



10 Rules for Restaurant Success

Success in the restaurant industry often comes with back breaking hard work, dedication and years of building a reputation. That is, of course, if the restaurant only has average food and forgettable experiences.

I, on the other hand, believe a restaurant can become an instant success if the following 10 rules are applied correctly:

Rule #1: Make it “Remarkable”

Creating a restaurant that others talk about and willingly recommend is paramount to success. But yet this is easier said than done. Most places fall into the realm of boring, unattractive eating establishments. You have to find something special that defines your restaurant, whether it's a theme, style, or some other unique experience.

Rule #2: Clear and Delicious Menu

All too often I see menus with page after page of unique food offerings. While this huge selection is great in theory, most people don't need (or want) that many choices. A dozen or less main courses is enough. Some meat, some vegetarian and that's it. No one needs 15 styles of chicken at a steak house. With limited choices, you can make sure that what you do offer is great!

Rule #3: Seating

Restaurant revenues are directly related to how many people get through the door in a day, and customers don't like to wait for too long. And with margins so small in most cases, a successful restaurant must have a large and efficient seating area.



Rule #4: Signs and Logo

As with food, presentation is everything. And having a 20-year-old sign with peeling paint, is not presenting your business in a positive manner. Most off-the-street guests pick where to eat by what they see. Others go by what they know, which is why good branding (and a memorable logo) are so important.

Rule #5: The Atmosphere

People looking to eat aren't all too judgmental (you don't need napkins with the finest Egyptian cotton), but they can definitely "feel" the surroundings. You want that to be a good feeling. Perhaps a catchy theme, or just some interesting furnishings and neat items on the wall... the atmosphere of a restaurant is just as important as the food!

Rule #6: Wait Staff Personality

No matter what else, the wait staff has to be memorable and courteous. Creating a crew of fun-to-be-around workers is what will get folks coming back and guaranteeing positive recommendations to friends.

Rule #7: Location! Location! Location!

City locations must be near high foot traffic areas. Suburban and rural restaurants must have ample parking. Enough said.

Rule #8: Memorabilia

Besides the huge profit margins, memorabilia is a great way to increase your chances of success, especially if you fall into the category of "theme restaurant". Hundreds or thousands of people occasionally wearing your branded shirts and drinking out of logo'd glasses is amazingly effective marketing. Especially considering the fan paid you for the privilege of advertising your restaurant.



Rule #9: Social Media Presence

It once was the future of marketing. Now, it's just marketing. Get your brand active on Twitter & Facebook. Create specials on Foursquare. Post fun pictures and content to your blog. Do whatever it takes to create a loyal online community.

Rule #10: The Details ("Sweat the Small Stuff")

How many times have you been at a restaurant and had to ask for more napkins? Unless I'm the only one who can't eat a salad, bread, main course and dessert without demolishing a single napkin, people need more than one napkin. And there's nothing worse than an empty drink cup!

Having customers track down a worker to ask for things that should be readily available is the easiest way to annoy a patron.