



Marketing That Pays

Most restaurant owners focus on the bottom line. Cost cutting, portion control and proper scheduling are the keys to turning pennies into dollars. Those of us with a marketing background tend to focus on the "sales cures all" mantra. In actuality, you need both to maximize the top and bottom lines.

Here are a few marketing ideas that will thrill any cost-cutting restaurant owner. Back before there was money, barter was the currency. I needed ten chickens and you needed a goat. We swapped and everybody was happy. Today, many media outlets will take full or partial payment in trade for your gift certificates.


You benefit three ways. First, the food certificates you give in exchange for advertising cost you less than 50 cents on the dollar. Consequently, you've just saved 50 percent on your advertising.

Secondly, your advertising vendors will use your certificates to entertain their cli-

ents. Now they are marketing for you. No telling how many new guests will turn into regular diners.

Thirdly, and my least favorite, some of these barter certificates will get lost or go unredeemed.

Let's focus on leveraging your marketing. Imagine non-competing businesses in your area paying you for the privilege of gaining access to your loyal customers. Several of my clients are masters of this tactic. Cowboy Sharkies throws monthly customer events and sells sponsorships. Sponsors get a table at the event and mention in all marketing including email, four walls and print. They end up with about five thousand dollars of sponsorship before the event even starts. Another client sells ads in his customer newsletter.


Use these ideas and get your marketing to start paying you some bigger dividends. 

By Michael Attias

Put It To Work

New employees bring with them an inventory of knowledge and skills, education and experience. To train them effectively, you need to find out what they already know, and what knowledge they need but don't yet possess.

To conduct a training needs analysis, begin by asking these questions:

- What knowledge does this person need to aid in the development of a new skill?
- What will it cost if I don't train on that skill?
- Do I have a personal bias about this particular skill or knowledge I'm requiring? Do my guests, employees or others really consider it unimportant? In other words, is it really a need-to-know skill?
- Will the behaviors I want to modify enhance my employees' interaction with my guests and co-workers?
- Will the skills positively affect the quality of my establishment?
- Will the skills improve my ability to recruit and retain employees? 

Role-Play: Hot Drinks for Hot Days

Think fun this summer with drinks that delight guests and celebrate summer. Train servers to sell the drink when describing it and watch sales sizzle.

Server: It's such a warm day. Can I bring you a glass of cold wine or maybe a margarita?

Guest: I'm kind of in the mood for something different.

Server: We have a Watermelon Kiwi Martini that's on special tonight. It's blended with seedless watermelon and fresh kiwi and then mixed with chilled Absolut. We serve it in a frosted glass with fresh mint. It's wonderful!

Guest: It sounds great. Thanks!

Guest 2: I don't really like vodka, but the fruit sounds good.

Server: We also make a Tequila Refresca. It's a lighter, breezier cousin of the margarita with gold tequila, a dash of Capari, a splash of grapefruit soda and a garnish of fresh pineapple, grapefruit and lime. It's delicious!

Guest 2: Let's do it! 

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