



The Ultimate Guide to

Running a Restaurant

This ultimate guide will provide you with the tools and knowledge you need to succeed as a restauranteur, from pre-launch to actually running your establishment.



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Introduction

From the outside looking in, owning and running a restaurant seems like a fun time. How hard can it be, right? Wrong.

Nearly 60 percent of new restaurants will fail within their first 3 years. 80 percent will close within their first 5¹.

So, when it comes to the ones that make it past the first 5 years, what are they doing right and what steps can you take to ensure that you're on the path to success?

This ultimate guide will provide you with the tools and knowledge you need to succeed as a restauranteur, from pre-launch to actually running your establishment.

LET'S GET STARTED >

¹ <https://news.osu.edu/restaurant-failure-rate-much-lower-than-commonly-assumed-study-finds/>

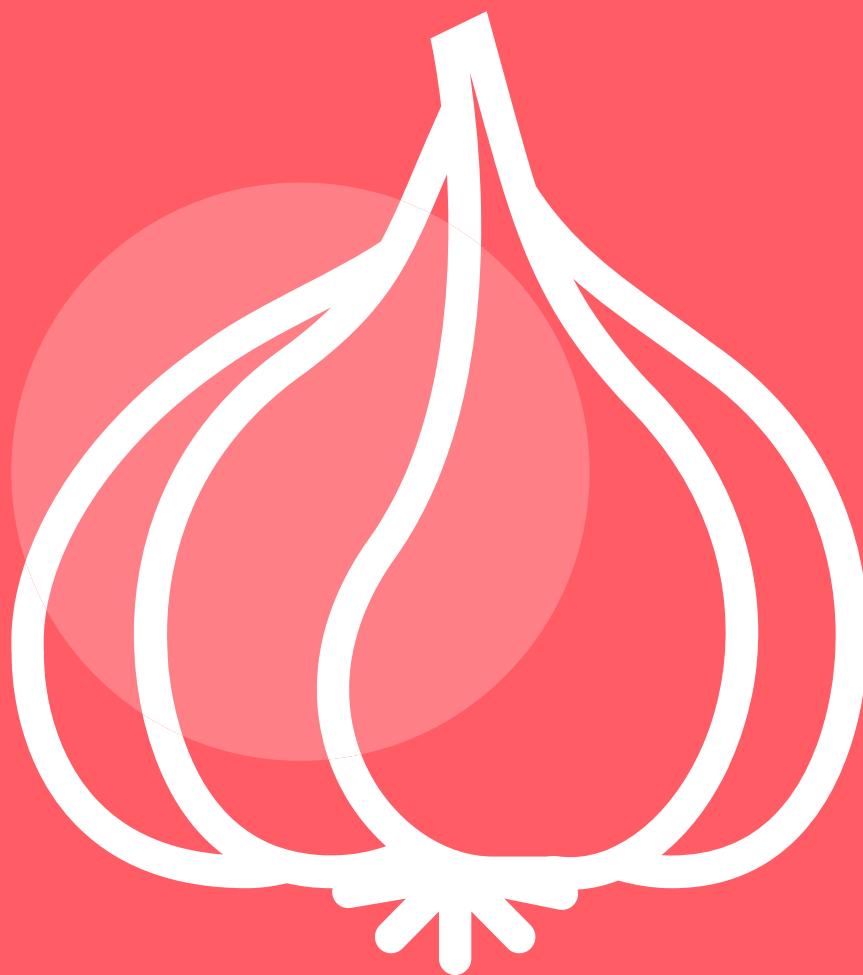
CHAPTER 1

Restaurant budgeting: Getting your numbers right

Written by: Chris Arnett

In this chapter:

- Why restaurant budgeting is so important
- What should be involved in budget planning
- How to create your budget, even if you're starting from scratch





CHAPTER 1

Restaurant budgeting: Getting your numbers right

Whether you're opening your dream restaurant from scratch, or taking over an existing establishment, what's the one thing that can make or break your restaurateur dreams?

Your Budget.

It will dictate what's possible for your restaurant (and what's not).

Having a well-researched, strategically outlined budget is imperative for any restaurant, new or old. And with all the responsibilities already involved in running an eatery — greeting guests, writing specials, managing payroll, maintaining kitchen equipment — administrative tasks like budgeting are easy to let fall by the wayside.

Don't fall into that trap. Budget planning is the savvy restaurateur's first step towards success and profit. Here's how.

Why Is Restaurant Budget Planning Important?

Ever tried to take a long road trip without a map? Of course not. That's crazy.

But that's what running a business without a comprehensive budget plan is like. You can have the most talented, competent staff; a brand new, top-of-the line kitchen; loyal customers who can't stop coming back for your food. But without careful budgeting, you can still run that business into the ground.

You need insight into your losses and your gains. You need to know you're not overspending on food and ingredients. You need to know how to price your cocktails. You need to know how much to pay your staff, and how many of them to schedule at any given time. You need to track your spending to make sure that money going out isn't more than money coming in.

In other words, you need a budget.

Who Should Be Involved In Budget Planning?

Unlike many facets of running a restaurant, budget planning shouldn't involve your entire staff. It's a task that's better left to administrative staff, managers, supervisors, and any partners or investors who are heavily involved in your restaurant's operations.

Managers (which should include executive chefs and entertainment managers, if your restaurant employs those) should have a hands-on involvement in setting the monthly, quarterly or annual budgets that they need to run their departments.

And when setting your budget, it might be a good idea to have an attorney or financial planner present to oversee agreements, spending reports and other pertinent information.

What Are The Main Goals In Restaurant Budget Planning?

It's easy to fall into thinking the purpose of planning a budget is to keep expenses lower than income. In reality, there's more to it than that.

You need a comprehensive budget plan to maximize your potential for profit while eliminating waste and over-spending.

A well-researched and carefully planned budget will keep you from overspending on food, ingredients, alcohol, kitchen supplies and cleaning supplies. It will also ensure you are keeping administrative costs like payroll and marketing cost-effective.

A budget plan should also help you design a menu with good profit margins. If you're designing your establishment's menu from scratch, your budget plan can be instrumental in deciding what dishes to include.



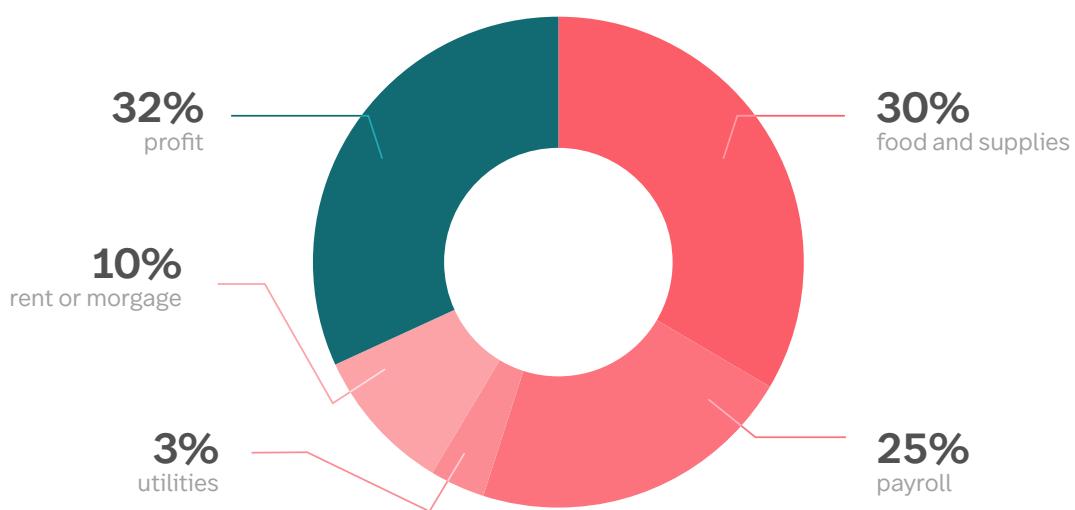
Managers should be involved in setting the budgets they need to run their departments.

So How Do You Create A Budget Plan?

There's a basic, general formula that provides a good starting point for any restaurateur who's planning a budget: The **68 percent formula**. What this means is that your restaurant's overhead expenses should account for right around 68 percent of your budget (with a little bit of wiggle room, because every restaurant is different).

The breakdown for this is around 30 percent for food and supplies, 25 percent for payroll, 3 percent on utilities (including gas, electric, phone bill and internet), and 10 percent on rent or the mortgage for the building space. The remaining 32 percent should be profit.

The 68 Percent Formula Budget Plan



With those percentages in mind, here's a basic road map for actually planning out your budget²:

First, evaluate your current reality. This can't just be an educated guess. Pull all your receipts, your purchase orders, your payroll. You need an accurate picture of your expenses and income right at this moment.

Next, calculate the return on investment (ROI) for everything in your budget. You need to know inside and out how much profit margin you're getting for each dish on your menu. You have to balance that against the cost of having staff on the clock. If you have too many staff on at a

time, the ROI on your staffing expenses won't be great. If you're overspending on ingredients, the ROI on your menu may need improvement. Figure out where you're at now, and maybe set some goals about where you'd like to be.

Next, do a careful audit of your current overhead and income, and identify places where you need to make adjustments. Keep the percentages from the 68 percent formula in mind as you tweak different parts of your budget.

Finally, replace the old with the new. Now that you have a budget plan, implement it and stick with it.

² <https://upserve.com/restaurant-insider/3-quick-steps-managing-restaurant-budget/>

If You're Starting from Scratch...

Opening a restaurant from the ground up takes even more careful budgeting. While ambition, a good taste for food and a vision for a niche cuisine will help a new restaurant owner, no restaurant is going to open without capital — and lots of it³.

Depending on the state in which you're opening and licensing a restaurant, permit fees can run up to \$7,000. And it's only after that that you get into the real costs of opening a new space.

In some cases, opening a new 90-seat restaurant can run anywhere from \$275,000 (\$3,064 per seat) to \$400,000 (\$4,444 per seat). And those are just the ends of the median costs. Any unexpected setbacks could cause that cost to rise even more.

Opening a new restaurant is far from cheap, which is why it's absolutely necessary to have a good business plan and a budget when you start. Here are just a few of the startup costs you need to plan for:

First, your venue. Market cost for a restaurant-friendly commercial space will vary wildly depending on your chosen location. In Chicago, for example, commercial space is now trending over \$40 per square foot⁴. Compare that to Toronto, where restaurant real estate can be as high as \$100 per square foot in high-traffic neighborhoods⁵.

As a general rule to follow when picking a location, your rent or lease agreement should not exceed 6 to 10 percent of your projected gross annual sales. If you can, get an assignable lease. That way, if a restaurant goes under, you're able to re-assign your lease to someone else and avoid bearing the cost after you close your doors.



Opening a new, 90-seat restaurant, can run anywhere from **\$3,064 to \$4,444** per seat or **\$275k-\$4000k**.

Then there are the costs for fitting out your restaurant (on average, \$300 to \$500 per square foot) and supplying all the equipment for both the front and back of house (on average, \$150 to \$300 per square foot). We're already over several hundred thousand dollars here.

And don't forget about your initial food costs. The first food and beverage order that's placed will be larger than average, so budget up to \$25,000, depending on the concept of the restaurant (this cost will be lower for something fast-casual and higher for something gourmet).

And then, once you've dropped all that cash, there's still the operating costs to cover. With all of these costs adding up, you see why it's common for restaurants to operate in the red for their first several years, and why so many of them fail early on.

Once you've established your budget, you'll get a better sense of what locations are possible options for you. In the next chapter, we'll talk about how to pick your location and create a space with personality.

³ <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/list-expenses-starting-restaurant-scratch-4580.html>

⁴ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/columnists/ct-prime-office-rents-ryan-ori-0321-biz-20170317-column.html>

⁵ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/rising-rent-is-starving-torontos-restaurateurs/article35061520/>

CHAPTER 2

Location, Space and Personality: Setting the Scene for a Winning Restaurant

Written by: Sean Hurley

In this chapter:

- What to consider when choosing a location
- How to add personality to the space and make it your own
- What to think about if you're re-locating





CHAPTER 2

Location, Space and Personality: Setting the Scene for a Winning Restaurant

Location, location, location. Those are the three most important parts of real estate, as the old saying goes. And that's true for your restaurant, as well — your location is one of the most important choices you face as a new owner or manager.

Choosing and styling your location may seem daunting. But even though this is one of your biggest decisions, it doesn't have to be as hard as it sounds. There's a lot of good advice out there that can help you make smart choices when it comes to your restaurant location and real estate.

How to Choose the Right Space

When opening a new restaurant, the right space can make or break it, regardless of how great the concept is. Obviously, there's a lot that goes into choosing a space that will help your restaurant succeed. Let's start with the basics: renting economics.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, your budget will be the single most important factor in choosing a location, especially since rent will be your restaurant's largest fixed cost⁶. No matter what, you have to work within a reasonable rent budget that you're able to afford. Considering that the initial stages of opening up a new restaurant can be costly, make sure you plan ahead so that this tough time isn't made harder with an outrageous rent.

There's some debate about how much is actually the right amount to spend on rent. You should do some market research first, and determine the average price per square foot for retail rentals in your area, particularly in neighborhoods where you think your restaurant would do well. Then, you need a projection of your expected sales. The general rule of thumb for restaurant rent is that the total cost of occupancy (including rent, insurance and any additional costs for taxes) should be around 6-10 percent of your gross sales⁷. That means if you expect to gross \$1 million in your first year, your occupancy costs should range from \$60,000 to \$100,000 yearly. There's some argument that 8 percent is the best figure, but some give and take is OK.

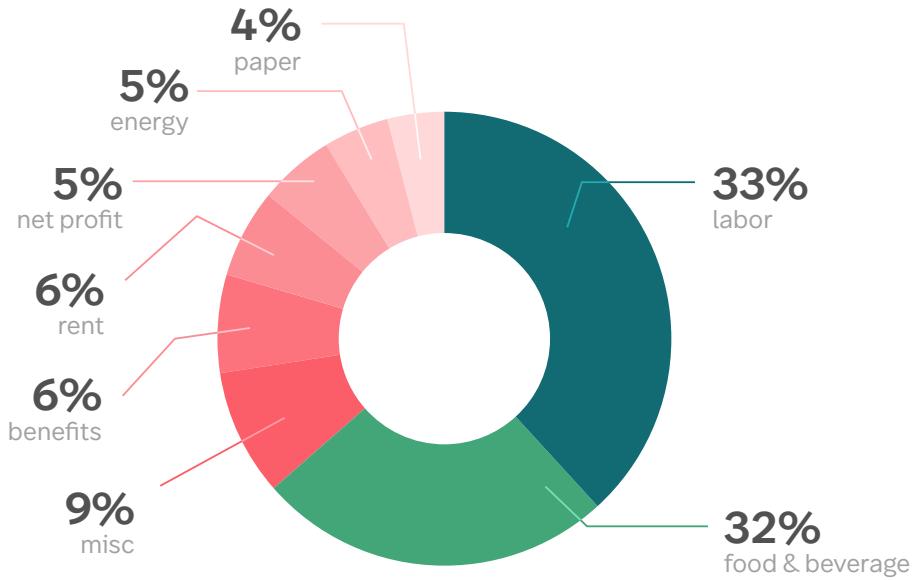
Keep in mind that the rent price for restaurants can often be negotiated⁸. Particularly if the location has been vacant for some time, there is likely room to haggle with the landlord and secure a lower price. It's common for restaurants to negotiate pro-rating rent, or not beginning to pay until the restaurant opens for business. It may also be possible to pay a low rent your first year and gradually increase it after that.

⁶ <https://totalfood.com/how-much-rent-is-too-much-for-your-restaurant/>

⁷ <https://restaurantrealestateadvisors.com/rent-for-restaurant/>

⁸ <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-to-find-a-restaurant-space-to-rent-3862684>

Typical Restaurant Expenses



Once you have a budget in mind, it's time to choose your location. Remember that a great location can often make a restaurant, but a great restaurant is less likely to be able to make a location⁹. At the same time, don't stress if you don't find a location in the first month. Successful restaurateurs have reported taking anywhere from a few months to nearly three years to find the right spot¹⁰.

Be flexible with your vision, because the location may be more important than the space itself. No matter how much you've envisioned what your dream restaurant looks like, it's probably worth it to redesign it to fit a space in a great, lively location.

And once you've chosen the perfect space, your work isn't over. It's important to do some legwork to make sure the space is as good as it appears to be. Talk to other tenants at that location, if there are any. Perform a background check on the landlord. And know exactly what's included in your lease so there aren't any disputes down the road over building maintenance or renovations. Legal counsel is probably a good idea at this step, just to help you sort through everything and know exactly what you're signing.

Make the Space your Own

Once you've signed the lease, the work is just beginning. It's time to style your location in a way that will bring your restaurant vision to life, without getting too expensive.

When you plan the interior of a restaurant, there are some functional considerations¹¹. A great restaurant design is laid out in a way that:

- Keeps travel distances short
- Keeps waste disposal out of sight of guests
- Separates the dining and kitchen areas
- Separates the movements of guests and staff and ensures there are no crossover paths
- Encourages a one-way flow of traffic through the space

You should also consider design best practices for all spaces. Keep in mind such principles as embracing natural light and sticking to neutral color schemes to create the kind of space customers can embrace and want to spend time dining in.

⁹ <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/how-to-find-a-restaurant-space-to-rent-3862684>

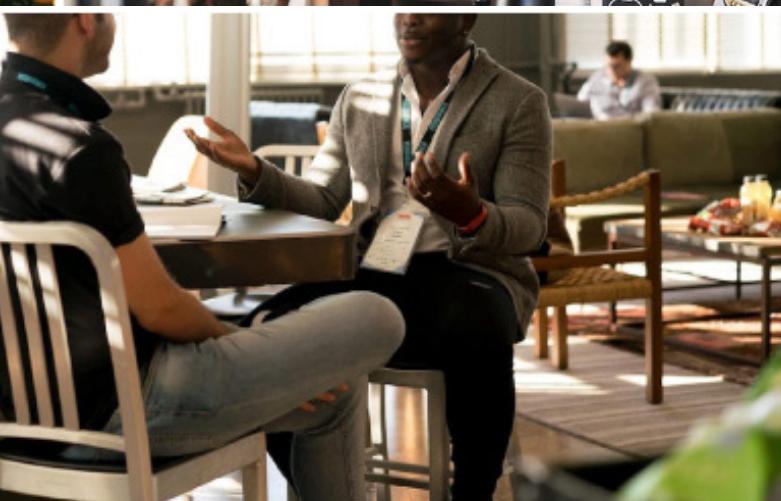
¹⁰ <https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/how-to-find-the-perfect-location-for-a-new-restaurant-6-ways.html>

¹¹ <https://comelite-arch.com/ergonomic-restaurant-interior-design/>

How you decorate will depend a great deal on your restaurant concept. For example, a fast-casual restaurant and a fine dining establishment will not look the same.

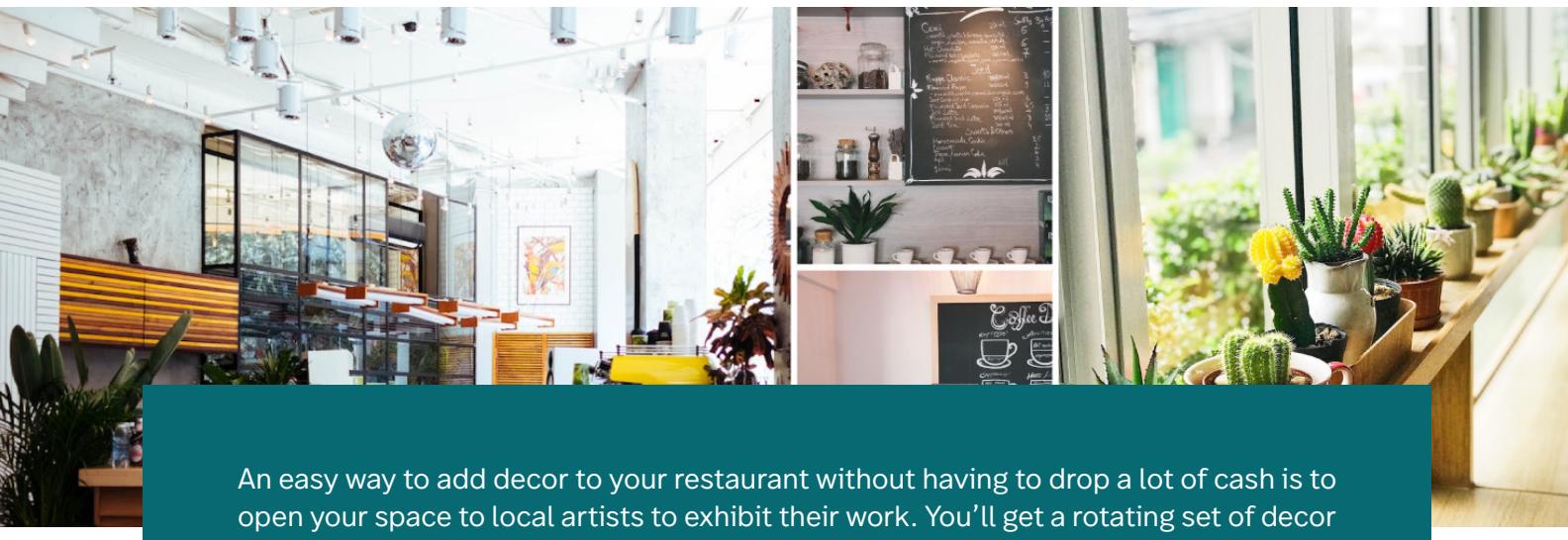
But there are some design principles that any restaurateur can implement to make a space look its best on a budget.

Outfit the space with good-looking but low maintenance plants, like ferns or succulents. Greenery can make an indoor space look much brighter and more inviting.



You can also get creative with your lighting. Edison bulbs or string lights are a few current design trends that are low-cost and look great in almost any space.

Another way to add some life to your space is to offer non-traditional seating. Booths and stools are all too common, so think about going with colorful repurposed chairs, or mix-and-match seating styles all done in your color scheme.



An easy way to add decor to your restaurant without having to drop a lot of cash is to open your space to local artists to exhibit their work. You'll get a rotating set of decor for free, and build goodwill in the community while you're at it.

Moving Up and Out

Moving is a huge hassle for a restaurant, but sometimes it needs to happen. Maybe your old lease is up and the landlord isn't interested in renewing. Maybe you've outgrown your current space. Whatever the reason for a move, there are ways to make it as painless as possible¹².

First, you're back to square one in choosing a location. Carefully research new spaces, keeping in mind everything you've learned as you've operated your restaurant so far. The new space should offer benefits you didn't have at your old space, so keep that in mind as you're looking.

Once you've chosen a new location, you need to let your customers know about your planned move. Hopefully, you have a customer database you can use to send out an email or a postcard to customers to give them a heads up on the move. If not, talk to customers about the move as they come in. Announce your plans on your website and social media. Posting progress updates about the move on social media is a good way to keep your customers engaged and get them excited about your new location.

If you're moving somewhere far from your old spot, it might be a good idea to offer incentives to your customers to entice them to make the trek to visit you again.

Carefully time your move to have the least possible impact on your sales. If you're able to move over a holiday break or your normal closed days to avoid having to shut the restaurant down during the move, that's best. And when you move your equipment and furniture into the new space, it's usually best to hire a professional moving company to help. Doing it yourself might seem like a good way to save money, but it's possible you could damage something and end up spending more than you would had you just hired the movers. Most moving services will also come with insurance and all the boxes, trolleys, blankets and other supplies you need.

Once you're settled in the new space, host an event for your grand re-opening. It'll help get customers, old and new, excited about your new space. You could also offer giveaways or discounts during the opening to give loyal customers and locals to your new a spot an incentive to check it out.

Something important to consider when designing your space is to define your restaurant's concept, identity, name and logo. Find an identity and concept that fits into the personality and vibe of your location (or vice versa).

Read on to learn about how to build a killer brand for your restaurant!

¹² <https://www.modernrestaurantmanagement.com/tips-for-moving-your-restaurant-to-a-new-location/>

CHAPTER 3

Restaurant Branding: Concept, Brand Identity, Naming, and Logos

Written by: Chris Arnett

In this chapter:

- Defining your restaurant's concept
- Establishing your restaurants identity
- Using tools to help you build a memorable brand





CHAPTER 3



Restaurant Branding: Concept, Brand Identity, Naming, and Logos

Who are you? Or, who do you want to be? That may seem like a weird question to ask when thinking about a restaurant. But it's totally valid when you think about the important role of branding.

Branding your restaurant is about making it unique and memorable. It's about answering questions like:

- Who are you?
- Who are your guests?
- What images and ideas do you want to convey when people look at you?
- What experiences do you want to create and inspire when people walk through your doors?
- What will potential customers look for and see in you when they're looking for a place to enjoy a nice evening out?

These and others are the important questions you should ask yourself as you step foot into the wide and perilous world of a restauranteur.

Here's a guide to help you get started.

Defining your Restaurant Concept

The restaurant concept is the overarching theme and driving force behind the brand, decor, voice, and messaging. Your concept should be what makes your establishment unique from the rest — and ultimately dictates market share and longevity.

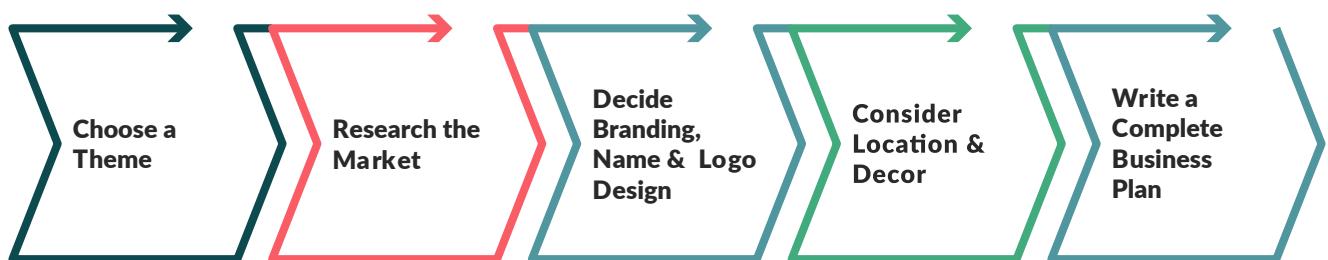
Planning a concept for a restaurant involves outlining solutions to many practical issues instead of just choosing a style of cuisine. Yes, this is an all-important aspect, but there are a few other things to keep in mind as well.

A Concept Plan

The concept plan is the actual written document outlining the look and feel of your restaurant in addition to the aforementioned problem solving. This will be included as part of your business plan. A simple map to follow when one is lost can be found below.

Restaurant concepts can be cyclical and they can go in and out of style over time. They're driven largely by consumer tastes and market demand — so it's important to consider those when deciding which direction to take.

Transforming a Restaurant Idea Into a Plan



More Than Just Food

When designing a restaurant, you're able to choose from a variety of cuisines, or add your own twist to a certain style in the culinary sphere. Will your restaurant follow a long-standing family tradition, or put a 2018 spin on a dish while we're out here living in 2018?

What's important to remember is most restaurants today don't just sell food and beverages, they also sell atmosphere, culture, and guest experience. When designing a concept, play on all five senses to elevate your space. Your restaurant's concept should be:

Characteristics of a Successful Restaurant Concept



Concept Impacts Everything

It's important to start with a solid concept plan as this will affect what type of uniforms your staff wears, decor and table settings, logistics such as location, neighbourhood, parking, wheelchair and foot-traffic access, etc.

Will your restaurant appeal to nearby residents or mainly commuters? Will you focus on being environmentally conscious by offering dishwashable dinnerware or compostable packaging? Will you cater to dietary restrictions or say no substitutions, ever?

If ever you get lost answering the hundreds of questions in the wide world of restaurant management, use your concept plan as a true north star to always stay on track.

Developing Your Restaurant's Brand

Once you have a concept nailed down it's time to decide on your brand and brand identity. What do you want your restaurant to look and feel like to the public? What are the most important aspects of your business that you'd like to get across?

What's Your "Why"?

You may immediately feel that you understand who you are and what you want your business to represent, but it's helpful to take a moment to understand the bigger picture of why you do what you do.

Once you have that understanding it becomes easier to consistently translate this vision to your customers, which in turn allows them to recognize your restaurant as a key experience they want to be a part of again and again.

This is a major step in developing your brand.

Your brand isn't just the slogan or the promise of service. But, it's a great way to keep the vision of your business alive. A good way to begin formalizing your brand's messaging is to complete your vision, value, mission, and culture statements related to your concept.

Once you have your messaging written out, whittle this down to repeatable paragraphs or advertisements to pass onto future staff, the press, and community who will then truly understand your concept.

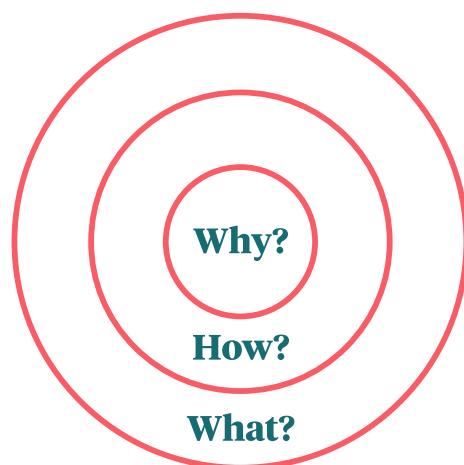
This is a tough process.

While some restaurateurs take to the branding and marketing quickly, others just want to get cooking and deal with the outward facing business stuff later. Trust us, taking the time to get your thoughts in order now is the best way to start on the right foot.

Starting out with a clear idea of who you are will actually make life easier!

When something doesn't quite fit with your brand or vision, instead of agonizing over the decision whether or not to keep it, you can immediately throw it out without hesitation. A clear brand identity and vision for your business can help you stay true to what brought you to the industry in the first place, while swiftly and simultaneously helping to neutralize competing interests.

When your "why" is your guiding principle, the brand identity makes up the visual and emotional components that convert non-believers to disciples. It will also allow you as an owner-operator to make clear, educated decisions regarding future design attributes, financing, and the hiring of a team that meet your values and messaging — key factors which will assist in controlling future labor costs.



David A. Aaker, the godfather of brand identity, has suggested looking at your restaurant from the following viewpoints, and asking yourself these accompanying questions to begin understanding your restaurant and brand identity from a marketing standpoint.

Your Restaurant Brand as a Product

These are the nuts and bolts — what will you actually be presenting on plates to your guests and what do these dishes say about you?

- What does "exceptional customer service" really mean to you and how will you ensure this is consistently provided to your guests?
- How will you source quality ingredients and provide continuous value to your customers? Will there be a trade-off on this spectrum, sacrificing quality to provide better value or some form of the opposite?
- What exclusive menu items do you have, or do you offer a unique twist on a classic dish?
- What demographic (who) does your restaurant appeal to?
- What will be included in your menu? A continuously shifting seasonal menu, or a sit-down eatery offering a variety of cuisines?
- What elements of service will you provide? Which are the most important to you that must be present in your restaurant each day, and which elements can be sacrificed?
- Are you a fast-casual establishment or leisurely escape? Dine-in only or will you also offer take-out?

Your Restaurant Brand as an Organization

What will your organization say to the public as a "business"?

- What values are important to you and which will resonate with customers and staff?
- How will you ensure these values are communicated daily through your staff and restaurant?
- How does your vision of staffing dictate the experience your customers will have?
- Where does your organization fit within the bigger picture—are you committed to only sourcing local ingredients, or focused on bringing eclectic global flavours to your community?
- Are there any community groups that you or your restaurant could be intrinsically tied to? It's always great to give back, and shows the community that you're not just taking up space, but are an integral part of the fabric of the neighbourhood.

Your Restaurant Brand as a Person

Here's where it gets a little abstract—stay with us. This may feel a little weird but trust us, it helps.

What's your restaurant's personality? Are you fun or serious? Making jokes all the time or sharing the joy of cooking through a reverence for your craft? Think of a celebrity chef, musician, or movie star that you admire. What are the other elements associated with their brand that you'd like to see reflected in yours?

- What's your relationship with your customers going to be like? Are you an entertainer? A provider? Will you educate your customers about a particular food movement, dietary style or technique, or perhaps hold open classes during off-hours for aspiring chefs?
- What's your story? How did you start and where did you come from? What was the defining moment in your past when you decided this was the life you'd like to aspire to? Why? Understanding these key concepts is another important part of building your "True North Star"—the driving force behind all of your organization's key business decisions.

Your Restaurant Brand as a Symbol of Design

How will you translate your written concept and brand messaging into a tangible design for either you or an external designer to work with?

- Once you have your story written out, take a look at it to see if any notable parts of your history stick out to you. Are there a few elements you can expand upon which truly encapsulate the unique journey you've been on?
- Look at your story and see if elements of your journey stick out to you. Is there anything you can latch onto that encapsulates what you've been through?
- What elements of decor, uniform, signage and merchandise come to mind when you read through and answer the questions above?

Giving Your Restaurant a Name & Identity

Choosing a name and logo are both extremely important, but also fun and relatively easy.

While you probably think a good name and logo won't make or break your business, it will allow potential customers to immediately identify your concept and brand identity from a distance, well before they set foot into your restaurant or lift a fork for their first bite. A logo and name are a representation of what your brand is all about, and are often one of the first interactions a customer will have with your business.

Choosing a Name

While the saying, "it's all in a name," may be a little bit of an exaggeration, it's also not entirely off base.

The name of your restaurant is something you're going to stand behind for years to come. It should reflect who you are, what you want to portray to your future diners, and, most of all, give at least some indication of your business and expected experience.

Sure, names can be all over the place in terms of actual restaurant experience, but think about it; naming your restaurant "Richard's Eatery" conjures up different mental images than "Rick's Eatery," or even "Rick's Pub."

Here's where to start:

- **Research the market:** Look at similar businesses for inspiration, but also to understand what signifies a "normal" brand name within your industry. More BBQ restaurants, for example, have "BBQ" or "Pit" in the name. To consumers, it may seem odd if your BBQ joint has a name that sounds more like a french bistro. That being said, this is your business so it's not necessary to follow the crowd! Sometimes, it helps to differentiate.
- **Consider the implications:** Will your staff be proud to wear uniforms with your restaurant's name printed on them? Will people really use the buttons, stickers, and t-shirts you hope to eventually give out? Would you proudly hand your business card over to the Prime Minister? How about your in-laws?

- **Seeing double:** Check to make sure no one else has taken your name, at least within a reasonable distance of your chosen location. No one wants to answer the phone and constantly explain, “No, we’re the other Summer Bistro.”

Choosing a Logo

A logo can speak volumes when it comes to getting a clear concept and brand messaging across.

Are you classic or contemporary? Trendy or old-fashioned? What kind of music do you like? Will your space be very fancy and dressed to the nines, or more ordinary? Do you have a sense of humour?

Choosing a logo can be a lengthy process, but it's worth taking the time to get it right. First, try to decide what type of logo you want to use. There are three main types of logos:

1. **Font-based logos** such as Licks, Coca-Cola, Tim Hortons, and Google that use their company's name right within their logo design.

2. **Illustration-based** logos typically include a small cartoon-style image and somewhat illustrate what it is the company does. For example a men's tie boutique may use a tie icon within their logo design, with real-life examples including most sports team logos.
3. **Abstract logos** usually contain obscure graphics or symbols which may or may not have anything to do with the business at all. That doesn't mean that the logo is so far removed from the brand's concept that consumers cannot make an association, but instead often has the opposite effect. Consider Nike's swoosh or Adidas' three stripes, both of which have very little to do with the act of selling shoes, but have become iconic in the minds of their consumers.

Just think of marketing your name and logo as setting yourself up for a great first impression. Keep in mind who you are and what you want the feel of the restaurant to be, then do your best to accurately set your customers expectations with this first touchpoint.



Next, consider the implications of the logo choice.

Are you going to have uniforms in your restaurant? Eventually want to give out t-shirts or stickers? How will your logo design look when reproduced across various platforms and mediums? Will this design be easy to translate to black and white or will you continually be producing in colour? This is fine but address what this could mean for cost and adjust your marketing budget accordingly.

Third, consider the placement of your design on your menu. Menu design is an art within itself, but try to conceptualize where your logo will be read the most to further cement existing associations customers have in their minds with your brand.

As with most things in life, when it comes to logo design, sometimes simpler is better.

Simply put, the quicker your audience is able to recognize and associate your logo with your brand the better it will be for your business.

Lastly, it pays to get help from a pro. Sure, accomplished designers can cost thousands of dollars, but their work is often worth it.

However, for someone just starting their business, there are great free-to-cheap options to be found with talented individuals on gig-based sites, such as Fiverr, Upwork and Freelancer. If you get frustrated when designing your logo, check out some of the portfolios by designers within your budget—you'll be surprised at the quality of work you can find.

If this seems overwhelming don't let it be! Start with a simple design that you're happy with and build out from there. If you hit a roadblock, there are thousands of free resources and professionals who can help assist in designing your logo.

Try them out and see which one speaks to you.

We like Logojoy, not just for their reasonable prices, but also for the inspirational logo generation processes.

Here are a few other fantastic options to get you started:

- Designcrowd
- CanadaCreate
- 99Designs
- Upwork
- Fiverr
- VistaPrint
- Waldendesign
- Logomaker
- Brushfiredesign
- Deluxe.ca

Filing for Copyright and Trademark Protection

In today's tumultuous business climate, it's imperative to copyright and trademark your work to deter others from stealing or recreating it in a detrimental manner.

The good news is there are online legal services such as [LegalZoom](#) and [LawDepot](#) which can help you file the paperwork necessary to protect yourself from this type of infringement. In addition, systems like this are a great way to ensure you yourself have not unintentionally infringed upon someone else's intellectual property.

Your restaurant's brand — from the concept to the logo — is extremely valuable. So it's important to protect that investment by taking the proper steps here.

Not only does it take a lot of time and effort to develop your brand, but it embodies your entire business.

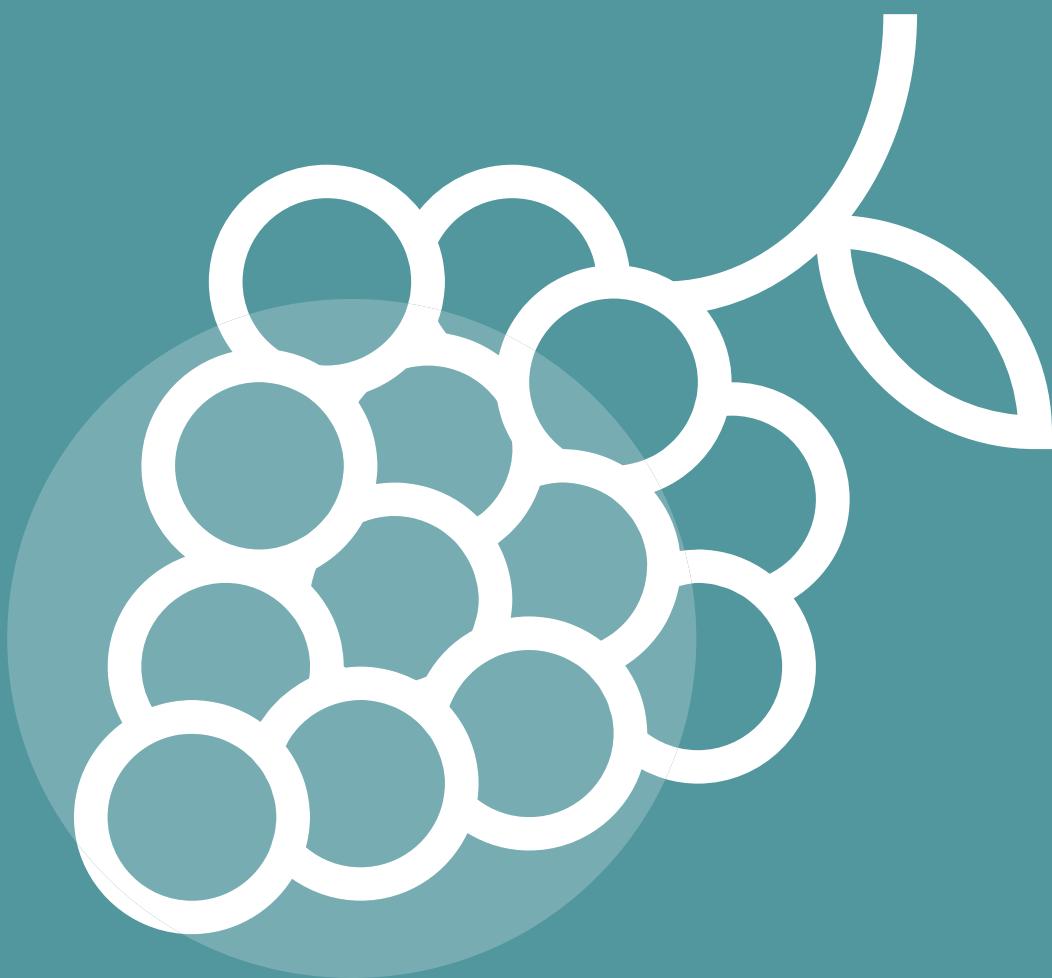
CHAPTER 4

Kickstarting Your New Restaurant Business

Written by: Sean Hurley

In this chapter:

- Getting your office back in order
- Establishing your online presence: website, social and more
- Finding the right talent (sneak peak)





CHAPTER 4

Kickstarting Your New Restaurant Business

Always dreamed of opening your own restaurant but weren't sure where to start? Of course, there are many factors that go into planning your restaurant. But, getting the basics right is absolutely critical to success.

Let's look at five of the most important steps you can take to get off on the right foot and set yourself up for years of success in the restaurant industry.

Step #1: Get Your Office Back In Order

Before you take any steps with your restaurant, you want to get all of the legal and financial stuff sorted out. The worst situation to put yourself in is trying to scramble to figure out your accounting procedure 6 months after the restaurant is open.

Get the basics figured out now and you won't have to worry about them down the road.

Register Your Business

Before you get started with domain names, social, or even location, it's important to make this business official. This means doing the necessary administrative work to register the business.

This includes three main steps:

1. **Register your business entity** - Steps for [USA](#) or [Canada](#)
 2. **Register for your tax ID** - Steps for the [USA](#) or [Canada](#)
 3. **Register for business licenses** - Check with your state/province for specific information
- Accounting Software

Accounting Software

Before you start hiring, spending money, or tracking all of your finances it's a great time to find an easy-to-use business accounting tool. This tool should connect to your business banking accounts, credit cards, payment tools, and everything else under the sun!

Free Option: [Wave Account](#)

"Not only is Wave the best free small business accounting website, but it's one of the best online resources period for its target small business audience." - PCMAG.COM

Paid Option: [Intuit Quickbooks](#)

"Of all the accounting software we reviewed, QuickBooks Online offers some of the best pricing, with four service tiers designed to accommodate the needs of different business types." - BUSINESSNEWSDAILY.COM

Step #2: Claim Your Place on the Web

We all live in the 21st century, so it should be obvious that one of the most important parts of running any business today is having a web presence. Most important: Your domain.

You need a website that lists your hours, your location, your menu, and other details that will help diners decide they want to stop by. And that information lives on your website and other business listings.

Registering Your Domain

Choosing the right domain name can have a huge impact on your web presence—and your entire business. You want something that's short and memorable, but you also have to compete with other businesses all over the world to find just the right one.

So you'll need to get a bit creative in coming up with just the right domain name to capture your brand without making it so long or complex that it's impossible to remember.

There are a few factors to keep in mind when making the right choice.

Length: Is it easy to remember? Keep it as short as you can.

TLD (top-level domain) - the characters after the "dot": Examples would be .com, .ca, .food, etc¹³. Now with more than a hundred TLD options to choose from, you can get really creative with the domain name you choose for your restaurant. Of course, getting a ".com" is probably still your first choice. But people are quickly getting used to other domain endings, so don't be afraid to try another option.

Price: Domain names should range from \$9.99 to 59.99 for most common TLDs. This will cover your domain registration for 12 months. If you're looking at a "premium" domain that will cost a lot more, you may want to wait until you have established your business further.

Keep in mind that you can update your domain in the future. So, settling for something that's less than perfect now may be a smart choice until you can get the name you really want.

Providers: enon, NameCheap, GoDaddy, and many more.

Setting Up Your Business Listing

When you start any new business, people will come out of the woodwork trying to sell you products and services to help you with marketing. One of the most common services you'll be pitched is reputation management or setting up directory listings.

You can pay people to help you with this. But, to start, it's probably best to at least do the initial setup yourself so that you understand how it works.

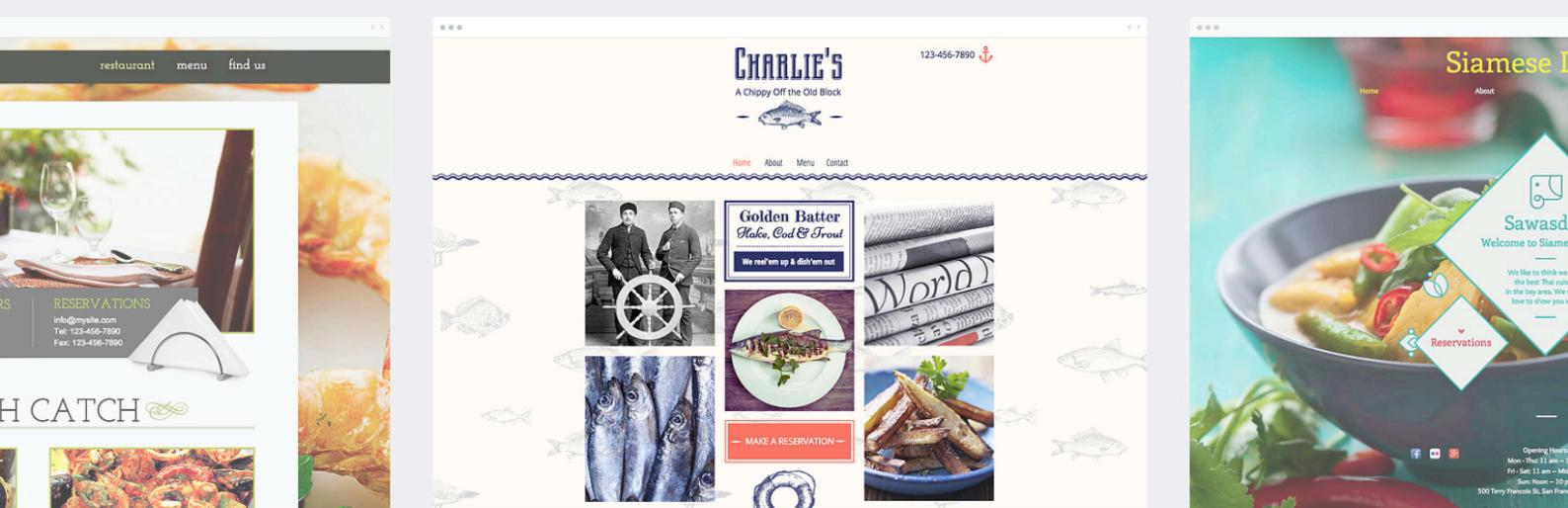
So which directories and websites do you care about?

The big five are:

- **Google My Business** - [Set up your listing](#)
- **Yelp** - [Set up your listing](#)
- **Zomato (formerly UrbanSpoon)** - [Set up your listing](#)
- **TripAdvisor** - [Set up your listing](#)
- **OpenTable** - [Set up your listing](#)

Of course, there are a million other sites out there that maybe could list your restaurant. But these are the most popular and they're critical to set up as early as possible.

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top-level_domain



Step #3: Decide How to Build Your Website

Buying the domain name for your website is really only the first step to getting set up online. You also need to build your actual site—or have someone build it for you.

You need to decide what kind of site you need and how it should be created.

Custom vs CMS vs Website Builder

Without getting too technical, there are 3 main ways to build a modern website:

- Custom-built website** - Hand-coded web page that is designed and uploaded directly to your web host
- Content management system (CMS)** - Web editing software that lets you update content on your website just like you're editing a text document; can use either pre-built templates or 100% custom designs.
- Website builder** - Drag-and-drop or WYSIWYG editor that lets you build a website from pre-designed templates and sections.

There's no clear-cut winner on which one is best for every situation, but there are some key considerations that can help you decide which one is best for you.

When to go custom-built: Probably the best use case for a custom-built website without a CMS would be a "brochure" style website that you plan to build once and rarely (or never) update. Usually, changing things on a custom-built website will require changes to be made in the actual code, so it won't be easy to do unless you're tech-savvy.

When to use a CMS: CMS is a great middle-ground option that lets you build a custom-looking website that you can easily update or change. So, if you plan to update your menu or post your newest specials each week, you can have a web developer build a custom theme/template for a CMS like [Wordpress](#) and then you can update the website content using the backend editor.

When to use a website builder: The easiest (and cheapest) option for setting up and maintaining your website is the WYSIWYG website builder like [Wix](#) or [Squarespace](#). Especially if you are tight on funds and just want a basic website, this could be an easy way to get things up and running. The downside is that you'll be working from templates and the website may not be 100% customized how you want it.

Step #4: Establish Your Social Media Presence

Looking beyond just your website, you also need to start to build a brand for your restaurant online¹⁴. You probably know that social media is a great way to connect with potential diners, share updates, and market your business.

For step 4, let's walk through the basics of establishing your presence on social and what you need to know.

Decide Which Channels are for You

It seems like every week, there is a new app or social site that is taking over the world. Resist the urge to jump on every new trend or fad.

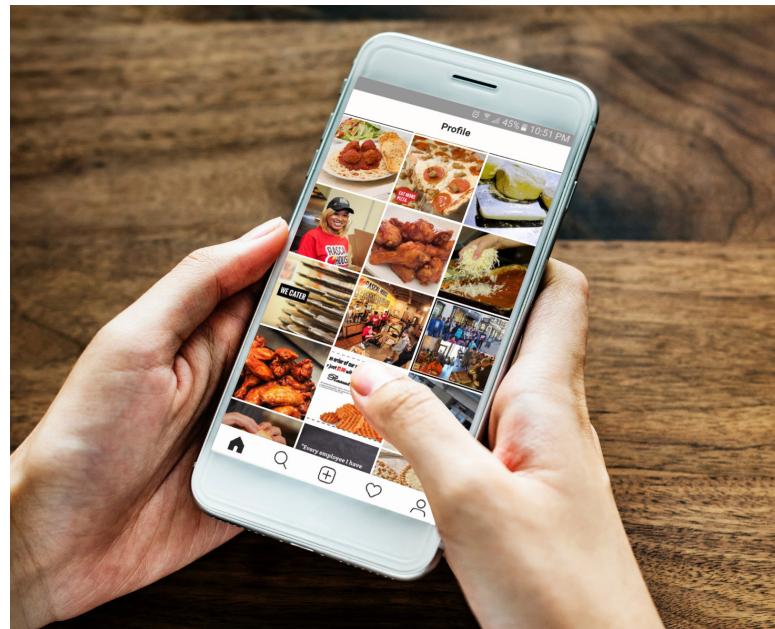
Don't register for every social media platform under the sun. If you're like most businesses, you don't have the time, focus, or resources to successfully manage more than 2 social channels really well. Since on social media it's better to do nothing than haphazardly do very little, choose 1-2 channels wisely and focus all of your efforts here. For a restaurant, Instagram and Facebook are pretty straightforward choices.

If you're ambitious or you have a mobile food business, it may make sense to use a real-time platform like Twitter or Snapchat. But don't feel compelled to use them if you're not comfortable and familiar with them already.

Choose a Handle

When it comes time to select your social media accounts and set up your online presence, keep these few tips in mind to choose the perfect handle for your business.

If possible, use the same handle across all channels. For example: facebook.com/AwesomeRestaurant, [@AwesomeRestaurant](https://Instagram.com/@AwesomeRestaurant) on Instagram & Twitter, and www.awesomerestaurant.ca on the web. It's just good for branding.



Double check the exact same name is available with all other channels you're going to use to grow your brand before registering an account with any platform. With any marketing or branding strategy, consistency across all channels is key.

Step #5: Find the Right Talent

Finding, hiring, and retaining the right talent isn't an easy task for any business. It has become an employee's market—meaning there are currently more open available job positions being posted than there are top candidates available to fill these positions. As an employer, you can't and won't ever win on compensation alone.

That means getting smart about where and how you look to find team members.

In the next section, we will go into all of the things that come with finding (and retaining) the right talent. From writing job descriptions to keeping your employees feeling challenged, we cover it all.

¹⁴ <https://www.chefhero.com/blog/2018/7/2/restaurant-branding-concept-brand-identity-naming-and-logos>

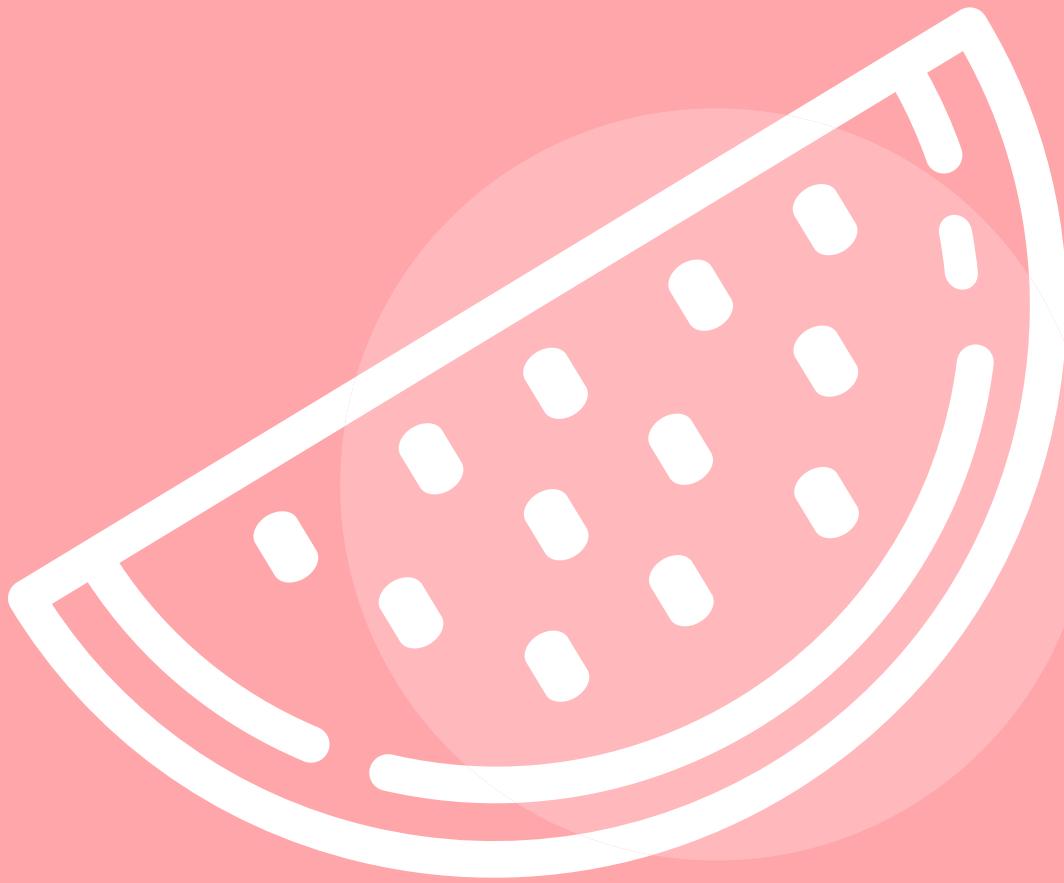
CHAPTER 5

Build the Best Team: Finding and Managing Your Restaurant's A-Team

Written by: Sean Hurley

In this chapter:

- How to recruit high-quality staff and retain them
- Compensation that goes beyond salary
- Key considerations for finding and hiring your chef





CHAPTER 5

Build the Best Team: Finding and Managing Your Restaurant's A-Team

From creating a concept that will succeed, to finding a killer space, to decorating and equipping and training. Starting a restaurant involves a lot of work, and a lot of moving pieces.

By far one of the greatest challenges would-be restaurateurs face is finding a superstar staff that will flawlessly execute their concept, all while making great food and providing top-tier customer service. The restaurant simply cannot run without a staff. But not just any staff will make your restaurant flourish. You want to best talent possible. Here's how to find (and keep) them.

When it Comes to Staffing your Restaurant...

First, some general tips for getting a high-quality staff in place — and then keeping them there.

You'll never win on salary. You may think you're offering the best salary around, but there's always somewhere that can pay the same or even more than you. And that somewhere else is also probably able to offer better hours or perks. Don't believe it? Give it time, and your turnover rate will prove it.

So where do you even start looking for someone with all of the qualities you want in an employee? A restaurant-centric job board is probably a good place to start, but the most qualified and talented individuals probably won't be out of work and looking.



You can consider hiring internally by promoting a sous chef, or externally by looking for personal or private chefs who might be interested in running a restaurant kitchen instead, scouting for soon-to-be graduates at cooking schools, or even going to a recruiting agency to help you entice a chef to make the jump from another restaurant to yours.

If you want to attract the best talent this starts with writing the best job description, clearly outlining an employee's duties and salary expectations.

Don't be afraid to get creative with your job descriptions—you'll never be the only fish 'n' chips place, or even the place that pays the most, so what makes your location unique and attractive?

Sell your vision and this opportunity to prospective employees.

Do you share and pool tips, go on frequent team-building outings, or offer a mentorship program? Be sure to let people know!

Writing your job description is just the first step. You also need to ensure that potential employees actually see your job posting. Generally, most people choose to list job postings on every free available job board.

While yes, you may get more applications this way, you'll then have to weed through hundreds of applications spread over several different platforms to determine the top quality candidates for your industry.

Find the right job board and focus your efforts on 1-2 selected platforms to get better quality over quantity candidates.

Some platforms to check out:

- Hired
- Glassdoor
- Indeed
- Workopolis
- JobShop.ca
- Job Bank
- HireMe
- Working.com
- Facebook Groups

Remember that when it comes down to it, the people you bring on will make or break your restaurant.

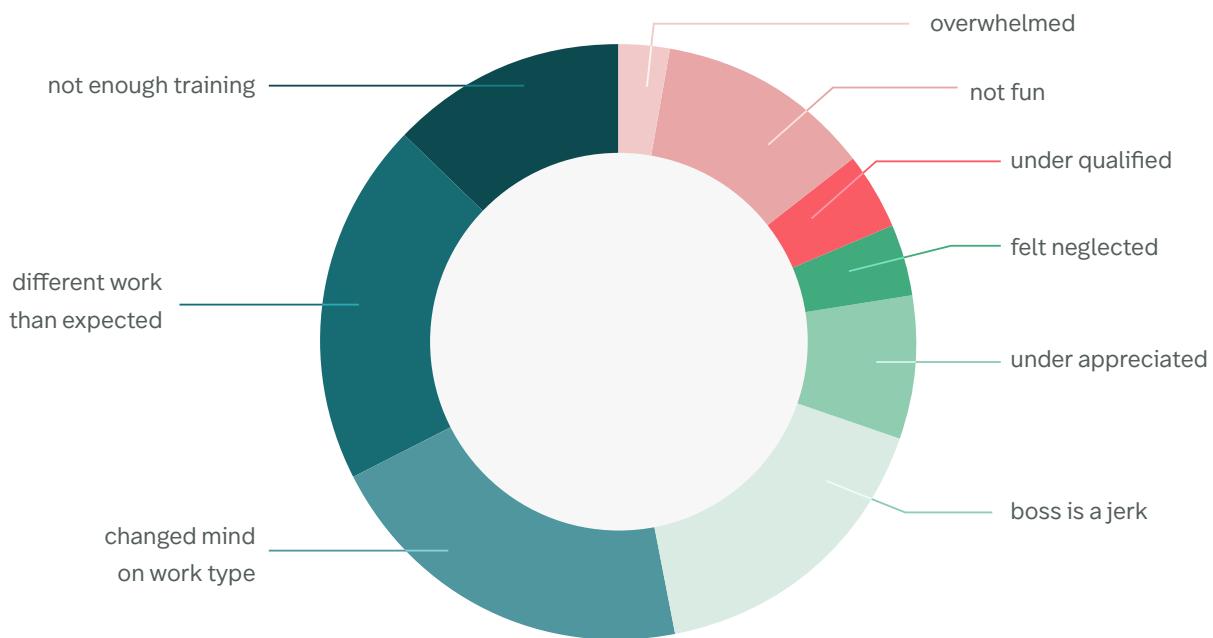
It doesn't matter how cool your concept is or even how great your food tastes, if you don't get the right people in the building, you'll never keep customers coming through the door. So, focus on finding, hiring, and keeping the right people.

While all of these steps are critical to getting your restaurant off the ground, it's especially important to spend extra time figuring out your recruiting and hiring practices.

Hiring Good Employees Goes Beyond a Competitive Salary

Instead of trying to beat out your competition on salary, focus on your culture — that's what will keep good talent under your roof and away from your competitors. How can you foster team engagement and culture? How can you reward your people in non-monetary ways? How can you provide helpful coaching and feedback to your staff to help them grow as they work for you? These should be your first considerations.

Top Reasons Employees Quit



One of the main ways you can foster a culture that will lead you to loyal employees is to give your staff autonomy. Give them guidance to steer them in the right direction, but then let them figure out how to be successful on their own. They're on the floor every shift. They know best. And if they're talented people, they'll create procedures that will have your restaurant running smoothly in no time.

An added bonus to this is you won't end up with dependent employees. When you fill your restaurant with people you trust, who are empowered to do good work, you have the freedom to let them run the show, with or without your presence. Win-win.

What's important when it comes to retaining staff is to treat them well. Once you have a well-trained staff in place, especially if you hire people with experience and talent, there's always the risk that they'll get poached by another restaurant. The good news is that in the restaurant industry, many workers face long hours and low wages¹⁵. You can beat out much of your competition for good staff just by offering a living wage and flexible hours.

What About the Chef?

Yep, finding your chef is one of your most important jobs when you're getting your restaurant up and running. And it's one of the hardest.

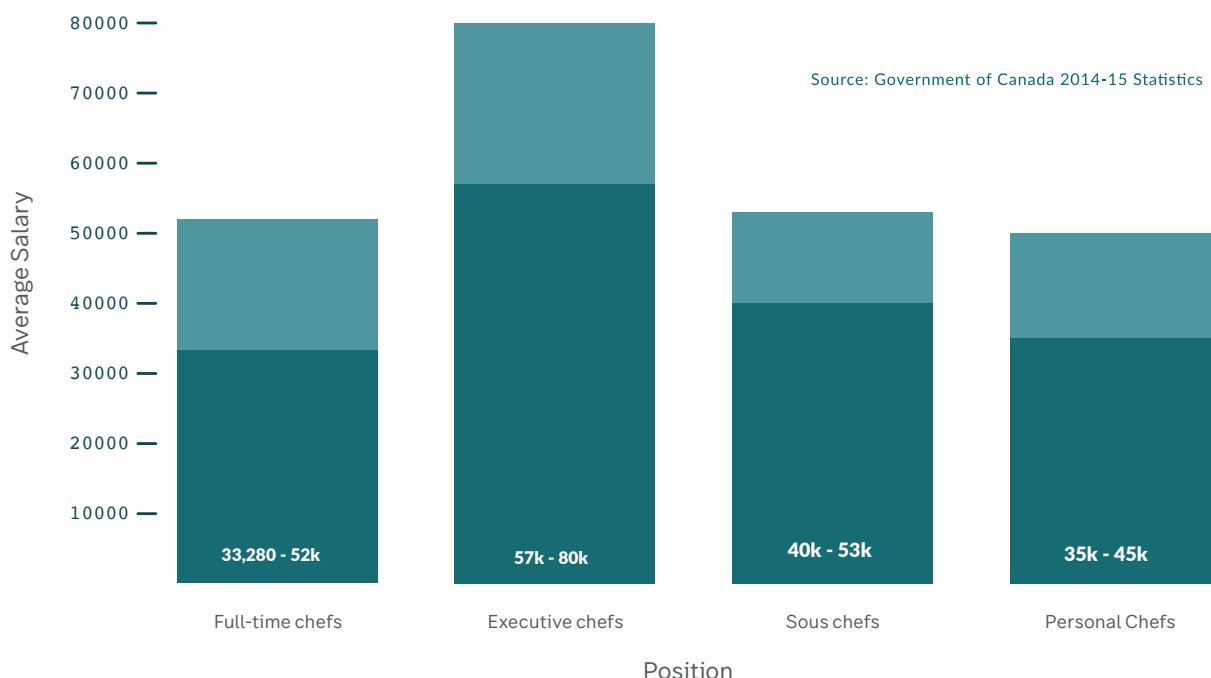
It's expected that some servers, line cooks, dishwashers and other lower level staff are going to come and go. Ideally, though, your chef should be a long-term employee¹⁶. This is the person who is going to take your concept and turn it into actual, delicious food. You should do everything you can to hire the best and then keep them under your roof.

One of the first things you should look for in your chef is experience and education. Certification isn't required for all chefs, but if you can find someone who is certified, you know you're getting a chef who has put in some serious time and work.

¹⁵ [https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/food-and-wine/food-trends/a-cycle-of-exploitation-how-](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/food-and-wine/food-trends/a-cycle-of-exploitation-how/)

¹⁶ <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/119/how-to-hire-a-chef.html>

Average Chef Salaries by position (in Can\$)



But certification is not all a good chef should possess. You will also want someone with:

- An excellent palate for tasting and distinguishing flavors accurately
- Creativity for inventing new dishes and plating designs
- Close attention to detail for accurately following complex recipes
- Excellent teamwork skills for working well as a team member in the brigade de cuisine system
- Leadership abilities for advancing your position and leading others working in the kitchen under them
- Clear and effective communication for constantly communicating to ensure that the kitchen runs smoothly and dishes get out on time

- Multi-tasking for handling various components of a dish or recipe all at the same time
- Level-headedness for keeping cool under pressure and time constraints

Starting to see why a great chef can be hard to find?

While your culture is going to be important when it comes to landing and keeping a quality chef, it's important to pay your chef competitively. A lot of factors go into setting an appropriate salary for your chef, including his or her level of experience, the working environment and your geographic location.

To give you a starting idea of what to budget for, though, Government of Canada statistics gathered between 2014 and 2015 showed that the national average salaries for full-time chefs ranged from around \$16 per hour (about \$33,280 annually) to \$25 per hour (about \$52,000 annually).

Remember though that these numbers don't take into account the different salaries between each type of chef — for example, an executive chef's average salary is between \$57,000 and \$80,000 annually, while sous chefs are paid, on average, \$40,000 to \$53,000 per year.

You also have to take into consideration whether your prospective chef has any advanced training or certification, the cost of living where your restaurant is located, and the hours and environment in which your chef will be required to work.

A restaurant in a rural town with a low cost of living might be able to get away with a salary on the lower end of that range, but a restaurant in, say, Vancouver, B.C., where the cost of living is much higher, will have to pay a chef much more to compete with other restaurants and entice the best talent.

And if you plan on poaching a personal chef, you may need to be prepared to pay more¹⁷ — personal chefs' salaries average between \$35,000 and \$45,000 per year (but can be much higher) in addition to schedules that often include several days off each week and vacation time each year. It'll take an attractive salary to lure a chef away from a position that has those kinds of hours.

Your staff is the backbone of your restaurant. Staffing is one of the most important decisions you'll make as you get your establishment up and running. It's part of what makes staffing (and staff retention) so difficult. But once you have a high-quality staff in place, it'll pay off in spades with good food, excellent customer service and a restaurant that can run efficiently and autonomously.



¹⁷ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/career-advice/life-at-work/i-want-to-be-a-personal-chef/>

CHAPTER 6

Taking Restaurant Customer Service to the Next Level: Strategies and Results

Written by: Ben Lucier

In this chapter:

- Learning the basics of customer service
- The monetary implications of awesome customer service
- How to take your customer service to the next level





CHAPTER 6

Taking Restaurant Customer Service to the Next Level: Strategies and Results

Welcome to the age of customer service. More and more, consumers are choosing where to spend their money based on where they get the best service. Excellence isn't a nice surprise—today's diners expect it, and to compete, you need to deliver.

Making a conscious decision to up your customer service game is just the first step. Good service is multifaceted, and it's going to take time and work to identify the changes you need to make in your establishment and to actually make those changes. But once you do, you'll be rewarded with customers who recognize and appreciate great service, and spend their money loyally when they feel well cared for.

Here's how to get started.

Learn the Basics of Customer Service

Across most industries, the core principles of customer service remain the same. What does “customer service” really mean? Put in the simplest way possible, it’s the act of taking care of a customer’s needs¹⁸. But there are some ways to take that idea a little further, to go from standard customer service to a consistently excellent experience that will wow your guests¹⁹.

For example, great customer service means giving professional, helpful service before, during and after a transaction is made. In other words, customer service isn’t just about making a sale. It’s about providing a consistently excellent

experience all the time, not just when the customer is actively giving you money.

Delivering quality customer service also means being prompt, and that is multifaceted. From the minute a customer walks through your door, it’s time to start giving them that excellent experience. Greet them immediately when they enter your restaurant, but be authentic. No one likes walking into a restaurant feeling like the greeting they just received was scripted. Listen to customers intently. And don’t make them wait. Try to get the first round of drinks or appetizers to the table as quickly as possible—drinks within 10 minutes of their arrival and appetizers within 15-20 minutes of their arrival ideally²⁰. Promptness can be the difference between a happy guest who becomes a repeat customer, and a hangry one who never comes back.

hangry | 'haNGgrē |

adjective (**hangrier**, **hangriest**) *informal*

bad-tempered or irritable as a result of hunger: *I get very hangry if I miss a meal.*

ORIGIN

1990s: blend of **hungry** and **angry**.

¹⁸ <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-customer-service-definition-types-role-in-marketing.html>

¹⁹ <https://restaurantengine.com/deliver-excellent-customer-service/>

²⁰ <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-average-waiting-time-for-a-meal-to-be-served-after-the-customer-has-ord...>

Restaurants can experience a **216% increase** in revenue for going above & beyond.



Another great way to deliver consistently excellent experiences is to personalize your customer service to each guest²¹. Maintain a guest database and use it to offer special promotions to loyal customers. Encourage servers to get to know regulars and address them by name. Train your staff to know the menu well enough to offer suggestions based on what customers like or what they've already ordered. Recommending the perfect drink or dessert to compliment a meal will make a customer feel especially taken care of.

Another necessary step to providing excellent customer service? Addressing problems immediately and to the customer's satisfaction. If a guest has a complaint, listen intently without interrupting, and always offer empathy, not blame. Stay calm, especially if you don't agree with the customer. Own the mistake, offer a genuine apology, and ask the guest what they would like — this will help start a conversation toward a solution you can both be happy with.

If you feel like there may be some gaps in your customer service, go to your best resource: your customers themselves. Start employing comment cards, email surveys or some other method to collect guest feedback. Not only does this give you specific action items you can address to improve your food and service, but it makes the customers feel that their experiences and their thoughts matter.

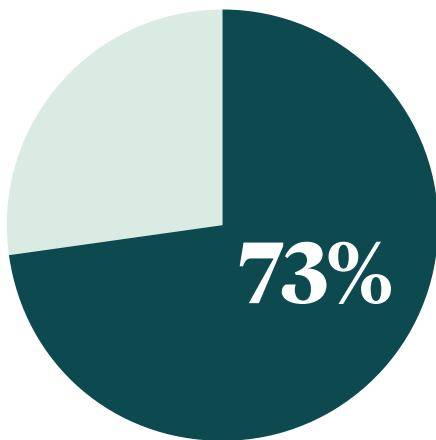
You may be reading this and thinking that providing excellent customer service takes a lot of work. It does. But, it's well worth the time and effort you invest. Happy customers are repeat customers, and there's data to prove it: A Harvard Business School study on Starbucks customers found that satisfied customers visited, on average, 4.3 times per month, spending \$4.06 per visit and remaining customers for 4.4 years²².

That's pretty good, right? That same study found that highly satisfied customers visited, on average, 7.2 times per month, spending \$4.42 each visit and remaining customers for 8.3 years. That's a huge jump in revenue.

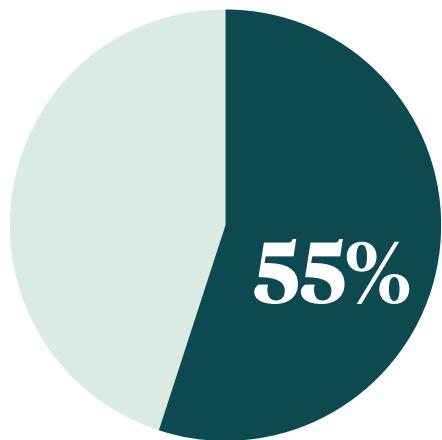
²¹ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/food-and-wine/food-trends/a-cycle-of-exploitation-how-to-hire-a-chef.html>

²² <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/article/119/how-to-hire-a-chef.html>

Why do customers stop frequenting a restaurant?



73% cited rude staff as the issue.



55% cited issues that weren't resolved in a timely manner.²³

So what about the flip side? A Customer Experience Report survey found that rude customer service was one of the top reasons customers will abandon a brand, beating out other reasons by 18 percent²³.

These two studies show why customer service is so vital for restaurants: it truly can make or break your brand.

How Restaurants Need to Take Customer Service Further

Of course, customer service varies a bit across industries.

For restaurants, specifically, there's food consistency to worry about. Think about your restaurant's signature dish. It's fresh. It's flavorful. Customers come back over and over because they crave it. Now think about how that would all change if the dish weren't consistent every time a customer ordered it. Imagine if a customer came back, specifically for

that dish, and got something other than what they expected, what they'd had before. That's why food consistency is vital to your customer service strategy and, ultimately, your success.

So how do you ensure the kind of consistency that will have customers coming back over and over for their favorite dishes? There are a lot of strategies you can employ²⁴.

First, standardize your products and your process. Make sure you're getting consistently fresh, high-quality ingredients from your suppliers, and if you're not, change suppliers. Eliminate variability in how different chefs create your dishes by documenting recipes and making sure everyone follows them.

²³ <http://www.slideshare.net/RightNow/2010-customer-experience-impact>

²⁴ <http://info.flavorseal.com/news-and-media/perspectives/consistency-in-foodservice-why-its-important-now-m...>

It's also a good idea to simplify your menu. The more complex your menu or any given dish is, the more opportunities there are for it to vary. Find ways to simplify recipes without sacrificing flavor. Consider that when it comes to the size of your menu, less is more — focus on a smaller number of dishes you know your staff can execute perfectly, rather than an overabundance of choice.

In addition to standardization and simplification, train your staff. Make sure everyone involved in cooking and food preparation understands the menu and the standardization process, so there's no human error causing variances in the food. Train servers to know the menu inside and out so they can answer questions guests may have about specific dishes or ingredients.

And lastly, like with general customer service, take advantage of feedback from your guests. Ask them for their comments and concerns, both to make them feel heard, and to gather information about whether your food is as consistent as it should be.

Use their comments to identify any problems with your food consistency and address them head-on.

Modern customers, in all industries, have high expectations for customer service. But in restaurants, where there's so much competition, providing customer service that wows your guests is necessary if you want to stand out. Restaurant owners know that repeat business is a vital part of any eatery's success. Great customer service will beget happy, loyal customers who visit over and over again, which lays the foundation for years of success.

Customer service is what motivates people to come back to your restaurant. But your menu is what makes it profitable (or not). In the next section, we will go over strategies to help you optimize your menu to be more profitable.

We appreciate your feedback!

Name _____

Rate your experience

(1-poor 5 excellent)

Email _____

Food: 1 2 3 4 5

Phone _____

Ambience: 1 2 3 4 5

Time/Date of Meal _____

Service: 1 2 3 4 5

Will you be back? _____

Additional Comments

CHAPTER 7

Menu Hacking: Cost Per Meal & Smart Design to Maximize Profits

Written by: Chris Arnett

In this chapter:

- Understanding and calculating cost per meal
- How to maximize your menu's real estate
- Mixing menu design with psychology for maximum profit





CHAPTER 7



Menu Hacking: Cost Per Meal & Smart Design to Maximize Profits



The key to running a successful, profitable restaurant isn't the food or the service. Of course, those things are critical. It's a nonstarter—without good food and good service, people just won't eat at your restaurant.

But when you dig into what actually sets apart the most successful restaurants, chains, and franchises, it's not because they have the best dish or the nicest staff.

It's the math that makes the business work.

The bottom line for any restaurant is that it's a numbers game. In order to survive, you can't just create great food, have stellar marketing, or provide an awesome experience; you have to nail the operations part, too. And that means knowing your numbers and understanding how to manipulate the numbers in order to keep your business profitable and sustainable.

Many restaurant owners like to get right down to the nitty gritty; one of the most granular calculations you can get is the cost per meal. The reasoning is simple. You need to be aware of how much you're making from each of your menu items to properly budget and monitor costs and profits. While an overall projected sales figure is a great measure of financial health of a business, calculating the margin you're making per meal and menu item is one of the best ways to optimize your menu. We're not suggesting you base your entire menu structure on the dishes that make you the most money; obviously the items you're most passionate about will get special consideration.

When it comes to the overall health and success of your business, it pays to be mindful of the costs associated with them.

The Importance of Cost Per Meal

Cost per meal gives you the most accurate description of your food costs as they pertain to the volume of meals you're selling. Cost per meal is also the gateway to unlocking other powerful ways of looking at your business: Average cost per plate (the sum of all your dishes prices divided by the number of dishes), as well as quick-and-dirty calculations such as total costs vs profit per party (average dish price multiplied by number of seats filled).

You can also use a percentage approach per meal to understand the margin being driven by each individual dish. Even if you're at a consistent 32% overall food cost, for example, it's good to know if that cost is similar across all dishes, or if you have a number of dishes at varying percentages.

Having these numbers in mind can inform decisions such as which dishes to promote, which to redesign, and which to retire, depending on your overall strategy.

Calculating Cost Per Meal

This process can take quite a bit of time to master properly; don't get discouraged or attack this task halfheartedly.

As with any calculation, the deeper you're willing to go, the more accurate a picture you'll paint.

Many chefs will go as far as adding in costs for utilities and labour per meal. This is up to your own personal preference, but as we said before, the more ways in which you can analyze your business finances, the clearer picture you're going to get.

For our purposes, we're only going to analyze food costs when discussing cost per meal.

Cost per meal is calculated by simply adding up the total cost of the ingredients used to make the dish. You can also turn this into a percentage by then dividing the cost by the menu price.

Calculate your food costs at least twice: once before you start selling the item, then again about a week after you've added it to your menu. The second calculation will ensure (or show) that you're actually spending the same amount as your initial calculation.

A dramatic change in overall food costs may also be a good time to revise your calculations. The more often you're willing to run these numbers, the clearer a picture you'll have.

Maximizing Revenue and Profit

Low Popularity	High Popularity
Downplay or remove	Create a premium version
Promote as specials or use as a price anchor	Highlight these dishes prominently

Maximizing Revenue and Profit

By analyzing your menu, either by hand or via the output from your POS, you'll begin to notice some dishes will rise to the top and some will sink to the bottom.

There are many ways to look at this, but the general consensus is to approach analyzing your dishes by breaking them

into four segments. Do this for each section of your menu so you have a list for every section customers would potentially order from (Appetizers, Desserts, Mains, etc).

Be ruthless when you do this! Categorizing your menu in this way allows you to have an accurate sense of which dishes are your stars and which could stand to be reevaluated.

Your menu can then be updated accordingly: High Profit, High Popularity: Highlight these dishes and ensure your menu focuses on them prominently.

Low Profit, High Popularity: Crowd pleasers, don't tuck them away but don't focus all your energy on them. Consider adding a version that you can sell at a premium (such as a sampler that contains elements of several of these dishes), or provide add ons that can help you increase profits while adding to the experience.

High Profit, Low Popularity: Consider highlighting these, or asking your staff to promote these items. You could try lowering the price to see what happens, or consider redesigning the presentation. Either way, make sure you reserve some of your key menu space for these items.

Low Profit, Low Popularity: Often times you can't simply remove this item; maybe it's standard fare for your type of cuisine, or one that holds deep emotional connection. Take an objective view and don't focus too heavily on these items, but don't allow them to take up prime menu real estate either.

Maximizing Prime Menu Real Estate

Menu experts agree on something called the "Golden Triangle" when it comes to menu placement.

Namely, this is the tendency of most customers to look first at the upper-middle section of a menu, followed by the upper right then upper left corners.

Experts recommend placing your most profitable dishes in this Golden Triangle for optimal viewing. This does not necessarily mean the most expensive items live here, but, instead, your most profitable ones.



Menu Design Meets Psychology

Behavioural psychology is one of the most fascinating and overlooked fields for an aspiring business owner.

Subtle forces that can influence and affect people's behaviours are innumerable. There are a few that you should keep in mind when designing your menu, if for no other reason than to be aware of the possible effects your design decisions may have.

In addition, it's great to maintain an informed perspective on your patrons and industry overall.

Menu Colour

The colour of your menu highlights can create powerful associations in a customer's mind. Green can inspire feelings of fresh quality produce, whereas red is associated with speed and passion, and pastels can offer a calming effect while encouraging contemplation²⁵.

There are a wealth of resources on colour theory and colour's emotional psychology²⁶. Consider these factors when deciding how and where to highlight on your menu, in addition to your overall decor.



²⁵ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/habits-not-hacks/201408/color-psychology-how-colors-influence-the..>

²⁶ <https://www.colormatters.com/color-and-design/basic-color-theory>

Menu Pricing

Pricing can be a matter of contrasts, with the second- or third-most expensive menu items often being the top sellers (as opposed to the highest or lowest cost items).

This is because the highest priced item on the menu sets the bar for a diner's expectations.

This phenomenon, known as price anchoring, is well known. Keep this in mind when pricing out your menu²⁷.

If your second- or third-highest priced dishes are also those with thin food cost margins, check to see how much of the remaining menu is being compromised. Consider an adjustment to either costs going into the dish, or the price being displayed to your customers.

Extremeness Aversion

By the same token, the most and least expensive dishes on your menu may suffer from what is known as extremeness aversion—a documented phenomenon that essentially describes human's tendency to gravitate towards the middle of the pack when faced with choices representing a series of extremes²⁸.

Keep this in mind when forecasting and planning your menu. Items on either side of the average may suffer from a lack of popularity, no matter how delicious they are.

Consider listing items or sizes in an array that you can accommodate, and expect customers to gravitate towards the middle of the pack when presented with a range of choices.

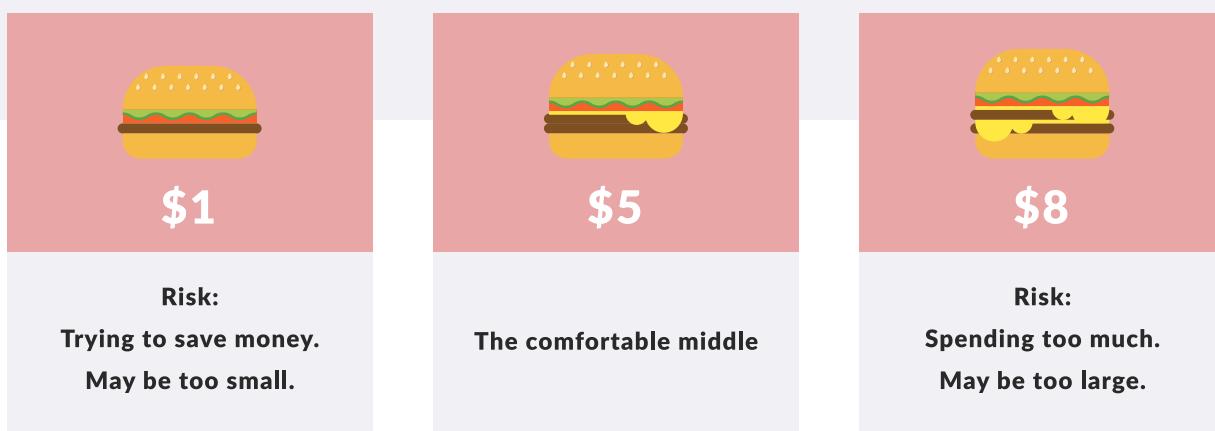
At the end of the day, there are many factors that will make your restaurant successful and profitable.

But one of the most important components—and the part that is often most difficult for restaurateurs—is getting the numbers right. Figuring out how to maximize the business operations can be a difficult and confusing challenge. But it's not impossible.

Use these calculations and “menu hacking” tricks to maximize your revenue and increase your profits.

In the next section, we will be focusing on some more key numbers and metrics you should be measuring or looking out for as a restauranteur or chef.

Extreme Aversion



²⁷ <https://www.priceintelligently.com/blog/bid/181199/price-anchoring-to-optimize-your-pricing-strategy>

²⁸ <https://www.economics.com/whatis/extremeness-aversion/>

CHAPTER 8

14 Essential Restaurant Metrics Every Owner Should Measure and Track

Written by: Chris Arnett

In this chapter:

- Calculations to help you understand how food costs are affecting your bottom line
- Tools to help you understand if you're putting the appropriate amount of money into each part of your business





CHAPTER 8

14 Essential Restaurant Metrics Every Owner Should Measure and Track

Whether you're just starting to price out your dream restaurant or checking on the overall health of your business, there are several metrics you should continually keep track of.

These metrics represent different ways of looking at the health of a business—allowing you to set goals, identify trends both positive and negative, and accurately gauge results of the operational tweaks you may make to your restaurant.

Metric #1: Break-Even Point

What it is:

Simply put, your “break-even point” is the point at which your business revenue is equal to your restaurant’s expenses and operating costs.

Why it's important:

This calculation takes into account all the costs you'll incur while running your business, then outlines your sales threshold. A sales threshold is the amount of monthly sales you'll have to make in order to turn a profit.

How to calculate:

1. Say your restaurant sells **\$20,000 worth** of products for the month of July.
2. If you paid **\$5,000** in variable costs, and **\$7,000** in fixed costs, your break-even point for the month would be **\$9,333.33**.
3. This means that your restaurant begins turning a profit after selling **\$9,333.33** worth of goods or services.

Equation:

$$\text{Break Even Point} = \frac{\text{Total Fixed Costs}}{[(\text{Total Sales} - \text{Total Variable Costs}) / \text{Total Sales}]}$$

Example:

- In this example, **\$20,000 - \$5,000** (Sales minus Variable Cost) equals **\$15,000**.
- **\$15,000** divided by **\$20,000** equals **0.75**.
- **\$7,000 (fixed costs)** divided by **0.75** gives you a break-even point of **\$9,333.33**.

When to calculate:

Calculate your break-even point before you open your business, then adjust accordingly as you accrue various business expenses. Use this figure to quickly justify a big new purchase or launch a marketing campaign.

Good to know:

- **Variable Costs** = Costs that may change due to business or environmental factors. These could include food and labor costs based on how busy your restaurant is, heating and cooling in winter and summer months, or advertising and marketing.
- **Fixed Costs** = Costs which typically do not change, such as rent, utilities, and salary, also known as ‘overhead’ as outlined below.

Metric #2: Overhead Rate

What it is:

Fixed costs (or overhead) are just that—repeating, expected business expenses that typically do not change in cost, which are invoiced then paid on a periodic basis. These could include rent, insurance, property taxes, equipment rentals, utilities, and monthly or non-rate driven employee salaries. When calculated as a rate, this tells you how much you are spending each day, week, month, or year just to keep the doors open.

Why it's important:

Calculating an overhead rate helps you understand just how much it costs just to keep your doors open on a day-to-day, or even hourly basis.

How to calculate:

1. **Go through all the monthly bills** your prospective restaurant may receive and total the cost for these expenses. This gives you a total fixed cost.
2. **Determine a fiscal period**—many restaurants use 13, 28-day periods.
3. **Calculate how many total hours your business will be open** for the specified month.
 - a. ***Be sure to pay attention to the number of days in each month** to accurately calculate your overhead rate. “Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November; all the rest have thirty-one, except for February alone.”
4. **Divide the total fixed cost by the total number of hours** your business will be open for the month to determine an overhead rate.

Example:

- Say your total fixed costs for the month are **\$7,000** and your restaurant is open **8 hours a day, 7 days a week**.
- For a 31-day month, $8 \text{ (hours)} \times 31 \text{ (days)}$ means your **business is open for a total of 248 hours**.
- For a **28-day month, 8 (hours) x 28 (days)** means **your business is open for a total of 224 hours**.

Take the total fixed costs and divide by the total number of hours your restaurant will be open for the month.

- **\$7,000 (fixed costs)** divided by **248 (hours)** gives an overhead of **\$1,580.88 per week, \$225.84 per day, and \$28.23 per hour**.
- **\$7,000 (fixed costs)** divided by **224 (hours)** gives an overhead of **\$1750.00 per week, \$250.00 per day, and \$31.25 per hour**.

When to calculate:

One's overhead can be calculated using actual figures (from past bills and receipts) or projected figures (by making an educated guess). Using projected figures is a great way to determine a forecasted overhead rate, which can be useful when mapping out operational processes before opening your business. Using actual figures shows how the operational tweaks you make impact your day-to-day business.

Equation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Hours Open for Month}}{\text{Total hours open per day} \times \text{Total days in month}}$$

$$\text{Overhead Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Fixed Costs}}{\text{Total Hours Open for Month}}$$

Metric #3: Food Costs

What it is:

Your food cost is the amount you spend on food per month, taking into account inventory at the beginning of the month, purchases made within the month, and any goods left over at the end of the month.

Food costs are one aspect of the total cost of goods sold (CoGS), but may not include all of the costs that go into the equation.

Why it's important:

Use this calculation to continuously monitor your supply of ingredients and inventory.

How to calculate:

1. **Determine a period to measure**—a good way to go about this is once each month, or each time you purchase goods.
2. **Determine the value of the inventory** you have left over from the **previous period**.
3. **Calculate the sum of your total purchases for the period.** This is typically the food you've purchased for the month.
4. **Determine the value of the inventory** you have left over at the **end of the period**.

5. **Subtract the total you have left over** at the end of the period, from the **total you had left over at the beginning of the period**.
6. **Add this new number** (the difference) to your total purchases to determine your CoGS.

Equation:

$$\text{Food Cost} = \text{Total Purchases} + (\text{Total Leftover Inventory from Previous Month} - \text{Total Ending Inventory})$$

Example:

- At the beginning of July, **your inventory was worth \$1,500** (leftover from June's inventory).
- At the end of July, **your inventory was worth \$500** (meaning you used up \$1,000 worth of inventory goods during July).
- During this same period, **you also purchased \$2,000 worth of goods** for your business.
- **\$2,000 [Total Purchases] + (\$1500 [Starting Inventory] - \$500 [Ending Inventory]) = \$3,000**, meaning your total food costs or CoGS during the month of July would be \$3,000.

When to calculate:

At least once per month, or each time you purchase a large amount of goods.

Total Restaurant Operating Costs



Metric #4: Food Cost Percentage (Theoretical)

What it is:

The percentage of a dish's selling price that it costs to create it. Said differently, the percentage of your dishes' prices that are taken up by the cost of the food used in that dish.

Eventually you'll want to compare your business' food costs with industry standards, so the way in which you calculate these figures should be consistent with industry practices.

Industry averages are based on the Uniform System of Accounts for Restaurants: A Guide to Standardized Restaurant Accounting, Financial Controls, Record-Keeping and Relevant Tax Matters, a standard textbook for North American restaurant accounting since the late 50's²⁹.

Why it's important:

Determining a food cost percentage allows you to know how much you're spending on the food used in your meals and use that to determine or update pricing. Generally speaking, food cost percentages should account for 25%-35% of an individual dish. For example, if it costs \$1 to create a taco, it's wise to sell this item for around \$2.90 (35%) to \$4.00 (25%). Food costs and labor costs combined should account for 50%-65% of total sales.

How to calculate:

1. **Determine a period** — one way to go about this is to collect all the elements which will be included in your food cost calculations (gross sales, inventories, and purchases) and create your period based on this timeframe. For example, if you purchase goods and do inventory twice per month, check your food cost percentage on a bi-weekly basis.
2. **Determine your total gross sales** — for this period let's say you sold \$20,000 worth of food and beverages.
3. **Determine your food cost (CoGS)** using the calculation above.
4. **Calculate your food cost %** using the calculation below.
5. **Multiple by 100 to get a percentage.**

Equation:

$$\text{Food Cost \%} = \frac{\text{Estimated Food Cost}}{\text{Menu Price}} \times 100$$

Example:

- For the month of July, let's say your **gross food sales were \$20,000** and your **food costs (COGS) was \$3,000**
- $\$3,000 \text{ (food costs)} / \$20,000 \text{ (total gross sales)} = .15$
- **Multiply by 100 to get a food cost percentage of 15%**

When to calculate:

Before you open your business, then routinely as your costs fluctuate.

²⁹ <https://www.amazon.com/Uniform-System-Accounts-Restaurants-Standardized/dp/1931400733>

Metric #5: Labour Cost Percentage

What it is:

Similar to food cost percentage, labour cost and its percentage is the amount you spend on labour relative to the total sales for a given period. Minimum wage and tip amounts, beverage sales, quality of food and service, pricing, and hours of operation all greatly impact your food and labour costs.

Why it's important: Much like food costs, labour costs, when analyzed month-over-month, can quickly help you identify operational issues within your business.

How to calculate:

1. **Determine a period**—a good way to go about this is once each month, or each time you pay your employees.
2. **Determine your total labour costs**, taking into account your company's payroll, taxes, and benefits.
3. **Determine your total sales** - for this period let's say you sold \$20,000.
4. **Calculate your labour cost %** using the calculation below.
5. **Move decimal 2 places** to the right to get a percentage.

Equation:

$$\text{Labour Cost \%} = \frac{\text{Labour Cost}}{\text{Total Gross Sales}}$$

Example:

Let's continue using the month of July where your total gross food sales were \$20,000. For this same period, you determined your labour costs were \$2,000.

- $\$2,000 \text{ (labour costs)} / \$20,000 \text{ (total gross sales)}$
 $= 0.10$
- Move the decimal 2 places to the right to get a labour cost percentage of 10%

When to calculate:

At least once per month, or each time you pay your employees.

Good to know:

Neither food nor labour costs alone will give you an accurate measurement of success. To determine this figure, combine both your food and labour costs to get what's known as your "prime costs" for the month.

Metric #6: “Prime” Costs

What it is:

Combined, your food and labour costs are often referred to as Prime Costs.

Why it's important:

This combined total displays all the money and manpower necessary to run your business. When maintained, this figure can quickly inform future buying or operational decisions by letting you know your expected spend for the month.

*The industry consensus is that prime costs should make up around 60% of your total restaurant costs in order to be consistently profitable.

How to calculate:

1. **Determine a period**—it's wise to sync this up to your existing food and labour cost periods.
2. **Determine your total food costs (CoGS)** using the calculation above.
3. **Determine your total labour costs**, taking into account your company's payroll, taxes, and benefits.
4. **Calculate your prime cost %** using the calculation below.
5. **Move decimal 2 places** to the right to get a percentage.

Equation:

$$\text{Prime Cost} = \text{CoGS} + \text{Labour Cost}$$

Example:

As determined above, for the month of July, your food costs totalled \$3,000, and your labour costs totalled \$2,000.

- $\$3,000 \text{ (CoGS)} + \$2,000 \text{ (Labour Costs)} = \$5,000 \text{ (Prime Costs)}$
- $\$5,000 / \$20,000 = .25$
- **Move the decimal 2 places to the right** to get a labour cost percentage of 25%

Prime costs should hover around 60% or lower to be consistently profitable.

When to calculate:

At least once per month, or each time you need to make a crucial purchase for your business.

Restaurant "Prime" Cost



Metric #7: Gross Margin

What it is:

Gross margin is your total gross sales minus your total cost of goods sold.

Why it's important:

Gross margin is another way of measuring your CoGS percentage and gives you insight about changes you may need to make in purchasing or pricing your dishes. Keep in mind that this is not your profit, because it does not include additional costs like labour and overhead.

How to calculate:

1. **Determine a period**—it's wise to sync this up to an existing fiscal period such as inventory, accounting, or delivery dates.
2. **Determine your total gross monthly sales** by collecting receipts and figures from the sale of all goods for the month (food, beverages, merchandise).
3. **Determine your total food costs (CoGS)** using the calculation above.
4. **Subtract your CoGS from your total gross sales** to determine a gross margin.

Equation:

$$\text{Gross Margin} = \text{Total Gross Sales} - \text{CoGS}$$

Example:

- During the month of July, let's say **your restaurant sold \$20,000 in total gross sales**.
- We've already determined that **our COGS is \$3,000**.
- **\$20,000 (total gross sales) - \$3,000 (COGS) = \$17,000 (gross margin)**
- Expressed as a percentage: **\$17,000 / \$20,000 = .85**
- **Multiply by 100 to get a percentage**. Gross margin is **85% of your gross sales**. Your expenses (in this case food costs) would **make up 15% of your gross sales**.

When to calculate:

At the end of each fiscal period, or whenever you'd like a pulse on your business' finances.

Metric #8: Net Profit

What it is:

Your net profit is the total revenue earned for the fiscal period after deducting all expenses. This is the amount you'll have left in your pocket once all is said and done.

Why it's important:

Net profit tells you how much money you have left after you account for all expenses.

How to calculate:

1. **Determine a period**—it's wise to sync this up to your prime cost period.
2. **Determine your total gross monthly sales** by collecting receipts and figures from the sale of all goods for the month (food, beverages, merchandise).
3. **Determine your prime costs** using the calculation.
4. **Determine your overhead costs** using the calculation.
5. **Subtract your total costs from your total gross sales** to determine a net profit.

Equation:

$$\text{Net Profit} = \text{Total Gross Sales} - \text{Prime Costs} - \text{Overhead}$$

Example:

- Let's use this same \$20,000, and the **prime cost of \$5,000** listed above for the month of July to determine our net profit.
- $\$20,000 \text{ (total gross sales)} - \$5,000 \text{ (prime costs)} - \$7,000 \text{ (overhead)} = \$8,000 \text{ (net profit)}$
- Expressed as a percentage: $\$8,000 \text{ (net profit)} / \$20,000 \text{ (total gross sales)} = .40$
- Multiply by 100 to get a percentage. Net profit is **40% of your gross sales**. Your total expenses (prime costs plus overhead) would make up **60% of your gross sales**.

When to calculate:

At the end of each fiscal period, or whenever you'd like a pulse on your business' finances.

Average Restaurant Operating Costs



Metric #9: Profit Margin

What it is:

Your profit margin is the percentage of your gross sales that then become net profit.

Why it's important:

This is a final tally on what portion of your restaurant's revenue is left over after accounting for all of the costs that go into making the food and running the business.

How to calculate:

1. To express your net profits as a profit margin percentage, **divide your net profit by your total gross monthly sales.**
2. **Multiply by 100 to get a percentage.**

Equation:

$$\text{Profit Margin \%} = \frac{\text{Net Profit}}{\text{Total Gross Sales}}$$

Example:

1. **\$8,000 (net profit) / \$20,000 (gross sales) = .40**
2. **Multiply by 100 to get a percentage—net profit margin of 40%**
3. Notice that profit margin and net profit percentage is the same calculation

When to check it:

At the end of each fiscal period, or whenever you'd like a pulse on your business' finances.

Metric #10: Table Turnover Rate

What it is:

Table turnover rate is a measure of how many dining parties are served within a specified period.

Why it's important:

Based on the type of restaurant you're running, turnover rates will be different. Fast casual restaurants with a lower price point will have a higher turnover rate, where a more laid back, but higher-in price establishment will have a lower one, often making the number of sales/time in drinks or desserts.

Keeping an eye on this metric can help you determine how much staff you'll need during certain periods.

How to calculate:

1. For a given time period, **count the number of dining parties served at a given table, for several tables.**
2. **Add the number of parties served together and divide by the number of tables.**

Metric #11: Employee Turnover Rate

What it is:

The percentage of employees that leave (quit or fired) within a given time period.

Why it's important:

This figure gives you insight into how quickly employees are coming and going from your restaurant and allow you to plan for future hiring based on estimated turnover.

How to calculate:

1. **Choose a time period** (1 month, 3 months, 6 months, etc).
2. **Determine the number of employees** at the beginning of the period.
3. **Add the number of employees hired** within that period.
4. **Subtract the number of employees remaining** at the end of the period.
5. **Divide by the number of employees** from the beginning of the period.
6. **Multiply by 100 to get a percentage.**

Metric #12: Guest Check Average

What it is:

This number gives you the average amount spent per guest in your restaurant.

Why it's important:

With your guest check average, you can forecast future revenues based on changes like increased traffic or larger tables. This allows you to decide the relative value of investments like marketing and advertising based on their estimated effect in total diner traffic.

How to calculate:

1. **Choose a time period.**
2. **Calculate your gross sales** over that time period.
3. **Divide your gross sales** by the **total number of seats/tickets** within that same time period.

Metric #13: Seating Capacity

What it is:

An estimate of the number of diners that can be seated in your restaurant at the same time.

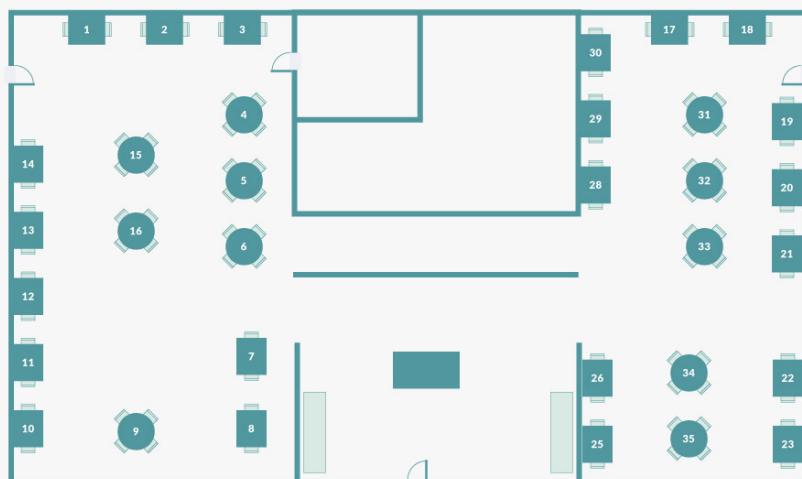
Why it's important:

Taken together with your table turnover rate and average ticket size, this number will tell you the maximum revenue your restaurant can possibly generate within a given time period. This is also a valuable way to compare your restaurant's actual seating versus the theoretical capacity in order to maximize the space.

How to calculate:

1. **Measure the total square footage** of your restaurant's front of house area.
2. **Measure and subtract the square footage** of any non-dining space (e.g., waiting area, beverage station, cash register, etc).
3. **Divide the total amount of space by 15 (assuming 15 square feet of space per average diner).**

How to Optimize Seating Capacity



- 1 **Measure the total square footage of your restaurant's front of house area.**
- 2 **Measure and subtract the square footage of any non-dining space (e.g., waiting area, beverage station, cash register, etc).**
- 3 **Divide the total amount of space by 15 (assuming 15 square feet of space per average diner).**

Metric #14: Percentage of Repeat Customers

What it is:

The proportion of customers that come back to your restaurant within a certain time period.

Why it's important:

Measures the loyalty of your patrons and how likely individual diners are to come back to your restaurant after dining there once.

This is a great metric for restaurants that've been keeping diligent records. If you haven't, that's alright, but keep it in mind when it comes time to upgrade your technology so you don't miss the opportunity.

How to calculate:

1. **Choose a time period (3 months, 6 months, 12 months).**
2. **Calculate the total number of customers** served within that time period.
3. **Use your POS, CRM, or other technology to calculate the number of unique customers** within that time period.
4. **Subtract the number of unique customers from the number of total customers** to calculate the number of repeat customers.
5. **Divide the number of unique customers** by the **number of total customers** within that time period.



How to Measure and Use These Metrics

Numbers are great, but how you use them is what ultimately matters.

When you measure these metrics, they give you impactful insights into your restaurant business and how it's running. But you need to know how to use that data in order to learn and improve.

Here are some general rules to follow:

Always Use Apples to Apples Comparisons

In most cases, it's wise to establish a period that you'd like to analyze, and keep it consistent across all metrics. This could be a weekly period, 28-day cycle, or quarterly basis usually determined by the fiscal demands of your business. This allows you to set a baseline for your calculations, sync goals and achievements, and ensures you're always comparing apples to apples when discussing different metrics.

Take a Full View of Restaurant Operations

Don't use singular metrics, instead, analyze several aspects of your business at once. One metric alone won't give you an overall picture of your business' health but using several in conjunction will give further insight.

Measure from the Bottom Up

When it comes to calculating metrics, begin with the more specific calculations first. Once that's completed it's easy to use these figures to do your high-level equations next. Most restaurant accounting software will help you make these calculations in real-time.

For example, when calculating break-even point, one would start by subtracting variable costs from sales, then dividing this by your total sales to get a percentage. Carry this percentage further into the equation to easily determine your break-even point!

Stay Diligent

Your metrics will only be as accurate as you are disciplined and diligent when creating them. The more effort you put into these calculations from the get-go, the easier they will be to update and maintain in the future. Carefully gather data and try to account for the wide array of variable costs and factors that may affect the overall health of your business. A seasoned restaurateur can tell you that keeping your analytical house in order is the most crucial step to having a full understanding of your business.

Lucky for you, we're in the age of tech — there are several tools out there to help make running a restaurant easier. In the next section, we cover the 19 tech tools that will help your restaurant run more smoothly, and keep you sane from all of the craziness that comes with running a restaurant.

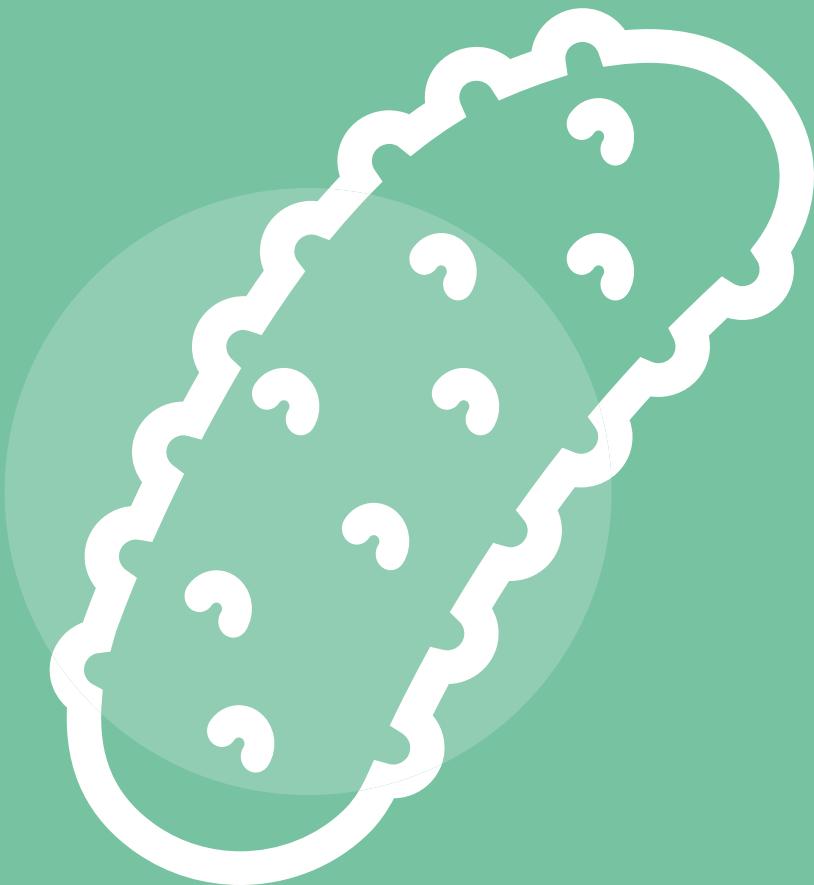
CHAPTER 9

The 19 Tech Tools You Need to Run a Successful Restaurant

Written by: Sean Hurley

In this chapter:

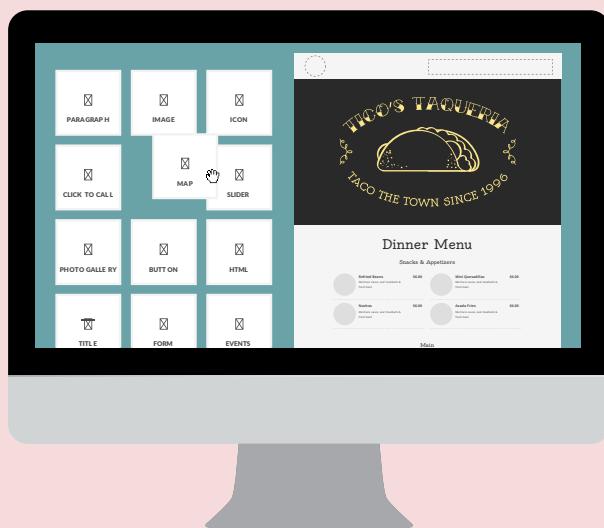
- The tools you need to build and run a website
- Technology tools to consider for your FoH and BoH operations
- The applications you need to get social with customers



CHAPTER 9

The 19 Tech Tools You Need to Run a Successful Restaurant

Running a restaurant isn't easy. Between the stress, the long hours, the startup costs and the razor-thin profit margins, you have enough on your plate.



It's 2018, and there are countless applications and other technology tools that can help make the modern restaurateur's job easier — or, at the very least, a little more efficient.

Technology can't run the restaurant for you (yet), but it can sure help. Here are some of our top picks for apps and tech tools that will help streamline the job.

How to Develop a Dazzling Website for your Restaurant

Every restaurant needs an online presence. Luckily, there are tons of platforms geared specifically toward restaurants, offering both hosting and content management in a one-stop shop.

[Restaurant Hill Website Builder for Restaurants](#)

Restaurant Hill provides an easy-to-use website builder with an intuitive interface and a ton of useful, advanced features. It offers hundreds of attractive, professionally designed templates and themes that will fit whatever your restaurant serves.

[Wix Free Website Creator for Restaurants](#)

Wix is a popular free website builder that offers restaurant-specific templates and tools. Its easy interface makes designing your business website simple and quick.

[HappyTables Free Website Builder for Restaurants](#)

Tons of advanced, free features make HappyTables an easy choice for many restaurants, both new and established. Unlike many other free website builders, you can customize your template, allowing your shop to really stand out.

[Jimdo Free Builder for Restaurants](#)

Jimdo might be one of the easiest website builders out there — all you need is a few photos of your restaurant, a menu, and some basic info. Once you plug it all in, Jimdo's Dolphin AI website builder sets it into a sleek template and you have a functional website in three minutes.

[Let's Eat Free Website Builder for Restaurants](#)

More than 15,000 restaurants use Let's Eat for their web hosting and design, and it's easy to see why. A simple interface and plenty of useful, restaurant industry-specific features make it user friendly and provide everything you need for your restaurant's web presence.



Comparison

Looking for specific features or price point for your website? Find the platform that best suits your needs here.

Restaurant Website Builders

	Price	Premium Plans	Mobile Friendly?	Key Features
Restaurant Hill	FREE	\$29/mo. Pro plan	Yes, with Pro plan	Secure hosting, online menu, online ordering, table booking, pizza constructor tool, blog, events calendar, recipes
Wix	FREE	\$5/mo. to connect domain \$8.50/mo. eCommerce \$25/mo. VIP	YES	Online menus, OpenTable booking integration, Google Maps integration, social media integration, customer reviews, events calendar
Happy Tables	FREE	\$39/mo. Pro \$390/year Pro	YES	Domain connection, online menus. With Professional plan, reservations, online ordering, daily menus, newsletters, priority support
Jimdo	FREE	\$20/mo. Business \$30/mo. SEO Plus \$40/mo. Platinum	YES	With premium plans, domain connection, online menu, online ordering, maps, events calendar
Let's Eat	Free for first 14 days, then \$10/mo. Or \$99/year	N/A	YES	Domain connection, online menu, online ordering, online booking, events calendar, maps, social media integration, email newsletters

Make Point of Sale (POS) Efficient and Simple

Ever been working when the POS went down? It's a nightmare for everyone in the restaurant, from management to service staff to customers. Avoid that by getting the best POS software out there.

Toast

Toast is one of the very few Android POS systems on the market, which gives it increased flexibility and affordability. Toast also comes with a community where users share best use tips.

TouchBistro

TouchBistro is iPad based, which keeps hardware costs low. It also offers a free trial program so you can test run it before you commit.

Square POS

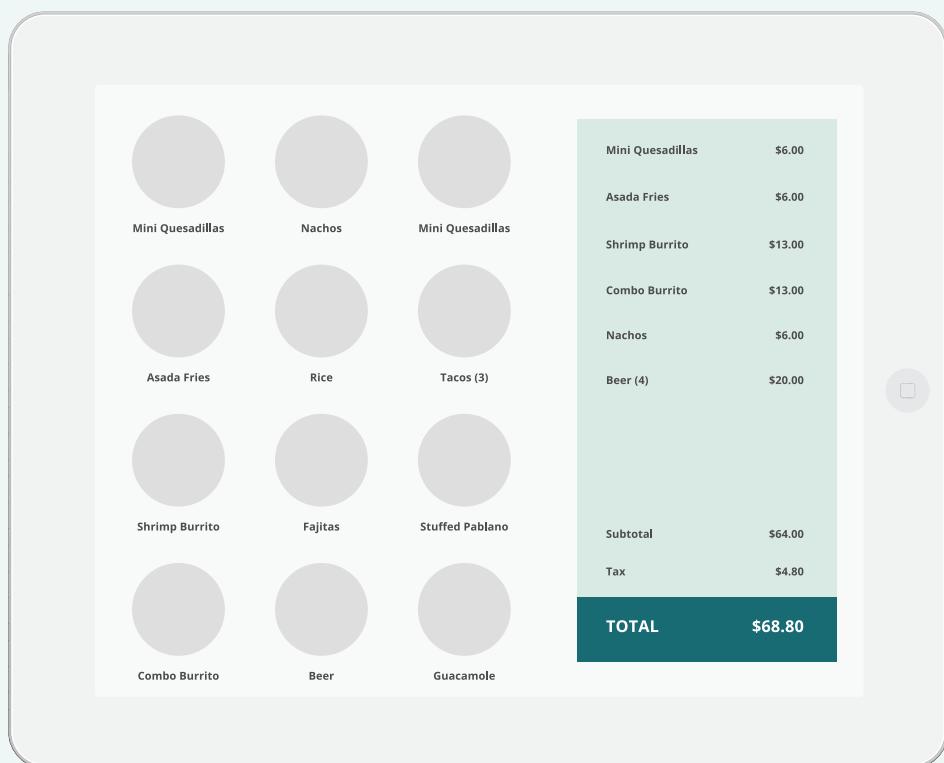
Square supports Windows, Mac, Android and iOS to offer all the essential POS capabilities in a simple interface. There's a reason it's one of the most popular POS platforms on the market, and has been for years.

Lightspeed Restaurant

Lightspeed Restaurant is cloud-based, and streamlines the entire process of managing your restaurant, with useful features and a built-in accounting system.

Revel Systems POS

Revel Systems offers one of the most customizable and scalable POS systems out there, allowing you to size your platform for your needs, and integrate only the features that will be most helpful for your business.



Comparison

Find the exact features and price point you're looking for below.

P.O.S. Systems

	Price	Key Features
Toast	Varies by restaurant. Request a pricing plan quote.	All-in-one platform, Android functionality, real-time reports on any internet enabled device, guest database, inventory management, gift cards, loyalty program, online ordering and delivery, expert installation and support
TouchBistro POS	\$69/mo. to \$399/mo., depending on number of terminals needed. Starting at one, up to unlimited	Tableside ordering, mobile payment processing, floor plan management, CRM, staff management, real-time reports on an internet enabled device, menu and inventory management, 24-7 support
Square POS	As little as 2.75 percent per transaction, with free hardware. Most advanced POS systems are available; see pricing info here.	Invoicing, gift cards, customer feedback, customer profiles, email marketing, offline payments, next-day deposits, inventory managements, purchase orders, vendor lists, employee accounts and permissions, 24-7 support

Handle your Books, Don't Let Them Handle you

Xero

Xero is one of the most popular small business accounting platforms available. It offers real-time reporting and features that will help streamline your entire accounting process.

Quickbooks

Most business owners are already familiar with Quickbooks, one of the most popular accounting platforms for all small business. With a host of restaurant-specific features, Quickbooks is ready to streamline your restaurant accounting.

Wave

Wave makes it easy to handle your accounting essentials, all in the cloud so your information is accessible from anywhere.

Restaurant365

Restaurant365 is, obviously, designed specifically for restaurants, meaning it offers all the features that will make integration with your business as smooth as possible.

Comparison

The most important factor in choosing accounting software is whether it integrates with your existing platforms, like your POS. So check that first. If you're looking for specific features or price points, see below.

Accounting

	Price	Key Features
Xero	\$9/mo. Starter plan \$30/mo. Standard plan \$70/mo. Premium plan	Invoicing, inventory, payroll, bank connections and reconciliation, bill paying, expenses, mobile app, real-time reporting, purchase orders, contacts, sales tax calculation, free 24-7 support
Quickbooks	\$17/mo. Essentials plan \$30/mo. Plus plan	Automated accounting, cost management, instant and automatic reporting, integration with other popular restaurant management apps, receipt scanning, payroll, bank syncing, tax deductions
Wave	Free, with premium add-ons for online payments and payroll	Cloud accounting, bank syncing, automated reporting, invoicing, receipt scanning, payroll, integration with other popular restaurant management apps
Restaurant 365	\$249/mo. Essentials plan \$299/mo. Professional plan Volume discounts available for franchises	Budgeting, sales forecasting, inventory management, POS integration, bank syncing, payroll, reporting, vendor management. With Professional plan: Scheduling, recipes, smart ordering and prep, catering, enterprise reporting access

Find the Right Talent

One of the most important parts of running your restaurant is having talented, skilled staff. Try these recruiting apps and sites to find the best.

Glassdoor

A job board, but also a roundup of crowdsourced information on what it's like to work for a company.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is one of the most-utilized job-searching tools available, meaning you'll find a ton of quality applicants.

Indeed

One of the top job sites on the web, with 200 million visitors each month.

Monster

A popular, well-known job searching site where plenty of qualified applicants will see your posting.

Comparison

Find the best talent without having to shell out for a recruiter using these budget-friendly online job boards.

Hiring

	Price	Key Features
Glassdoor	Free, with premium features for finding the best candidates	Free job posting, precision targeting, analytics, posting boosts
LinkedIn	Free, with premium features available	Free job posting, large network of candidates, review and filter candidates, message prospective hires directly
Indeed	Free, with option to sponsor posts starting at \$5/day	Free job posting, email alerts for job-seekers, performance metrics. With sponsorship: placement on partner sites
Monster	\$295 Standard plan \$329 Enhanced plan \$529 Premium plan	Job posting on partner and social networks, job posting on local newspaper sites, email alerts for job-seekers, AI-matched resumes, multi-user access for team collaboration

Get the Food Out the Door... Fast

In 2018, no one needs to leave their house or office for a quality meal. If you plan to deliver to your customers, check out these partners.

Ubereats

Deliver meals to Uber customers quickly and conveniently. Orders can even be placed while riding in an Uber, and timed to arrive concurrently.

Seamless

Customers order online to have their favorites brought to their door, with daily discounts and deals.

Postmates

Postmates delivers from restaurants in major markets, but also from other types of retail stores, making it a go-to for many customers.

Doordash

A delivery service that also puts effort into decreasing food waste.



Comparison

Delivery Aids

	Price	Available In
Ubereats	A percentage of your sales on Ubereats.	Cities in North and South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. See site for more details.
Seamless	A marketing percentage from every sale. The more you pay, the more views your menu gets. Also a percentage from each delivery fee.	660+ US cities. See site for more details.
Postmates	A commission on products sold using Postmates.	More than 100 cities in the US and Mexico. See site for more details.
Doordash	A percentage of your sales on Doordash.	More than 250 US cities. See site for more details.

Get Social with your Customers

One of the most important parts of running your restaurant is having talented, skilled staff. Try these recruiting apps and sites to find the best.

Facebook

The most-used social media platform allows you to share status updates, restaurant contact and location information, and customer reviews—all for free. You can also pay for ads and “boosted” posts, guaranteeing more potential customers will see your content.

Instagram

Great for posting dinner specials and mouth-watering customer pics, Instagram is a photo-based platform that will really let you show off how appetizing your wares look. With a business account, you can link straight to your website from your profile page.

Twitter

Good for short updates and interacting with customers, a strong Twitter presence will make your customer service stand out from the crowd.

YouTube

Want to walk customers through your menu, give a video tour of the restaurant or introduce your staff? YouTube’s video sharing platform is the place to do it.

Comparison

Almost all social media profiles are free, and since they all offer different features and reach a different kind of audience, the more of them you use, the better.

A Game-Changing Solution for your Supply Chain

Now that you’re set up to conquer everything from your web presence, to your approach, to delivery, it’s time to start rethinking about one of the most essential aspects of your business: your suppliers.

When it comes to their supply chain, virtually all restaurants are looking to secure lower prices, better quality (and increasingly, local) ingredients, and to do so with as little hassle as possible.

[ChefHero](#) is a one-stop shop where you can get all of that done.

If you’re looking to switch up your supply game and take your business forward, ChefHero is a key tech tool for your arsenal.

Now that you’ve got your restaurant up and running smoothly, it’s time to think about the environment and your restaurants carbon footprint. In the next section, we’ll walk you through the simple changes you can make to your restaurant to make it more eco-friendly.

CHAPTER 10

Greener Tomorrow: A Step-By-Step Guide to Running an Eco-Conscious Restaurant

Written by: Hiba Amin

In this chapter:

- Learn about the ways to reduce your restaurants footprint
- Food safe ways to reuse materials
- How to improve your recycling program





CHAPTER 10

Greener Tomorrow: A Step-By-Step Guide to Running an Eco-Conscious Restaurant

It's no secret that consumers are becoming more eco-conscious. They want green products, sustainable manufacturing and ethically sourced products.

And restaurants can benefit from this push for sustainability³⁰. Many modern-day consumers are willing to pay more for ethically sourced, sustainably manufactured goods and services³¹. And that means diners are often willing to pay more to eat at restaurants that practice environmentalism.

Implementing good, eco-conscious practices can help give you an edge over your local competition. It can also help you build a positive rapport with your local community, especially those who strive to reduce their impact in their own lives.

No matter what changes you make to your restaurant to make it more sustainable and environmentally friendly, be sure to let your local community know about them. Advertise on your website or social media. Tell your diners when they come to your restaurant. Word will spread, and it'll bring more and more eco-conscious diners to your door.

First, you have to make some changes. Here's a step-by-step guide to running an ecologically conscious restaurant.

³⁰ <https://canadabusiness.ca/business-planning/writing-your-business-plan/#toc6>

³¹ <https://www.sustridge.com/single-post/Sustainability-in-the-Restaurant-Industry-Time-to-Fire-It-Up>

Reduce

The first step is to reduce. There are a ton of usage numbers you can reduce, and each will reduce your overall footprint.

First, reduce your energy usage. One of the easiest ways to do this is to install energy efficient lighting. There's a cost requirement upfront, but that can be offset in many places by government initiatives that incentivize businesses to install LEDs or other footprint-reducing lighting.

If you're opening a new restaurant, try to choose a space that has large windows. This allows you to use natural light in lieu of electricity during the day. And opening the windows on warm days to let in a breeze can help you keep air conditioner use down.

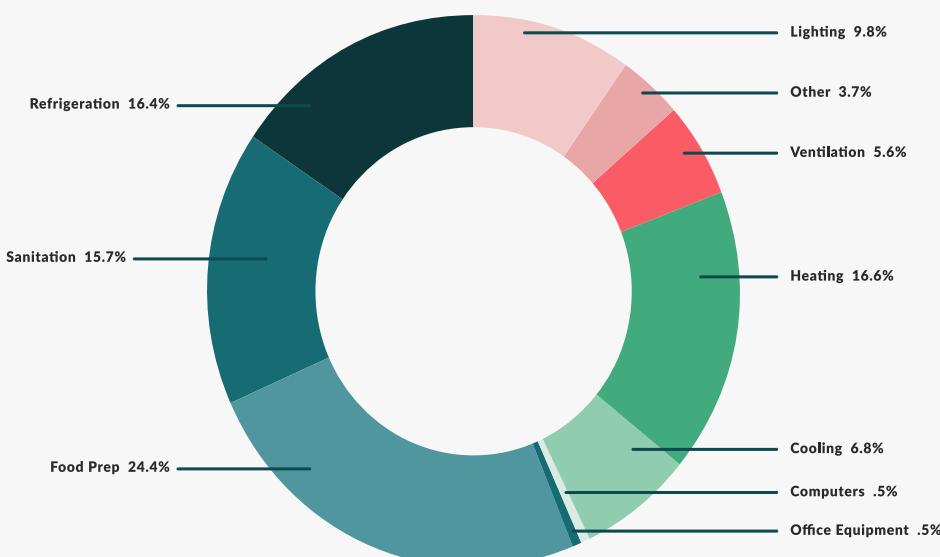
If you happen to be renovating or making kitchen upgrades, go for Energy Star appliances. And perform routine maintenance on all appliances to make sure they're in good shape and running efficiently. Energy Star also certifies roofing materials and window sealant, and using compliant products will help you regulate your indoor temperature through outdoor weather extremes.

You can also install a high-efficiency water heater in order to use less energy as you heat water for kitchen use. If possible, install energy efficient insulation, duct sealing and weatherstripping to cut down on heating and cooling consumption. And plan on keeping your indoor temperature moderate and using a programmable thermostat, so heating and cooling can be reduced during off hours.

Reduce water usage by using low-flow faucets and toilets and installing a water filtration system in house. Some restaurants even use rain barrels to catch water to reuse.

And reduce waste by carefully highlighting expirations dates, using digital inventory management tools, donating leftover food or ingredients and repurposing tonight's leftovers and tomorrow night's special³². Additionally, join the wave of restaurants pledging to cut down on plastic straw pollution in oceans by joining The Last Plastic Straw — and encourage your customers to take the pledge, too³³.

Restaurant Energy Use



³² <http://www.buzztime.com/business/blog/restaurant-sustainability-11-ways-limit-environmental-footprint/>

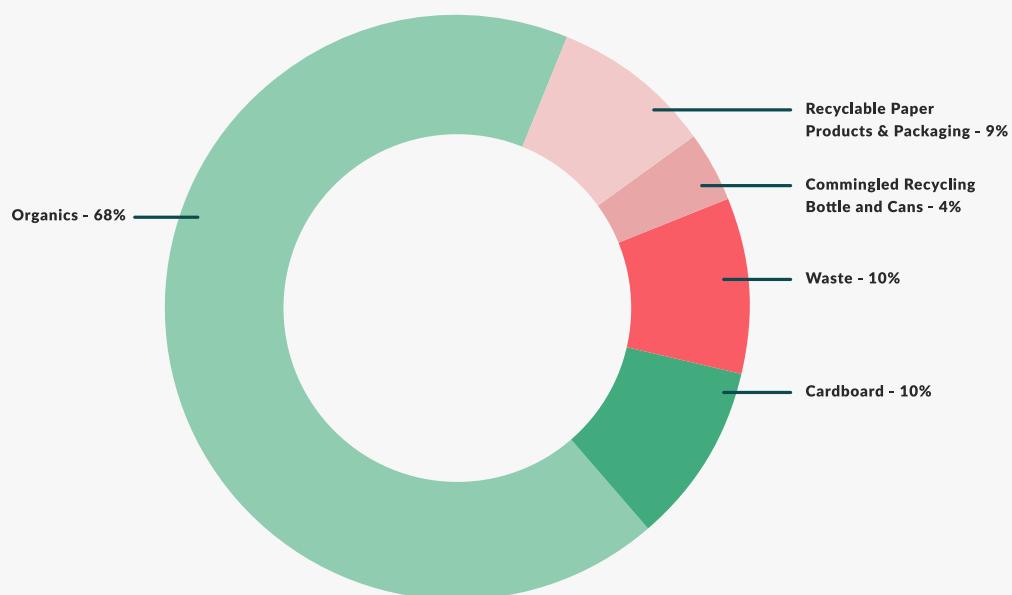
³³ <http://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/no-straw-please/>

Reuse

The second step is to reuse as many resources as possible in your day-to-day operations. Consider using cloth tablecloths and napkins that can be washed and reused over and over. Purchase pre-owned kitchen appliances and furniture instead of buying brand new ones — you can even reupholster or refinish an old dining set to make it look brand new. And if you're replacing any appliances or furniture in your restaurant, consider donating your old equipment for another kitchen to use.

Additionally, make sure you are carefully managing your inventory to ensure you're using all of your products and ingredients before they spoil. An inventory management program can really help with this, and periodic menu and inventory audits will ensure you're making inventory changes to keep your supplies as efficient as possible. Finding creative ways to reuse scraps and leftovers is a great idea; for example, start a composting program to support a restaurant garden.

Restaurant Waste Profile



Note: This is a representation of Total Waste generated and does not depict what is diverted from landfill through recycling and/or composting

Source: possector.com

Recycle

Maybe you saw step three coming: Recycle. Recycling has never been easier, and your restaurant can take full advantage of the ample opportunities that exist to cut down on your ecological footprint this way³⁴.

Start by purchasing 100 percent recycled products whenever possible, including kitchen and bar mats that are made out of 100% recycled materials. You can also make the switch to recycled paper towels and toilet paper if you aren't using them already — just make sure they're chlorine free and made from kraft paper. Commit to recycling all your boxes and bottles, and sign up for a bottle return program if one is available in your area. If your restaurant serves fast food or fast-casual fare, add recycling stations to give your diners more options than just dumping their leftover tray contents into the trash. Given the option, many customers will choose to recycle, and they'll appreciate that they can at your restaurant³⁵.

For takeout and delivery, use compostable, recyclable or biodegradable containers that are made from recycled kraft paper, bamboo, corn or banana leaves — yes, banana leaf boxes exist! And only include condiments and cutlery with takeout orders if the customer requests them. Since most takeout customers just eat the food at home, they probably already have utensils and don't need a plastic set.

Clean Green

Step four? Clean up your cleaning practices. Cleaning supplies, sadly, tend to be harsh on the environment, often even containing non-biodegradable materials, and when used on an industrial scale, those products can have a hugely negative impact on the planet. But there are sustainable options out there if you look for them.

When sourcing your cleaning products, look for cleaners that are environmentally friendly and biodegradable, like all of the products that are [green seal certified](#). A quick pro-tip: The green seal covers way more than just cleaning supplies.

You can also look there for paper products, takeout containers, paint, building supplies and more.

In addition to looking for the green seal on cleaning products, you can swap out harsh chemicals for natural cleaners like vinegar, borax and baking soda. Not sure where to start? [Check out these chemical-free cleansers](#).

Keep Food Practices Sustainable

Ready for the final step? It's one of the biggest trends in restaurants this year. It's time to make sure your food practices are sustainable.

You can do this by buying local, in-season produce from nearby producers, or even growing your own in a restaurant garden, if space and time allow. Aim to buy organic ingredients whenever possible.

If you serve seafood, making sure you're sustainable gets a little trickier, since seafood can't be certified organic. Overfishing is a huge problem worldwide, so make use of a service like the [Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch](#), which can help you make sure you're getting sustainable seafood from the right places.

While you're at it, rethink your supply chain

Having a supply chain that's bringing in food from far away isn't great for the environment, either. While you're working to make your restaurant as sustainable as possible, maybe it's time to reexamine your supply chain as well.

[ChefHero](#) makes it easy to secure local, sustainable ingredients, all while eliminating supply chain hassle and saving you money.

³⁴ <https://www.naturawater.com/buzz/eco-friendly-restaurant-ideas-5-ways-to-go-green>

³⁵ <https://www.recyclinglives.com/news/general/report-reveals-81-people-prefer-buy-sustainable-sellers>

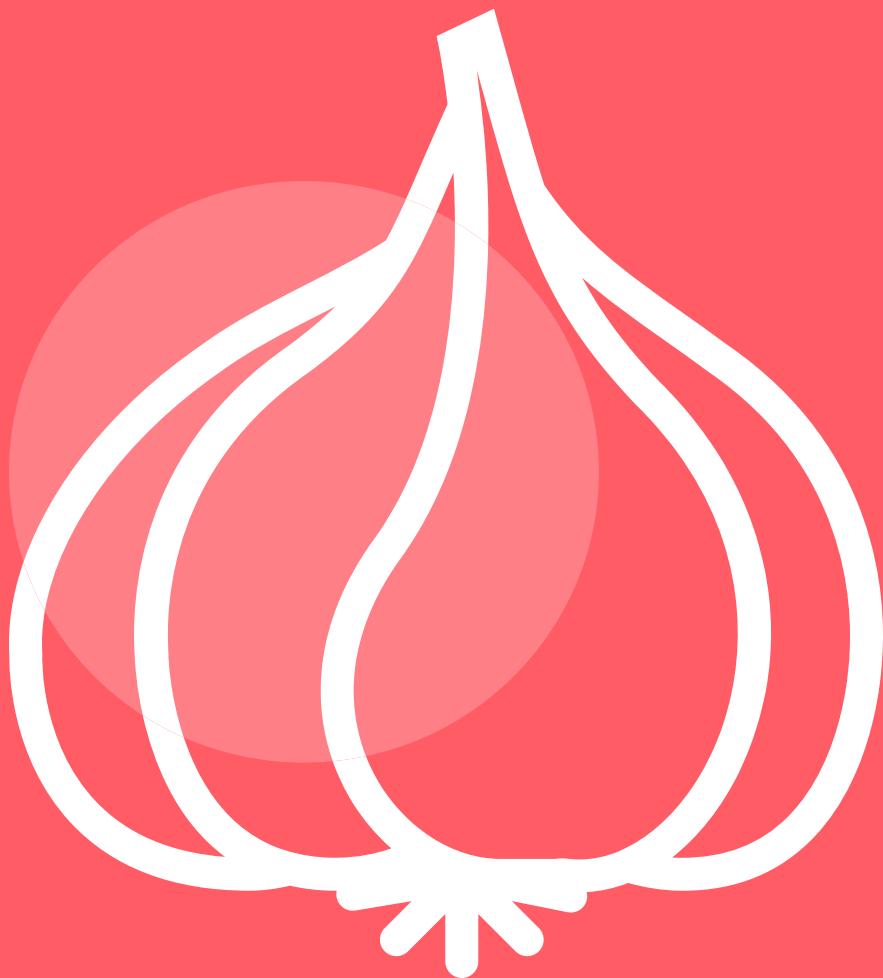
CHAPTER 11

A starter guide to Instagram marketing for restaurateurs

Written by: Hiba Amin

In this chapter:

- Setting up your Instagram account
- Types of content that drive engagement
- How to engage and build relationships with customers





CHAPTER 11

A starter guide to Instagram marketing for restaurateurs

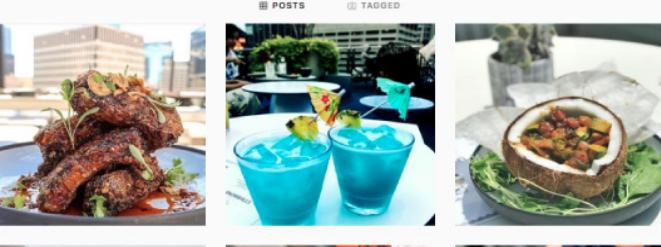
No matter how great you are with words, nothing can sell your food better than a mouth-watering photo.

Diners eat with their eyes first, and that's what makes Instagram a vital marketing tool for restaurants. It provides a cost-effective way for you to get images of your food in front of potential guests. By giving these hungry guests a craving for the real thing, you'll have them lining up at your doorstep in no time.

But if you think filters are for coffee, feeds are for farm animals, and hashtags are for... well, who knows what, you might need a little Insta-assistance. And that's where this guide comes in. From setting up your Instagram to creating and curating the perfect posts, this post has everything you need to get started on your #InstaSuccess.

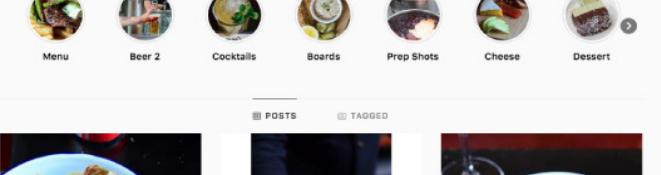
 **noyanechicago**   ...
360 posts 14.6k followers 989 following

Noyane
Noyane is officially open for the season! Japanese cuisine & top-shelf cocktails overlooking the Mag Mile 🍷 🍹
#NoyaneChicago
www.noyane.com



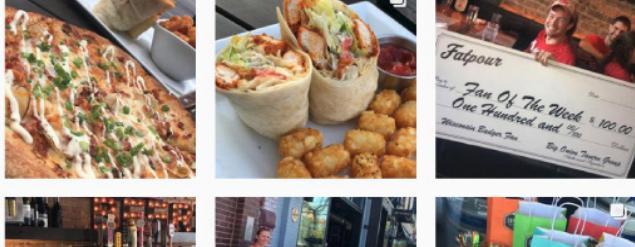
 **deepellumboston**  ...
1,628 posts 7,736 followers 1,020 following

Deep Ellum
cocktails + craft beer + food since 2007
brunch until 4pm + open until 2am
sister restaurants: @lonestarallston + @lonestar_camb
www.deepellum-boston.com



 **fatpourchicago**  ...
1,239 posts 1,598 followers 3,318 following

Fatpour Chicago
What have you tapped lately?
www.fatpourchicago.com



 **locosouthbos**  ...
811 posts 24.9k followers 839 following

Loco Taqueria & Oyster Bar
Slangin' tacos at the @ciscobrewers pop up beer garden in the Seaport Wed-Sat 4-10pm through September! 🍻
www.locosouthboston.com



Set your Instagram up for success

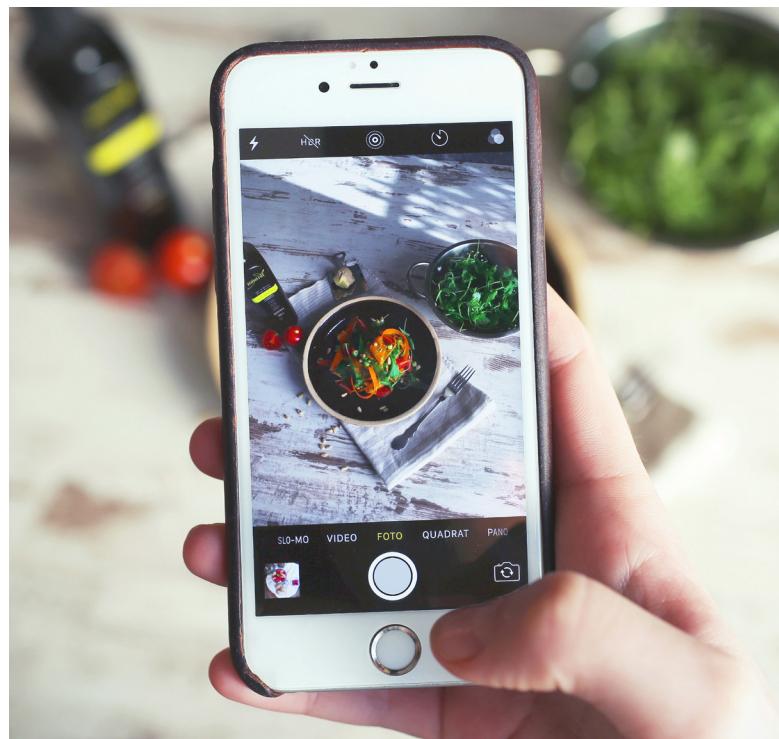
First things first: You need to set up a business Instagram account for your restaurant. There are a few tips for doing so that will make your account both professional, and the best possible marketing tool.

First, choose a handle that's easily recognizable and searchable, so guests have no problem finding you on the platform. Your restaurant name is a good place to start, and if it's not available, add your city to the name. Example: @sweetgreen or @deepellumboston. Pro-tip: Both of those accounts kill it, so check them out if you need some inspiration. When you set up your account, make sure you set it up as a business account, and not a personal one. This will allow you to access Insights, Instagram's suite of business-friendly analytics tools to see how your posts are performing and where there's room for growth in your reach. Having a business account also makes it easier for diners to contact you through Instagram.

When you create your account, also take a moment to create a location page for your restaurant, which will allow other users to easily tag you in photos they post when they visit, as well as curate posts made at your restaurant onto one page.

If you use other forms of social media, like Facebook and Twitter, integrate your Instagram with those accounts. Always make sure your Instagram photos are posting to your other social profiles, and cross promote your new Instagram account there to increase reach and follower counts. And consider embedding a stream of your most recent Instagram photos on your website, too.

Finally, before you start posting, you should do a little bit of hashtag research. Instagram posts with at least one hashtag average 12.6 percent more engagement, according to a Simply Measured study³⁶. But that doesn't mean any hashtag will work. Choose hashtags that will get you a lot of eyes, but be careful of being too vague and getting buried with millions of other posts. For example, #foodie is nearing 100 million posts on Instagram. Instead, try personalizing it with your city; for example, #chicagofood, which has more than half a million posts. This means that you have a higher chance of reaching new followers without getting buried by thousands of other posts. You should also create a hashtag specifically for your restaurant, and then use it in your Instagram bio and all your posts. You can even display it in your restaurant or print it on your menus to encourage diners to use it, too.



³⁶ [Simply Measured Q3 2014 Instagram Study](#)

Who should post?

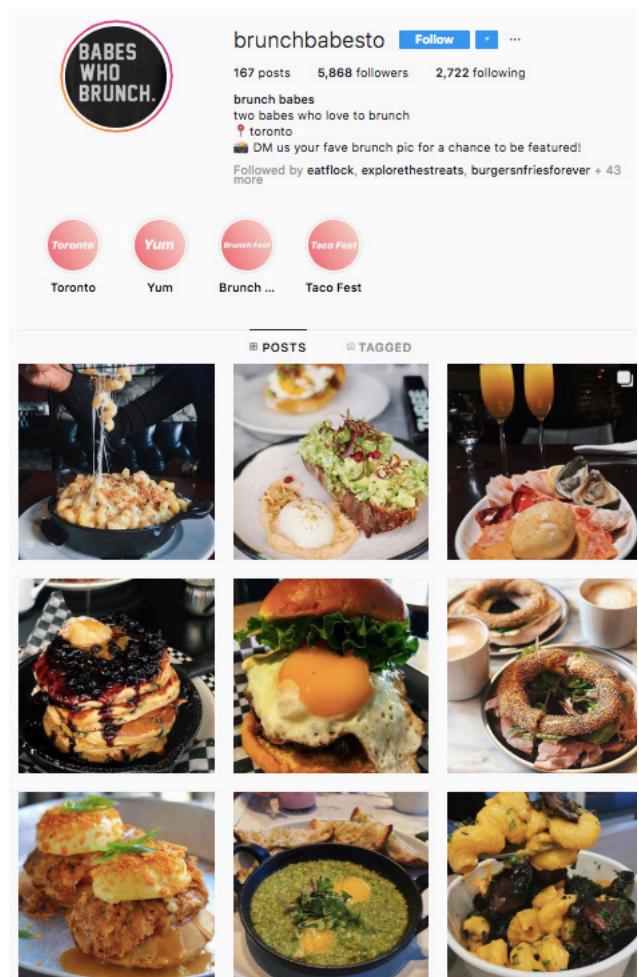
Once your Instagram is up and running, it's time to determine who should post to it.

Ideally, posting should be the responsibility of a small handful of staff who know how to take great photos, understand Instagram business best practices, and can nail the company's voice in captions and customer interactions. If you have someone in charge of marketing, this is a job for them.

But don't limit your Instagram posts to just your staff. Encourage customers to post photos they take at your restaurant, then use your hashtag to find them and share the best on your own account. You can offer gift cards or discounts as an incentive to get customers posting great photos using your hashtag with your location tagged, which will help spread the word about your restaurant online. A good example of this comes from a Dunkin' Donuts campaign called "UpgraDDe Your Sandwich."³⁷ It encouraged followers to share pictures of their lunches that needed a "Dunkin' Donuts upgrade" along with the hashtag #UpgraDDe. Select participants won gift cards to Dunkin' Donuts.

If your restaurant is involved in a fair or festival, promote that on Instagram! Take photos of your setup at the event. Broadcast a live video showing crowds and excitement at the event, and encourage more followers to come out and find you there. You can even use photos or stories to chronicle something disastrous, like a rainstorm in the middle of a festival. Have fun with it, and your followers are sure to enjoy the content.

But also be on the lookout for day-to-day events that you can promote on Instagram. If you're introducing a new food or signature drink, use your Instagram account to show it off and welcome your guests to try out new menu items. You can even use Instagram to host a contest where you allow a guest to name a new food or drink item.



When should you post?

Ideally, you should be posting to your Instagram daily, or even multiple times per day. Try out regular, daily posts, like posting photos and descriptions of your specials.

But you should also definitely take advantage of Instagram when special events are happening.

³⁷ <https://aaronallen.com/blog/restaurant-promotions/10-great-ways-for-restaurants-to-use-instagram>

What should you post?

While everything in this guide will help you create the best Instagram account possible, nothing matters as much as what you post. Your content is what will gain you followers, and turn those followers into guests who show up for your food.

First and foremost, you have to post photos of your food and drinks. Remember that example at the beginning? What's more effective: a really well-written description of a cheeseburger? Or this:



@lincolnsouthbos

You're getting hungry just looking at it, right?

But if you're going to post food pics, they have to look as great as the food tastes. That means you can't just take any photo. Does this look as appetizing?



The answer is no. It's dark. It's blurry. The angle doesn't show off the ingredients.

A few tips for getting the best possible food photography, even as a novice:

- Use a real camera, or your phone camera app, rather than taking your photos with Instagram's limited in-app camera.
- Use the Rule of Thirds to get nice framing on your shots. If a grid were placed over your photo, dividing it into thirds both vertically and horizontally, the most visually interesting points should be where the lines of the grid intersect.
- Aim for natural light. Always avoid flash and harsh overhead lights that can wash out your food.
- Use props! A pair of chopsticks on a plate of sushi, a cork next to a wine glass, a spoon in a bowl of soup. They all add action to what could otherwise be pretty stale shots.
- Add texture. If you're shooting something like soup, garnish it with herbs or croutons. Add fresh berries to a sorbet. These little details add some contrast to your shots and make them more interesting (and tasty!).
- Embrace filters. Instagram comes with plenty of pre-set filters that can help your photos pop, and apps like VSCO and Lightroom can also help you adjust colors and levels to make your shots look even better.

But food shouldn't be all you post. Instagram is also a great way to show the behind-the-scenes workings of your restaurant. Show off your ambiance. Introduce your staff. Let your followers follow along with a renovation project. Instagram can make your restaurant and its staff seem a little more human, so let it do just that.

While Instagram has always been a photo sharing platform, it's introduced new ways to create content with video and stories. Take advantage of these! A video of a glass of wine being poured is a lot more interesting — and mouth-watering — than a still shot. A video tour of your kitchen can allow followers to meet your chef and see them in their element.

When it comes to daily content, don't feel like you have to create it all yourself. Embrace the art of regramming — posting customers' photos that they took at your restaurant. Your hashtags and location tags will really help with this. One note: Be sure to tag the original poster. It will let them know that you posted their content and it builds a way for you to connect with a customer--making the relationship even stronger.

Instagram is not a one-way street

Beware: Instagram isn't a visual press conference for your brand.

You should constantly be interacting, liking, commenting, and engaging with your followers. Take the time to dig into their relevant content that relates to your brand and engage with it.

Aside from posting, use Instagram to have positive interactions with your fans. Post captions that inspire them to comment (a fill in the blank is a great option, like "The best burger topping is ___"), then start a dialogue. Answer questions. Encourage opinions. Engage respectfully, but with a fun tone.

Armed with the right tips and tricks, it's easy to see that Instagram is a powerful marketing tool — and that it isn't nearly as scary as it might seem to a less-than-tech-savvy restaurateur. Use this guide to create a restaurant Instagram account that will not only show off the great work you're doing, but will inspire diners to become followers.



portilloshotdogs • Follow

portilloshotdogs You're ordering Portillo's delivery for dinner, which two items do you choose?

[Load more comments](#)

jasontravis1441 hotdog onionrings

bshuffler_ Chicago dog and fries and not tipping 😂

mct1230 Beef and cheddar croissant with sweet peppers. Mustard & onions & a chopped salad

zach_m29 @portilloshotdogs Please come to @visit_jax Fl !! I need you back in my life haha

chloeszulc Hotdog and fries!

firewifeq Roast beef and tamale ! YUM

scarcasm101 The ones on the left. But with an Italian Beef to wash it down... 😊



1,659 likes

SEPTEMBER 5

Add a comment...



...

Conclusion

All in all, running a restaurant takes a lot of preparation, organization, knowledge, know-how, hard work and so much more.

From the ideation stage to actually running a restaurant, there is a lot to consider and learn.

The purpose of this guide is to give you the knowledge and tools that you'll need to succeed as a restaurateur. We have covered topics ranging from hiring amazing employees and actually keeping them to what it takes to build a memorable brand for your restaurant.

If you're just getting into the industry, we hope that this guide has painted an accurate picture for what's to come and help you better prepare for this new exciting journey you're about to embark on. If you're an industry veteran, we hope that this guide has been able to provide you with a new view on how to tackle the many challenges that restaurateurs face on the daily.

About ChefHero

ChefHero is an online mobile and web application that allows businesses to order wholesale restaurant supplies from a network of dedicated regional suppliers. We are on a mission to build the world's most trusted wholesale food network.

Hundreds of restaurants, coffee shops, bars, etc have joined our community, helping you save time and money.

If you'd like to learn more about how ChefHero can help you save time and money, please get in touch!

[GET TO KNOW US](#)

The screenshot shows the ChefHero mobile application interface. At the top, there is a header with the ChefHero logo and a search bar containing the placeholder text "I am looking for...". Below the header, a banner states "9000+ items in 1 market" and "Everything you need for your business in one convenient place." The main content area is titled "Shop Categories" and displays a grid of nine categories, each with an image and a title: Produce (apple and pear), Grocery & Pantry (pasta), Dairy, Eggs Alternatives (milk), Baked Goods & Sweets (bread), Meat & Poultry (steak), Beverages (can), Seafood (crab), Takeout Supplies (utensils), and Restaurant Supplies (forks). At the bottom of the screen, there are four navigation icons: Order Desk, Invoices, Market, and Cart, with a red notification bubble showing the number 3 over the Cart icon.