

Are Your Suppliers Building You or Killing You?

A bad supplier will kill your business; not quickly, but over time in a slow death-by-a-thousand-cuts kind of way. A great supplier will help you build your business by driving traffic for your business.

Your relationships with your suppliers can help you sort out the best from the rest.

Job One

A supplier's first job is to provide you with the food, beverage and supplies that best fit the value proposition you give your guests. Quality, consistency, safety, on-time complete orders, a fair price; these are the table stakes or cost of entry for all suppliers.

Past the table stakes is the land of the great supplier; the one that builds you. And they have a secret. Their cost to you per case is often not the lowest, but the cost per guest is. Make sense? Read on.

How does a supplier who is not the lowest price from the back door of your restaurant make you into the lower cost/higher profit operator? They do it through guest counts. Great suppliers help drive guest counts higher, making your salaried labour, operating costs, and your rent much lower per guest. These costs can be so much lower that your net profit per guest goes up.

Great Suppliers Focus on Guests

So, how does a great supplier relationship work? It works when your supplier understands your business and what matters to your guests and what does not. A great supplier will read you the way a great server reads a table.

Here are a few questions you can ask yourself today:

1. Do I feel like my supplier is my partner and helps me drive guest counts?
Trust your gut, it is probably right.
2. Does my supplier know what matters in my restaurant?
3. Does my supplier give me ways to be different and provide value to my guests to "wow" them.
4. Does my supplier seem to be more interested in selling me what is on incentive in their world?
5. Are the products my supplier sells me slow to move, difficult to work with in the back of the house and, most telling, do they come back to the kitchen to be cleared into the garbage once the guest leaves?

Good suppliers matter to your guests; guests put cash in your bank. Take the necessary steps today to build solid supplier relationships that will enhance your business.