior servers enjoy full health care coverage, \$2 employee meals and a sense of responsibility. It's so simple, really. Trotter treats his employees as he would be treated. Lawler lays it all out in a readable and succinct fashion, with each chapter backed up by handy "service points." Whether you're running a restaurant, an airline, an investment bank or a lemonade stand, you could learn from reading *Lessons in Service*. Oh, if only more service business managers would!

*Lessons in Service from Charlie Trotter* My coworker recommended this book to me. I took her recommendation due to the fact that she is a great customer service provider. It didn't disappoint. I've never had a chance to visit Trotter's and it looks like I won't because they have closed their doors since this book was written. I think there are a lot of great examples of extraordinary customer service in this book. I work customer service for a large coffee supply company with a small staff. There are only about three of us that answer the phones to help people with their orders. Answering the phones is always a surprise, sometimes it's someone having troubles with an espresso machine and at other times it's as simple as syrup pumps. After reading this book and seeing how the staff at Trotter's deals with their customers and Trotter himself I can't help but be better for my company. The things they go through to deliver the best service they can seems crazy at times ie. driving patrons home in their own cars during a blizzard. But they do it and they really believe in bettering themselves and their industry. If you can get over the fact that at times this book reads like an advertisement there are a lot of things to learn. I definitely recommend this book to anyone that is in the service industry and looking to better themselves.

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