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#### INTRODUCTION

It's opening night at your new restaurant. The place is packed, and you have a night of reservations.

You make your rounds in the dining room to interact with your local community—everyone from families to young couples—and find them eating and drinking, laughing and smiling. You are elated, and you know you're driving a profit. So, how did you get here? By spreading word of your restaurant well before opening day and reaching a targeted group of new customers.

Looking for a successful opening day? Marketing and advertising ensure that people hear about your restaurant and are inspired to pay it a visit. This guide provides restaurant owners with a comprehensive checklist for advertising a new restaurant.

It discusses eight popular techniques and reviews the upsides and downsides of each. Ultimately, it illustrates how coupons and promotions are a proven technique that drive traffic at a fraction of the price of other methods.

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# CHECKLIST FOR ADVERTISING A NEW RESTAURANT

Establish digital channels
Build a website and make sure it's optimized for local
search results
Claim your local listings
Google listing OpenTable listing
Yelp listing Zagat listing
Zomato listing Trip Advisor listing
Create a mobile-friendly website
Sign up for coupon and discount programs
Advertise through your local supermarkets with register tape coupons
Sign up for social media platforms
Share updates on construction, menu-item testing, training, and anything
that creates a buzz
Build word of mouth with referral and influencer marketing
Begin loyalty programs and advertise them out of the gate
Host a social hour to test out menu items and build early relationships
Network with local media, area food bloggers, local businesses, etc.
Build strategic partnerships
Build relationships with associations and businesses that reflect
your values
Partner with local delivery services (Grubhub, Eat24, UberEATS)
Launch paid online advertisements (AdWords, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
Implement mobile marketing (Foursquare, Yelp, etc.)
Sign up for email marketing
Research traditional ads and direct mail advertising

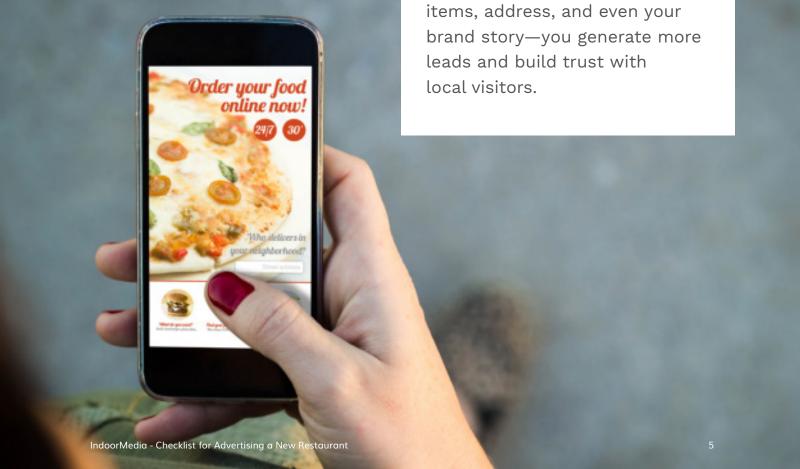
#### 1. DIGITAL CHANNELS

#### **Build Your Voice**

Before you open your doors, it's important to create a website to build your voice. Your website is often the first interaction a lead has with your business, so it's important to write content that embodies who you are as an organization. Publishing great content to a website or blog drives traffic, contributes to your search engine rankings, and increases your visibility. Consider how you want to be portrayed:

- Do you want to emphasize approachable, family-friendly verbiage?
- Or do you want to give off an edgy, modern vibe?

Investing in a well-designed, updated website with high-quality content is one of the best ways to build local awareness. A good website converts people into making reservations. When your website provides value by giving your target audience the information it needs—menu items, address, and even your brand story—you generate more leads and build trust with local visitors.



#### SEO, Mobile, and Local Listings

Even if you don't sell online, you must be discoverable by qualified local customers. Promoting your brand before you launch helps reach a wide audience. Investing in even the most basic search engine optimization (SEO) tools or services ensures your website is optimized. SEO focuses on growing visibility in organic (or non-paid) search engine results. From the content on your page to the way that other sites link to your website, SEO can become complicated. However, it's all about making your site better for your audience.

It's also important to claim your local listings, or the online directories, and create social media and search engine listings that advertise your business on search engine results. When creating and claiming business listings, restaurants can submit business information, images, logos, hours, menus, and more. Optimizing these listings with updated information enables businesses to reach and interact with a wider audience.

Be sure to claim the following local listings:

- Google
- Yelp
- Zomato
- OpenTable
- Zagat
- Trip Advisor

Many website platforms are either free or affordable but require maintenance. A website with little or outdated content is counterproductive to your investment. Not responding to user comments on local listings can come back to haunt you, and a non-optimized site can get lost in the digital ether. Regardless, investing in a web presence is a long-term initiative that may require outside assistance.

#### 2. COUPONS AND DISCOUNTS

Looking to make an immediate impact to fill seats? Coupon advertising not only compels consumers to visit your concept, but it impacts how much money they spend. Nearly 90 percent of consumers said that promotions affect the amount of money they spend. Coupons also sway consumers from your competitors. Seventy-eight percent of consumers said that coupons influenced them to make a purchase of a brand they wouldn't typically consider otherwise—a huge benefit in the cutthroat food service industry.

#### Register Tape Advertising

One of the best ways to advertise a new restaurant is through register tape advertising, a technique in which coupons are printed on the back of grocery store receipts.

The concept is simple:

- You pay to place coupons on the back of local grocery store receipts.
- Shoppers are handed a receipt every time they complete a purchase.

You know that opening a restaurant requires a lot of capital, which may not leave you with much cash for advertising. Utilizing this proven marketing method can help restaurant owners increase restaurant sales. With a CPM as little as \$6 per to reach 1,000 people, coupons offer the kind of return boosts your bottom line during the first few critical months of your new restaurant—and well beyond. Finally, this form of advertising lands in the hands of 20,000 shoppers each week.

"COUPONS ALSO SWAY CONSUMERS FROM YOUR COMPETITORS."

#### 3. SOCIAL MEDIA

Building a social media identity is an essential marketing technique that should be started as soon as you've selected your business's name. Even though you aren't open, you can share updates on construction, menu-item testing, training, and anything that creates an initial buzz. While there's no prescribed list of social media sites that restaurant owners should utilize. it's important to see what works for you. Consider implementing at least a combination of the following platforms:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

In other cases, restaurant owners can also benefit from sites like Pinterest. Reddit. and Tumblr. Regardless, making the most of your efforts goes beyond simply signing up for a page, feed, or account. From sharing photos of specials and your hardworking staff to responding to comments to offering exclusive offers, you must consistently update your accounts. It's true that you are looking at a real investment to set up your profiles, monitor and respond to reviews, and make the necessary changes to your restaurant when needed. However, the effort is a great complement to your other marketing strategies. You just can't become lazy.

#### 4. WORD OF MOUTH

#### **Referral Marketing**

Eighty-four percent of consumers say they trust recommendations from family, friends, and colleagues most about products and services. These recommendations are the highest-ranked source for trustworthiness—so it only makes sense for restaurant owners to leverage word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth marketing first requires businesses to understand their brand, their competition, and their customers.

Loyalty programs and events win the trust and support of a city, town, or neighborhood. Loyalty programs lead to increased visitors but also create repeat customers. In fact, according to recent research, members of a restaurant loyalty program spend nearly 20 percent more, on average, when redeeming a reward. Events are a great way to engage with your community and

get people in your doors. From menu tastings to happy hours, community events can build excitement and traffic.



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#### Influencer Marketing

From radio and television personalities to food bloggers and social media gurus, local media is often overlooked by small businesses. However, leveraging their influence can help drive local customers. For example, restaurants can build camaraderie with food bloggers to gain immediate local attention. Or they host an industry-exclusive, pre-opening event to gather key members of the media under the same roof.

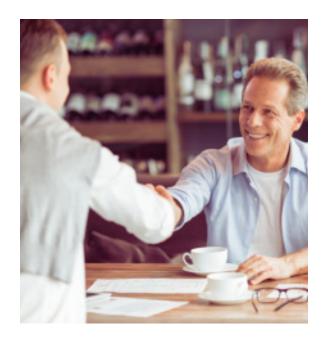
Local media outlets ensure that efforts are reaching the right audience. Ultimately, the more noise you generate before you open, the better. Positive reviews will generate traffic as you open. However, it's important to be selective about whom you're networking with. You want your influencing marketing to be effective—and working with positive, enthusiastic members of local media validates these efforts.

#### 5. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Teaming up with local businesses related to your industry—but not direct competitors—can increase awareness and reach a niche audience. Partnerships can manifest in events, oneoff dinners, or other special events. Building relationships with associations and businesses that reflect your values can draw in consumers you'd want in your doors in the first place. Partnering with complementary restaurants, breweries, or wineries for pairing nights can boost awareness of each other's brands.

Partnering with local delivery services—Grubhub, Eat24, UberEATS, and local bicycle courier services—can also help you reach a new audience.

Unless you own multiple locations across a large market, there are diners who live too far from your restaurant to visit it regularly. Partnering with delivery services increases your reach and enables guests to eat your food, regardless of work, weather, or other factors.

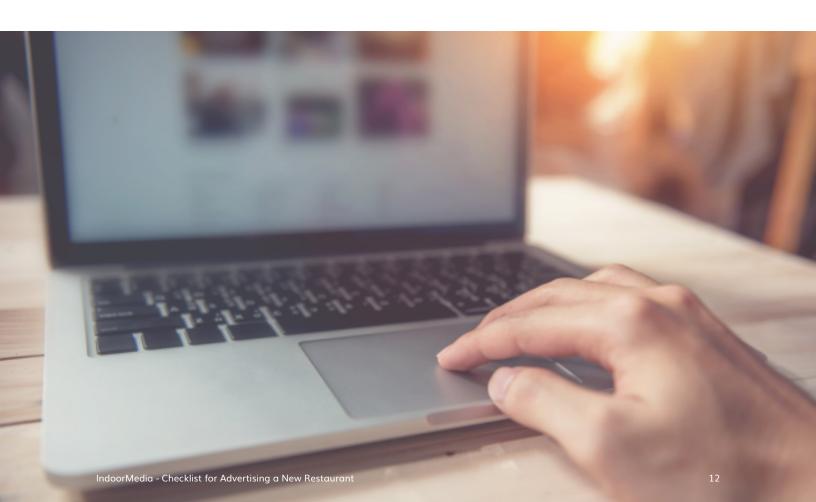


"BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ASSOCIATIONS AND BUSINESSES THAT REFLECT YOUR VALUES CAN DRAW IN CONSUMERS YOU'D WANT IN YOUR DOORS IN THE FIRST PLACE."

#### **6. PAID ONLINE ADVERTISEMENTS**

Did you know that 81 percent of shoppers conduct online research before making a purchase? Payper-click (PPC) is a great way for brands to target specific audiences and develop a strategy that drives the right leads. Luckily for small-business owners, Google AdWords, Facebook, and Twitter have made it easy to advertise online. Ads are created and shown on search engine results or social media platforms. Businesses then pay an established fee each time their ad is clicked on by an online user.

It's true that PPC provides brands with relevant, hyperlocalonline traffic at an affordable price.
However, like other online advertising strategies, PPC requires time, money, and effort.
Unlike other online marketing efforts, PPC also requires some technical know-how—which often means that brands will be outsourcing these efforts.
It's essential to establish objectives and outline a budget.
It's important to ensure your investments are worth it.



#### 7. MOBILE MARKETING & EMAIL MARKETING

#### Mobile Marketing

The prevalence of smartphones, and the impact they have on the consumer-facing market, cannot be understated. As of June 2017, 77 percent of U.S. adults owned a smartphone. Because nearly 60 percent of all consumer traffic to websites is from mobile devices. optimizing your websites around mobile devices is essential. Websites that are designed for a mobile experience automatically reformat and populate large navigation buttons and optimized images. These websites enable users to locate information, no matter the device.

We've discussed social media platforms at length—but have you ever considered mobile marketing platforms such as Foursquare and Yelp? These platforms draw in tech-savvy users and encourage social sharing in the same fashion as Facebook and Twitter. Like PPC, geo-targeted mobile ads can

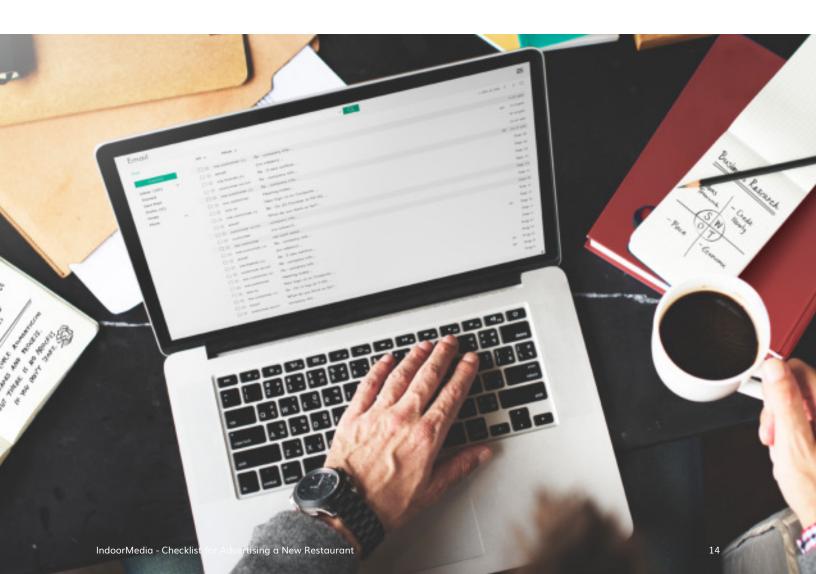
reach hyperlocal consumers, generate positive conversion rates, and produce a better return on your dollar. And like browser-based paid search, these techniques target local users looking for a place to eat.

#### **Email Marketing**

Think that email is dead?
Think again. The technique creates loyalty and reaches local customers. In fact, a survey found that 59 percent of marketers consider email to be the most effective channel in generating revenue. Email marketing is targeted, increases brand awareness, is measureable and shareable, and is costeffective. By leveraging analytics, restaurant owners can track their efforts with precise metrics and insights about their consumers.

It should be noted that it takes work to build email lists especially before you open. Brands must be able to convert website traffic into interested consumers. It's important to know how to strike a balance with email marketing as well. Like social media, it's important to remain consistent. However. you don't want to bombard your audience with an endless stream of emails. To get the most from their efforts, brands must often outsource their email marketing needs.

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## 8. TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING & DIRECT MAIL

#### **Traditional Advertising**

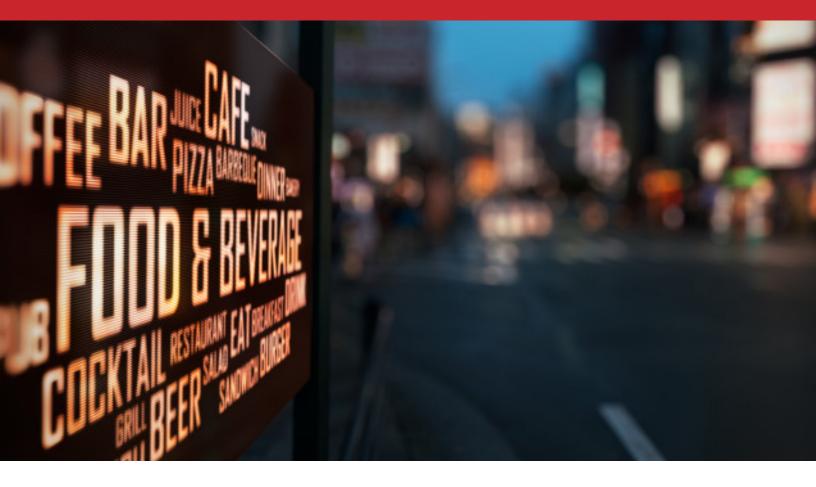
For many years, traditional advertising was the de facto technique for well-established restaurants. Traditional advertising is what most people think of when talking about advertising or marketing, including "conventional" venues for media placement, such as newspaper, radio, broadcast television, cable television, and outdoor billboards.

While some of the world's biggest brands have capitalized on catchy songs and innovative TV advertising, the landscape has changed quite a bit. These campaigns undoubtedly drove results, but there are other traditional avenues that drive a better ROI for restaurants of all sizes. For example, brands can put in the footwork and advertise their grand opening in local retail stores and apartment and condo complexes. Or they can invest in affordable small radio spots to reach a targeted audience.

#### **Direct Mail Advertising**

Another example of traditional marketing is direct mail advertising, in which restaurants send their menus, coupons, and other marketing material directly to doorsteps. Valpak local coupons and other direct mail advertising have been around for decades—however, these techniques leave business owners in the dark as to whether residents actually receive the delivered coupons and take action.





Effective advertising requires repetition, exposure, and targeting. To ensure that direct mail campaigns are seen, businesses must pay for multiple campaigns. This type of mail is often thrown away without hesitation (there's a reason it's called "junk mail" in the first place). Ultimately, this technique

takes on a "spray and pray" approach. While businesses can target consumers in broad ZIP codes, they may be reaching consumers 30 miles from their business, meaning that they may not even choose your restaurant over a closer competitor.

"TO ENSURE THAT DIRECT MAIL
CAMPAIGNS ARE SEEN, BUSINESSES
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#### CONCLUSION

So, what's the best way to advertise your new restaurant? Your budget is likely limited, so expensive print and broadcast channels might not be feasible. While effective, online efforts require upkeep and, sometimes, technical knowledge. You want to create a buzz before the restaurant opens and then attract customers after launch who, you hope, will turn into repeat customers.

As we've reviewed, online marketing and social media sites such as Yelp, OpenTable, and Facebook are influencers when it comes to restaurant selection. However, deals and special offers still drive more than one-third of diners' decisions on where to

eat out, compared to reviews, which influence just 14 percent. What's more, coupons can serve as a tiebreaker for diners deciding between two or more restaurants.

It's easy to make marketing mistakes in the restaurant industry. However, by dedicating the necessary time and resources, listening to your customers, and utilizing coupon advertising (register tape), it's possible to fill your seats and boost your bottom line—so that you can focus on the excitement of opening night.



### **HOW TO GET STARTED**

Whether you are interested in register tape advertising, cartvertising, or SPS, working with IndoorMedia is simple, efficient, and stress-free. Our marketing consultants are experts on your local community and can advise you on what solutions will work best and what information you should include on your ad or coupon. Our in-house graphics team can help design your ad, and we handle the rest: printing, placement on receipts, and delivery of register tapes and cartvertising ads to grocery stores. The entire process is that easy.

Ready to learn more?

Call us at 888-475-0993, or send us a message.

We look forward to working with you.

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