

5 Ways to Make Your Bar or Restaurant Stand Out From the Crowd

By Rieva Lesonsky

Your customers have many choices these days when they go out to eat, drink and socialize. How can you ensure your bar or restaurant stands out from the crowd? For a bar or restaurant, getting involved in the community is key to success. Here are five ways to make your establishment stand out.



1. **Participate in community events.** Many communities have food fairs or events where local restaurants offer samples of their best dishes for a small price. Find out about these and investigate other events where you might be able to set up a booth to offer samples or sell food or drinks. Getting out in the community puts a “face” to your business and helps you stand out.
2. **Make your location available for special events.** This could include anything from setting aside a secluded room for special events or dinners, to renting out your whole restaurant or bar for a night to a large group, such as a business networking event or company party.
3. **Offer cooking or mixology classes.** Hold classes in your restaurant or bar during off hours (make sure there are no liability issues that would prohibit this). Or pair up with a related, but not competitive, business (such as a cookware store or wine store) or community adult education program to have someone from your business hold the classes.
4. **Host special meals or tastings related to seasons or holidays.** For example, a restaurant could offer a special Father’s Day menu for the week in which Father’s Day falls, or offer a special dinner event featuring seasonal wines paired with appropriate foods. A bar could host a tasting event with light pilsners for the start of summer or heavy stouts to welcome fall.

5. **Get involved with a local charity.** Choose an organization you and your staff would like to help. Then figure out the best way to support that organization. Perhaps 10 percent of every tab on a certain day could go to the charity, or you could designate a special dish or drink and give the profit from those purchases to the charity.

Whatever methods you choose to get involved and make your business stand out, be sure to publicize your efforts to the local media, food writers and bloggers, and your customers themselves. Let customers know about your events and activities through social media, email marketing, signage and more.

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