

Implement Compelling Marketing Ideas to Drive Traffic and Boost Sales



Modern Restaurant Management — While the past two years have been a challenging time in the restaurant industry, there is a light at the end of the tunnel for restaurant owners. Falling Covid-19 numbers and the lifting of mask mandates in many cities is helping give restaurateurs hope for increased traffic this holiday season.

However, restaurant operators are now encountering a new set of challenges. Supply chain issues, high food costs, and labor shortages are cutting profits at restaurants nationwide, the National Restaurant Association reported. At least 95 percent of operators said their restaurant experienced supply delays or shortages of key food or beverage items in recent months, according to a September survey of 4,000 restaurant operators. Supply shortages have also resulted in operators having to change their menus on the fly. Additionally, 91 percent of restaurateurs said their total food costs are higher than they were prior to the pandemic. Finding reliable staff is also a challenge.

With all the challenges on your plate, implementing a robust marketing plan might not be on your radar. However, taking steps to increase your loyal customer base will ensure your restaurant flourishes during this difficult season. Here are a few unique marketing ideas designed to boost customer traffic and develop loyal

customers.

Create a Customer Loyalty Program

Loyalty programs drive repeat traffic by offering discounts based on the number of visits. Having the prospect of a free meal in the future will make customers more likely to choose your restaurant when picking where they eat out.

Host Fun Events to Drive Traffic

Customers are eager to attend fun events, especially post-pandemic. Restaurants that offer special events for customers will generate buzz in the community and drive traffic. Adding music bingo, hosting an evening featuring local fare, or simply offering a holiday special will help set your eatery up for success.

Offer BOGO Deals

Buy-one-get-one deals encourage your customers to introduce your restaurant to their social circle, as well as serve as a great reward for regulars.

Send a Thank You Note

Current technology enables you to keep in touch with customers when they aren't at your restaurant. My company, Our Town America, helps restaurants add loyal customers by targeting new movers. We mail new residents a welcome package complete with a proven offer they redeem at your eatery before they've formed a loyalty to your competitor. As part of our service, we can send those new customers a thank you note after they redeem their gift to encourage them to return for another meal. It's an easy and affordable method for enticing customers to not only visit your establishment one time, but return as a repeat customer.

Social Media Contests

You probably understand the importance of having a social media presence. Social media gives you the opportunity to highlight your fare and engage with diners where they spend their time. In 2020, the average American spent 145 minutes

each day scrolling on social media, reported **Statista**, a provider of market and consumer data. Holding a contest on social media can increase online engagement.

Solicit Feedback

Encouraging customers to write online reviews or simply getting feedback on their experience shows them you value their opinion. On average, 87 percent of people read online reviews before visiting a new business, according to a survey of more than 1,000 people conducted by **BrightLocal**, a marketing firm. Reviews are especially important for restaurants; 93 percent of restaurant customers pay attention to reviews, the survey revealed. In addition, 72 percent of people surveyed wrote a review of a business simply because the establishment requested feedback.

Support Local Businesses

Being a valuable member of the local community impresses diners. Promoting the fact that you buy hamburger buns from a local bakery, serve beer from a nearby brewery or that you are the exclusive pizza restaurant **welcoming locals** tells customers you understand the importance of fostering local resources and supporting other small businesses.

Don't Forget the Basics

In addition to implementing unique marketing ideas to encourage repeat business, there are a few steps every restaurateur should take to create loyal customers and ensure repeat business. Customers return to a restaurant because they received stellar customer service and enjoyed their experience. Make sure your kitchen staff greets customers with a smile, maintains portion sizes and provides the same delicious fare each time. Consistency is key.

Focusing on serving delicious meals and implementing unique marketing ideas can help your business thrive this winter and recover sales lost during the pandemic.

MODERN RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT