

The US Census Bureau tells us that 46% of Americans moved between 1995 and 2000. Researchers confirm that new residents are rebuilding their lives, reestablishing their identities and dealing with a major life transition: a birth, marriage, divorce, career move, retirement, or death. This transformation continues for at least two years, until the new resident feels at home.

During that time, movers are far more likely to try new products and services than at any other time in their lives. That makes recent movers a perfect source of new "regulars". Local restaurateurs need to find a way to attract the attention of new residents, impress them with their good food and service and capture them as regular customers. But how can you afford to invest in capturing new residents?

### Pre-Work

Any direct mail program starts with two basic components - a message and an audience. What are you trying to say and to whom are you saying it? Before you decide on these two components, you first need to come up with a budget for your campaign.

What is the purpose of the campaign?

- Introducing a new menu
- Promoting a holiday or special
- Driving new business
- Increasing repeat business
- Promoting an event
- Increasing brand awareness

Who is it directed towards?

- Existing customers to increase frequency.
- New customers to increase new business.

What are your target demographics? Try to be as specific as possible: Knowing your audience is crucial when putting together a mailing list and creating a successful direct mail piece.

### Mailing List

Effectively targeting your audience will generate the greatest results with minimal expense.

### Current Customer Database

If you already have a database of your customers' addresses, this is the best option. They have already been to your restaurant and have given you their permission to mar-

ket them. This is a very targeted and effective way to increase business.

### Developing a Database

If you do not have a current customer database and would like to develop one, now is as good as time as any! A comment card is a great way to capture customer contact information for your database!

### Purchase a List

Purchased lists are ideal for building new business or when a current customer database is unavailable. You know your target audience best. Take the following things into consideration when purchasing a mailing list...

- Geography 0 - 5 mile radius
- Age
- Income
- Sex
- Type of household

### Find a Direct Mail Company

Sysco offers an iCare partner that can help you implement a successful direct mail campaign.

Marathon Press ([www.marathonpress.com](http://www.marathonpress.com))

Their niche is targeting families and children.

This company offer easy to use websites with several design templates to choose from. If you are doing a direct mail campaign over 5,000 pieces you should quote local print companies and/ or mail houses. Their rates are usually lower when you reach quantities over 5,000.

### Implement Your Campaign

#### Stand Out in a Crowd

Use brightly colored card stock and large typeface.

Use glossy, cover stock paper; it will make your campaign look more professional.

#### Brand Identity

It is important that your direct mail designs not only reflect the feel and attitude of your restaurant, but also match in color scheme and basic layout. Consider the national chains and how much brand recognition is in their promotion pieces. You can easily achieve the same goal by picking a design and sticking with it.

#### Consider Post Cards Instead of Envelopes

A post card has a better chance of catching the eye of your

prospect than an enclosed letter.

Post cards can be less expensive and take little to no effort to read.

### **Content Counts**

Offer Value to your Customer

Giving something away or offering a discount will attract attention. However, you can also offer “value” by promoting an entry or event that makes you unique.

Give some thought to planning the arrival of your mailers. Avoid mailing around the holidays and on Mondays as they are heavy mail days.