



PRE-OPENING BUZZ

Marketing Guide



You've embarked on a thrilling journey—one filled with culinary and business creativity and the dream of welcoming eager patrons through your restaurant's doors. Opening a restaurant is not merely a business venture; it's a passionate pursuit, a labor of love, and the realization of your culinary dreams.

As you prepare to introduce your culinary vision to the world, there's an exhilarating path you must tread first—the pre-opening phase. This phase, often overlooked in the excitement of designing menus and selecting decor, is where you lay the foundation for your restaurant's success. It's the time to create buzz, build anticipation, and establish your presence in the hearts of your local community.

*Disclaimer: This checklist is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for any audit, tax or other professional advice, consultation or service.



In this comprehensive guide, we will navigate the intricate process of a successful pre-opening marketing plan, from branding essentials to creating teaser campaigns that will leave your potential patrons salivating. After all, your dream restaurant deserves a grand opening, and this is your roadmap to make it happen.

1. Define Your Brand Identity

Your restaurant's brand is its personality. Before you open your doors, define your brand identity. What's your restaurant's mission, vision, and values? What makes it unique? Knowing this will guide your marketing efforts.

Branding Essentials: Generate an enticing restaurant name, design a captivating logo, and craft a memorable tagline that aligns seamlessly with your brand's core principles.

Logo Styles: Consider various logo styles, including Wordmark, Icon or Symbol, Combination, and Emblem logos.

Wordmark:  

Symbol:   

Mascots:   

Combination:  

Visual Identity: Craft a visually appealing and consistent style for menus, decor, and marketing materials.

 **Did You Know?** Using a signature color can increase brand recognition by up to 80% (Oberlo)

Hire a Professional: A well-designed logo can increase your brand's recognition and memorability. If you have a larger budget, a creative agency can really shape your brand, but freelance designers can produce high-quality work, often at a lower rate.

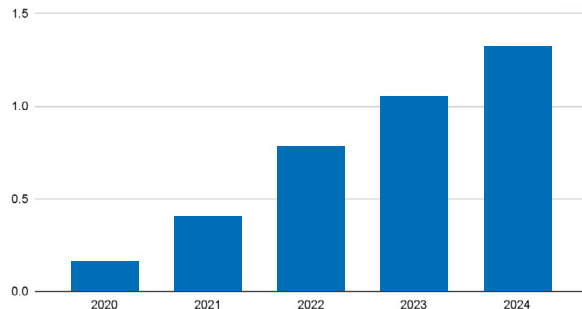
Online Presence: Establish a professional online presence with a user-friendly website showcasing your menu, story, and ambiance. Set up social media profiles on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, X (Twitter), and YouTube. Similar to a logo, it will be in your best interest to hire professional website designers or have website companies build it with you as you go through the process so that your website is optimized for SEO, which would ultimately lead to more visitors.

What is SEO? To put simply, SEO is a way to optimize the content on your website to make it more attractive to various search engines. SEO helps prospective customers find your business. This is done through specific keywords on your website, content you produce (blogs) and making sure your website functions quickly and properly.

Local Search: While customer reviews on GMB (Google My Business) will play a significant role, establishing a GMB page with up-to-date and pertinent details serves as an excellent initial step in enhancing your business’s online presence. Ensure that your address, contact information, website, and any associated links are precise, and also feature a menu that is not only available on your GMB page but also on your website. This approach will help incorporate relevant keywords aligned with user search queries.

While developing your website it is important to include any location specific keywords on your pages, specifically where your restaurant is located.

Influencer Marketing Spend (Billions)



(Data from Statista)

Professional Photography: Invest in high-quality images of your dishes and restaurant ambiance. Professional food photos alone can increase customer trust in your restaurant and create compelling content to be shared across social media verticals and your website.

Visual Consistency: Ensure that your visual identity is consistent across your website, social media, and physical decor.

2. Engage with Local Influencers

Influencer Visits: Organize influencer visits. Allow them to take sneak peek content and share it with their followers, this will generate some curiosity and excitement, building your restaurant’s credibility before opening.

Influencer Identification: Locate local influencers by browsing Instagram and other platforms that resonate with your restaurant’s style. Also, consider influencers followed by other influencers; they’re often within your desired range.

Ask these questions (they usually have this information in a package of sorts)

Average engagement rate

Likes/comments

Gender of followers

Age of followers, location of followers


Compensation: Compensation can range from gift cards and free meals to cross-promotion, monetary payment, or unique discount codes. Targeting nano or micro-influencers (under 10,000 followers) is often cost-effective and can yield excellent results.

Tracking: Identifying influencers and having them in is just half the process. It is important to have tracking in place to determine if these are worthwhile investments. This can be done through unique tracking URLs, ordering codes, or if just awareness is important to you, likes and comments/views.

3. Local Publications/City/Neighborhood Resources

Leverage local magazines, newspapers, and blogs to create a buzz. This can position you/your establishment as more than just a business but a neighbor and member of the community.

Press Releases: Send press releases to local media about your restaurant's opening. Highlight what makes you unique and your connection to the local community. Some of these features may be paid media, but most local publications want to highlight exciting new things in the community.

 **Tip:** Share your restaurant's story and what sets it apart from others and how you will contribute to the community.

4. Teaser Campaigns


Create teaser campaigns to generate excitement and anticipation among your potential customers.

Countdown Campaign: Share a daily or weekly countdown to your opening on social media and your website.

Example: Share daily sneak peeks of your restaurant's interior, menu items, or staff. Showing the transformation of the buildout can generate some excitement.

Menu Previews: Offer sneak peeks of your menu. Feature one dish each week, revealing ingredients and preparation.

Behind-the-Scenes: Share behind-the-scenes glimpses of the restaurant's setup, staff training, and menu development.

 **Idea:** A creative way to generate some buzz can be to do an Instagram raffle where if people sign up for your newsletter, they get an exclusive visit to your space to try some menu items and get a first look at the development.

5. Local Partnerships

Establish partnerships with local businesses, from coffee shops to boutique stores, to cross-promote.

Local Events: Collaborate with other businesses for joint events, tastings, or pop-up shops.

Benefit: These collaborations can introduce your restaurant to a broader audience and create a sense of community.

Coupons or Discounts: Offer discounts to their customers in exchange for their support.

6. Launch a Loyalty Program

Consider launching a loyalty program to create a sense of belonging among your potential customers.

Pre-Opening Memberships: Include any additional documents that support your business plan, such as resumes of key team members, location photos, or market research data.

Rewards: Develop a rewards system that keeps customers coming back. This can be done through POS Systems like GoTab or integrated through the POS with third party loyalty companies.

Collect Customer Data: Start building your customer database before your restaurant opens. This will come in handy when planning special announcements, events, and marketing your restaurant.

Strategy: Encourage customers to sign up for your newsletter for exclusive offers and updates. This would be placed on your website.



7. Plan Your Grand Opening Event

Event Planning: Plan a grand opening event with flair. Invite friends, media, and the community.

Menu Showcases: Host tasting sessions or offer samples of your most delectable dishes..

Note: Ensure the event aligns with your brand identity and creates a memorable first impression. Invite important people in the community such as local government officials, business owners etc. Host food stations in the kitchen so that your whole space can be seen.

By following these pre-opening marketing strategies, you'll set the stage for a grand opening that's sure to make a lasting impression and leave your guests craving more.

Sources:

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Conclusion

The pre-opening phase of your restaurant is the foundation of your success. Building anticipation, creating a buzz, and engaging with the local community are key elements of a well-executed marketing strategy. As you navigate through this guide, remember that the more effort and creativity you invest in your pre-opening marketing, the more you'll reap in the form of a stellar restaurant launch.


With these strategies in place, your restaurant's opening is bound to be a memorable and successful event, setting the stage for a bright culinary future.




Talk With Our Experts

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