



Maximize Your New Startup Restaurant Sales

By: National Restaurant Consultants

A restaurant owner's number one priority should be the marketing and promotion of their business. If your guests don't know who you are and where you're located, you'll never have a chance to show them how great your business is. The trick is to avoid direct competition, fill your unique niche and let your guests know in no uncertain terms that they're special by giving them what they want.

Here are some techniques that restaurant owners and managers can employ to set themselves apart from the competition.

BRAND YOURSELF WITH A GREAT BUSINESS NAME--

The branding of your business is an unwritten guarantee of quality in the eyes of your guest. When making a dining decision, remember that guests have expectations that must be fully delivered upon. Everyone wants to make a good choice when going out to eat, and it makes logical sense to deliver more than what they're expecting. Great food and great fun is a combination that usually results in lines out the door. As such the goal of every operator should be the clear branding of who you are, what you offer and what makes you unique. Your business name should, to a great degree, reflect who and what you are.

ENSURE A COMPLETE EXPERIENCE THAT'S SERVED WITH PASSION--

Offer your guests things they can't easily get anywhere else, served by passionate people. Promoting and serving premium quality and unique products, offering a larger than normal choice of beverages, making sugar free and low carb options available, and staying on top of emerging trends will help set your operation apart from the others. However, your employees are, as they say, "Where the rubber meets the road." Hire passionate people that care about what they do, and that have a real desire to please others is key. A "No hire" is better than a "Bad Hire". Your people don't care about mission statements, profit margins or market position. They want a sense of purpose, a clear goal to shoot for every day, and the recognition of accomplishment. When an employer can successfully offer an employee a sense of purpose and meaning, that employer will quickly outpace the market in share, sales and profits.

MAXIMIZE INCOME BY CREATING ADDITIONAL REVENUE STREAMS--

A restaurant owner must offer the right thing at the right price at the right time in order to maximize revenues. This can include packaged goods to go, selling various retail items, offering carry out and drive through services, value packaged meal deals, food and beverage combos, entrée and dessert specials, seasonally theme-based food items, special kid meals and anything else that your guests want to buy.

A recent study by Bain & Co. revealed that the average business loses more than half of its customer base every four years. In light of these facts, operators should look at selling more than just food and beverage items. Why limit your sales opportunities to just menu items, when at the end of the day, one dollar looks the same as another regardless of where it came from.

OWNER DEDICATION AND ATTENTION TO THE BUSINESS--

More than one-third of all restaurant guests have dietary needs and restaurateurs that fill that niche generally do well. The engagement point between what guests need and the owner's direct and focused attention on those needs results in loyal diners that come in more frequently, and that's key to building sales. Patrons like to see a regular face that cares about them-that's why this is called the hospitality industry. Owners that deliver true hospitality are those that enjoy the rewards of what is commonly described as the most competitive business on earth.

BE UNIQUE AND DIFFERENT--

Don't waste your time trying to block your competition when you can avoid it. Carving your niche in the market and laying leadership claim to that market will clearly set you apart from the other dining options, and can turn a hum-drum restaurant meal into a dining experience. The result of niche marketing is that you stand out from the crowd and because you're offering better quality products in a unique setting, guests see your operation as something special. Niche restaurants are usually the most profitable and those that have market leadership positions must constantly look to further exploit that niche. As Jack Welch notes, "Today's niches are tomorrow's big things". Regardless of how you get there, the objective is clear: To be the restaurant of choice.

LOGIC MARKETING--

After a new restaurant opens, operators usually get caught up with the daily demands of running their business. Take the time long before opening to determine which marketing efforts are worth the time and money. Relevant and interesting menus, excellent signage, holiday promotions, guest e-mail or mailing list, a quality web site, personal relationships with local hotels and related business partners, excellent media contacts, and giving back to your community are all simple basics of marketing your business.

For more information:

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