

Do What WORKS!



Marketing is important to the success of any business. Whether big or small, restaurant operators that effectively use their limited marketing resources get the best results.

Make sure you are clear about who you are. The reason your best customers buy from you is why you are better than the rest. Make sure you know what they think, because it matters way more than what you think.

Look for emotional reasons why your customers buy from you. People make sense of what they buy with their hearts. You become really strong when you get customer loyalty beyond reason.

“Once you are clear about who you really are you can invest in marketing to tell people about that very thing,” says Rick Duncan, founder of Kameleon Marketing Communications based in Scarborough, Ont. “Do not spend money on marketing unless it is in the strike zone; only spend if you are focusing on why you are great.”

The first thing to do before spending money on marketing is to know what works for your business. Find out where your competitors are marketing; review what they do. Talk to people in your business that are outside of the trade area; share stories to get one step ahead of most of your local competition.

Once you get good advice then choose something and try it. The only way to sort out what works cost effectively is to test and test again.

- Test lots of promotions and tactics to figure out what drives guest counts for you and what does not.
- Calculate what marketing or promotion got you the most margin dollars for the time and cost you put into it.
- Stop doing what does not work well – stop even “okay” promotions to make room for great ones.

How do you know how much to budget for marketing? The answer is as much as you can afford that actually works. If you invest \$500 in marketing and it makes you \$1,000 in profit, then the budget is unlimited. On the other hand, every time you hit a dud you will run out of money and have to wait until you have more.

You can't do everything, so treat your time as a resource as well. How much time can you afford to spend on one marketing effort versus another? Spend your time only on what works.

Sandy Kedey, associate professor in the advertising faculty at OCAD University in Toronto, provides some quick tips on marketing that works.

- Influence the people in your natural trading area to come to your restaurant and make sure you tell them clearly why you are better. Forget the rest.
- If you can't figure out if a marketing plan or a promotion is working, stop doing it.
- Know where your customers do their research before they even set foot in your restaurant. Don't guess, do a survey and ask.
- Find out which events and activities your customers care about and get involved. Customers embrace a business entity involved in their community.
- Figure out how people would find out about you if they didn't know about you. Once you know you have a leg up on the competition.
- Don't shun the reliable 'old school' way of talking to your consumers for a new, shiny bauble. Twitter if it works, but only if it works.



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