

5 WAYS TO GENERATE SUCCESS IN CATERING SALES

Increasing revenue through takeout, catering and delivery is the key to profitability in today's crowded market.



If your restaurant offers catering, you may already have an idea about the importance of a powerful sales culture and an organized system. If you have not yet implemented a carryout catering program but are considering it, these tips will help you shape your strategy. The team at Synergy Restaurant Consultants cannot stress enough the importance of a collective, goal-driven team for driving off-premise revenue. Your business is like a machine, and proper maintenance of

the engine paired with consistent use will generate successful results. You and your team are responsible for running the machine that is your business and off-premise sales can increase your profitability if managed thoughtfully.

Your restaurant is a product, and no matter how you look at it, you are constantly having to sell your product. To be able to pitch at a consistent rate, it is crucial for every member of your team to be on board and ready to promote your business. But before we dive into the details, there are a few things you need to have in place as a restaurant owner to generate a rewarding outcome from your catering department.



**GETTING THE ORDER
RIGHT AND DELIVERING
IT ON TIME ARE THE
MOST IMPORTANT
ATTRIBUTES.**



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CATERING LEADER

You need to have a catering leader who will differentiate the catering program from carry out orders and who will understand the business from the inside out. Leadership is key when it comes to the prosperity of any business model. The catering leader will take ownership of the program and be responsible for educating not only your team, but current and prospective clients as well. In a sense, they will be the face of your brand as a catering business, so it is crucial to choose a leader who loves and cares for your business the way you do.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS

Your catering leader must have a clear, organized internal system in place to ensure that every member of your team can take on catering operations internally. This will include a centralized sales system, where all of the calls and orders will be funneled to one area. This system will look different for every restaurant, but it is imperative to have some version of the following developed for catering and ready to train and use:

- Marketing
- Sales training
- Accounting
- CRM Knowledge
- IT System

If your team is proficient in these key factors, they are sure to avoid much of the stress and disorganization that can come with off-premise sales in a growing catering department.

MARKETING AND SALES

In any business, marketing and sales will make or break you. Marketing and sales work very closely together, but it is important to create two separate plans for your team to work on and execute. A sales team will utilize the messaging and materials produced by marketing as tools, so it is wise to have a marketing plan in place before setting a sales plan in stone.

86% of consumers use off-premise services at least once a month

33% of people are using off-premise services more than they did one year ago

60% of operators say delivery has generated incremental sales

Source: Technomic, 2018 Restaurant Leadership Conference



Using an appropriate CRM to track sales will be extremely helpful to your marketing team in creating targeted marketing plans that speak to consumers and the way they use your program. Once you have packaging, marketing, and online ordering ready, the catering leader can push forward with promoting your program to meet target revenue goals. The sales team should:

- Work with Local Food Bloggers and Social Media Influencers,
- Ask for Referrals
- Seek Placement on Venue Lists
- Take Samples To Targeted Locations

Growing a catering business requires the same consistent marketing as running your restaurant. Draw attention to catering in menus, brochures and table tents. Create a page dedicated to it on your website. Raise awareness through social media, mobile devices and e-mail marketing.

TRAINING AND OWNERSHIP

You can do all the marketing and outreach you want, but if your catering business doesn't provide excellent service, you are not going to succeed. With all the above in place, you can begin to train your team and get your machine updated and running smoothly. It is imperative for leaders to be able to train their team to have ownership in the program and to work towards achieving clear goals. The more impactful and influential a leader is, the better they will be at

training a successful team that is excited about their jobs. Communicate clearly and often so all staff involved in catering know what's expected. Post fliers in the kitchen and the break room. Speak with staff during meetings and shifts.

Teach your team to differentiate between catering and restaurant language. In simply understanding the contrast between catering language and restaurant language, your team will be on the path to successfully differentiating and executing both businesses.

ORDERING & DELIVERY

Online ordering is essential for modern consumers, it is quick, convenient and offers a history of previous orders to ease decision making. Menus should be easily accessible through both mobile devices and laptops. However, administrators ordering for office lunches tend to prefer to phone in their orders so they can speak with a team member and get recommendations for their group, so make sure your program is set up for both methods of ordering and all calls are answered quickly.

Once a catering sale is made, you must be able to deliver the goods to your customer efficiently and on time. Consider details like affordable and efficient transportation, specialized packaging, and marketing your brand on the go. When considering packaging, make sure that all the packaging reflects your brand and is sustainable - you want people to feel good about what their meals are being served in and for the packaging to bring your restaurant to mind in a positive way when they see it. When catering customers receive their order, they want it to look appetizing and to convey quality. Having your driver set up the order and ensure that plateware and serving utensils are included takes your service over the top.

Consumer interest in catering is on the rise and operators are having to adapt to shorter lead times and faster fulfillment as 49% of consumers say that their catering orders are not usually placed in advance, but are impulse orders.



Building your catering business with the above in mind is sure to generate success. Once you have an internal system in place, you have the freedom to go more in-depth with your team about actually selling your product. Set precise expectations; make your goals clear to your team so that they can effectively put in the work to meet your sales standards. Make catering a daily internal conversation to discuss new sales tactics, improvements, and opinions with your team. Your team is your greatest asset, so don't ignore their creativity and potential. Create a cohesive sales environment and find ways to consistently improve and in turn, increase catering and off-premise sales. The fine details of this system are unique to every business, so it is imperative that you and your team are familiar with not only the big picture but every detail within it.



**Contact us to have a conversation about how to
improve your off-premise sales**

info@synergyconsultants.com

(888) 861-9212