

Designing Your Restaurant's Website

By Rieva Lesonsky

Getting the right look for your bar or restaurant website so it attracts customers, informs them about what you offer, and keeps them engaged can be challenging. These days, there are more and more bells and whistles you can add to your site to stay on the cutting edge. Mark Drake, CEO of imSMB.com, an online Web design and Web hosting company for small businesses, suggests the following tips for designing a great bar or restaurant website.

1. **Look and feel:** Your restaurant website's look and feel should match the atmosphere of your establishment. When someone visits your website, they should get a feel for what your restaurant serves and what it will be like to visit. Is it casual, family-friendly, sophisticated, romantic? Make sure you incorporate the general colors used in your restaurant, and include images of foods you serve on your home page.
2. **Menu:** Your menu is one of the first things customers will look for when visiting your website, so it's extremely important to provide a current menu online. Pricing should be left off of the menu (unless you offer takeout orders) to encourage patrons to come in to your restaurant in person to experience the food rather than allowing them to make a decision based on price. This is especially the case if your entrees are a bit more expensive.
3. **Reservations:** If you take reservations at your restaurant, you may want to investigate Open Table. This service, which can be easily added to your website for a low monthly fee, allows customers to book reservations online without having to leave your website. Taking reservations online helps you get more customers for your restaurant and keeps crowds coming back. Of course, for customers who prefer to call, make sure your phone number is prominently placed on the website so they can make reservations that way, too.
4. **Directions:** Make sure you have a page dedicated to "Directions" to your restaurant with maps and the ability to print the page out. Ensure this option is prominent or at least available in the main navigation of your website so that patrons can easily find out how to get to your establishment. Not being able to easily get directions or quickly see where you are located



provides an excuse for a visitor to leave your website and abandon their plans of visiting your bar or restaurant.

5. **Marketing:** Make sure you engage in email marketing and include an option to sign up for your bar or restaurant's email newsletter on your website. Encourage customers to sign up for your newsletter by letting them know they will receive discounts or coupons for subscribing. This helps you market to existing patrons and drive both new and repeat business.

Rieva Lesonsky is CEO of GrowBiz Media, a media company that helps entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses. Follow Rieva at [Twitter.com/Rieva](https://twitter.com/Rieva) and visit her blog at SmallBizDaily.com. Visit her website SmallBizTrendCast to get the scoop on business trends and sign up for Rieva's free TrendCast reports.