

# How to Market Your Restaurant During Recovery

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Boosting Sales  
When Dine-In  
Traffic is  
Sparse

## Marketing Basics: How to Attract & Win Customers



WAYPOINT

In today's unprecedented and uncertain marketplace due to the Coronavirus, how you market your restaurant is as critical to its success as the food you serve. For consumers, according to Datassential, restaurants can help ease the tension for diners by providing a safe and comfortable socially-distanced place to dine. Additionally, on a more emotional, human level, let diners know that their patronage ultimately helps the community, by supporting staff, feeding first responders, or by restarting the local economy. Getting the word out about what you are doing to help others during the COVID-19 recovery and beyond requires marketing and is a positive and impactful way to market your restaurant.

A strong marketing strategy can help you grow your business. With a bit of creativity and several free or low-cost do-it-yourself marketing tools available, you can take your business to the next level—by getting your marketing strategy off the ground!

Whether you're a seasoned restaurateur or new to the world of foodservice, you'll learn marketing strategies and tactics to help you promote your establishment to potential and existing customers. This guide will help you optimize the various channels at your fingertips to multiply your reach, increase traffic and gain more customers than ever before.

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Unlocking your brand's potential

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Boost revenue with creativity

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It's time for you to apply these marketing tactics



PART 1

# The Benefits of Marketing

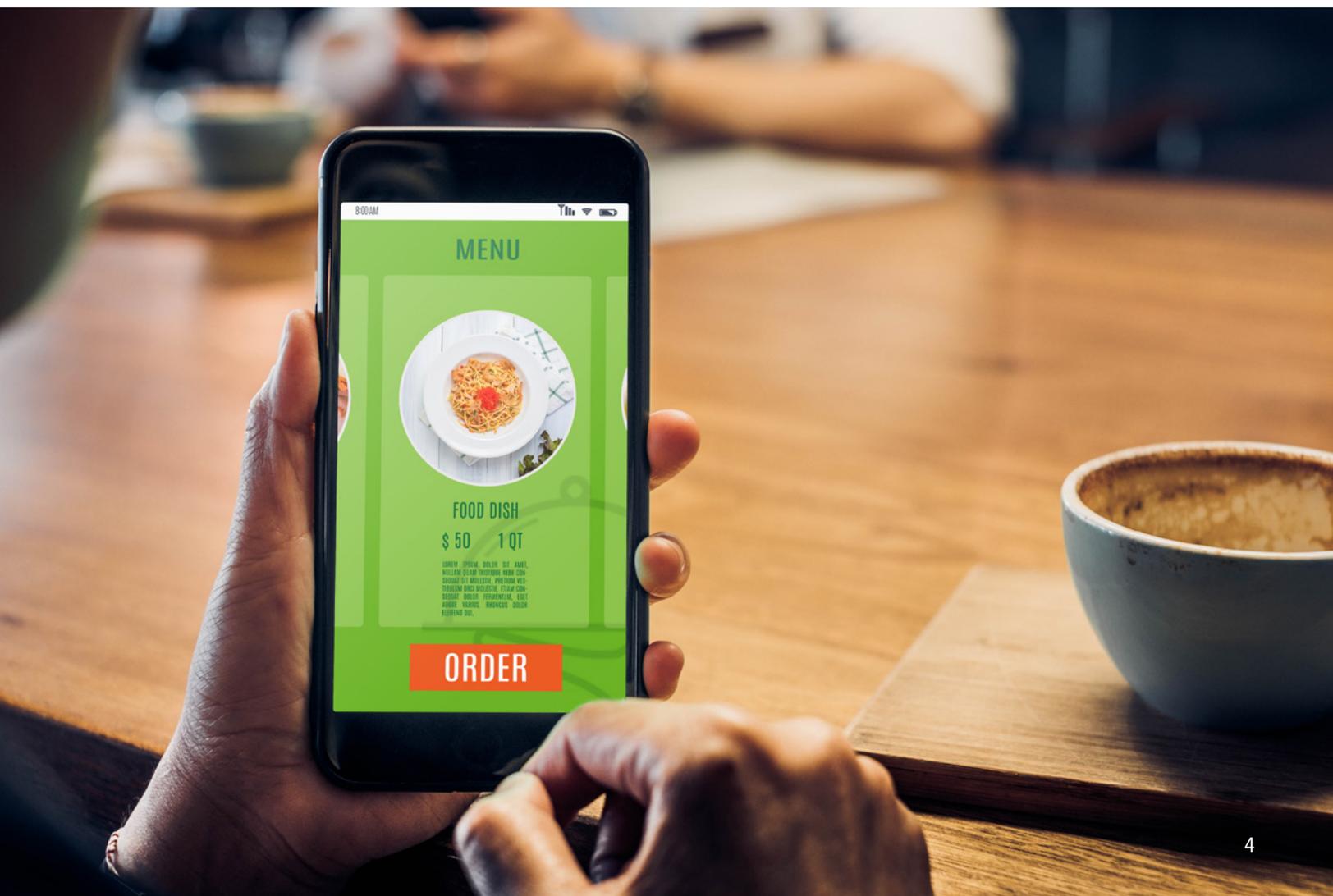
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*Unlocking your brand's potential*

Over the years, restaurant marketing has evolved from handing out printed menus to large-scale, immersive campaigns grabbing the attention of consumers from billboards, web browsers, and smart phones. Although transitioning to the digital landscape is competitive, the great news is that technology allows you to build brand loyalty, increase sales, and reach more customers than ever before.

*Marketing allows a brand, company, or establishment to promote itself and reach people beyond their physical scope of influence. And when it comes to connecting customers with your delectable food, it can be the thing that sets your restaurant apart from the competition.*

Whether you're a marketing pro or new at the concept, there are a few basics you'll want to master.



# What Can You Accomplish With Marketing?

*Marketing is a concept that brings your restaurant new customers — with the potential to improve patron loyalty — leading to sales growth.*



## Attract New Customers

WOW your patrons once, and they are likely to return — and probably bring a friend. But for most restaurants, it takes more than word-of-mouth. Fortunately, there are lots of marketing tools and techniques to accelerate growth: from earned media through social platforms, to e-mail marketing incentives, to paid promotions and co-sponsored events, to working with local foodies and influencers.



## Accelerate Your Sales

At its core, marketing is about two things: meeting your customers where they are, and giving them what they want. Starbucks does a great job with this; the Starbucks App is directly responsible for an impressive 22% of the company's overall sales? To increase sales your restaurant should look to connect with consumers where they are and in the connected age, that's through their smartphones, social media and online.



## Retain Your Customers

Customer retention is the key to much of your business.

*Studies show that increasing customer retention by just 5% could increase profits by 25-95%*

A great restaurant with good food and a nice venue will attract customers, but it takes creating the best customer experience to keep them coming back. Consumers want to connect with your restaurant through understanding your brand, they want to feel special, so friendly staff and great service is critical, and they want to be heard, so respond to their feedback and reward them for being loyal.



## Grow the Business — and Strengthen ROI

Over time, effective marketing can build your brand, make more people aware of your food and increase your sales. And it doesn't have to cost a fortune to get started. At Waypoint, we have a team of experts that can help you find that sweet spot for your business goals and provide solutions to help you reach them.

# What Are Marketing Basics?

## Cheat sheet



## Outbound vs. Inbound Marketing

Outbound marketing is when a business reaches out to its target audience with an offer or announcement. Examples of outbound marketing include: TV commercials, radio spots, billboards, direct mail and magazine ads — any effort where you're pushing out marketing messages to your target audiences.



Inbound marketing is when you provide value to your audience first and convince them to come to you for more.

Inbound marketing often comes in the form of blogs, infographics, email marketing, videos or social media content. The idea is to build trust with your audience, eventually compelling them to become a customer.



## SEO

Search Engine Optimization, (SEO) is the collection of tactics, techniques, and best practices that influence how findable your restaurant is on popular search engines like Google. In other words, how high do you rank, and on what page, for what search terms?

Your SEO power is the sum of all your online properties, both those you own (like your blog, website, your social media pages) and those you don't (customer review sites like Yelp, food blogs, other peoples' social media content about you, etc.) that all affect where you appear, how you appear, and how findable you are.

The world of search engine optimization is complex and ever-changing, but you can easily understand the basics, and even a small amount of SEO knowledge can make a big difference. Free SEO education is also widely available on the web, combine this information and some practice and you are well on your way to becoming SEO savvy.



## Paid Media

Paid media is advertising that costs money. This includes: website banners, Facebook ads, sponsored Instagram posts, video ads or a partnership with a popular foodie blog. These are all examples of how restaurants can trade dollars for local or social media exposure, getting more awareness for the business.



## Earned Media

Like inbound marketing, earned media is publicity your restaurant gets by doing something that gets attention and is promoted by word-of-mouth or news coverage. Maybe it's a trendy new signature dish, or maybe your restaurant has unique, aesthetically pleasing branding. You don't pay in dollars — earned media refers to the recognition you receive because of creativity, effort, or skill and gain exposure as a result.



## Traditional Promotions

Contests, birthday and anniversary discounts, and bounce-back coupons are among the common marketing tactics restaurants have historically used to keep a steady flow of customers.

These methods are still viable today — but their impact is exponentially greater when combined with newer digital methods. The key is to find a balance between the two methods. Together, they're the perfect pairing for staying visible, staying competitive, and rising to the top of your unique position in the market.

## How Your Brand Drives Your Marketing Success

A clear understanding of your brand — what you're all about, and how you're different from the competitors in your area — is the secret ingredient to the most successful restaurant marketing efforts.

Once you determine your brand differentiator, stay focused on the key points of difference and keep them in mind as you apply the strategies in the rest of this publication. Whatever it is, get clear on the one or two points that separate you from the pack — and keep them in mind as you apply the strategies in the rest of this publication.

Now that we've covered some of the key ingredients of effective marketing, let's move on to crafting a recipe for success that's perfect for your operation.





PART 2

# Expanding Your Reach

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*Introducing yourself to new customers*

# Social Media

## Give Them Something to Talk About

With 387 million Instagram posts tagged #food as of this publication, social media is where people go to see, share and comment on what the world is eating — which presents a huge opportunity for you to reach new customers.

## 3 Tips For Social Media Success:



### Perfect the Basics

Before creating tons of social media content share basic information like location, business hours, or phone number on your social media channels. Be consistent across profiles — to give your customers (and search engines) clear, essential information.



### Be Creative

Social media is a tool, so be creative. Whether it's cooking demonstrations, behind-the-scenes tours of your kitchen, chef interviews, or just having fun, offer your audience fresh content that's as irresistible as your restaurant menu offering.



### Be Conversational

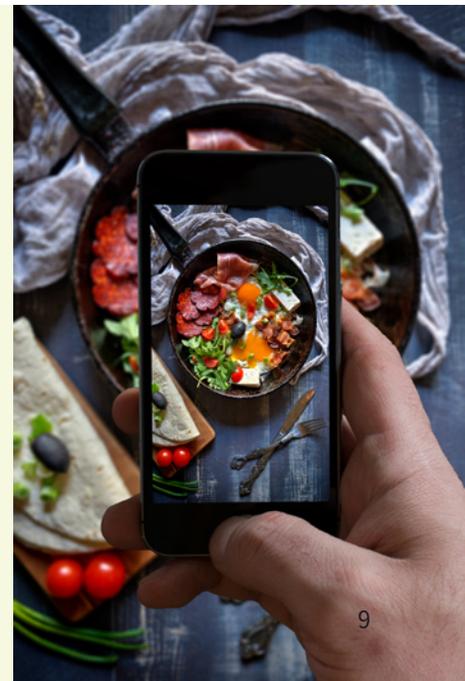
Think of social media as a place to build community and talk more intimately with your followers. Ask questions, listen, connect, respond to comments — and when the time is right, point your followers to relevant offers.

## Delicious Food for the Eyes

Of course, you'll need gorgeous photos of your dishes to drive engagement — not just on social, but everywhere online. So, you will need to invest in a good quality camera or photo shoot with a local professional food photographer.



Menu items with photos see a +13% click-through rate



# Search Marketing

## Getting Found Online

81% of consumers search for restaurants on their mobile device and “restaurants near me” with 111 million searches as of this publication — is the top search term for the restaurant industry.

We all use search to find local businesses and setting your restaurant up for SEO success is easier than you might think. Here are a few tips to get started:



### Set Your Strategy

The essential components to your restaurant SEO strategy are geography and cuisine type. Identify the city or town where most of your customers come from — or where you want them to come from — and the kind of cuisine you offer. Focus your SEO around these two key items.



### Claim Your Listings

Many customers can arrive by searching sites like Yelp, Google, and third-party delivery services. By appearing on these sites, you leverage the SEO power that takes years to build up. Claim your listing, and make sure they're updated with your preferred geography, business information, and cuisine category — and don't forget to add delicious food photos.



### Get Reviews

Ask for reviews — from loyal customers, your email list, and those who order online. When people talk about you online, that signals Google and other search engines you're a business that they should pay attention to — which leads to higher rankings and more traffic.

## Good Food Comes First

Before you execute your SEO, make sure you've already figured out how to provide your guests with delicious food and a superior experience.



Huffington Post reported that a half-star difference on a Yelp review rating can swing restaurant business by a whopping 27%.



# Measuring Performance

## Making Marketing Profitable

Like making the perfect dish, modern restaurant marketing is a combination of art and science. The science part is about measurement: the more precisely you track your promotional efforts, the more profitable you can make them.

That said, two metrics you'll want to pay close attention to in your marketing are your Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) and your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

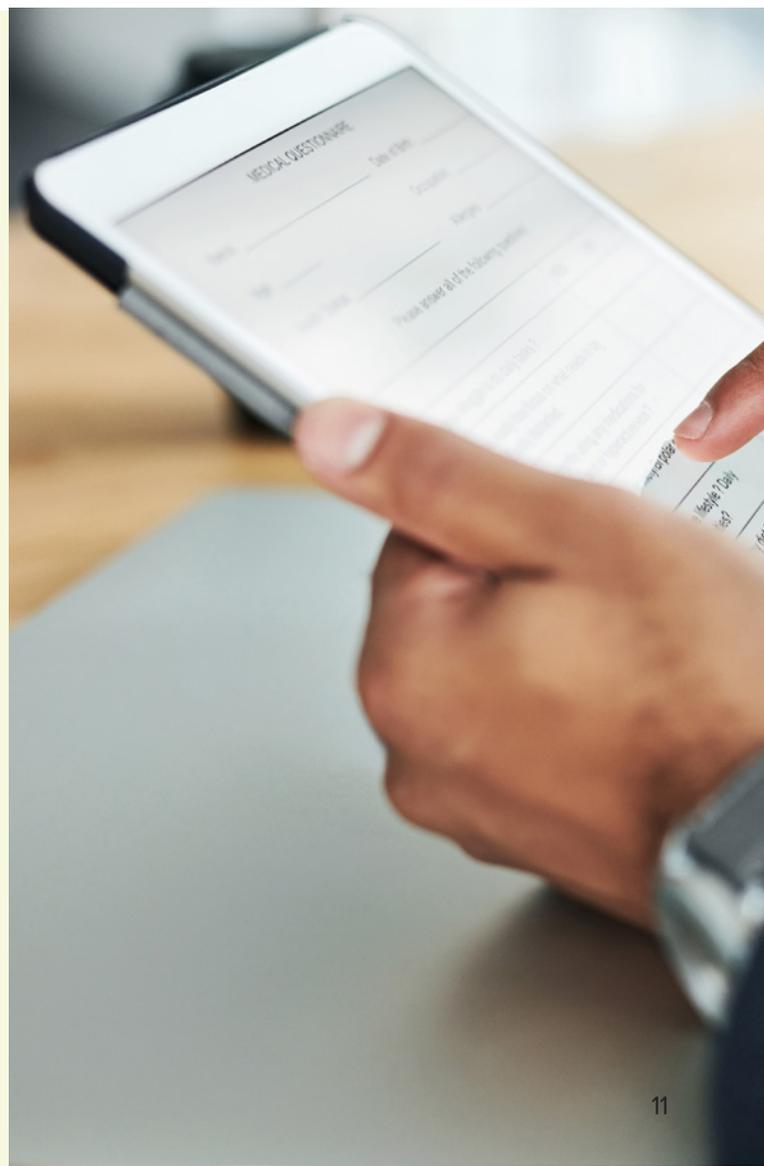
### Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)

How much you spend to bring in each new customer is your Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) — this is an important number to track. With this metric in hand, you can evaluate the effectiveness of a campaign, determine your most (and least) valuable channels, and use it as a baseline to inform specific marketing goals.

## HOW TO: Calculate Your Customer Acquisition Cost

Divide your marketing expenses by the number of new customers you bring in during a given period. For example: If you spend \$500 a month on marketing (*including discounts and promotional pricing*) and get 50 new customers, your CAC is \$10.

$$\frac{\$500}{50} = \text{CAC } \$10$$



## Marketing Percentage of Your Customer Acquisition Cost (M%-CAC)

Once you invest in a marketing strategy, it's important to know if your strategy is working. The M%-CAC tells you how well you're performing in relation to your marketing spend. You're comparing your overall marketing budget to the cost of customer acquisition, a lower percentage is better. Keeping tabs on this number ensures you're not spending most of your marketing budget on each new customer you acquire.

## HOW TO: Calculate Your Marketing Percentage.

If you find the percentage is high, this is a sign that you should re-focus your marketing strategy moving forward — and look to new channels to expand your reach.

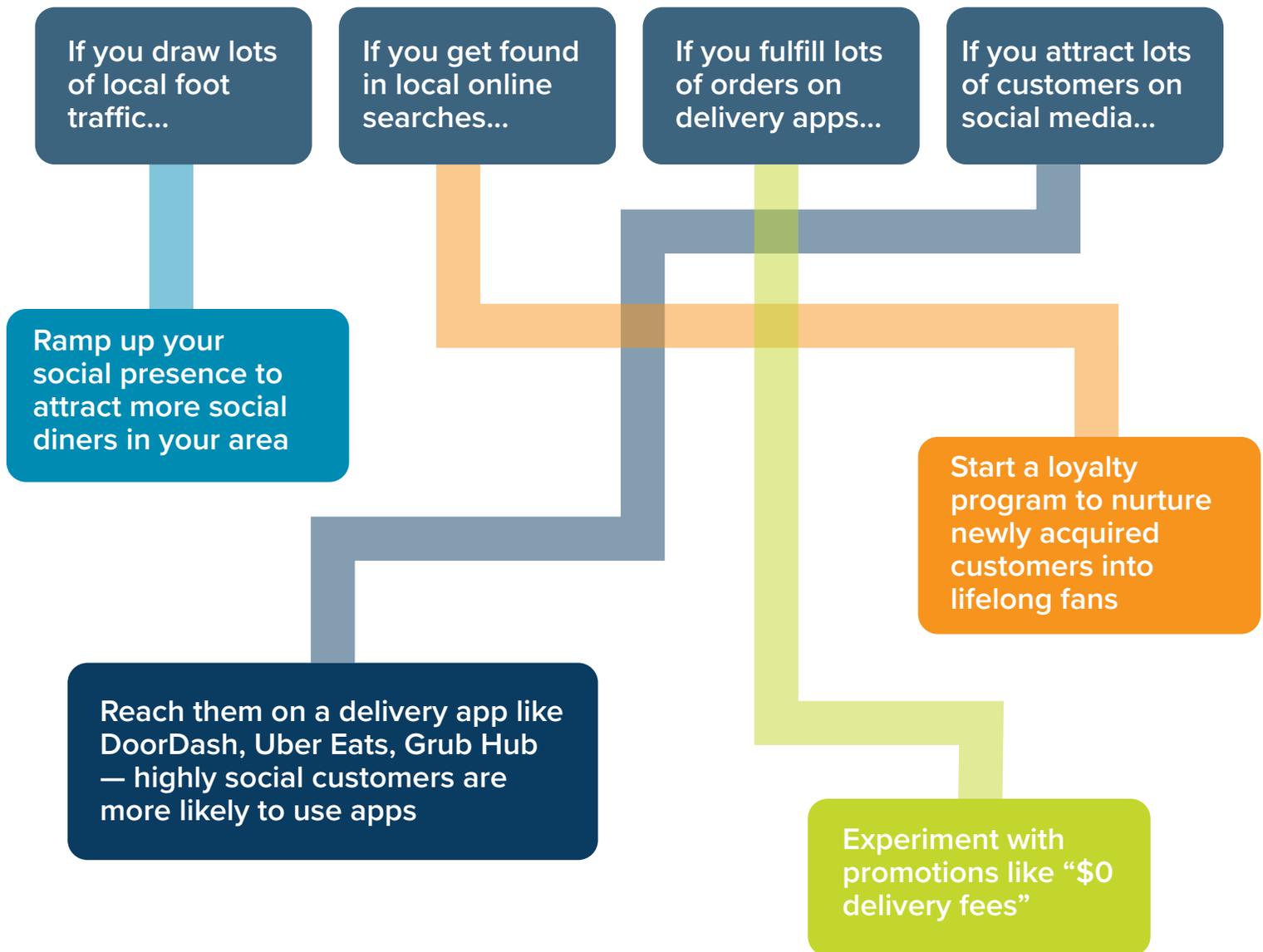
$$\frac{\text{Marketing Costs}}{\text{Sales \& Marketing Costs}} = \text{M\%-CAC}$$



## ACTIVITY: See this? Then do this.

You want your customers to come from all over, so think about which marketing channels are currently working well for you — and which ones you might pair with them to bring in even more customers.

### For example:



Like a well-balanced meal, a strong marketing strategy brings a variety of elements together. So be sure to make the most of every marketing channel through which you can reach customers.

A young woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue denim shirt and a light-colored apron, is smiling and looking down at a laptop. She is sitting at a wooden table in what appears to be a cafe or a small business setting. The background is softly blurred, showing shelves and other people. A large blue diagonal shape covers the left side of the image, containing text.

PART 3

# Accelerating Sales

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*Boost revenue with creativity*

# Getting the Attention of Customers Online

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We understand that for many restaurateurs, managing the day-to-day finances and crafting culinary creations can feel like two separate pursuits. The reality is both are equally important in driving sales and increasing revenue for your restaurant. Each objective needs to be strategic and well thought out, especially in a world where cutting through the noise and grabbing a customer's attention is more competitive by the day.

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*According to Facebook's 2019 Restaurant Trends and Insights Reports, "90% of guests research a restaurant online before dining — more than for any other business type. And 57% of those guests viewed a restaurant website before selecting where to dine." The report also stated that, "86% of millennials will try a new restaurant after seeing food-related content online."*

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Now more than ever, it's important to have a deep understanding and strategy for your restaurant's digital presence. 60% of U.S. consumers order delivery or takeout once a week. 45% of consumer say that offering mobile ordering or loyalty programs would encourage them to use online ordering services more often. When it comes to optimizing your digital storefront, running promotions, and engaging in new types of marketing, there are plenty of innovative tips, tools, and tactics to add to your toolbox — and accelerate your sales.

# Invest in Your Website



Your website has the potential to drive awareness, online orders and reservations. When it comes to boosting your online presence, designing a compelling and mobile-friendly website with photos, your menu, location, and other essential information is a necessity. With a visually stunning website that is easy to navigate, your restaurant will be able to build a professional image, especially if you are starting out. Customers get a chance to get acquainted with your brand, menu and promotions.

Your website can also differentiate your business from the competition. Use images

of your restaurant's decor and ambiance on your website. We also recommend showcasing your menu visually with a gallery of images that puts your food in the spotlight. By investing time into search engine optimization (SEO) you can help your business show up for related search terms. For example, if your website shows up for someone searching 'late night café', 'Italian restaurant' or 'family friendly pub' you will gain more exposure and hopefully more customers. If your website is designed and managed well, it can help you grow your local audience and maximize sales opportunities.

## HOW TO: Calculate Your Revenue From Marketing

Whether you're launching a new website, a new marketing campaign, email advertising campaign, or advertising on social media, you can easily calculate the impact of these efforts on your revenue using the following formula:

$$\text{Incremental Revenue} = \text{New Sales} - \text{Baseline Sales}$$

**Baseline Sales:** your total sales for a given period **without** any marketing

**New Sales:** sales in the same period, after the introduction of a new marketing campaign

# Community Involvement & News Coverage



When it comes to maximizing your local influence, find ways to become more involved with your community. Reaching out to local news, media outlets, or even local micro-influencers to get your name out there and build coverage is a great first step.

It's easier to attract more customers during the summer months, especially with tourism. However, a restaurant's real source of revenue, all year round, comes from locals within the community. If you can win the hearts of the locals near your restaurant, tourists will also flock to your establishment.

Try getting involved with philanthropic groups or donating food to community non-profit organizations, such as your local food bank, children's charities or camps, etc. Another great way to get involved with your community is to have a booth at local art shows, festivals or farmers markets that may be going on in the city center. Not only does this help you win the hearts of the community, but it also is a perfect opportunity for you to be featured on the local news and create positive brand awareness around your restaurant.

## CHECKLIST: Optimize Your In-House Marketing

Along with digital marketing, it's still a great idea to have traditional marketing items that you can use to promote your restaurant. Here's a checklist of items you can use to advertise your restaurant's events, deals, promotions, and services:



- “Pick up here” signs
- Thank you stickers for take-out
- Sidewalk signage
- Disposable takeout menus
- Google business reviews sticker
- Magnets with phone number & website
- Table tents
- Drink coasters & crayon packages
- Reserved parking signs for takeout & delivery staff

# Offer Online Promotions When Foot Traffic is Low

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Before we dive into specific restaurant promotion ideas, it's important to call out that no promotion is successful without first identifying, analyzing, and understanding your existing customers and your target customers. Ask yourself: Are you located near office buildings? A stadium? Do your customers tend to be older or younger? Families? What motivates your customers: having an experience, trying new foods, saving money, or something else? Figure out the answers to these questions and you'll have a much easier time coming up with promotion ideas that spur repeat visits.

Restaurant promotions exist to help restaurants overcome challenges. Is there a section of your menu that isn't getting any love, or a time of day where your staff are idle? Set up discounts on those foods that aren't moving and try a happy hour during off-peak times.

Discounts don't just incentivize customers that you wouldn't otherwise have, it boosts their sense of fulfillment that they secured a delicious meal and a deal — and can help reinforce positive brand sentiment.

It's important to know the margins of every menu item — both food and beverage. This can help you come up with creative bundles to offer your customers. For example, you could just give away free

fries to all customers for a short timeframe, but it might be better to offer free fries when they buy a milkshake.

You'll want to thoroughly understand your margins so you'll know how much you can discount in order to make more informed purchasing decisions and identify ways to make your inventory go farther. If you're interested in re-engineering your menu, would like to get one-on-one guidance from a corporate chef, or if you're looking for menu insights and trends, Waypoint can help.



REACH OUT TO US AT:

[www.asmwaypoint.com/ask-waypoint/](http://www.asmwaypoint.com/ask-waypoint/)

While placing signs on your doors and take-out menus certainly won't hurt, online promotions are the most effective way to reach the most people across the widest spectrum — and consumers demonstrate a clear desire for them. According to Facebook, 63% of diners say that mobile “discounts and promotions” are important to them.

# Promotion Ideas to Get You Started

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## Leverage Local and Community Events

Local and community events can help you drive business and generate awareness around your restaurant. Think art shows, festivals, farmers markets, charity events, trivia nights, etc. By tying a promotional discount or meal bundle to an event you can increase sales and customer loyalty.



## Holidays

Holiday promotions lead to more people coming into your restaurant to eat with family and friends. They also usually help restaurants expand their social media presence. Many people take photos at restaurants during the holidays which leads to sharing, liking and tagging your restaurant in photos and recorded memories.



## Bundling and Fixed Price Offerings

Bundled meals, like a pasta dinner for two at a certain price that incorporates a higher priced wine, can be a crowd pleaser. Another example would be a reduced-price fixed menu that includes an appetizer, main, dessert and bottle of wine at lunch time to increase foot traffic. If you need help with menu development, reach out to Waypoint. We have a team of corporate chefs who can assist with menu solutions and recommendations featuring products from leading manufacturers.



## Discounts on Sides and Snacks

Another surefire strategy is to heavily discount a section of your menu that's filled with items that aren't typically eaten by themselves – like sides, snacks, and soups. Usually, customers will also purchase other items as well.



## New Menu Launches

If you've already invested in new elements for your restaurant, it's the perfect time to promote the changes. Although a new menu may seem obvious to you, sometimes a simple announcement on your website and social media campaign can help your new menu stand out and generate revenue quickly.



## Live music and bands

By bringing in a well-known local band or solo artist, you can increase restaurant sales and reservations. Try extending happy hour or offering a discount on drinks while the band is in session.

A man and a woman are smiling and looking at a tablet together in a cafe setting. The man is wearing a denim shirt and a brown apron, and the woman is wearing a grey blazer. They are both looking at the tablet with interest. The background shows several hanging wicker lamps and a blurred interior.

PART 4

## Logging On

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*Using social media to keep customers coming*

# Increase Your Reach With Social Media

With 45% of the population on social media worldwide, it's no wonder that businesses are relying on social to get the word out about their services, showcase how their business is unique, and engage with new and current customers.



## Making Your Restaurant Unique

Social media can help you have a distinct voice in a sea of noise. Use these platforms for event marketing, sharing recipes, menu creations and general restaurant information. You'll also want to use social media to generate reviews, offer deals or meal packages, as well as to keep in contact with your customers. Here are some things to consider as you think about your online voice:



### Who is Your Audience?

A regular posting schedule, and investing in social media advertising by location, can help you engage with your audience and build your following in no time. Think about who you want to serve and who you currently serve. How can you create an experience that they will love and want to come back for again and again? What do they care about or value the most? This will help you build out a social media strategy that maintains their attention.



### What Do You Want to Say?

In order to stand out, carefully craft messages and videos that are fun and engaging. So how can you create fantastic content that will bring in followers and customers? We recommend that you study your content to find out which posts people comment on or like the most. Which times of day do you receive more impressions and engagements? It's also a good idea to check out your competitors pages to see what they are posting. Also, look to holidays and events for content inspiration.



### Which Social Channels Make Sense for Your Business?

Each social media channel has a different tone and community interest. Not all may be right for your business. To start, pick 2 or 3 that you know make sense for what you're trying to accomplish and where the bulk of your audience engages. Facebook is the number one social channel with roughly 69% of U.S. adults on the channel. We recommend having a Facebook page to reach consumers, a Google business page, as well as an Instagram page. These platforms can help you showcase your creativity, display amazing images and videos that highlight your restaurant's atmosphere and cuisine, as well as reach a larger audience of foodies and restaurant enthusiasts.



## How Social Media Savvy Are You?

With this guide and partners like Waypoint, you have an opportunity to sharpen your social media skills. We have several blog articles on our website with infographics to assist you. A best practice is to designate someone on your team to post on your social media pages on a regular basis, as well as reply to customer reviews and comments. Regular engagement will help rank your page higher in the social media platform's search results. You can do this by setting up automatic AI responses to respond to generic questions and messages on your behalf.

# The Keys to Success on Social Media

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Social media is about being strategic and creating content that resonates with your audience. To tap into this potential, here are the four basics to guide your approach:

## Value



Provide value on social media with content that makes people want to follow you and engage. An example would be sharing a video about a new menu option that you're offering. On Facebook, you will want to cultivate a savory and delicious description of any new menu offering. Pair this with a video or a high-resolution image for best results. On Instagram, you'll want to focus more on the quality of the image of the dish and use popular hashtags to help your post reach more people.

## Review



It's so important to structure and review your posts for tone and grammar before you publish them. We recommend planning post content at least one week in advance. Once a post is out there, it's hard to edit it or make a change. In some instances, you can't make a change without reposting altogether. Make sure your social content represents your brand in an accurate way and aim to have at least one other person look at a draft post before you upload it.

## Consistency & Frequency



It's important to post regularly, at least 3 times a week. This way you're satisfying your customers' hunger for updates about your latest promotions and menu items. We suggest that you make a schedule for your posts and plan out the time you post. Different times of day can impact your engagements. Before you know it, posting will become second nature to your social channels.

## Engagement



As your following grows, so will the number of customers engaging with you. Try to respond to as many inquiries as possible, as promptly as possible. It's important to interact with customers and potential customers because it lets them know that you are listening and that you care.

# Social Media Advertising

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Facebook and Instagram offer an affordable way to advertise, reach more potential customers and increase your following by targeting audiences through demographic and location information. Once targeted, consumers can see your restaurant ads in their home feeds. Pushing paid content in front of random social media users is not ideal and will not perform well. Be strategic with your ad spend, content selection, and choice of audience. Depending on your budget and goals, paid social media could be a recipe for success. Here's what you need to know:



## What's Your Campaign and Objectives

What's the goal of your social media advertising strategy? Do you want to increase traffic to your website, increase your brand awareness, followers, or engagements? Or do you want to increase leads through online orders or reservations?



## What Kind of Content Can You Sponsor or Advertise?

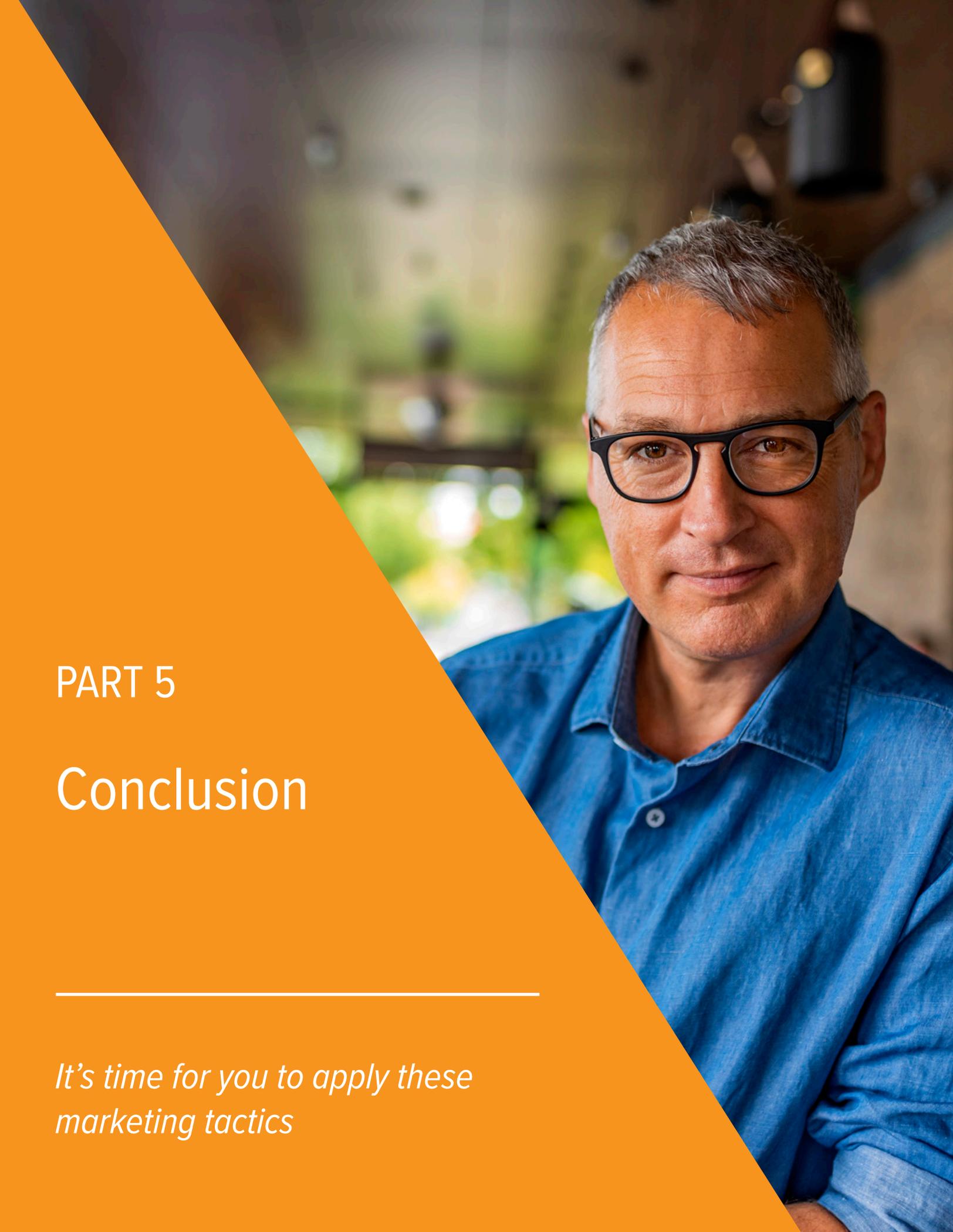
Sponsored content can be a post, story, or link that's bumped up to the top of your business page and promoted beyond your circle of followers as a quick advertisement. You can do this on Facebook relatively easily with their ads manager, which also works for Instagram. Since video is the number one form of content on social media, we recommend creating 15 second video ads with a tool like Promo.<sup>23</sup>



## How Much Does it Cost?

With paid media, expenses can be measured in cost per click(CPC) or cost per like (CPL). Cost per click, means you will only be charged when someone clicks on your ad. Cost per like, means you will only be charged when someone "likes" or follows your Facebook page from your ad. It's best to run ads in 2-month intervals because the first few weeks the ad will still be optimizing. After this first ad set completes, look over the performance data and audience information that's collected before starting your next ad.





PART 5

# Conclusion

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*It's time for you to apply these marketing tactics*

# Ready to Become a Great Marketer?

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Just like cooking a delicious meal or delivering exemplary service, becoming a capable marketer is something you learn by doing. Below are some things to keep in mind as you dive into marketing your restaurant.

1. Your marketing campaigns should be revenue driven
2. Know your customers and what they are interested in
3. Tell your restaurant's unique story and stick to your brand
4. Invest in your website to boost online orders and reservations
5. Promote your restaurant on social media and engage with your audience
6. Use data from your menu, website and social to make informed marketing decisions

Whether you do all or some of the above, the important thing is to simply get started. Don't forget that we are here to help, should you need us. Check out [asmwaypoint.com](https://asmwaypoint.com) for helpful blog articles, data and insights, recipes and to sign up for free webinars. You can also use our [Ask Waypoint](#) for help with re-engineering your menu, seasonal menu changes and menu development by partnering with one of our corporate chefs. We care about your business and are here to help you succeed. We wish you success on your restaurant journey.



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