

I'm taking a different approach with this week's blog in that I will not be focusing on just an insurance issue for restaurant owners, but rather I want to share some social media strategies that may be helpful to the restaurant entrepreneur. I will make the assumption that your restaurant is already involved in some social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter and that you hope to engage these platforms to let current and potential customers know what you are doing and help them want to come and spend money at your eating establishment.

Let's start with an old saying which can be very true in the social media world. It's not what you say, but how you say it that is important. Begin with the understanding that writing for the social media is very different from the formal business writing that you may have learned in school. This is quick hitting, witty and conversational writing where one sentence may be the only thing by which a potential customer will judge your entire restaurant. A simple typographic error could give them the impression that you are sloppy and don't care. So here are some simple tips that may help you.

First of all, have a plan. You want to be consistent in your approach and in your delivery. If you are unable to get a conversation going on one topic, you should still know what your next post will be. You can develop post topics and reasons to share that have to do with commonality with your customers and that can lead to offers that you may make to induce them to try your restaurant either for the first time or as a repeat customer. But remember, this is not the place for hard sell, keep your focus on the social aspect of this media.

Keep it simple, keep it short. Brevity is the key here. Twitter enforces that with their 140 character limits but with other sites, long posts will usually discourage readers from reading and thus kill off any chance that you had to start a conversation. Keeping it simple is also important; this is not the place for long, complex topics, save those for your blogs. If you want to link to your blogs, just give them enough information to peak their interest, then show a link to the full blog.

Keep it fun. People don't generally scan social media sites for hard information, they are usually surfing for fun. This means you need to keep your topics light and try and introduce a bit of wit as well. If your proofreader needs you to explain anything about your posting, then you probably have made it too complex. And if you don't have a proofreader looking over your posts before you put them online, then you are taking an unnecessary risk. As I mentioned before, one typo may be all it takes to keep a potential client out of your restaurant.

Be thoughtful in the words you use. Check your posts before you put them on line to make sure that you haven't said something that could be misconstrued and perhaps offend someone or perhaps just confuse them. Earlier I cautioned you to keep it short. Don't do so when keeping it short leaves your message unclear.

Make sure that you include some call to action when needed. If you want readers to like your facebook page, then ask them to do so. If you want feedback about your restaurant, be sure to ask for it. People will generally comply with reasonable requests so keep your message clear and be sure to ask for what you want. If you can write clear, concise messages that are fun, have some wit and a clear call to action, then over time you will enjoy positive results from your social media efforts. If you ignore these suggestions, then you may find it to be slow going.