



Giving Thanks, Giving Back, and Planning for the New Year

Happy December everyone! I sincerely hope that the articles you read here every month provide guidance and solutions that make your business better and stronger.

'Tis the season for giving thanks to friends and family and, hopefully, to your family of restaurant employees and special restaurant guests. If you have done things like presented your employees with bonuses, given random acts of gift cards to special

significant and keeps you on point all the while.

So, 2018 is coming fast, and you have the opportunity now to make the new year one of the very best for you, your business, and your family. As in all important life decisions, proper planning is needed well in advance of the actions that will define your successes. The game plan is familiar, tried, and true...and will work if you deploy it properly:

Plan on updating your website and your social media presence

For whatever that may imply for your business, and at whatever level of sophistication, having a plan to refresh, update, and improve what you already have will have a huge impact on your business. Make it important.

Evaluate and rework your menu to make it more interesting and more profitable

Spend the time that is needed to do a proper analysis of your menu mix and your food costs. Eliminate items that are dated, do not sell well, or do not reflect well on your brand. Be sure that every menu item is worth selling from a quality, consistency, and profitability standpoint.

Take a careful look at your restaurant's interior

Does it need a refresh? Do the bathrooms need to be improved or remodeled? What does the entryway say about your place when a new guest comes in? Are you making the right impression?

Take the time to train and retrain all of your staff on the importance of hospitality

First, know what it means to you, and then be sure every one of your

employees, front and back of the house, understands that importance and how it affects pride, service, quality, consistency, and the building of guest relationships — so vital for your success.

Engage with a consultant

Though on the surface self-serving, this is sound advice that will help you develop yourself and your business in ways you may not even see right now or do not think you can accomplish on your own. As Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google, once said, "Every famous

athlete, every famous performer has somebody who's a coach; somebody who can watch what they're doing and can give them perspective. The one thing people are never good at is seeing themselves as others see them. A coach really, really helps."

Happy holidays, Happy New Year, and, as always, let me know if I can help.

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guests, and perhaps a catered meal or two for a community group you support, then it is already the time to celebrate your holidays!

If you have not done these things, or similar, it is certainly never too late to give gifts of joy and appreciation. While carrying out gestures that help to maintain important relationships is not — and should not be — a once-a-year event, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa are reminders to give back and show appreciation. With or without an ROI, these gestures would be important; but in fact, the ROI is

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