

20 Ways to Promote Your Restaurant for Under \$1,000

Tight profit margins demand innovative solutions for marketing.

And no one knows this better than restaurateurs. Maybe your restaurant has a robust marketing budget you want to squeeze a little more juice out of. Maybe you don't have a marketing budget at all. Either

way, we've drawn up 20 possibilities for promoting your restaurant that should come in under a thousand dollars. Some of them are even free!

1. Put up a window sign.

It could be as simple as some vinyl lettering that lists your cuisine type and specialties, or as fancy as a painted logo, but a cleanly applied window sign can be a great way to drive in foot traffic that would otherwise have passed you by!



2. Run a Google Adwords campaign.

The benefit of an online advertising system like Google Adwords is the low risk involved in trying them out. You can start with small bids on search terms that apply to your restaurant and see how they do. Just narrow in on your location and give it a try.

3. Advertise with a local college.

City newspaper and magazine advertising can be very expensive, but spots in your neighborhood or local college newspapers can often be much more affordable. Plus, they have audiences which are much more targeted to people who live in your area.

4. Upload photos and a fresh menu online.

It costs you nothing but time, and keeping your menu up-to-date and photos looking current and attractive is a sure way to get customers who find you online to give you a second look. While you're there, make sure your hours of operation are correct, too!

5. Manage your Yelp account.

Yelp is one of the primary places diners go to look for restaurants — and talk about them afterward. Make sure you have access to your establishment's page, keep your information updated, and check out your reviews. They could provide insight to what you're doing great, and what can be improved.

6. Run a cooking or mixology demonstration.

Customers will come out to see your chef or head bartender teach how one of your popular dishes or drinks are made. It gives your team a chance to showcase personality and your customers a chance to feel welcomed and learn something new.



7. Partner with a charity.

Every business owner has something that they're passionate about, and doing good in your community not only is great in itself — it also is great for your restaurant's image. It doesn't have to be huge — even one day where a portion of proceeds go to a non-profit in need could be great publicity.

8. Facebook.

Building a community of followers on social media can take time, but Facebook has become more than just a social media site. It's almost like a search engine in itself. And if you're not posting photos of your food, listing special events, or featuring menus, you could be missing out on people looking for you.

9. Table at a local street fair.

Nothing says reaching out to the community to promote your business like actually getting out into the community. Street fairs are a great way to meet lots of people and showcase a limited amount of food that will stand out in their minds the next time they're choosing a restaurant to dine at.

10. Run an LTO.

Limited time offers are great ways to attract customers because of the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) effect. And they don't have to be discounted dishes. A successful LTO just needs to be something that a customer can enjoy that isn't regularly available on your menu.

11. Offer free wi-fi.

A lot of business owners may not be crazy about having customers on their smartphones while dining, but the reality is, that's now part of the social experience — so take advantage! Free wi-fi won't just endear your customers to you. It may also encourage more viral Instagramming and tweeting about your fantastic dishes!



12. Start an email newsletter.

An email newsletter is a great way to keep people informed about your specials and offers and maybe feature some regular customers. Ask people to sign up at your host station when they walk in, or give them the option as they pay their check at the table.

13. Promote a Happy Hour.

Of all the after-lunch, pre-dinner possibilities, Happy Hour is tried-and-true for boosting business. All you need to do is decide which food and drink can survive a price cut and promote! Just be sure to check your local laws. Some states do prohibit these.

14. Make a monthly video.

With so many behind-the-scenes shows about restaurants these days, it's a no-brainer that customers want to know more about the places they dine. YouTube is free and directly integrated into Google searches, giving your restaurant its ability to shine on a broader stage for almost no cost!

15. Respond to reviews.

It's nice to see good reviews, but reading and responding professionally and helpfully to the bad ones can be just as important to your business. Be apologetic for their less-than-ideal experience, and think about how you can use their review to make positive changes in the restaurant.

16. Partner with other local businesses.

Whether it's working with local farmers to feature organic and fresh produce or partnering with hotels or B&Bs to recommend you to out-of-town guests, teaming up with other small businesses in your community just makes sense, and can benefit both of you.



17. Host a game night.

Setting up a trivia contest during those slow after-work hours or later at night is a great way to attract guests — and give them a fun way to unwind. It can be as inexpensive as getting a simple public-address system and offering a small prize for the winners.

18. Sponsor an amateur sports team.

Whether it's an adult softball or kids' baseball team, sponsoring a team in a local, amateur sports league ties your business closer to the community you service. Plus, where else would players go to unwind and celebrate (or commiserate) than the sports bar or restaurant printed on the back of their t-shirts?

19. Update your Google local listing.

According to the Google Mobile Movement Study, 88% of consumers who search for a local type of business are likely to visit that business within 24 hours. Managing your Google "My Business" account and getting seen by people actually searching in your area is a sure way to drive more foot traffic.

20. Join a pay-for-performance loyalty program.

The key to keeping marketing costs down can be as simple as choosing marketing that immediately makes you more money than it costs. A loyalty program like those Rewards Network manages can bring you an average 500% return on ad spend because our marketing is fully pay-for-performance.

When Rewards Network markets your restaurant, we help fill in valleys of traffic with exactly the type of customers you want: frequent diners who spend 13% more per check on average than others. You never have to discount your food or drink, and you only pay when we send you a customer.



“Rewards Network’s intrinsic value is huge. The integrity that they have has definitely helped improve the quality of the clients that we get. These customers tend to spend more and are more engaged.”

— Raveen Arora, Owner
The Dhaba, Tempe, AZ
Rewards Network client since 2009

Want to learn more about how Rewards Network can help your restaurant grow?

Contact us today:

restaurants@rewardsnetwork.com
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