SOP Template: Customer Greeting and Seating Procedures

This SOP details the **customer greeting and seating procedures** to ensure a welcoming and efficient experience for all guests. It covers steps for warmly greeting customers upon arrival, verifying reservations if applicable, assessing seating preferences and requirements, guiding guests to their tables promptly and courteously, and managing seating arrangements to optimize space and service flow. The purpose is to create a positive first impression, enhance customer satisfaction, and maintain smooth restaurant operations.

Purpose

To standardize the customer greeting and seating process, ensuring each guest feels welcome and comfortable from the moment they arrive and enabling efficient service for optimal restaurant operations.

Scope

This SOP applies to all host/hostess and front-of-house staff responsible for greeting and seating guests at the restaurant.

Procedure

1. **Greeting Customers:**
   - Smile and make eye contact as guests enter the establishment.
   - Offer a genuine, friendly verbal greeting (e.g., "Welcome to [Restaurant Name]!" or "Good evening!").

2. **Reservation Verification:**
   - Politely ask if the party has a reservation.
   - If yes, confirm the details (name, time, number of guests) using the reservation system or log.
   - If no reservation, inquire about party size and expected wait times if applicable.

3. **Assessing Preferences/Requirements:**
   - Ask guests about seating preferences (e.g., booth or table, window or quiet area, accessibility needs, high chairs, etc.).
   - Note any special requirements (e.g., allergies, celebrations).

4. **Seating Guests:**
   - Check the current seating chart or POS system to determine available tables.
   - Lead guests to their table promptly and courteously; walk at a comfortable pace.
   - Engage in light conversation if appropriate.

5. **Presenting the Table:**
   - Ensure the table is clean and properly set before seating guests.
   - Pull chairs for guests when appropriate, offer assistance as needed.
   - Hand menus to guests and briefly explain who their server will be.
   - Thank guests and wish them an enjoyable experience.

6. **Managing Waiting Guests:**
   - If there is a wait, provide an estimated wait time and offer guests a place to wait comfortably.
   - Maintain regular communication with waiting guests, updating them on their status as needed.

7. **Optimizing Seating and Service Flow:**
   - Monitor table turnover and communicate with serving staff to manage seating efficiently.
   - Update the seating chart and reservation system in real time to avoid double-seating or long waits.

Responsibilities

- All front-of-house staff: Follow the procedures outlined above for every guest.
- Hosts/hostesses: Ensure accuracy in reservation management and table allocation.
- Management: Provide ongoing training and ensure adequate staffing for guest flow.

Documentation and Tools

- Reservation system or log book
- Up-to-date seating chart
- Guest waitlist tracking system (if applicable)

Review and Improvement

- Regularly review customer feedback for improvements in the greeting and seating process.
- Update this SOP as needed to address operational changes or feedback.