

On giving a name at the register to be called when your order is ready

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Shultzzy's Sausage describes itself as “Seattle’s Wurst Restaurant since 1989!” It’s a local hangout for sausage, beer, chili, and advanced dishes like sausage with beer or sausage with chili.

In the early 1990’s, Shultzzy’s expanded to a second location just a few blocks from Microsoft’s main campus in Redmond, at a location known to my circle of friends as *the location of death*.

Many neighborhoods have a location of death: It’s the location where there’s a restaurant that can never manage to stay open. First it’s a gyro restaurant. After a few months the gyro restaurant shuts down and a crêpe restaurant opens in its place. After another few months, the crêpe restaurant closes and a tea shop opens. You get the idea. It’s not that we want the restaurants to fail. It’s just that the location appears to be haunted.

Anyway, we wanted Shultzzy’s to succeed, so we made a point of going there semi-regularly. One evening, we went to the register and placed our orders, and the person behind the counter asked for a name to call when the order was ready.

Sometimes, when we went out to eat as a group and were feeling particularly whimsical, we’d all give the same name (Dave). Each time the name Dave was called, whoever felt lucky went to the counter to pick up the order. If the order was theirs, then they “won.” It was cheap amusement, I admit.

Anyway, at this particular visit to Shultzzy’s, we did not play the Dave game. Each of us just gave our names. Except for Bob, who decided to be a bit of a smart aleck. When the person behind the counter asked, “What’s your name?”, Bob shot back, “What’s *your* name?”

The person behind the counter calmly replied, “Shultzzy.”

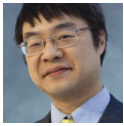
Bob realized that he had just sassed the restaurant’s owner and meekly replied, “My name’s Bob.”

Shultzy was gracious. “Thanks, Bob. I’ll call you when your order’s ready.”

Even though Bob was only in his early 30’s, he was a relative old-timer by Microsoft standards of the early 1990’s. He perhaps should have recognized Shultzy, because Shultzy himself was featured in a full-page Microsoft advertisement a few years earlier touting how a small business uses Microsoft Excel to manage its day-to-day operations.

The location of death took another victim. The Shultzy’s location near Microsoft main campus shut down after a few months. But the reason wasn’t lack of business. Shultzy said that business at the new location was fine. Rather, he came to the conclusion that it was too much work to manage two locations, so he scaled his business back to its original size.

Today’s article is in celebration of Seattle Restaurant Week.



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