



The Restaurateur's Guide to Digital Marketing



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At the end of 2019, it was already important for restaurants to be visible in the digital space in order to capture modern diners. Since 2020, digital presence is even more crucial to not only growing your business, but keeping it alive. For restaurant owners, there are several aspects of digital marketing that you'll need to consider.

From the most basic aspect of your digital footprint – your website – to your presence in the local (digital) community, you must plan out your digital marketing strategy with as much care as your menu. Luckily, we've created the ultimate guide so that you can maneuver the digital marketing scene easily and successfully, covering the following:

- Website
- Local SEO
- Social Media
- Influencer Marketing
- Email Marketing
- Online Reviews
- Local Partnerships
- Consistency





Grow Your Website

If you're starting from scratch in the digital marketing world, the first thing you'll want to do is create a website. Your website will act as the central hub for online business and serve as a home base for the rest of your digital marketing strategies. Once your website is complete, it is crucial to keep up-to-date with current content. While it may not seem like a big deal, outdated content can do serious harm to your business. To avoid problems, keep an eye on your site and implement refreshes whenever necessary.

Be sure to include your location(s), hours, menu, specials, events, and all special guidelines or rules on your website. Remember, your customers' online experience is just as important as their in-person experience; make sure need-to-know information is easy to find so that users don't have to hunt for it. You should also include good photos of your physical location and menu items to make your site attractive to the eye. For a more personal, up-to-date touch, implement a blog and update it regularly.



Optimize Local SEO

Restaurants thrive on local business. For restaurateurs looking to target customers in a particular geographic location, understanding how to leverage local SEO is critical. To do local SEO successfully, focus on:

- 🕒 **Name, Address, Phone Number (NAP)**
- 🕒 **Google My Business**
- 🕒 **Local-focused content**

Ensure that your name, address and phone number are accurately and consistently recorded across the web. This will help search engines and customers connect various listings to your business and improve your online rankings. Having a quality Google My Business page will also improve local SEO; create a customized experience with images, reviews, and other means of engagement with your customers. Finally, you need the right content in order to be discoverable. Be sure to create content that targets your specific region and desired audience.

Social Media Presence — Instagram!

Like it or not, social media has changed the way people utilize the internet. In fact, most customers expect to find their favorite businesses posting on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and more. To cater to modern customer preferences, supplement your website with a social media presence. Many people spend their time mindlessly scrolling through social media; take advantage of this by posting daily specials or events that will drive traffic to your business.

Instagram in particular is especially popular for restaurants because of its photocentric nature. It provides an excellent medium for enticing potential customers with mouth-watering images of your food and drink offerings. Additionally, when you implement online ordering, Instagram offers ROI with direct sales from your posts or links in your bio.



Explore Influencer Marketing

There are those on social media that everyone follows. Whether they're a celebrity or food blogger, these users usually have a large following, and therefore are considered "influencers," as their opinions and thoughts have a heavy influence on their followers. Influencers are often sharing things they like, including their new favorite restaurants, foods, recipes, and more.

Partnering with these influencers is a great way to gain exposure and positive reviews; their attention will drive important traffic to your website and social media platforms. Some influencers with a larger following may collaborate with your restaurant with a charge per post or story, while others may give your restaurant a shout out in exchange for a meal on the house. When an influencer shares a photo of them at your restaurant, you can bet many of their followers will check it out, bringing more traffic to your business.

Leverage Email Marketing

People on your email lists are most likely to become your loyal customers; they want to hear from you. Email marketing is a great opportunity for restaurateurs to promote themselves and engage with customers. You can send emails that highlight special events, menu changes, discounts codes, and much more. You can even create entire marketing campaigns targeted towards a specific audience for a specific purpose. To start bringing in more business with email marketing, begin by creating an email marketing plan that answers the following questions:

- What will each email say?
- How many emails will you send?
- How will you target non-openers?
- What's the next step for readers who click on the call-to-action?



Once you've determined the answers, you can create an automatic email series to make sure the right recipients get the right emails throughout your campaign.

Launching an Email Marketing Strategy: The Who and the What



The first step to creating a strategy for email marketing is **deciding who you're trying to reach**. Do you want to entice existing customers to return and try something new? Do you want to reach potential customers who have yet to try your food? Perhaps you want to reach both.

- Collect emails on your website, through social media, through any apps or delivery orders
- Persuade visitors to your site to give you their email address by offering them something in return, like a discount or free appetizer or drink
- Once you have these email addresses, keep them sorted by where you obtained them, as the source of receiving the email will determine the message you send



Messages need to be valuable to the recipients, so make sure that the content of any of your emails is interesting, persuasive, and perhaps offers the customer/potential customer something in return for opening the message. Once you have an email address, you want to keep them on your email marketing list, so every message needs to contain good content. You can send a variety of emails, like:

- Coupons, deals, and special offers
- Seasonal menu changes
- Events



Cultivate Productive Online Reviews

When a potential customer searches for your restaurant online, usually the first thing they'll look at is the review section. If there are no reviews, they might be hesitant to do business with you. Because of this, encourage customers to leave online reviews to prove that you provide excellent service. Your servers can remind customers as they check out and you can even include a reminder through email.

Negative reviews can never be totally avoided; however, they shouldn't be something to fear. In fact, you can use them to your benefit. If someone didn't enjoy their visit and airs a complaint online, you have an opportunity to respond publicly and make it right. By apologizing for the incident, promising to improve in the future, and even offering to send them a gift card, you may be able to keep them as a loyal customer as well as show others that you're considerate and working hard to improve.

Secure Local Partnerships

Customers trust local establishments they have already had a good experience with. Nurturing long-term partnerships with these local businesses can increase your credibility and visibility, allowing for a broader range of potential customers. By working together and cross-promoting each other, both you and your partner can build a more sustainable and profitable business.

This is why it is key to connect with local businesses around you such as food suppliers, craft beer brewers, and your local Chamber of Commerce. Your customers will appreciate that by doing business with you, they're also supporting other local businesses. You can even partner with other food cooperatives such as bakeries, cafes, bars and even other restaurants. Partnering with them allows you to offer diners something they can't get from you and proves that you are supportive in your community.

Be Consistent in Your Efforts

One post, one email, one review, or one partnership isn't going to be enough. You must have a regular schedule. Keep your efforts consistent in tone, quality, and messaging, and stay on brand in order to maximize recognition of your establishment. The more consistent you are with your messaging, the more likely you are to capture your target audience.

In today's digital economy, digital marketing cannot be ignored. If you have yet to implement a digital marketing strategy, let this be a sign that you should start now. It's important to remember that each individual aspect of your digital marketing efforts is valuable, but you're going to get the most return on your investment by carefully and strategically executing all of them together. Consistent messaging paired with a solid online presence and local partnerships will aid you in maximizing your restaurant's success.



About NCC

Since 1986, NCC has been delivering comprehensive software solutions to businesses in the hospitality and retail industries. Our software engineers combine years of experience in software development with a strong understanding of restaurant and retail operations to create products designed to work in a wide variety of environments.

Through a world-wide network of reseller partners, NCC has installed over 50,000 POS systems in more than 35 countries. NCC products are installed in wide range of retail and hospitality concepts including Table Service, Quick Service, Fast Casual, Bars, Night Clubs, Delis, Frozen Yogurt, Delivery and Concessions.