

MOOD:MEDIA

7 INGREDIENTS FOR A BETTER RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE

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If there's one primary take away from this article, it's this:

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE IS TO CREATE MEMORIES THAT CUSTOMERS WANT TO REPEAT AND SHARE.

Read it again. Say it out loud. Let it simmer to a sear because how well you pursue this goal is one of the biggest determining factors of whether or not your restaurant succeeds.

Additionally, how well you pursue this goal determines whether or not you're able to differentiate your business from the competitor down the street. And regardless of which restaurant sector you serve - fine dining, full service, QSR or fast casual - this key objective still applies.

1 SENSATIONAL RESTAURANT MUSIC

When it comes to sensory importance, what your customers hear is not too far below what they taste. Solid acoustics and control over ambient sound are critical, but your music is the most important factor. The music you play cannot be random - and according to federal law, it cannot be your favorite radio station either.

If you want to create positive memories associated with your restaurant, you need to choose **music that reflects your brand personality AND appeals to your clientele**. Getting it right takes a significant amount of research, time and expertise, so unless you don't have anything better to do (like manage the day-to-day operations of your business), then it's a good idea to get professional assistance from a licensed music provider.

Be wary of consumer-based streaming platforms that rely solely on bots and algorithms to generate your soundtrack.

Your brand experience is not something you want to put on auto-pilot. Expert design and management of your music ensures a consistent experience - one that is true to your brand and resonates with your guests.

For example, dayparting is an essential consideration of restaurant music - especially if you offer breakfast, lunch and dinner. Your restaurant music solution should give you the ability to schedule different programs for different times of the day. Doing so, you can drive the energy that is consistent with

The second most important takeaway is this:

CREATING THESE MEMORIES TRANSCENDS YOUR LOCATION AND THE QUALITY OF THE FOOD AND SERVICE YOU PROVIDE.

In other words, it takes more than the fundamentals to truly **complete** the restaurant experience. It takes maniacal attention to detail, rigorous accountability and a superhero sense of your surroundings.

Let's take a closer look at how we can leverage some of the most important sensory elements to help create those memories that customers crave. To bring customers back again and again. To inspire them to share with others just how much they loved their experience at your restaurant. Below are our 7 ingredients for a better restaurant experience.

the time of day and the experience you want to create.

Lastly, your restaurant music needs to be reliable. The last thing you want are streaming interruptions, odd segues between songs or complete silence because the internet is down at your location.

We expand on these concepts and many more in [The 11 Elements of Effective Restaurant Music](#). Give it a read to really help develop your music strategy.

2 LET THEM FEAST THEIR EYES - & SPEND MORE

Heads may turn when guests see your famous double-decker Angus burger passing by on a tray. But that isn't the only thing drawing stares from your guests. We're all incredibly visual by nature, and effective use of screens in your restaurant will undoubtedly elevate your guests' experiences - and how much they spend.

Restaurant digital signage isn't a trend - it's an expectation that can drive tangible bottom line results for your business. Run a slide show of your entrees or showcase daily and weekly specials. List upcoming events or wrap live TV with a branded on-screen template (more on that in the next section).

It probably goes without saying, but not all applications are suitable for all types of restaurants. For example, **digital menu boards** and **short-form TV** are ideal for QSR and fast casual. Not so much for the full-service spots.

By the way - restaurant digital signage applications are more cost-effective and significantly more efficient than their print counterparts. With most D.S. solutions, you can update and schedule content instantly using a web-based portal. No more waiting for signs to come back from the printing company, and no more printing fees. Just a simple monthly rate that typically amounts to some pocket change a day.

3 WATCH YOUR PROGRAMMING

The programming you show on your TVs matters big time. From your customer's perspective, there's no better way to spoil a great lunch or dinner than by having to watch negative news programming. By the same token, there's no better way to send customers elsewhere than by allowing your TVs to show your competitors' commercials. We explore these issues in depth in our blog: [How to Make the Most of Your Fast Food TV](#).

If you're a QSR or fast casual restaurant, you can switch out the live TV for a short-form programming solution. Short-form programming offers 1-3 minute clips of popular TV shows, and it's wrapped in a branded template that offers on-screen space you can use to promote your business.

On the other hand, let's say you're running a sports bar. You don't really have many suitable options outside of live TV, which means you can't control which commercials appear. In that case you can [incorporate a branded digital signage "wrap"](#) on your screens that allows you to promote your offerings and specials. Just imagine - while all eyes are on the big game, they're also checking out your app and drink specials. Pretty powerful stuff.

No matter what, always be mindful of what TV-based entertainment you're showing. Showing the wrong programming can have an adverse effect on your bottom line and send guests elsewhere in the future.

4 DELIVER THE MESSAGE

The restaurant experience can begin even before your guests make it to your dining room. What do potential guests hear when they call ahead to reserve a table? Do they get a quick, "Thanks for calling, please hold," followed by three minutes of silence or an annoyingly incessant beep-beep? Or are they greeted by your friendly brand voice and valuable information that they'll want to know about (e.g., parking, hours, events, specials)?

[On-Hold Messaging](#) can do wonders for showing your guests how greatly they're valued. It also helps improve the way guests perceive your business - and offers a glimpse of the great dining experience they can expect at your restaurant.

5 WHAT ELSE DO THEY SMELL?

The enticing aroma of your delicious fare should be present the dining room, but what do you guests smell when they're at the entrance or in the restrooms? Are your customers catching a whiff of the garbage as they walk down the hall to the restroom? Do they smell mold in the entrance? Some odors are simply unavoidable, no matter what your sanitation grade may be.

Stay on top of things to ensure you manage potentially unpleasant odors, but also look for ways where you can create or enhance positive aromas. Using a [scent marketing](#) solution can help you ensure that your guests only smell the good stuff.

Even if you don't have an odor problem in your restaurant, the use of scent can be extremely effective in creating positive memories associated with your restaurant. It works in three ways:

- 1 Using specific scents in your restaurant will set the stage for you to provide a great experience with food, service and your in-store media. Once you deliver that experience, your guests may begin to associate the scents of your restaurant with positive memories when they encounter those fragrances in the future. Then their thinking may become, "you know, we ought to stop by that restaurant tonight. It's been a while."
- 2 Taking a "billboard approach" to scent can stimulate appetite and cravings for specific menu items. Looking to increase dessert sales? A faint aroma of apple pie can encourage diners to splurge. Wish that natural smoke scent carried from the kitchen to the dining room? You can accomplish that too.
- 3 Using specific scents in your restaurant may also trigger positive memories of experiences that happened outside of your restaurant, causing your guests to appreciate your business even more.

Countless studies have shown that smell is the strongest sense for recalling memories. Use the power of scent to your advantage and implement refreshing scents in non-dining areas of your location.

6 BELIEVE IN THE SYSTEM

When it comes to your music, digital signage and TV, you need high-performance [audiovisual systems](#) to complete the experience. Your guests appreciate and recognize quality sound and picture quality in their homes, and they will notice when a speaker is crackling or out completely. If you're using consumer-grade flat screens for your TV or digital signage, they'll also notice the poor, fuzzy resolution. Show you care and invest in a quality AV system.

Speaking specifically of screens, remember that the consumer-grade screens you use at home aren't designed for use in restaurant environments. They're not made to run for 12-15 consecutive hours a day and they don't have structural casing in place to withstand the grease, excessive dust and high temperatures that exist in a restaurant.

The point here is that it's not a good idea to cut corners on AV systems. Whether you're a family-owned restaurant, a corporate-owned chain or a QSR/fast casual, you should definitely go with commercial-grade AV solutions from reputable brands such as Bose, Klipsch and Samsung.

When your customers notice low quality, they begin to develop an unfavorable impression of your restaurant - which can absolutely influence their decision to return (or not return) in the future. More importantly, your investment in on-site media is all for naught if the speakers are low quality or if a screen is out.

7 ARE THEY DRIVING THROUGH OR DRIVING AWAY?

This point is for the QSR folks, and systems quality has even greater implications when we're talking about [drive-thru systems](#). A malfunctioning headset or a broken loudspeaker is sure to muddy up communications with your drive-thru customers. The consequences are longer transaction times, dissatisfied customers and potentially inaccurate orders.

Even worse - if you're short a headset, you're not operating your drive-thru at maximum performance, which adds up to dollars lost for every hour you're without that headset.

Make sure you have a provider that offers responsive on-site service and comprehensive maintenance plans to keep your drive-thru functioning at optimal performance at all times.

The quality of your food and service are paramount, but there is so much more that goes into creating a share-worthy restaurant experience. It's about engaging your guests on a multi-sensory level, and creating an emotional connection with them that brings them back for years to come.

To learn more about elevating the experience at your business, [contact us today](#). We help more than 200,000 restaurants across the globe connect with their customers on an emotional level - and we have the expertise and affordable solutions to help you do the same.