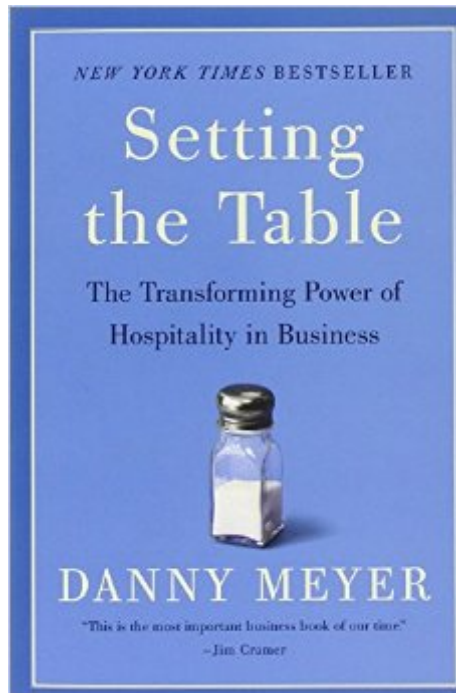


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# Setting The Table: The Transforming Power Of Hospitality In Business



## Synopsis

A landmark, bestselling business book and a fascinating behind-the-scenes history of the creation of Danny's most famous eating establishments, *Setting the Table* is a treasure trove of valuable, innovative insights applicable to any business or organization.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The 2006 Zagat Survey lists Gramercy Tavern as New York's most popular restaurant. (It was also #1 last year.) Union Square Caf  came in second. (As it did last year.) Eleven Madison Park ranked fourteen. (Down one from 2005.) Tabla was eighteen. (Up one from 2005.) Blue Smoke --- unranked in 2005 --- was the 36th most popular restaurant. These Manhattan restaurants were all conceived by one man: Danny Meyer, who has also created the restaurants at The Museum of Modern Art and an outdoor joint called Shake Shack. Most restaurants fail, and quickly; these restaurants have, most of them, been around long enough to qualify as "institutions." If you have ever had the good fortune to sample Danny Meyer's food, you know they are likely to remain so deep into the future. Now Danny Meyer has written a book. It is nominally a memoir about his life in restaurants. But although there are mouth-watering descriptions of great meals, it will be a great tragedy if this book becomes "food porn," devoured by foodies and unknown to the general public. This is a bigger book, and a better book, than that. (Not that there's anything wrong with food porn.) For one thing, it is a business book that should be read --- like: today! --- by anyone whose livelihood involves face-to-face encounters with customers. For another, it is a hands-on, real-world book of practical philosophy that could knock a great deal of sense into those who believe that nice

guys finish last and the only way to get to the top is to kick others off the ladder as you claw your way up. This book obeys the form of memoir, especially in the young Meyer's culinary education --- his writing will remind some readers of A.J.

This book will be of great interest and even greater value if one or more of the following is relevant to you:

1. You have direct and frequent contact with customers.
2. You train and/or supervise those who do.
3. You need to improve your "people skills" in your business and personal relationships.
4. Your organization has problems attracting, hiring, and then keeping the people it needs to prosper.
5. Your organization has problems with others who, for whatever reasons, consistently under-perform.

It is no coincidence that many of those on Fortune magazine's annual list of most admired companies reappear on its annual list of most profitable companies. Moreover, both customers and employees rank "feeling appreciated" among the three most important attributes of satisfaction. Now consider the total cost of a mis-hire or the departure of a peak performer: Estimates vary from six to 18 times the annual salary, including hours and dollars required by the replacement process. Until now, I have said nothing about Danny Meyer nor about the restaurant industry so as to reassure those who read this brief commentary that, although *Setting the Table* does indeed provide interesting information about him and his background, the book's greater value derives (in my opinion) from the lessons he has learned from his successes and failures thus far, both within and beyond the kitchen. One of the most important concepts in this book is hospitality. Here's what Meyer has to say about it: "hospitality is the foundation of my business philosophy. Virtually nothing else is as important as how one is made to feel in any business transaction. Hospitality exists when you believe the other person is on your side.

*Setting the Table* by Danny Meyer provides lots of value for business leaders. I ranked this book five stars based on the value alone. The reader should be apprised that the book is written as a memoir of Mr. Meyer's experience in the restaurant business. As a business leader you should study excellence in your industry and outside of your industry and there are numerous take-aways in *Setting the Table* that can be applied to any business. Here are ten excellent points I took away from Mr. Meyer's book.

1. The Excellence Reflex - "A natural reaction to fix something that isn't right, or to improve something that could be better." The excellent reflex is a natural reaction that some people have and cannot be taught. Meyer trains his leaders how hire those that have it.
2. Employees can be categorized as Overwhelmers, Whelmers, and Underwhelmers. It is easy to identify Underwhelmers and get rid of them. The most dangerous employees are the Whelmers

because "they infuse an organization and its staff with mediocrity...and send a dangerous message to your staff and guests that "average" is acceptable."3. Coaching is correcting with dignity.4. You obtain valuable leadership skills while managing volunteers. It requires you to consistently motivate employees beyond their earnings.5. Create a sense of "shared ownership" with your customers by taking an interest in them and making them feel important. They will view you as a partner instead of a provider.6. ABCD - Always Be Collecting Dots. You should aggressively collect lots of little information about your customer (dots) as they interact with your product or service.

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