

## French Fries: The Secret Sales Weapon

Have you ever sat down with a potential new customer and had no clue about him/her? How are you going to fill your lunch hour and actually make a sale with this person when the only thing you can visibly see that you have in common is that you both have hair on your head? In some cases, you don't even have that in common! If you can get through the first five to ten minutes flying conversation solo, have no fear – the French fries you just ordered will be coming shortly to act as your wingman. Yes, I said French fries!

I am by no means a psychology expert or even a researcher, but what I am is a proficient French fry connoisseur. Oh, and also over the last 16 years in hospitality sales and marketing, I have seen all types of customers and colleagues. I have been fortunate to have numerous meals that have not only included my esteemed friends and colleagues, but also French fries. In knowing the personality of each of these colleagues, I thought it would be fun to observe/question how exactly he/she eats French fries and correlate that to his/her personality. It is amazing that in all of the cases, how the person eats fries is a blaringly obvious sign of his/her personality type.

So next time you are eating with a customer (or even on a blind date), pay heed to the art of the French fry indulgence. It might just help you sign that contract by knowing what type of customer you are dealing with! By the way, per Good Housekeeping, here is the “polite way” to eat French fries: <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipes/table-manners/polite-eat-fries-oct01>

**The Cheapskate** – This is the person that doesn't even order his\* own fries, but the first to take one or two off your plate when you are aren't looking. He doesn't want to pay for them, but will find a way to still get his/her fair share. This person is very intelligent, as he knows what he wants, and can use another person to get there.

**The Systematic** – This person likes the fries the same exact way every time and with a certain type of dipping sauce. If by some chance it is not available the same way, he has a back-up plan. When dealing with him, make sure that you have a plan in place to have things a certain way each and every time and try not to deviate from the plan. If you do need to deviate from it, make sure you have a solution that is easily adaptable.

**The Speed Demon** – This is the person that doesn't have time to be sitting there talking to you. He is going to eat as fast as he can shoveling up as many fries in one handful as possible and leave no room for daylight in his/her mouth. The mentality is the faster he completes the meal, the sooner he can get out of there and get on to the other 100 things that are more pressing. Talk quickly to this person and get to the point – you aren't going to have much time to make your pitch.

**The Accountant** – This person picks up three fries at a time and dips politely. Each time he takes fries, it will be three in a nice, neat little bundle. You will need to be very specific with this client. Make sure your x's and o's are all in line.

**The Easy Goer** – This person doesn't care what kind of fries he gets – if they are crisp or soggy or salty/seasoned or not. He is an easy-going person and just handles things as they come. This person will go along with the conversation easily – just make sure that you explain exactly what it is you want or need so this person doesn't just take it as a social hour.

**The Big Dreamer** – This person finds the biggest fry first and eats it. If the fry is too big, he bends it so that he can tackle it at once. He knows what the best result is first and then finds a way to achieve it. If you see someone going for the biggest fry first, know that you are dealing with a big dreamer and someone who is not afraid to immediately attack what he wants.

**The Multi-Tasker** – This person takes a few bites at first and then may or may not come back to the finish the fries. He has numerous things going on at once, and just attacking the fries at one time is out of the ordinary. When you are dealing with this person, make sure to set clear deadlines and expectations because he might have other things that might take precedence to your needs. He will eventually get to you, but you might need to light a small fire to make it faster.

**The Over Achiever**– This person is the one when fries are delivered in a paper bag, she is going to add salt and pepper and then take the bag and shake incessantly until each and every fry is covered. This individual takes every task to the extreme. When you are dealing with this person, make sure that he understands the entire situation first before allowing him to runs loose immediately. This person is so ready to get started; he might not see the whole picture the first time.

**The Organizer** – This person has a defined spot for fries on the plate. He meticulously spreads each fry out and makes sure that the dipping sauce is correctly dispensed. This person is a Type A personality. Make sure that you don't arrive late and get to the point, don't waste time and, by all means, have a plan and a timeline.

**The Splurger** – This person lives a meticulous lifestyle with a deep belief system (in something). Whether that lifestyle is health-conscious, budget-conscious, professionally-driven, etc., this person has deep passion for this belief and has changed his way of life to align everything to this belief. However every once in a while, he will splurge on the "old" way. You will know if you are sitting with a splurger because you will hear comments like, "I can't believe I am actually eating this fry – I haven't had a fry since I started this diet," etc. In dealing with a splurger – if what you are selling is an outside of that lifestyle/belief system, just know that where as nothing is impossible. It is going to be a tough sales hill to climb to get that person to agree with what you are saying.

In watching everyone eat, I have still yet to see someone actually pour the sauce directly on the fries. If you see this, you might be sitting with an alien, so I advise you politely excuse yourself and then run away like there is no tomorrow! Whereas none of the above is scientific data, I hope that scoping the way someone eats his french fries will help you make sales! Happy Eating and Happy Selling!

\*Note – I used "he/his" throughout this article, but french fries know no gender – applicable to both men & women!



About the Author: Chaunsea Keller is Vice President for E-proDirect. She has over 16 years experience in the hospitality sales and marketing field. In her role with E-proDirect, it allows her to see daily interaction between suppliers and planners; therefore, is a good gauge on the meetings industry as a whole. She resides in College Station, TX with her husband and two children.

E-proDirect is a consulting firm for the hospitality and events industry. They provide a variety of products including Email marketing which allows the industry suppliers to reach our database of over 80,000 Meeting Planners and the E-proMeetingApp which is a mobile app which can be customized for any meeting or event and/or for a destination to enhance attendees' experiences while allowing organizations to generate additional revenue.

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