

# Why Leading Restaurants Commit to New Mover Marketing



QSR Magazine (July 2019) — New mover marketing is a fantastic way to reach those new residents and begin building a relationship.

Sometimes, being well-known and well-liked can actually work against a restaurant.

That may sound like a crazy statement, particularly since brand recognition is an important aspect to consider when buying a franchise. Restaurant owners, after all, spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase franchises with big-time brand recognition. But when it comes to landing customers who are new to a neighborhood, a big name is often a disadvantage for owners of mainstream restaurant franchises.

When someone moves into a new house or apartment, they usually want to explore their new neighborhood. After a long day of moving, they'll have worked up an appetite and be on the hunt for new, local places to eat. Many times, new movers want to know what's good, trendy and local, rather than settling for the same restaurants they have already been to countless times before. The key is to let the new movers know that, while the brand may be national, the owner is still a local.

Marketing to new movers can turn a big brand from being impersonal to personal. New movers may be searching for local mom-and-pop restaurants; however, that doesn't mean big brands are out of the running. Reaching out to people who have just arrived in town can be an effective way to remind them that the owner of a national franchise is still a vital part of the local community.

In fact, it's something today's movers are craving. In a recent **millennial mover survey**, 80 percent of respondents said they'd love to receive a housewarming gift and more than half (57 percent) said they want to live within walking distance of restaurants. Therefore, any neighborhood restaurant who connects with them first gains a huge advantage.

Also, by welcoming a new mover to the neighborhood, a big-name brand is suddenly no longer something corporate and impersonal. It's a brand that cares enough to reach out to somebody new to the neighborhood. That's presuming the restaurant isn't just mass mailing a coupon to every house and reaching the new people by chance along with everyone else. Targeted, new-resident offers with appealing offers or freebies are key to drawing in this lucrative demographic.

There is more than one big-brand restaurant. Another simple reason to market to new movers is one that is as old as business itself—competition.

Customers have a lot of choices, especially when it comes to food. The restaurant industry, along with the economy, continues to grow. **Sales at restaurants hit \$825 billion in 2018**, according to the National Restaurant Association, **and are projected to reach \$863 billion in the United States by the end of 2019**. There are over a million restaurants in America, and a lot of them have familiar names. Even famous brands need to distinguish themselves from the rest of the pack, simply because the pack is so big.

If a neighborhood is full of popular restaurants with notable name recognition, that familiarity will draw some new residents in the door. But in a well-populated area, there's no guarantee that every new mover will try out each big name-brand dining establishment competing for stomachs and dollars.

People develop habits pretty quickly. While people new to a neighborhood may be looking for quirky and unusual eateries, they often get their morning coffee and breakfast sandwiches at the national restaurant franchises that can give people what they want quickly and efficiently. New movers who also work in the area and

are grabbing food during their lunch hour will quickly start compiling a list of easily accessible favorite spots. When they don't want to cook dinner, and they want something simple and easy, they go to the familiar and comfortable. In all of those cases, nationally recognized franchise restaurants usually fit the bill.

But big brand names have the same problem as the small, mom-and-pop restaurants have; customers develop daily habits that can be hard to break. Restaurants that miss out on getting new movers to come into their business in those first few weeks may lose out on that customer becoming a regular forever—and that's a lot of potential profit missed.

New mover welcome packages should be full of fun, local offers to nearby businesses—included. New mover marketing is a fantastic way to reach those new residents and begin building a relationship.

After all, from a new mover's point of view, if he or she is enjoying that coffee and breakfast sandwich in the morning and getting to work on time, why go somewhere else where things may not go so well? If a new mover loves "Pizza Fridays" with the family and has discovered the ideal pizzeria to pick up something on the way home, why risk upsetting the kids—who are still adjusting to this move—by trying something different?

While part of the excitement of moving is trying new things, what makes people feel at home are rituals that become ingrained in daily life. It's a mistake for owners of a national restaurant chain to assume new movers will simply walk in the door. It's always a good idea to put out a welcome mat and make life-long customers in the process.

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