

Best Practices

HOW RESTAURANTS
ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE

QSR E-Newsletter: Best Practices

Getting Them in the Door

By Linda Duke, CEO, Duke Marketing

Local Restaurant Marketing (LRM) is a marketing philosophy that seeks to build competitor-proof relationships with customers and employees without relying on mass media advertising. It's intended to generate awareness, create loyalty and build frequency, grow store traffic and sales, and establish you as a prominent restaurant in the community. Here are a few examples of LRM techniques you can use:

Email marketing. If you haven't jumped on the email bandwagon, don't miss this opportunity to communicate one-on-one with your guests. It's as simple as creating a sign-up sheet as a check presenter or at the register with a business card drop. Once email addresses are collected and a database created, you can send email news, tips, offers, or event information right to your guests' email address. This keeps you in front of your guests and reminds them to return.

"Food in mouths." Getting food in people's mouths is one of the best ways you can generate buzz. Some of our clients have had great success with getting plenty of well-made signature menu items in people's mouths. Feed the community and turn them into fans. One client, who invited over 1,500 people to a tasting event, had such strong sales the following two months, we waited several months before even doing any other advertising or direct mail to the community. Creating a buzz by getting food in people's mouths can be very effective. Also, it costs less than paying for advertising. You really only pay food cost, which is a fraction of the dollars you would have to spend on advertising.



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Fundraisers. Creating fundraisers starts by choosing one or two charities in your trading area and working with them over the course of time to create a true partnership. This way your contribution can be more focused and you work together as partners. Research area non-profit organizations and find which has the most members and largest following, or chose one about which you feel passionate. Pick a day to have a percentage of proceeds donated to the organization. Give the organization flyers to pass out, email and send invites, and do a press release announcing the event to get as many people as possible to come to the restaurant. Hold a special check presentation at the end of the day. Take a photo of the “big check” being handed to the executive director of the non-profit. Submit this to the local newspapers along with the amount of proceeds donated to the organization.

The above is adapted from Restaurant Franchising, a publication from QSR magazine that will appear in Spring 2006. The author is Linda Duke, chief executive of [Duke Marketing](#). For more information about RF, visit www.ownarestaurant.com or contact Greg Sanders at greg@qsrmagazine.com.

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