

A restaurant reality check (list)

Here is a reality check — and the reason you need to ensure compliance with the checklist below as you run your restaurant business every day: Almost 60% of restaurants that open every year fail, are sold, or similarly falter in the first three years. The good side? Patrons and guests spend almost two billion dollars per day in restaurants in the USA. You just want to ensure you get a little piece of that lotto prize, right?

As I detailed in last month's article, it is essential that you hire properly. Hiring someone just to fill a slot, without defining a role properly, can lead to bad hires that you are "stuck" with, dragging your business down, rather than helping to build it.

✓ Train properly

NOT by the seat of your pants. Not by having a new hire follow someone for a few days, but with a well-thought-out training manual that is the bible of what is right, what is wrong, how things get done in YOUR restaurant, your core values, and your mission. This will be a bit different for managers than for other employees — so yes, you need two bibles.

✓ Treat guests right

Live and die with the adage that the guest (notice I did not say customer) is always the guest. NO they are not always right, but you must treat them as if they are. Always. You, your managers, your employees all must understand that



you and they are there to make your guests happy. Guests are not an intrusion into their side-work or people trying to get over on you for free food. They are your lifeblood.

✓ Be great, front and back

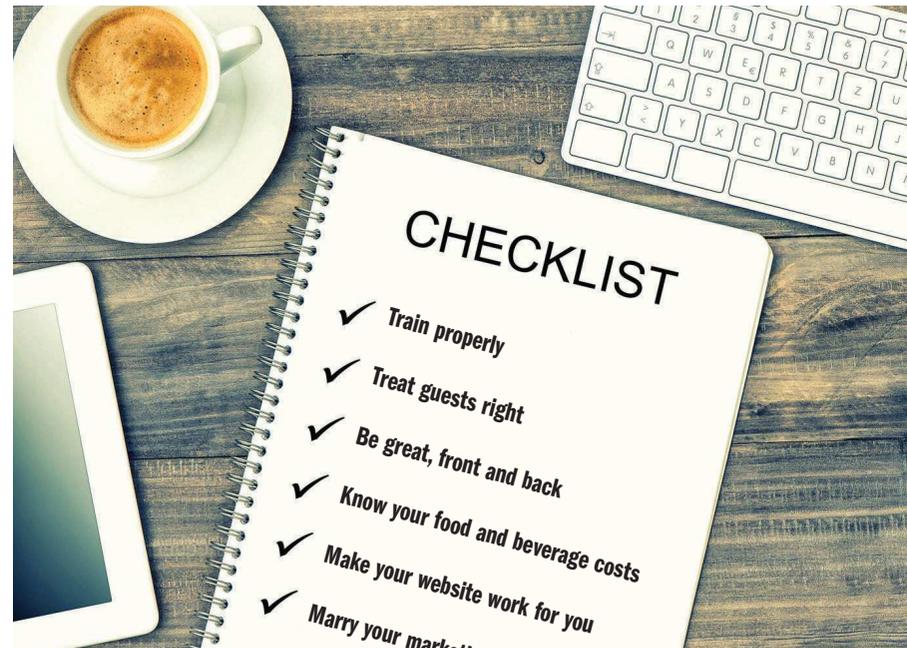
Have a great kitchen, producing great food, but have an even better "front of the house." A friendly host, server, or manager who provides a great, not a good, not an adequate, but a great first impression can make all of the difference in the world — not only to a first-time guest, but to regulars whose names he or she knows, and knows enough about them moving forward to make the ultimate restaurant move: From guest...to FRIEND!

✓ Know your food and beverage costs INTIMATELY

As intimately as you know your spouse or best friend. Yes, it is that important. If you price out your menu at about 30 percent, your alcohol at about 20 percent, and you do not have much waste, then you should be making money. If you are not making what you should, dive deep. Are you buying right? Are you portioning right? Is there more waste than you thought? Is theft of product happening? Understanding those numbers will help you run the business profitably, and there is just no substitute for having this intimacy as part of your life.

✓ Make your website work for you

Keep your website current,



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beautiful, easy to maneuver, and meaningful to your story. Your story is the reason you are in this business. Your passion should be conveyed in every sentence, in every paragraph, in every picture, and in every part of your website.

✓ Marry your marketing and social media

...to maximize the benefit of both. Doing it yourself puts you behind the eight ball. You already have a job. Many jobs, right? This includes hiring and training the right staff, diving deep and often into your operating costs, coaching your staff to treat your customers as guests so that they become your friends. You have a big job, but in this day and age, a dedicated marketing/social media person either in your organization or outsourced

to a company that specializes in hospitality is critical to your success. And do note that that company must specialize — understand and live and breathe the hospitality business — or it will just spin wheels for you. You can spin wheels yourself. Invest wisely and the return here, assuming the first items in the checklist are accomplished, will pay off for years to come.

Sage advice from Henry Pertman: Print this checklist, post it in your office, and check the checklist. Do it daily, stay current, and keep your eye on what you are doing right and more importantly, which checks are not checked. Then check. Check in with me for help or to chat anytime.

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