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## Marketing plan sample for restaurant pdf

Financial security is one of the most common life goals around the world. It's the reason why people save, scrimp and budget their money. But sometimes, they fall behind on their efforts. Whether it's due to a drastic setback or a series of small stumbles, you might find that you're not where you want to be in terms of handling money. While this can be frustrating, it doesn't have to be the end of the world. You can learn to create a financial plan from the bottom up and work toward a more financially sound future. Start by Setting Goals Most people work better when they have something to work toward. Give yourself both short-term and long-term savings goals to serve as motivators. Use a financial plan template to get started if you're unsure where to begin. Do you want to retire on time? Pay off your student debts before you get married? Your individual initiative will be person to you, but make sure they follow the S.M.A.R.T. guidelines. This means they should be specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and timely. Create a Budget Next, you need to understand exactly where your money is going every month. You don't need to use elaborate software to get organized, but try to use a simple financial-planning worksheet to track your income and expenses. Most financial experts recommend following a 50/30/20 budgeting rule. Put simply, this means that 50 percent of your income should go directly toward recurring, time-sensitive needs, including your mortgage, car payment, transportation and similar bills that you pay on a regular basis. From there, you should allocate 30 percent as "fun money" to be used for dining out, subscriptions, entertainment and the like. The remaining 20 percent you'll apply toward saving for the future and paying down debts. Participate in Your 401(k) Does your employer offer a matching 401(k) program? If so, make sure you're taking advantage of it. A main objective of financial planning is to create patterns that allow you to enjoy life away from a full-time career when the time comes. Yes, such a program will affect how much money you have to take home at the end of every month. Yet, the principle of "if you don't see it, you won't miss it" usually applies. It's wise to plan ahead for your retirement and set aside some money now, even if you're decades away from your golden years. Create an Emergency Fund Even if you're barely scraping by, it's important to set aside a little money each month in an emergency fund. Aim to eventually save one month's worth of living expenses so that in the event that an emergency occurs and you no longer have a steady stream of income, you won't go bankrupt. Over time, increase your fund to six month's worth of living expenses if possible. If you need to use your emergency fund, work on building it back up once you have an income stream again. At the same time, work to build up your good credit or reverse any bad credit you have. This can help you receive better interest rates on loans, skip certain security deposits and provide financial freedom. Pay Down Your Riskiest Debt The reality is that some debts are riskier and more harmful than others. The most toxic types are those with the highest interest rates, including credit cards, payday loans and similar debts. Seek to pay these down as quickly as possible so they don't keep working against you. Over time, as you pay down your debts and work toward a more lucrative and comfortable future, you'll find that saving becomes second nature. Seek out free financial planning advice from your local library or community center if you need more guidance. When you make it a practice to keep a close eye on your income and find way to cut wherever possible, you might be surprised at how quickly even the most dire financial circumstance can be reversed. MORE FROM ASKMONKEY.COM In the last section, we described how to use your website, social media, PR, and campaigns to promote your soft opening and your grand opening. In this section, we'll show you how to create a restaurant marketing plan with ideas and strategies to keep up the momentum and promote your restaurant well after it opens its doors. While restaurant marketing is a big topic, there are some general principles and mechanisms you can employ to focus your efforts on strategies that will yield results. Depending on your budget, you'll want to test a few of the restaurant marketing strategies we mention here and repeat them if they're effective. Not all restaurant marketing ideas will be a slam dunk, but you'll need to take some leaps to find out what does and doesn't work for your concept, target market, and location. You'll walk away from this section with: The knowledge you need to write a restaurant marketing plan Restaurant marketing strategies for your website, social media, email, SMS, review sites, and more Traditional restaurant marketing strategies for direct mail, contests, and events A list of festivals and events for your restaurant When you read through this section, have your business plan, budget, and priorities close at hand. Note which restaurant marketing strategies you think will resonate the most based on the research you've already done on your target market and concept. How to Write a Restaurant Marketing Plan So when it comes to drafting your restaurant marketing plan, there's good news: you've sort of already done it with your business plan. For your restaurant marketing plan, you'll just need to pull together relevant pieces from your business plan in a way that will translate into a succinct, actionable restaurant marketing plan. Here's how to do it. Step 1: Solidify your brand. Before you begin brainstorming marketing activities, revisit your brand's mission statement, vision statement, value propositions, and positioning statement. These should already be in your business plan, but it's important to revisit them with a restaurant marketing lens. Here's a reminder of what these components should look like. Mission statement: A mission statement is the reason your restaurant exists. Mission statements are usually one to three sentences and approximately 50 words. They should: Describe your restaurant's value Inspire your customers, staff, and stakeholders Be plausible and realistic Be specific and to the point Vision statement: Your vision statement should answer the question, "What does your restaurant hope to create in the future?" Make it inspirational and motivational. Announce your goals and how you intend to impact your customers and the restaurant industry in the future. Use the future tense. Value propositions: In one sentence, describe the unique value your restaurant provides to customers. Feel free to break down this sentence further into three or four value propositions that are unique to your restaurant. You will use these statements to describe how your restaurant stands out from your competition. Positioning statement: In one sentence, describe how you want competitors, customers, and the rest of the marketplace to perceive you. Step 2: Remind yourself of your target audience. Your target audience was defined based on the the demographics, psychographics, and behaviors of your customer segments. All restaurant marketing strategies you develop should speak to one or more segment of your target market. Run through the following questions for each customer segment: Do they communicate on social media or review sites? What do they do before choosing to dine at a restaurant? Do they prefer to dine in or take out? What kind of events do they enjoy? Are they influenced by coupons or discounts? Feel free to add any concept-specific questions that address the behaviors of your customer segments. You'll want to determine the motivations behind choosing one restaurant over another, so that you can properly speak to your target audiences in ways that will resonate with them. Step 3: Perform a SWOT analysis on your competitors. Refer back to the competitor analysis you completed based on How To Do A Restaurant Competitor Analysis. Choose your top three to five local competitors. For each competitor, perform a SWOT analysis: Strengths: What are your competitors doing right? By understanding what your competitors are doing right, you can do it better. Weaknesses: What could the competitor do better? Learn from your competitors' mistakes by identifying holes in their operations. Opportunities: How can you exploit your competitors' weaknesses and do better? Threats: Do your competitors offer something unique that you can't? Check your competitors' website for the most current promotions and campaigns. Log coupons or freebies, deals, and daily recurring specials. Note special events like live music, karaoke, games night, etc. Visit your competitors' Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and blog. Evaluate their follower numbers and content Step 4: Define your market differentiators. Repeat the SWOT process on your own restaurant, and define your market differentiator in a single statement. This statement should describe your advantage over the competition. Examples of a unique selling point are: lower pricing, unique location, specialty dishes, more engaging service, the atmosphere at your restaurant, or the culture you're creating. Example: Domino's Pizza You get fresh, hot pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less or it's free. Step 5: Craft your elevator pitch. An elevator pitch is how you would describe your restaurant to a stranger in 60 seconds or less. It's important to keep this in mind as you craft the messaging behind promotions later. In your elevator pitch, state: Your restaurant's name and concept The type of cuisine you offer What you do for your target audience How you do it uniquely Example: The Burger Bank is a gourmet burger fast casual restaurant. Our burgers fuse traditional Americana with flavors from around the world. Located in the heart of New York's financial district, Wall Street professionals choose us to satisfy their quick service needs, without sacrificing gourmet taste or breaking the bank. Step 6: Define and prioritize your restaurant marketing objectives. Your restaurant marketing priorities at the beginning of your restaurant's life will change as you develop. In general, however, all restaurant marketing initiatives will serve at least one of these three purposes: Brand optimization (SEO) and how to optimize your website for search engines. To recap, SEO is the practice of optimizing your website for search engine results, particularly Google. Your goal is to rank the highest on search engine page results (SERPs) when people use search terms that are relevant to your restaurant's concept, type of food, and location. There are several ways you can develop your website so that it's optimized for Google's indexing algorithm. Here are some basic best practices that you're thinking about SEO. Content: Don't plagiarize content because Google will know. Use original copy on your website that keeps people browsing. As you develop the content on your site after you open, post relevant videos, images, and links to reputable websites to improve your SEO ranking. Keywords: Research keywords that are relevant to your restaurant. Use Google Keyword Planner to get started. Enter your city and the term "restaurant", click on your product category, and browse the results. Once you've researched relevant keywords, use them (naturally) into your web copy. Title tags: In the backend of your website, you'll see a field for title tags. Title tags are what appear in Google search results, and they should be between 20 and 60 characters long. Be as straightforward as you can when using title tags. For your restaurant's homepage, for example, use your restaurant's name and your location for your title tag. Meta descriptions:Your meta description is the brief description of text below the title tag displayed in search results. In your meta description, summarize your page in 150 characters or less. Use relevant keywords within your description. Backlinks to your website: Note that when a "high authority" website links to your website, your SEO ranking improves. So if you can get media coverage, blog coverage, etc. from other websites that Google has already ranked highly, your website's ranking will also improve. Now that you know the basics of SEO, here are two common best practices to follow when building your website. Responsive design: A website is "responsive" when its design adjusts for smartphones, tablets, and desktops. Responsive design allows users to comfortably view and navigate a webpage on any device, without compromising the page's text or functions. Most website templates and providers now use responsive design tactics. When you're choosing a template for your website, make sure it supports responsive design. Your website as a hub: Your digital restaurant marketing efforts should drive traffic to your website, and your website should include links to all your digital promotional assets. Make sure you include the following assets on your website: A newsletter submission form to capture visitors' email addresses Social media pages Blog Events Promotions Take-out and delivery apps Reservation apps Restaurant Marketing: Content Content marketing uses blog posts, videos, images, and SEO to: Improve your search ranking Reinforce your brand Remind your followers you exist Establish your restaurant as an authority on your concept Your main tool for a healthy content marketing strategy will be a blog. If you enjoy writing, have a great story to tell, or your concept is interesting enough to explore in a blog, content marketing may be a crucial part of your overall marketing strategy. Here's how to create and maintain a great restaurant blog. Host your blog on your website: Hosting your blog on your website can increase your SEO ranking because you're producing more material for search engines to crawl and generate links. Build a content calendar: An ideal posting cadence is three times per week, but we understand this is a lofty goal for a busy restaurateur. The most important thing is to create a content calendar so you can plan content and stick to a regular schedule that you can manage. Generate content that is easy to create: Here are some restaurant marketing ideas for content to get you started: New menu items List articles (ex. 8 Ways to Serve Beer-Roasted Chicken) How-to articles Interviews with your staff History of your cuisine Special events Customer profiles Hack the news: If something in the news relates back to your restaurant, feel free to write about it in your own words. Since the topic is trending, news hacking has the potential to bring more traffic to your site. Distribute the workload: Ask staff and your business partners to write guest blogs, and feature a variety of subject matter experts. Use keywords: Produce traditional and digital marketing in the first place. Use Google Keyword Planner to plan content, and use keywords in a blog post's title, the opening line, and throughout the body of the post. Proofread your content: Re-read your content (out loud helps). Check for spelling and grammatical errors. Repurpose content: Make sure you're featuring your blog content across multiple platforms. For example, if you created a video of your chef explaining how to braise beef, write a blog post about it and post a shorter version on social media. Cross-promote: Share all blog posts social media pages, in your e-newsletter, etc. Restaurant Marketing: Social Media While there are multiple social media platforms you can sign up for, here we'll focus on the big three: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Facebook Use it for: maintaining customer relationships, announcing new items, promoting events and specials, customer service, marketing incentives, and attracting new customers. Post a maximum of two times per day to avoid inundating your audience. Here are some ideas for content to post to Facebook: New menu items Special dishes and menus Events Contests Promotions and coupons Job postings Blog posts Event photos Videos Partner content Media coverage When you post something to Facebook, you've created an organic post. You should know that organic posts by businesses are not served up to followers as much as they were in the past. If you really want to increase reach and engagement on Facebook, you'll need to pay for Facebook advertising. Facebook advertising allows you to: Boost your posts Promote your whole page Advertise an offer Send people to your website Here are some campaigns you can run on Facebook based on which goals you're trying to meet. Brand awareness: Showcase your Facebook ad to as many people as possible. Use an awareness campaign for content that teaches people about your brand or area of expertise. Use this type of campaign for foundational, high-level marketing pieces like a brand video. Store visits: Focus on acquiring customers to your location. Facebook uses your location to target appropriate users. Local awareness: Create brand awareness based on your location. If you're creating high-level content that speaks to your neighborhood, for instance, you may want to use this campaign. Website conversions: Get traffic to your website and encourage people to take an action. Use this campaign to promote subscriptions to your newsletter, event attendance, or promo sign up. Clicks to website: Drive more traffic to your website through a content piece. Or use this campaign to direct users to a third-party review site for instance. Event ads: If you've created an event through your page, promote the ad to users beyond your network. Offer claim ads: Customize a call-to-action that sends users to a sign up form on your website where they can claim a discount code. Form fill ads: Facebook enables you to create a form for users to fill out without making them leave Facebook. The user clicks the ad and is brought to a pop-up. They can then submit the form and redeem their offer, while you get the information they fill out. Page likes: Get more users to like your page. This is especially useful if you're regularly posting content to Facebook and want to generate more reach. Post engagement: Showcase content to broader audiences by expanding the reach of single post. This ad serves the dual purpose of generating more activity (likes and comments) on your posts and exposing your page to new likes. When you run a Facebook ad, you'll need to create an "ad set" – a target audience – based on a set of criteria. Use the target audience you've identified in your marketing plan as a guide to creating your ad sets. When creating ad sets, Facebook gives you the following criteria to filter: Gender Age Location down to the street, neighborhood, city, and country level. Drop a pin, presumably your restaurant's location, to determine the amount of Facebook users you'd like to target within that vicinity. You can target as close as a kilometer from your restaurant. Interests (competitor restaurants, cuisine type, menu items, etc.) You can also exclude certain interest groups and narrow your search by including "must-have" interests. Instagram Use it for: showcasing mouth-watering menu items, cross-promoting content, spreading awareness of your brand and culture, promoting contests and engagement. Instagram is where restaurants shine, with mouth-watering pictures of food. Feel free to post at least once or twice a day to Instagram. Here are some ideas for content to post to Instagram: Images of food (professionally taken) Timelapses (plating meals, creating drinks, the front door on a busy night) Contests Behind the scenes Pictures Customer and partner profiles Videos Event photos Snippets from blog posts Here are some tips to posting high-quality Instagram content. Post great photos: Use professionally curated images or ones that you've taken yourself under great lighting. Download an easy-to-use photo editing app to your phone, such as Snapseed, A Color Story, or VSCO. Share your content about your customers and partners, share community news about your restaurant, and feature images of local entertainment that will be playing at your restaurant. Always respond to comments: The more you engage with your audience, the more Instagram's algorithms will believe your content is relevant. When Instagram perceives your content as relevant, your posts will appear in more feeds. Engage with customers and partners: Don't wait for them to comment on your posts. Stay top of mind by commenting on their posts first. Use Instagram Stories: Instagram allows you to post 15-second videos and photos that are visible to audiences for 24 hours. Feel free to post non-professional, in-the-moment material. Use unique hashtags: Create a hashtag based on the name of your restaurant, a contest, campaign, or promotion. Use the # sign and add the theme or campaign name. By creating a unique hashtag, you're creating a conversation thread that tracks any post using that hashtag. Use niche hashtags: Use hashtags that already exist. They might be geographical, industry related, or event driven. Niche hashtags allow you to join in on a conversation so that potential customers can find you when they search the hashtag. Search #WingWednesday on Instagram to see how niche hashtags work. Use geo-tags: Always geo-tag to your content by tagging the location of your restaurant or the city you're in. Geo-tagged content has a better chance of being featured because Instagram indexes this information when suggesting promoting relevant content to their users. Similar to Facebook, you can create ads on Instagram. Instagram advertising allows you to: Create ads through Facebook: Facebook owns Instagram, therefore the platforms are linked. Create an Instagram ad at the same time as a Facebook ad. Do this to cross-promote a campaign and increase its impact on multiple social media platforms. Before you place the order for your Facebook ad through the Ad Manager, check off Instagram in the "Ad Preview" section. Create Instagram Story ads: Using Facebook's ad manager, upload one photo or a 15-second video. Facebook will serve your Instagram Story ad to relevant audiences in between stories. Note that you can only use 9x16 vertical images and video for Story Ads. Promote a post quickly: Sponsor posts on-the-fly using the Instagram app. Simply click the "Promote" button and select an eligible post that you've already published. Then determine your audience, budget, and the ad duration. Twitter Use it for: Promotions, moment-to-moment updates, customer relationships, and customer service Post to Twitter as much as you'd like! But three or more times daily is a common standard. Note that marketers have been questioning the value of Twitter. With that in mind, we suggest prioritizing other social media platforms over Twitter, especially as you're starting out and you're short on time. Here are some best practices to posting to Twitter: Post links to blog posts, videos, events, and websites Engage by retweeting your partners Search hashtags to participate in conversations Limit hashtags to two hashtags per tweet Restaurant Marketing: Email Marketing Email marketing is an effective way to: Deliver educational information and great stories to people who are interested in you Entice an engaged audience with promotions Promote special events Encourage customer loyalty To get you started, here are a few email platforms you can use to create attracted and effective emails: Mailchimp Constant Contact AWeber Here are some ideas for the types of content you can send via email. Newsletter: Send a monthly newsletter with new menu items, special menus, and upcoming events. Include successful blog posts, videos, and any contests. Offer incentives to your email list to get return business, whether that's a coupon or a promo code. Dedicated email blasts: Send a dedicated, follow-up email to the emails you collected during a contest or event. Do this within a week of receiving their email. Capture their attention – and hopefully their business – while the event or contest is still fresh in their mind. Here are some of the best practices for email marketing: Build up a text message marketing list: AT&T's Mobile Marketing Vibes Moves Here are some ideas for content you can send via SMS: Offers and promotions Waitlist notifications with opt-in asks Here are some SMS marketing best practices. Keep it short: Text messages are limited to 160 characters. Keep your text short. Include a clear call-to-action: Tell customers exactly what you want them to do, whether that's to redeem an offer code or visit your website. Identify your restaurant: Recipients are easily puff by a text from an unknown number. Make it clear that the text is coming from your restaurant. Opt-in messages: Both U.S. and Canadian companies need to obtain permission to send marketing messages. You can do so with an initial text message or a web-based form-fill. It's also a best practice to set expectations by telling contacts the type of material you intend to send them and the frequency. Opt-out messages: Notify the recipient of the ways they can opt-out of communications. It's better to have a contact opt-out before they start receiving messages, rather than send materials that could provoke a negative response toward your brand. Restaurant Marketing: Review Sites You may think of review sites as a place to manage customer complaints, gather intelligence, and showcase your menu. But review sites are also incredibly effective advertising platforms. In fact, review sites have optimized their platforms to give restaurants an opportunity to tap into the diners who are looking at reviews. You'll want to start by claiming your page on all review sites. Once you claim your business page, you should: Add photos: Optimize your page by adding professionally curated photos of favorite dishes and your space. Update information: Update any contact information and ensure your location information is accurate. The majority of people on review sites are looking for contact information. Manage feedback: Both positive and negative reviews require a response. Think of your response as good customer service, so make sure you're cordial when responding to negative reviews. And invite guests who have had a positive experience to leave a review – more reviews mean a higher ranking in results. But don't pay or offer incentives for reviews. You could get suspended from the site if you're found out. Each review site has marketing tools for restaurant owners. Here are some of the most common review site marketing platforms. Yelp for Business Owners Yelp Ads features your restaurant in Yelp search rankings. Target local audiences and place an ad on competitors' business pages. You can also: Restrict competitors from advertising on your page Add a slideshow to your Yelp to take reservations Create a call-to-action button to highlight a promotion Receive account management support Gain access to a videographer who can create a video promo for your Yelp page FourSquare Business FourSquare uses consumer behavior, preferences, and location to advertise your business to the correct target audience. Foursquare ads feature your restaurant at the top of their search page. The ad itself is free, but you pay when a user clicks on your ad. TripAdvisor Premium for Restaurants TripAdvisor comes with three tools beyond its free business page: Storyboard: A tool that combines your best photos, reviews, and tags into a preview of your restaurant. Here's an example. Top 3 Reasons to Eat Here: This feature adds a layer to your TripAdvisor restaurant listing. The layer enables you to showcase your differentiator using photos, reviews, and your own words. Spotlight Favorite Reviews: Pin your best review to the top of your review page, so that the review is the first thing guests see. Zomato for Business Zomato has two advertising models. You can use customized banners on Zomato's website and mobile platform, or you can advertise within the collection of restaurants where you're already featured. Zomato also has widgets you can add to your website. These widgets prompt users to rate your restaurant on Zomato or order from your restaurant on Zomato. OpenTable for Business OpenTable ads: Like other review sites, OpenTable ads make your listing show up higher in search results, across all mobile and web platforms. OpenTable follows a pay per click model, so you only add when diners take action on your ad. The cost is \$5 per seat cover. Gifts: You have the option of sell gift cards through OpenTable. Bonus points on OpenTable, users can collect points and get rewards when they book a table through the platform. OpenTable enables you to hijack this feature. Offer bonus points during slow times to incentivize diners to choose your restaurant over others. Private dining: OpenTable's Private Dining pages are essentially premium pages. They promise to increase your Google SEO and have more space for videos and lengthy descriptions. OpenTable also directly promotes restaurants with private dining pages in their seasonal emails. Restaurant Marketing: Loyalty Programs The goal of a loyalty program is to generate repeat business using incentives and gamification. The benefits of loyalty programs include: Customer retention Higher average check size Customer referrals Better customer communication Here are types of loyalty programs to explore for your restaurant. Punch cards: The concept is simple. When a customer purchases a menu item, they receive a stamp. After they have acquired a specific amount of stamps, they earn a free meal. Apps, however, have made it possible for customers to collect points digitally. POS loyalty programs: A POS system allocates points to guests based on the amount of money they spend or the items they choose. The system can distribute discounts based on the customer's activity. Usually the customer is working towards a points goal that results in a free or discounted meal. Referral programs: Referral programs are a great way to get satisfied customers to POS to engage their networks. When a customer refers a friend to your restaurant, you reward them based on the new business they send you. Food Delivery and Ordering Apps A 2016 statista study found that 26% of people order food online at least once a week, and another 24% order food online three times a week. By having a presence on take-out and delivery sites, you get your brand and your menu in front of a larger audience. Here are some food delivery and ordering apps you should consider being a part of. GrubHub/Seamless/Eat24 (Yelp) Services: Pick-up and delivery Where: Available across major U.S. cities and London, UK. GrubHub is used by 55,000 restaurants. Seamless is available in some large U.S. cities, with a major presence in New York. Differentiators: Use Seamless for professional target markets. Use GrubHub/Eat24 for everyone else, including students. What they do for you: GrubHub and Seamless list your menu items, process orders, and accept payments from customers and deliver your food using a delivery driver. Eat24 does the same, except you're responsible for food delivery. JustEat Services: Pick-up and delivery Where: Available in major Canadian cities What they do for you: List your menu items, process orders, and take card payments from customers. UberEATS Services: Delivery Where: Major cities across North America, South America, and Moscow. What they do for you: List your menu items, process orders, accept card payments from customers, and deliver your food using a delivery driver. ChowNow Services: Online ordering Where: Anywhere What they do for you: ChowNow allows customers to place orders directly through your website, Facebook page, Yelp page, or a customized smartphone app for your restaurant. Unlike other apps, customers don't have to go to a third party site. Traditional Restaurant Marketing Strategies While digital marketing efforts have become the cornerstone of most marketing plans, the power of traditional marketing should not be overlooked. Face-to-face interaction, word of mouth, and endorsements are tried-and-true marketing tactics that still work. Be sure to bolster your digital marketing efforts with traditional marketing as well. This dual strategy makes for well-rounded marketing that leaves no stone unturned. Restaurant Marketing: Contests Contests are an effective way to engage your audience and tap into their networks. They offer entrants a reward in exchange for their submission. Entrants are more willing to give up their contact information and share the contest because they want free stuff. The key to a successful contest is making sure the reward is worth the steps to enter, whether that's giving their email address or tagging friends. There are three subcategories of contests: A skills contest: You choose a winner based on skill or merit. There's no random draw; instead the entrants must submit something that can be judged. For example: a photo contest would require guests to submit pictures for judging. A sweepstakes: You choose a winner at random. Entrants participate for free. A lottery: Entrants must pay a fee in order to participate in the contest. To run a contest, you're responsible for putting together rules and guidelines. These should include: Your restaurant's name Your restaurant's website Your restaurant's address Contest start and end dates How to enter Who qualifies as a winner (minimum age, eligible countries/states etc) How many times entrants can enter Disqualification rules How a winner will be chosen When and how you'll notify the winner that they won Prize and prize value The date the prize must be claimed Also be aware of Facebook and Instagram contest rules. You're responsible for "the lawful operation of that promotion" including: The official rules Offer terms and eligibility requirements Compliance with applicable rules and regulations governing the promotion and all prizes offered A complete release of Facebook by each entrant or participant Acknowledgment that the promotion is in no way sponsored, endorsed or administered by, or associated with, Facebook or Instagram Both sites have some substantial differences in their guidelines. Facebook Promotion Guidelines In essence, you cannot use any of Facebook's features to host a contest. That means you can't say "like/share/tag this post for a chance to win." You'll instead need to use a third-party app or link to an external page. The legalities of Facebook contests can get murky really quickly. Third-party apps make it easier to navigate this process. As a bonus, they also provide you with a set of contest analytics. Here are a few providers: Contests for Pages Heyo Wishpond Instagram Promotion Guidelines Instagram lets you content engagement for contests, but be aware that: "You must not inaccurately tag content or encourage users to inaccurately tag content (don't encourage people to tag themselves in photos if they aren't in the photo)." Here are some contest ideas for Instagram. Photo contest: Ask entrants to take a photo at your restaurant and submit it for a chance to win. Submit a recipe: Feature the winner's recipe on your menu or run it as a special. Nominate a winner: Ask entrants to post a picture of someone they think deserves an exclusive three-course meal and why. This would be a great contest to hold around Valentine's day. Mother's Day or Father's Day, when people are feeling sentimental about their loved ones. Here are some contest best practices for Instagram. Be clear on your goals. If your goal is to get more followers, build a tag or follow request into your contest rules. If your goal is to collect email addresses for your mailing list, have participants submit a form. If your goal is engagement, require entrants to interact as a part of the contest rules. Announce your winner publicly. This shows entrants that you followed the contest rules and didn't cheat. If applicable, showcase the winner receiving their winnings in your restaurant. If their prize was a dinner for two, ask permission to take their picture when they claim their prize. Post it to social media. Restaurant Marketing: Direct Mail Campaigns Direct mail campaigns use your post office's business program to send marketing materials to specific zip/postal codes. While you can't weed out recipients who don't match your target market, you can market to people who may try your restaurant due to proximity alone. To get the most out of your direct mail campaign, include an incentive for the recipient. In the design, make sure you've included your logo, address, phone number, links to social media pages, and your website. Examples: Flyers: a one-page, double-sided paper that features menu items Take-home menu: a printed version of your full menu Invitation: an invitation to an exclusive event for your neighbors Coupons: Deals, promotional codes and special offers Use the following services to distribute your direct mail campaign: Restaurant Marketing: Events By becoming involved at local festivals, you have the opportunity to: Gain brand recognition Connect with local businesses Expand a large group of local consumers to your menu While many events and festivals charge vendor fees, you may be able to make up your costs if you can successfully capture future business from the event. How do you do this? By providing incentives, making personal connections, and capturing festival-goers' email information to ensure future correspondence. You should also be aware of the risks. The success of outdoor events can be compromised by inclement weather. Some events might look enticing on paper, but in actuality fail to attract a relevant audience. With this in mind, approach the event with a clear goal in mind and a way to measure that goal. Your goals could be any of the following: New customers Brand exposure Event revenue Number of meals sold Expanding your email database Ways to measure success include: Use a promo code on coupons specially designed for the event, to track conversions. Convert new event contacts in your email database to researchers. Run an email campaign to that specific list of event attendees. Use a promo code to track conversions. Calculate the revenue made from the event against your vendor costs, food costs, labor costs, and equipment costs. Tips for choosing and attending festivals: Ask an event coordinator about the expected number of attendees. Research past vendors and inquire about their experience. What return on investment did they get? Determine whether your target market will be present. Determine if you need to acquire permits. The festival should provide you with this information. Consult with an insurance broker to make sure you're covered. Ask about the other vendors locations and determine an ideal placement. Create a custom menu using low food cost, high popularity items. Create an inventory list of all the items you'll be selling and the number of orders you anticipate. Determine the event materials you'll need: Portable cooking equipment Promotional materials A banner for your booth and other signage with your logo on it A menu board An email sign up sheet Or, if you don't want to participate in a festival, you can always host your own event. Special events take on many forms. You could celebrate the cultural holidays that match your restaurant's cuisine. Or you could partner with a local charity to raise funds. Especially when running in partnership with other businesses, events have the power to bring in new business. They allow you to interact with your local business community and tap into the network of your business partners. Consider the following event types: Holidays and celebrations (e.g., everything from Mardi Gras to Thanksgiving) Fundraising for a local charity Silent auction (using auction items from neighboring businesses) Your event checklist: Determine the theme of your event and the date you will hold it. Double check that there are no conflicting events in your neighborhood or city on that day. Pitch local partners to get involved. Choose a food item strategy: create hors-d'oeuvres, tapas, or a prix fixe menu. Create invitations: digital, print, or both. Create a registration page. Use a web form that includes a field for email. This way you can send guests specific information closer to the event day. You have the added benefit of obtaining their email information with their reservation. Update the event on your webpage. Create and distribute a press release. Create a blog post about the event. Invite local media and businesses. Include the event in your monthly newsletter. Send out an email dedicated to the event. Promote your event on your social media pages. If necessary, create an advertisement. Pass along promotional material for business partners to distribute to their networks. Create a Facebook event. Determine advertising platforms and budget. Create an swag bag for the event. Include a coupon or discount card as an incentive for event guests to return. City-run events also have huge marketing potential. These events tend to draw large crowds because they're backed by the city and local tourism boards. They also garner a lot of press and consumer attention. Thus, getting a piece of the local event pie can do wonders in getting exposure and generating new businesses for your restaurant. Here are just a few local foodie events for restaurants. Toronto Summerlicious / Winterlicious Hosted by the City of Toronto, Summerlicious is a food festival that runs for two weeks every July. Its counterpart Winterlicious runs for two weeks every January. Each restaurant offers a three-course prix fixe lunch and dinner menu at a set price. The goal of the festival is to expose Torontonians to new restaurants. To be eligible, full service restaurant Be located in the city of Toronto Possess a current Drive Safe Green Pass issued by Ontario Public Health Demonstrate that the average price of a three-course meal on the restaurant's regular lunch and/or dinner menu meets the minimum requirements. Apply here. Every year in Toronto, various cultures celebrate their cuisines in burros around the city. These include: New York City NYC Restaurant Week New York Restaurant Week New York Restaurant Week is an event held twice a year. Participating fine dining restaurants in New York City offer prix fixe lunches and dinners for a set price that is less expensive than their normal menu. You must fill out a registration form, indicating NYC Restaurant Week as your main point of interest. Fill out the form here. Chicago Chicago Restaurant Week Chicago restaurants offer special prix fixe menus starting at \$22 for brunch and lunch, and \$33 or \$44 for dinner. Purchase participation and register here. The cost to participate is between \$350 and \$500. Conclusion Restaurant marketing is what you make of it - while you likely won't be able to implement all of the suggested restaurant marketing strategies we have here, you should be able to choose a few that will be most likely to work for your concept. Restaurant marketing is a constant work in progress. You'll try a few tactics, succeed and fail, and fine tune your overall strategy based on what you've learned. The most important thing to remember about restaurant marketing is to prioritize properly for the budget you have. But don't be afraid to take risks: you may just find that your restaurant shines after testing a marketing tactic that you didn't think would work. Just be aware of your limits so you can take smart risks rather than breaking the bank.









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