



**THE GOLDEN BOOK OF  
UPSELLING SECRETS  
FOR BARS AND RESTAURANTS**

# THE ART OF UPSELLING? IT'S MORE LIKE SCIENCE.

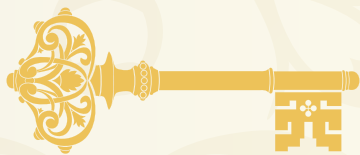
But only a select few bars and restaurants know the secret upselling methods. Master the proven tactics within these pages, and join an elite league of establishments enjoying 3 key benefits.

## GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES OF UPSELLING

- Increased Guest Satisfaction
- Improved Guest Loyalty
- Larger Check Averages

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

- The Golden Rule of Upselling: WIIFM
- Reframe the Upsell with 3 Key Questions
- The #1 Easiest Customer to Upsell
- Overcome “I’m Too Full for Dessert”
- 4 Ways Your Team is DOWN Selling & How to Fix It
- 6 Science-Based Secrets of Menus That Upsell



### TOP SECRET TIP #1:

Turn On the TV:  
Your Upselling Machine

*Want to upsell without even trying? Look towards eye-catching digital signage at your venue. Otherwise known as DOOH (digital-out-of-home), studies show this type of signage results in impulse buys. A Nielson study revealed that on-site digital signage can increase sales of an item by over 30%.*

*Buzztime provides an easy-to-use system that turns your TVs into digital signage. You're even provided with digital signage templates that can be customized with your logo or images of the items you're trying to sell. You can rotate multiple messages – from drink specials to events, desserts to gift cards.*



## THE GOLDEN RULE OF UPSELLING: WIIFM (WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?)

*Speak in benefits, not just features. Teach your servers this golden rule and your sales will be golden, too.*

To speak the language of benefits, imagine your customer saying...

### What's In It For Me?

Servers must make the connection between what the customer wants, and how the features of your menu items can meet their needs. Train them by practicing WIIFM-speak for upselling nightly specials, high-margin menu items, and even gift cards. Use WIIFM when writing menu descriptions and copy for marketing campaigns, too.

WIIFM isn't just about upselling – it's about building loyalty with your guests. Adding the WIIFM reminds guests that you're going out of your way to treat them right.

## EXAMPLES

### No 1: Upsell to a nightly special

**Features:** *“Tonight we have wild-caught salmon served with sautéed spinach.”*

**Benefits (WIIFM)** *“Tonight we have sustainable, wild-caught salmon. It’s only in season for a few weeks, it tastes best now. It’s served with super fresh sautéed spinach from a local farm... We like helping local farmers.”*

### No. 2: Upsell to a gourmet version

**Features:** *“Could I upgrade you to the blackened and blue burger? It’s a half pound burger with blue cheese and pickled onions.”*

**Benefits (WIIFM)** *“You might like the blackened and blue burger! It’s a filling half-pound with house-made pickled onions and a new, delicious blue cheese we just got in.”*

### No.3: Upsell to add gift cards

**Features:** *“Would you like to add on a few \$20 gift cards?”*

**Benefits (WIIFM)** *“We’re having a special this week only on gift cards, buy \$100 – get a bonus \$20. They make easy stocking stuffers around the holidays.”*



## TOP 8 WIIFM BENEFITS

**Superior Taste.** This is the most important benefit to hit on – it also means your servers **MUST** have tasted your menu so they can speak convincingly about the flavors and tastes

**Freshness** is a key benefit so touch on timing and sourcing i.e. “made this morning”

**House-made.** Emphasize the care and skills your culinary team is putting to work – all for the customer

**Great Value.** No need to give price if you can say “generous portion” or “filling” and/or emphasize quantity – the customer will perceive value

**Limited Time.** Convey an item won’t be around long – it’s a rare opportunity just for the customer!

**“First to Try”.** Guests want to feel like VIPs. Let them know they’re one of the first to try something.

**Helping Others:** If you source products that improve the lives of people, animals, or the environment – tell your guests.

**Convenience:** Make life easier on your customer, it’s that simple.



## 3 KEYS TO RE-FRAME THE UPSELL

Do you want fries with that? Clearly whoever came up with that line didn't understand upselling. Here are 3 strategies to reframe the question for better sales.

**Server Says:** "I Can Add Fries for Just \$4?"

**The Tactic:** Hiding a Command in a Question and Getting Personal

Never ask guests yes or no questions...it's way too easy to say no. Instead, make a command but "ask" it. When the server says "I can" they are also getting personal. It's simple to say no to \$4 fries. It's hard to say no to a personal request.

**Server Says:** "You Can Add Fries, Too. Would You Like Sweet Potato, Waffle Cut, or Shoe String Fries?"

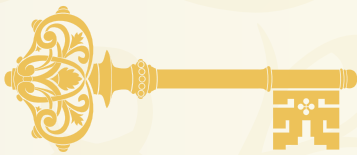
**The Tactic:** The Guest Focuses on the Choice, Not the Yes/No

Another way to avoid the "no"? Give guests options and they'll forget there is even a choice.

**Server Says:** "Our Chef Just Made Fries with Heirloom Potatoes... I've Tried Them...They're Delicious. I Can Add Them for Just \$4?"

**The Tactic:** New Menu Offering and Getting Personal

This is a WIIFM-inspired tactic that hits on a key benefit – great taste – and a personal recommendation.



### TOP SECRET TIP #2:

Incentivize Servers

*Gamify upselling by creating a competition for your servers. Keep it simple. Identify your 3 highest margin menu items, and give the server who sells the most a reward at the end of the night – or the week.*



## THE #1 EASIEST CUSTOMER TO UPSELL: THE INDECISIVE ONE

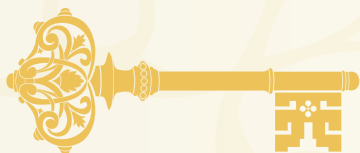
Be the hero. Save an indecisive guest from having to choose.

The indecisive guest is easy to spot. He's the one who changes his drink order 2-3 times. Or, she's the one who keeps the menu out longer than anyone else. In fact, if everyone has set down their menu except for the indecisive one, your server should approach the table and say this (the rest of the table will be relieved).

"Having trouble deciding? I get it...would you like to hear a few of my personal favorites?"

Then, the server should be armed with both a mid-range and high-margin, high-priced menu item. The server should provide the high-priced menu item first. Then, if the guest has sticker shock – you've got back up.

If servers can identify the indecisive one early on in the meal, they can use it to their advantage by proactively suggesting personal favorites at every course up until the dessert.



### TOP SECRET TIP #3:

Servers with Good Taste

*Your waitstaff should taste every item on your menu. That way, when guests ask for recommendations, your server doesn't have to fake it.*





## OVERCOME “I’M TOO FULL FOR DESSERT”

*4 super sweet ways to upsell dessert.*

### **Don’t Even Ask**

Let the desserts speak for themselves. The server quickly places the dessert menus on the table and says “I’ll leave these right here for you. Take your time.” This isn’t rude. In fact, it will appear like the opposite of upselling since there’s no “ask.”

### **Takeout to the Rescue**

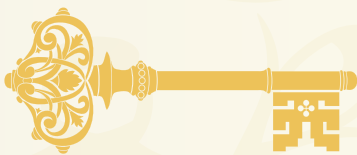
If a guest says they’re too full, acknowledge it. Don’t try to shove food in their face. Say: “I’ve been there, too. I can send you home with a slice of pumpkin cheesecake – our chef rarely makes it, I’d hate for you to miss out!”

### **Gourmet Coffee**

Some guests love a nip of caffeine after dinner, but most worry they’ll stay wired. Offer gourmet coffee drinks like a cinnamon latte but emphasize they can be made with decaf.

### **Use Humor**

Often the guest isn’t really full but is trying to be “good.” Try light humor: “Are you sure don’t want to just look at our dessert menu?” or some other light-hearted temptation comment.



### **TOP SECRET TIP #4:**

Consistency is King

*Train your entire staff on how to upsell – that way your guests can expect a consistently pleasant experience every time they’re with you. Don’t let veteran servers tell you they have their own methods.*



## 4 WAYS YOUR SERVERS ARE DOWN SELLING & HOW TO FIX IT

*Fear not, we've got fast fixes for common server errors.*

### **Fear of Suggesting High-Priced Items**

The intentions are good: the server doesn't want to appear like they're pushing high-priced items. However, guests are often flattered when a server believes they can afford that pricey wine or trendy craft rye. In some cases, they may be so flattered they splurge and treat themselves.

### **Choice Overwhelm**

Choice overwhelm is scientifically proven to shut down a sale. If servers give guests too many options, guests just say "forget it." An example would be offering more than two specials.

Use this principle on your menu, too. Too many options on your dessert menu can create mental havoc and a "I'll just skip it" response from your guests.

**THE PROOF:** In a TED Talk by Sheena Iyengar, she shared a study in which a grocery store sampled 24 types of jam one day, and 6 jams the next day. Only 3% of shoppers ended up buying a jam with 24 types to choose from. Yet, over 30% of shoppers made a purchase with just 6 options.

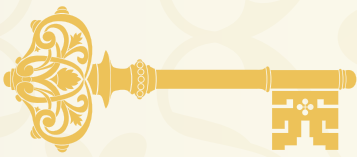
### **Closing the Check Too Early**

Not every guest sticks to the traditional appetizer, entrée, dessert routine. Yet, some servers just bring the check without asking if the meal is done. Train waitstaff to always ask "can I get you anything else?" even if the meal appears to be over. Who knows, your customers may have a craving for one of your priciest whiskeys!



## Overt Selling

This is a no-brainer. Great salesmanship should never be obvious. The single best way to avoid the sleazy salesman vibe? Always put the customer's needs first using WIIFM.



### TOP SECRET TIP #5:

#### Scarcity Sells

*It's a basic psychological response: we want more of things that are hard to get or rare.*

*To move sales of high-margin items, servers can announce to the table that: "there are just a few more porterhouse steak specials, if you're interested let me know... I'll take your order right to the kitchen."*

*The guest feels important – and gets that "rare" steak.*



## 6 SCIENCE-BASED SECRETS OF MENUS THAT UPSELL

*Better upselling starts with smart menu design and pricing.*

### 1. No Dollar Signs

Let's say you have an \$8 martini, how should you write it out on your menu? Never add double zeros. It subconsciously suggests expense (an \$800 martini?). You should also lose the dollar sign. Your best bet? One of these 3 options:

Martini 8-

Martini 8.

Martini 8

Source: <http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/chrpubs/169/>

### 2. Magic Number 9

Customers love the number 9, so you should probably make that martini 9 bucks! In a study of clothing by MIT and University of Chicago researchers, customers bought more of an item when it was priced at \$39 – even compared to \$34.

Source: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023%2FA%3A1023581927405>

### 3. What Makes Cents?

Do you cater to a value-seeking crowd? You'll want to include cents next to your prices as it visually communicates that you're giving a great value. Studies show that .95 and .99 are ideal amounts to convey value. If you serve guests who aspire to luxury, never show cents.

Burger 7.95

Burger 7.99

Source: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0010880401421003?journalCode=cqxa&>

### 4. Digital Upselling

Let technology do the upselling! Digital tablet menus from Buzztime include a built-in upsell engine. Guests are shown customization options like extra cheese, larger portions, and substitution options. The guest builds their perfect meal, you build extra profit.

### 5. Descriptions That Sell

Want to see a 27% increase in sales of an item? Create a great name and description for it. Refer back to WIIFM for tips on writing menu descriptions that sell.

Source: [http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/unmanaged\\_files/descriptivemenulabels-2001.pdf](http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/unmanaged_files/descriptivemenulabels-2001.pdf)

### 6. The Decoy Method

This is one of those menu pricing strategies that may seem manipulative when in fact it's far from it. Give guests a good, better, best option. Many scientific studies show that guests will often go for the middle option or splurge on the best to treat themselves.



## GO FORTH AND UPSELL

Congratulations, you are now an official keeper of the Golden Book of Upselling Secrets for Bars and Restaurants. You may now share these methods and practices with your front-of-the-house apprentices.



# CATCH THE BUZZTIME EFFECT.

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