

What's The MOST Important Thing You Need To Know About Restaurant Marketing?

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I can't blame you if this article caught your eye. There are many things that support and build upon your core marketing; like knowing who your target audience is and what motivates them. There is one thing (no matter what you are selling) you must know to make your marketing successful. If you do nothing else but implement this one thing into your marketing, you will fill your restaurant and sell more food and drinks. Interested? Then read on.

What I have discovered is that when it comes to ANY marketing campaign, there is one question, when correctly answered, which always works. It's what we all ask before we make a decision to buy something or use someone's services. It even matters with where we eat. You most likely ask it yourself, consciously or unconsciously. Yes it's basic human nature for all of us to ask this one question.

After years (actually decades) of being in the marketing business, I still find that the success of any campaign remains dependent on this key element. Because, even with today's faster pace, busy lives and ease of communication, the success of any marketing campaign is still tied to answering this one question correctly. It hasn't changed. Yes, when you unlock the answer it scores more times than Michael Jordan. It results in an increased number of patrons, food being enjoyed and revenue numbers going up.

Okay, so what's the MOST important thing to know about restaurant marketing? What's the one thing that always works? Simply this: successfully answering the consumer's question: **"What's in it for me?"** Ironically, it's also often the most misunderstood aspect of many marketing campaigns. Yet it is the one thing we all do when we are on the consumer's side of the deal.

Therefore, what the best marketers do is they develop a successful marketing campaign that asks and answers this essential question clearly. A failed marketing campaign is one that does not increase sales and thus did not correctly address this key message to its consumers. But, here's the good news, you can do it yourself. It's really quite easy.

"How can that be easy?" You are probably asking. It's easy because you already have the answer. Think about it the next time you read a magazine, go shopping or surf the internet. As you look at an item, you'll find yourself asking the question: "How will I benefit from choosing this service or product?" In other words... "What's in it for me?"

If it's a car, you might think... "When I get that Porsche, I'll feel really successful. My friends might be envious. Yes, it's always been my dream to own a Porsche. After all there really is "No Substitute."

Or you might be picturing yourself gliding down your street feeling the warm breeze touching your face as you turn into your driveway with the top down...and that thought alone just makes you smile.

The product (in this case Porsche's Boxster sports car) has successfully answered your "What's in it for me?" question. Thus, their answer is prestige, success, or maybe excitement. But, there's no doubt they have conveyed to you "What you what's in it for me?" in their marketing messages and consistent branding statement.

You see, Porsche isn't selling an automobile that just takes you from point A to point B. That would just be expensive transportation. What they are selling you is what you want to feel. That's what 'drives' buyers (pardon the pun) to buy a car or anything else. Driving a sports car that you believe is the a true sign of success coupled with feeling like you're a little bit of a risk taker, feels good, doesn't it? It certainly does.

Now here's where you will discover an "Aha" moment. Learn to use this exercise and you will know how to market your restaurant, sell more food and beverages and get your name known in a community.

Discovering Marketing Success

STEP 1: Write down what type of dining experience you are selling. Whatever you are marketing; write it down.

STEP 2: Now in a couple sentences describe your marketing objective.

STEP 3: What's its brand name or identity?

STEP 4: What slogan does it have or fall under? For example, in the case of Porsche...There is No Substitute.

STEP 5: Describe why people would want to dine at your restaurant. Write as if you were placing a classified ad to sell this item for attracting potential buyers. Bullet point its most important selling features from the patron's point of view.

Now, picture yourself at your restaurant having a conversation with a good friend. Sincerely visualize meeting with the friend. Now, think about telling her, word for word what you wrote down in the steps above and think how your friend would respond. Do you think she would be excited or interested in your message?

If you cringe and say, "I wouldn't talk to my friend that way." Consider your wording. Does it sound like 'salesman-eeze' or is it just too impersonal. In other words; if you're heavy selling, she's not buying. If this is the case, go back through the five steps and rewrite them in a way you would talk to that good friend.

Now let's check if your marketing is too "me" oriented rather than "you" oriented. Nobody likes the boring friend that always talks about themselves. Marketing is no different. Remember, nobody likes to be sold, but we all like to buy.

So, the next thing you want to check is what I call the "Me vs. You" factor. You will want to make sure the "You" factor far outweighs the "Me." Here's how to discover this. Imagine you are at the same meeting with your good friend. But, this time, she offers the product or service you mentioned above.

(Note: Some people find this exercise easier to do with a friend. And if you have a significant other or friend that will role play this scenario with you; it is even more revealing and certainly a lot easier.)

If when you hear or think about your friend telling you the answers to the five steps above, you feel like "it's all about her," then there is too much "Me" in your marketing. It's time to put more "You" into it. If, on the other hand, you feel like your friend is talking directly to you and that there is something in his product or service that benefits you, then you have something.

Use this process before you place another advertisement, print literature, write a direct mail piece or develop your website. Emotion, imagery, and painting a picture that either helps or inspires people is what works. If you do nothing else, direct your marketing so that "you" would want to buy it and your sales will soar.

Now, that's something you can take to the bank!

"Why not go out on a limb? Isn't that where the fruit is?"

- Frank Scully
