Kraft Heinz AWAY FROM HOME

REAL RETENTION: KEEP PIZZA LOVERS COMING BACK

While attracting new customers to your Italian restaurant through social media is important, it's more important to make them repeat customers.

Raising repeat visits by only 5% could result in 25–125% more profits for you![1] That's because repeat customers spend up to 67% more than new ones.[2]

It's also cheaper than attracting new customers because grabbing new diners' attention means conquering the competition — by spending marketing dollars and creating more advertising. Let loyal, existing customers do the marketing for you; 86% of diners will try a new restaurant based on a recommendation from family or a significant other, and 81% from coworkers or friends.[3]

But having loyal customers can help more than your bottom line. Giving regulars a feeling of buy-in on your decisions can be an invaluable resource. They'll give you a trusted set of taste buds to test new pizza recipes, and a sounding board for when you're straying too far.

HERE ARE OUR OPERATORS' BEST IDEAS FOR GETTING THE REPEAT CUSTOMERS YOUR NEW ITALIAN RESTAURANT NEEDS

BEFRIEND YOUR REGULARS

Customers love being an insider. Being attentive, friendly, and responsive to their needs and feedback will show that you respect their patronage and provide an experience they'd be happy to have again.

- Arm your staff with what they need to know so they can answer questions, offer recommendations, and handle concerns or issues.
- Encourage staff to actively use the customer's name during interactions to create a personal connection and make it easier to remember next time.
- Personalize experiences to make customers feel valued and important. You know that woman that always goes for double pineapple? You might think it's sacrilege, but she'll love you for remembering!
- Remember and celebrate special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, and milestones. These are great opportunities to offer complimentary desserts, drinks, individualized notes, or free extra toppings.

CREATE EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

Creating an experience that only regulars get provides additional incentive for customers to keep coming back.

- Send out an "Insiders Only" discount for Pizza Fridays.
- Let servers comp a drink or appetizer.
- Throw a "friends and family" event for new topping tastings and invite regulars to show how much they mean to your business.
- Implement a loyalty program to reward repeat customers with discounts, freebies, or exclusive perks — it's a great way to retain customers and foster a sense of belonging.

ENCOURAGE REGULARS TO POST

If you're testing a new pizza topping or hosting an event, consider asking your repeat customers to post to their social media — and engage with them when they do by replying to comments, reviews, and messages. To make them feel even more connected, you can even get their opinion on a post you're making.

TRAIN STAFF TO RECOGNIZE REGULARS

Make sure your FOH staff can pick regulars out by face or name, so they can communicate to BOH about the best ways to personalize their experience. Remembering a customer's name, dietary restrictions, favorite toppings, preferred seating, and more can go a long way. Better yet, maintain this info in a database easily accessible by staff.

BE ACTIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Community engagement can demonstrate to customers that you're committed to strengthening the area you operate in. Sponsoring local events or little league teams, supporting charities, or collaborating with other local businesses can foster positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

It doesn't have to be a huge, costly commitment to get you noticed. Can you afford to provide pizza for the local kids' football team's awards ceremony? Couple that with some discount cards to drive traffic and you're supporting your community while bringing in more customers to your restaurant.

KEEP YOUR CUSTOMERS CLOSE

It's an honor to be a customer's favorite Italian restaurant. With these retention techniques, you can win over your regulars to become their go-to pizza place. The upsides are repeat visits, great word-of-mouth, honest feedback, strong relationships, and community building. The downsides? There are none.

SAMPLE THE REAL TOMATOES

Like these tips? Want more that are tailored specifically to you? Request two free cases of Escalon 6 in 1® and Bonta® tomato products, and enter for the chance to be the lucky restaurant to add some world-class flavor to your photography and online marketing.

The winner will receive a professional photoshoot to showcase their food, restaurant, and staff on menus and other materials, and a comprehensive marketing toolkit. Just request the cases of Escalon 6 in 1® and Bonta®, take a photo of a pizza you've created with them and post it on Instagram using #6IN1BONTA and #Sweepstakes and tag @EscalonTomatoes in the caption.

Sources:

[1] Prescription for Cutting Costs

[2] Report by Manta and BIA/Kelsey

[3] Touch Bistro, "2023 Diner Trends Report", 2023