

# Profitable Promotions – Restaurant Promotions That Increase Profits

Culinary Staff

The restaurant business is a nose-to-the-grindstone industry, and competition is a way of life. Trying to one-up your neighbor is a never-ending endeavor, but employing a couple clever and efficient promotional strategies can help attract customers and increase profits, giving you the edge you need to succeed.

## Consider Off-Hours Promotions

Happy hour is a restaurant tradition, but few establishments have tweaked their nightly discounted tippie time to match the ever-evolving job market. In a world where 9-5 is no longer the undisputed norm, a 6-8pm “happy hour” isn’t necessarily going to appeal to your target demographic. Late-night specials will attract hospitality employees looking for an after-work beer or two, and not only are they incredibly loyal customers, they also tend to tip better than the average guest.



## Harness the Internet

The Internet is an essential part of 21<sup>st</sup>-century marketing strategies, and social media should be at the center of every Web-based plan. A [recent study](#) by research firm Chadwick Martin Bailey found that 81 percent of consumers have used a mobile app to look up a restaurant, 92 percent have searched for a restaurant using a Web browser, and 75 percent of those users decided which restaurant to dine at using those results. Take advantage of the trend and partner up with apps that will feature your restaurant’s current menu special or event schedule in return for in-house promotion of their technology.

## Utilize Social Media

Send out tweets or Facebook posts with a special redeemable for 24 hours only. The immediacy of such deals encourages customers to look at your profile pages daily, in turn creating behavior patterns that keep your restaurant’s name in the front of their minds. Employ a social media guru who will not only create an initial Internet presence, but who will also engage customers when they drop by your page; just like an office phone that goes unanswered, overlooking questions posted on your social media is tantamount to ignoring your customers. Don’t do it.

## Community Outreach

People in general are most often motivated to give when they’re also getting something in return — it’s simply human nature. The key is to be first in line to offer up your expertise, product or service. “A strong partnership is a win-win for both parties, but be prepared to do the giving first — the receiving will come later,” explains QSR marketing guru Denise Lee Yohn. “Consider providing discounted or free catering for sporting events and school parties or offering your location for community meetings.”

## Ditch Discounting; Build Value Instead

There are definitely arguments in favor of lunch specials and 2-for-1 appetizer flyers, but also remember that every time you discount your product, you’re telling your customer base that you can a) afford the lower price, and b) maybe your product isn’t worthy of the higher price to begin with. Instead of lowering your prices, aim to add value to each

diner's experience with complimentary offerings like a seasonal amuse bouche, free weekend valet service or even a simple thank-you card sent to the diner as a token of appreciation for their last visit.

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