

Marketing & Advertising

Marketing, advertising, and promotion are often confused. Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services to the consumer. This is viewed as the product planning, pricing, promotion, distribution, and servicing of goods and services needed and desired by consumers.

Advertising is getting the word out -- Marketing is the words or concept -- Promotion is usually a specific offer to sell the product. ***THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF MARKETING IS HAVING A PLAN IN PLACE!***

Listed below is a few tips and suggestions that may help you develop your marketing plan:

1. Develop a marketing budget. (*Important - Stay with-in your budget*).
2. Develop a yearly plan that will include all marketing & advertising components.
3. Research your market - collect information about current customers and those you'd like to secure as new ones.
4. Research your current market conditions - will there be new construction ... will new business be coming to the area? (*Stay in touch with your local chamber for new information*).
5. Investigate your competition and keep a close eye on them. They will be watching you!
6. Develop your own (UPS) Unique selling Proposition.
7. Use audit reports for feedback. (*Comment and Customer cards*).

INTERNAL MARKETING

This is a marketing tool that is overlooked. Repeat business is the heart beat of any restaurant operation. Always look for opportunities to promote your business internally.

Here are a few tips & suggestions that may help you:

1. Keep a message board that welcomes new customers to your restaurant.
2. Have a "secret" night that you give a special discount to all patrons (unannounced). This should be done on a typically slower night.
3. Give "Customer loyalty cards" away that are punched every time they dine at your restaurant.
4. Have customers write down their name, address and email address on the back of guest check. This will accomplish two things first, the names can be used for mailing coupons or flyers and secondly, the names can be used for a drawing to give away a free meal or beverage.
5. Sample some of your new or signature dishes on customers. This can be money well spent. This is a great job for the manager, he or she can take the time to describe the ingredients and how each dish is prepared.
6. Window displays can be used to promote "kids night" or maybe some other school event.
7. In-store flyers can be handed out when a customer is cashing out. *A great way to say thank you.*
8. Table tents can be use all year long changing and promoting different events or holidays.
9. Faxing specials for breakfast and lunch? Have a "sign-up" sheet at the cashier's station for businesses to leave their fax numbers.
10. Entertainment - Have a magician or face painter come on "kid's night". This will help mom & dad enjoy their dinner, while the kids are having fun.

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION (USP)

In helping to determine the concept of your business you may want to find your company's USP - your "unique selling proposition" may be your claim to fame.

Below are a few tips and suggestions that may help you create your USP:

1. Reputation - "We never close! Our Cook is 'in for you, 24 hours a day"
2. Trend awareness - "Selling the coolest shakes in town"
3. Innovation - "We didn't invent the chicken wing. We just made it taste cooler!"

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4. Convenience - "Your one stop restaurant"
5. Experience - "Baking bread for over 50 years"
6. Longevity - "Still grill'n after all these years"
7. Specialty items - "Our original deli fresh sandwiches are the best in town"
8. Speed - "Delivered fresh door to door in 10 minutes"
9. Service - "Service is what sets us apart"
10. Selection - "Largest selection of chicken wings in town"

Remember to consider the following:

- Competition
- Target market
- Your own operation

MENU MARKETING

The menu is your chief marketing tool. The design and presentation of your menu should send a message to your customers in regards to theme, atmosphere and clientele. The menu choices and the frequency of item rotation will either keep your diners coming back or drive them away. The choices for children, vegetarians and the health-conscious will either eliminate or captivate whole demographic groups.

Below is a list of tips and suggestions that may be helpful when using your menu as a marketing tool:

1. Develop signature appetizers
2. Develop signature desserts
3. Offer samplers of desserts and appetizers. *(Show off desserts with a dessert tray or cart).*
4. Create specific side dishes for certain entrée's. - Make sure to list them together on the menu, with the additional prices per side. Make sure these sides are creative & compliment the main dish.
5. Offer vegetarian alternatives. *(Healthy choices).*
6. Include regional or local favorites - "Buffalo" offers chicken wings!
7. Offer free seconds or "All you can eat" concepts. This works well with pasta dishes. Be careful to choose the right entrée's for this offer. *(Offer Soup, Salad & Breadsticks before the main course).*
8. Allow the customer to substitute from a list of sides. *(Customers love to have choices).*
9. Offer "signature" bread choices with salads or entrée's. Offer a unique type of butter. *(Honey butter?)*
10. Create inserts for your menu. They can be used to promote specials and future events.

Marketing your menu is not limited to just food products. You may want to market your liquor or wine lists. Certain restaurants like to create holiday menus to offer their customers. You may want to have an "early bird" menu available. There is also "late-night" or "take-out" menu's you may want to implement. Take a real hard look when creating and changing your menu contents.

Notes:

STAFFING

One of the most important marketing tools that any restaurant has is there wait staff. The servers that represent your restaurant should be employees who love people. These employees should be enthusiastic, bubbly and fun. Remember your success depends a great deal on your staff.

Listed below are a few tips and suggestions that KFS believes will help you market your establishment and be able to offer more in-house advertising by hiring and training a staff that has the energy and personality which is needed to have a successful food and beverage operation:

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1. Hire a host or hostess that is more than just a greeter and seater. Finding a great host can some times be a rare find. A great host or hostess starts the whole dining experience off on the right foot by taking initiative (taking drink orders, bringing water, booster seats etc...) and anticipating the customers' needs.
2. Train your staff to sell. Make sure that you are constantly training your staff in the business of "up-selling" the menu. Ask your KFS representative for more information on "up-selling".
3. Keep staff informed have a 5-10 minute pre-shift meeting daily. Every day gather the staff before their shift and update them on any specials, drink specials or featured or 86'd items for the day. Always include words of encouragement and a few tips for improvement.
4. Advertise with buttons have your staff wear buttons with featured drink specials or appetizers.
5. Have a board in the break room or kitchen with messages or dates posted of upcoming events and specials that the restaurant may be having. Keep the staff well informed.
6. Implement an employee-incentive program. Employees like their guests, like to be recognized. Consider an incentive program that may track compliments of servers. Reward them with a gift certificate or a day off with pay. (This really works). Make sure all servers have name tags and are worn at all times. Customers can relate better and will communicate with the server if they know who they are talking to. This gives a much more personable touch to the business.
7. Always say "Thank you", "Welcome", "Good night" and "Stop back again" to every customer that walks through your door.

Notes:

THE COMPETITION ... STAY ONE STEP AHEAD!

Take an objective look at how well your establishment is doing. Evaluating your restaurant from time to time is important when "sizing-up" against your competition.

The following options should be considered when evaluating your performance:

1. The use of a "mystery shopper" will help make sure that your customer is getting the best possible service that your establishment has to offer. Consult your KFS representative for more information on conducting a "mystery shopper" evaluation for your establishment.
2. Utilize e-mail or telephone surveys. If you have your customers e-mail or phone numbers from past drawings, comment cards or reservations you could use this valuable information to evaluate the service they received on their last visit.
3. Suggestion box usage - Many establishments have a suggestion box in place but the fact is that many customers' suggestions go unnoticed. Don't let that happen. When a customer fills out a suggestion card make sure that they include their name and phone number. This way when the box is checked by the manager or owner EVERY week you can give the customer a follow-up return call and further discuss the suggestion that was made. This will give the customer the impression that you do care of what he or she has to say.
4. Provide hospitality and not just service. There is a big difference and your customer knows it!
5. Keep track of repeat customers. Know what their favorite drink is and have it ready so they do not even have to ask for it. This also follows over to the dining room. *(Some customers for example prefer to have the same cup of soup before each meal) Remember guest's preferences.*
6. Think of your guests as family or close friends. The restaurant business is based on such hospitality. Remember your customers likes and dislikes. You may wish to keep small notes about your regular guest's preferences. DO NOT PRY FOR INFORMATION. A customer may also wish to be left alone during their dinner. Give them what they want.
7. Make sure your staff can handle complaints better than the competition. Turn a negative situation into a positive one. *(Provide refunds before guests "ask" for them, offer a complimentary meal if needed) Active management!*

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DISCOUNT & COUPONS

The use of discounts should always be used sparingly. Remember this rule it is very important. While it will challenge your competition it could also very well weaken your overall pricing structure. Discounts work if done wisely.

Below are a few tips and suggestions for using discounts:

1. Offer discounts to special groups, this is a good way to entice a specific audience to your establishment. This is a great idea especially if you are located near a manufacturing area.
2. Create your own special coupon to offer a "good meal deal". This may include \$5.00 off the total check or purchase one meal and get a second meal at half price. You could also offer a free dessert or appetizer. *Get creative!*
3. Offer discounts only during weaker times of the day or week. Maybe this could be seen in the form of a percentage off or on only certain meals for a couple of hours.
4. Offer "mystery" discount envelopes for a little excitement in the restaurant. When the server gives the check to the customer they will receive a "mystery" envelope to open and see what kind of "mystery" discount they receive.
5. Offer the use of "Bounce Back" coupons. These certificates are given to the customer to be used on the future visits. This really works well on a customer's first visit to your restaurant.
6. Accept your competitor's coupons. An inexpensive and perhaps sneakier way to steal your competitors customers. This will also allow you to see what type of coupons are redeemed and are typically being used most frequently.
7. If you serve alcohol or wine try giving a free drink away to the bar at "spot" times during the day. Make sure you vary the "spot" time every day so your customers won't be able to plan their visit!
8. Partner with your local movie theater. Give a discount when a customer shows a current movie ticket stub. Work a deal with your local cinema telling them that you will post current movies and times on the tables.
9. Track all coupons and discounts that you give away so you will be able to see what works, when it works and what type of business you are receiving from the coupons. *(IMPORTANT)*.

Notes:

PROMOTING THE RESTAURANT

Positive word-of-mouth is still the best marketing and advertising there is, without question. Great word-of-mouth comes from guests having something great to talk about and then sharing this effectively. Guests will not talk about you unless they are thinking about you. Remember you want them thinking about you in the right way, which means you have to educate your customers on why they come to you. For this you must create points of difference between you and your competitors.

Below is a good list to start a word of mouth program:

REMEMBER THE WINNING FORMULA:

Good Food + Extraordinary Service = Priceless Word-Of-Mouth Marketing

1. Inform and educate your customers. *(Ask your KFS for details)*.
2. Teach the guest to become a salesperson for your restaurant. *(Great Service / Great Food)*.
3. Always give the guest a reason to return.
4. Create your service to be unique and personal.
5. Distinguish your business from the competition.
6. Offer exceptional service.
7. Know your customers and what they like. *(IMPORTANT)*.
8. Accept reservations.
9. Utilize "Happy Hours" this is a prime time for captive marketing.
10. Offer time limits for lunch. (Served in 20 minutes or it's free) **BE PREPARED!**
11. Offer lunch time delivery for a certain area.
12. Fax or email lunch specials to area businesses *(Give a discount if 5 or more order)*.
13. Start a birthday club.

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14. Offer private dining rooms.
15. The use of a message board to announce special occasions or a customer's anniversary.
16. Make souvenirs available.
17. Have a limo service that is available to cater to your guests.
18. Offer a nightly "free-meal" drawing on slower nights for customers that dine that evening.
19. Give away a private dinner for two. *(If available).*
20. Have a weekly business card drawing for lunch or dinner.
21. Hold a customer-idea contest.
22. Have an adult "Easter egg hunt" (open a plastic egg when checking out").
23. Hold children's contest's (coloring, guessing, trivia's, etc...) Give the kid's real prizes. They don't really care about a free meal or a discount.
24. Start a food festival.
25. Try a variety of entertainment. Some play for free!
26. Celebrate your restaurants anniversary.
27. Have a customer or community appreciation night. *(Make sure the newspapers get informed).*
28. Hold an invite-only taste testing.
29. Have a global food festival.
30. Let your restaurant hold and annual "Cook-Off" contest.
31. Join the discount coupon book that your local school or church may have during the year.
32. Donate some product during the year to local community functions. Be careful and make sure that you keep track of these items. You may want to hand pick the way you donate during the year. This can get out of control very fast.
33. Pick a special event *(Super bowl, St. Patty's Day)*. Promote this for about 1-2 months before the event. Give customers discounts for the big day every time they eat prior to the special event.
34. Have a live remote with the local radio station. Provide prizes for contests. *(The radio station will usually have prizes to give away also).*
35. Get some positive media attention by helping a few people in your town that have been hit with a crisis. *(This is nice to do around Christmas time).*
36. Hold a canned food drive. This should get your restaurant some good press.

Notes:

KIDS, PARENTS & FAMILIES

Having the entire family dining together is a common occurrence these days. If you don't create an amazing experience for not only mom and dad but for the twelve and under crowd, you won't get their vote! How do you make sure that the kids are campaigning for you?

KFS has a few tips and suggestions that may be helpful to you:

1. Always have a children's menu in place. Without one the parents may feel forced into ordering a meal that their children may not eat and definitely will not finish.
2. Use smaller versions of adult entrée's for children.
3. Free kid's meal with the purchase of an adult entrée.
4. Allow the kid's to order for themselves. *(Keep a parent in eye contact for approval).*
5. Kid's love small gifts. *(Have a chest of treasures for the kids).*
6. Create a game room or play area for the children. The parents will love this. It gives them a little break to enjoy their food. Keep this area safe and secure.
7. Create family packs. This is great for when the family cannot come to the restaurant.
8. Have a family night. This works great for a Monday & Tuesday night.
9. Hire a "Kid Wrangler" This person can dress like a clown or take the kids on a mini tour of the kitchen or make balloon figures. This could be a nice touch on busy nights.

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10. Create a Restaurant "Mascot" try to stay in the theme of your restaurant.
11. Add a fish tank to the kids "dining room" Where they can have coloring contests and activities.

MARKETING THROUGH YOUR SCHOOLS

Involving your local schools is an excellent way of marketing your restaurant in the community and it is also great fun!

Listed below are tips and suggestion that KFS believes will help your operation get started:

1. Consider having a "cooking show" at the school. Get the teachers involved.
2. Sponsor school activities, sports teams, academic programs etc...
3. Reward good grades. Promote this by contacting the schools or distributing gift certificates.
4. Participate in coupon fund-raisers. *(They usually run all year long).*

Notes:

EXTERNAL MARKETING

External marketing is basically the use of outside advertising such as radio, newspapers, T.V., billboards, etc... If you choose to use external advertising be sure you fully understand and are aware of what you will be getting for your advertising dollar.

Below is a list of tips and suggestions that may help you when making decisions about external marketing & advertising:

1. Advertise all the time. Even if business is steady and you're happy with your current profit share, you should never let up on your advertising. Many businesses make the mistake of stopping their advertising when business is good. Keep in mind that today's ad is really generating your business for the next six months. By keeping your business in the minds of potential customers will help you maintain the momentum for long term business.
2. Always follow the KISS principle - "*Keep It Simple Stupid*" - In a nutshell you want to keep your message short and to the point so the customer understands exactly what you are trying to drive home.
3. Choose an appropriate medium - This decision is decided by two factors budget and audience. Make a list of the clientele that you want to attract with a certain ad and then how much you want to spend on that type of ad. *(T.V., newspaper etc...).*
4. Three Mile Rule - When you are planning your advertising remember that a majority of your customers will come to you from a three-mile radius.
5. Advertising Accountability - Make sure you are getting the most results for your dollar. Ask your customers if they heard your radio ad or have seen the T.V. ad. If they haven't then stop the ad and try other avenues of advertising.
6. Develop a logo - A great way to give your restaurant a little personality. An inexpensive way to create a logo is to use a local artist. *(Let them display their art work in you're restaurant).*
7. Develop a catchy tag line - Remember "Where's the Beef?"

Notes:

ADVERTISING SPECIFICS

The ideas, tips and suggestions listed below will help you make the most of those valuable external marketing dollars:

1. List the business in the phone directories - A great way to catch tourists looking for something different. At the least you should have you're business listed in the white pages.
2. The use of brochures - A brochure with pictures and text can be produced inexpensively on most desktop computers. These brochures could be left out at gas stations, doctor's offices, post offices or any place where people have to wait. Make sure you include the hours of operation.

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3. Billboards are effective if they are placed close to your business. You can also give directions like "Turn right at next light" if the sign is close enough to business. These are costly and usually have to be bought for a min. of 3-6 months. Be sure they will be cost effective for business.
4. List in business directories - Businesses may be looking for a place to have a lunch or dinner meeting.
5. Become good friends with your local visitor's bureau - Display you're materials with other local area attractions. There is a good chance that tourists have already contacted them.
6. Flyers - Flyers are cheap and easy to produce. Use them to announce any special event that you may be having in the future or to introduce a new item.
7. Advertise in school and college newspapers - You may be surprised by the return you will get if you try this way of advertising. *(Providing you have these with-in a minimum driving distance).*
8. Place ads near ATM's if possible there is a nice flow of traffic that passes through these areas.
9. Advertise on movie slides if possible.
10. Print some endorsements from area "celebrities" *(with permission)* - Mayor's, Teachers, Local reporters. Messages could be printed at the bottom of your ad in the local paper prior to a holiday such as Mother's Day.
11. Use paycheck stuffers - Place coupons or discounts in paychecks *(with permission)*. This is a nice time to advertise when a potential customer is feeling good and upbeat.

Notes:

ADVERTISING & MARKETING TECHNOLOGY

Development in external marketing has been the rise of the world wide web and the placement of using web sites to market your business.

If you are already using or are looking for some tips and suggestions KFS has listed below a few ideas that help in getting started:

1. Create a web site - Since your primary goal won't be to conduct business on the internet, you won't have to be complicated. Start out by providing your restaurants background, maybe some photos of your food, directions to your restaurant and contact information. Be sure to update web information. Keep an eye on recent online reviews.
2. Once you have your web site submit your site to search engines so potential customers can see it. If you do it yourself just go to a search engine site (Yahoo?) and look for their web site submission section.
3. Publish articles on line - The use of e-zines (electronic magazines) or a newsletter is one way of getting your business a little more publicity.

Listed below are some other Technology Tips & Suggestions that may be useful:

1. Have closed competitors calls forwarded to your business - If you contact your local phone company you can request that the calls to their number be forwarded to your business.
2. Provide pre-recorded messages for customers on hold. Describe the specials for the evening until a staff member can get back to them.
3. Fax or email daily /nightly specials - Fax to only your local businesses that are only 5 minutes away. Make sure you get permission before you start faxing.

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