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RESTAURANT MARKETING

Effective restaurant marketing is not easy. It takes a lot of careful research, analysis and testing. A restaurant marketing plan is a plan for success. A restaurant marketing plan has to cover much more than the 4P's taught in marketing. Great marketing is about solid operational execution, effective positioning and the cumulative results of marketing. If a restaurant marketing plan is allocating a large percentage of marketing budget on print and broadcast advertising to gain new business, it is not effective. Up to 90% of restaurant marketing budgets are spent against new trial – getting a new customer to visit for the first time. This is the least effective way to spend money.

There has been lots of hype over the last few years about branding. A brand is a promise. It's what customers, employees (Internal Customers), vendors, the media and all other key constituents come to expect in dealing with a restaurant. Brand-building is closing the gap between what the owner of the restaurant promises and what the owner delivers.

Positioning is an underleveraged restaurant marketing component. It is the place held in the customers' mind relative to the competition (the cheaper choice, the higher quality choice, etc). Effective positioning involves incorporation of Unique Selling Proposition (U.S.P.). The USP is the one thing that only the owner can claim. It is a point of differentiation that the competition either cannot or does not claim. An example is Burger King versus McDonald's. If Burger King can convince the customers that a flame-broiled burger tastes better than a fried burger, they have won the war because McDonald's will never go into all of its stores.

Restaurant marketing does not happen in a vacuum. Effective restaurant marketing must be built on a foundation of fact and knowledge about competition, customers, internal customers, financial history, marketing history, the industry, and outside forces that will impact the business. It's a lot to worry about, but restaurant marketing has to factor these considerations into the overall strategy.

Every six to twelve months, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of menu. This will include profitability analysis and competitive menu analysis. Each point of menu should be relevant, profitable, fresh, be well-performed.

Marketing, human resources, operations and training are inextricably connected. You have heard before that great marketing will just kill a bad operation faster. Training is a vital component of restaurant marketing. Training will have to go beyond just employee orientation. It is important to have an ongoing program that constantly improves and evolves staff competencies. It is also a good idea to include a restaurant marketing component in training program to have “a staff of ambassadors” to help the sales-building efforts.

How much should we spend on marketing your restaurant?

There are several rules of ratios in the restaurant industry and there are some for restaurant marketing as well. A typical restaurant should allocate 3%-6% of sales to marketing. It's also very useful to allocate this money proportionally to sales volume. One of the most common marketing mistakes is not spending money when business is good.

Nowadays McDonald's offers a prima example of how marketing can help a firm to achieve its goals.

Effective marketing strategy contributes greatly to success. The lack of it can doom a business to failure. Marketing firmly links the company to customers. Those activities, all part of marketing, are based on a tried-and-true idea: *give people what they want* (speedy service, a simple menu, consistent quality, good value).