

Marketing Your Restaurant



Your Restaurant Vision and Mission

What do the biggest restaurant chains in this world have and most of the small-er independent restaurant operators not have? Apart from a lot of customers of course! The answer is vision and mission statements.



“Every restaurant should have a vision, every employee should know that mission and every customer should experience it.”

Now you may think that as an independent restaurant operator you have no need for any of this ‘strategy stuff’ and that this Cork man has been too much influenced by his American experience.

By all means think that, but one of the keys to having a really good restaurant and one of the critical elements that differentiates the very good food-service establishment from the ordinary one is having a clear idea of what you want your restaurant to be. The old dic-tum - Having lost sight of our objective, we redoubled our efforts – is so very appropriate for the foodservice operator. Put simply, there is very little chance of you having a great or even good restaurant unless you set that as an objective. I am not talking here about trying to get two or three

Michelin stars. Great can relate to a fast food operation, to a coffee bar, to a fish and chip outlet as much as a Patrick Guilbaud operation. It means being the best you can be in your specific segment or target market.

Do you have a clear vision of what your ideal restaurant operation is? If you were to close your eyes and visualise your perfect restaurant unit what would it be? Yes, you would have a full restaurant, but how would you describe the clientele’s age, sex etc. What is the cheque average per guest? What is the atmosphere in this ideal restaurant unit? Are people serious or having a great time? What attitude does your staff have and how helpful are they being to your guests?

If you think you do have a clear vision for your restaurant, write down the key points. Get your partner and



staff to answer a similar question independently and compare notes. If you are not getting consistent answers from your work colleagues, you do not have a clear well communicated vision.

My belief is that every restaurant should have a vision, every employee should know that mission and every customer should experience it. Once you have decided on your vision and mission – possibly with the aid of others – make sure everyone knows what it is. The Darden restaurant group (Red Lobster and Olive Garden restaurants) in the United States state the company’s mission is to “nourish and delight everyone we serve”. All new employees are made aware of this vision and it is constantly reinforced.

Increase your profits

You can define your own vision for your business. Close those eyes and dream! I will, however, give you a mission for your business which if you get your staff to buy into and implement properly WILL increase your profits. Make sure everyone in your business works to the following thought. “Our mission is that we want our guest to think when they leave the restaurant ‘Hey I like that place, I’m going to come back’”.

The staff job may be to serve tables; their mission should be to make sure guests come back.

No ‘tray-carriers’

Put that mission to your staff, discuss it with them and ask for buy in. If it’s implemented you will see results in your business. Make absolutely sure that every person seeking a job in your restaurant is aware of the mission and is prepared to work to it. Many of you employ students and part-timers who think that all they have to do is bring food from the kitchen to the table. Scotch that idea. Challenging younger staff who are still possibly idealistic to live the above referenced mission can bring out an added dimension in their work performance. The wait-staff who works to get the customer to think when they leave ‘Hey I like that place, I’m going to come back’ will do a totally different job to the ‘tray-carrier’. Much greater effort will be put into making the meal a memorable experience for the guest.

I stress this logic applies whether you have a coffee shop or a gourmet restaurant. Your guests will get similar food in a similar operation at a similar price down the road.

Differentiate yourself with the guest experience. The best way to make this happen is to discuss the mission with staff, decide how you can make it happen and review constantly. You need not worry too much about your competitor having the same mission. If they have and they implement properly, it will force you to do so. If they don’t implement it and you do, that competitor will wonder why business is going your way.

There are three kinds of people in this world, those who watch what happens, those who wonder what happens and those who make things happen. If you want to be in the latter group, clarify today your vision but even more importantly get the mission ‘Hey I like that place, I’m going to come back’ into everyone’s brain. Do that and you will grow foodservice profit. That is a promise.

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