

Restaurateurs are driven to serve food conveniently to consumers no matter where they are. Drive-thru, take-out, and catering will continue to fuel growth for both quick-service and full-service operators.

-National Restaurant Association

Products and Packaging

Products:

- Mirror or limit your existing menu. Products must travel well... so, test them. Most take-out is consumed between 20 to 30 minutes from the time it is cooked. Only offer products that will maintain their integrity.
- Don't forget to garnish!

Packaging:

- Wrong packaging causes the greatest failure rate within the food service industry, because operators choose by price.
- Must travel well and be leak proof.
- Maintain flavor integrity - Don't let items touch (compartmentalize).
- Hot foods, hot; cold foods, cold.
- Add tissue paper to bags for gift-like feel.

Pricing Strategy

- Pricing for your take-out menu should be consistent with your dining room menu.
- Consider offering bundles or family meals. (ie appetizer, two entrees, dessert)
- Train staff to up-sell sides, appetizers and desserts to increase check averages.

Process and Implementation

- Dedicate staff specifically to handle take-out orders.
- Consider having a dedicated phone or fax line for take-out orders.
- Educate those taking phone orders about the take-out menu. Stress the importance of asking relevant questions to ensure the accuracy of the order. Tell the customer exactly where to go when picking up the order; hostess station or bar for example.
- Before handing the customer their order, confirm that what they are receiving is what was ordered. Provide necessary cutlery, napkins and condiments.
- Consider dedicating a separate entrance, parking spaces and possibly delivering to the car. Make staffing adjustments according to times of the day that are typically busy for take-out.

Marketing Techniques

Consider those customers within a five mile radius - are you marketing to businesses or homes or both?

- Utilize direct mail and e-mail to target new customers.
- Drop off to-go menus with a \$5.00 certificate towards any take-out order.

Fast-paced family lifestyles - no time to cook and looking for alternatives.

- Consider partnering with a daycare or private school and providing dinner for working parents.

Every dine-in customer is a potential take-out customer!

- Offer gift certificates to current dine-in customers to give take-out a try.

Other Marketing Ideas:

- Table tents, Window Clings, Frequent Customer Cards, Utilize your website.