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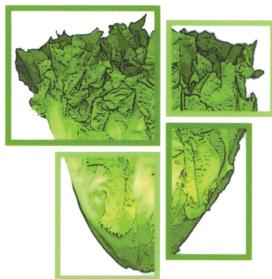
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Red Light Camera Revolt: Woodfield

According to the The Wall Street Journal, the Village of Schaumburg, IL, installed a camera at Woodfield Mall last November to film cars that were running red lights, then used the footage to issue citations. Results were astonishing. The town issued \$1 million in fines in just three months. But drivers are fighting back. Many vowed to stop shopping at the mall unless the camera was turned off. The village stopped monitoring right turns at the intersection in January.

Improve Your Signage and POS Materials In 7 Simple Steps

Clean, colorful signage play a critical role in determining which food products a consumer will purchase, especially since research has proven that most customers enter a restaurant or foodservice operation without a solid plan of what they intend to buy.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to create your own signage and POS program that will help you to start increasing your sales right away:

Set a goal and budget

Since you obviously can't put a sign on every product in your restaurant, you need to prioritize the categories or items you wish to highlight. Develop a commitment to your overall signage strategy, and be consistent with it. It is also important to set aside a budget that is solely dedicated to your signage and POS program, as it is something that needs to be constantly changed and updated. Some operators make their own signs and do a poor job.

Use signs to convey price and brand identity

At the very least, your signage must clearly and quickly convey pricing information, and reinforce brand identification. Your signs should have continuity in its design, and be clear, well written, consistent and cohesive with the look of the rest of your operation. They should all have your brand/logo with your distinctive graphic elements. They should not look as if they were written in a rush, but as if they were written with a great deal of thought and precision.

Keep it simple and easy for staff to change

Since a large chunk of your clientele is probably regulars, it is crucial to update your signage and POS materials often so as to highlight and rotate items you would like to push.

Consider the chalkboard

Handwritten and hand-drawn signs tend to convey freshness, which is vital in the foodservice industry. When a chalkboard is framed in wood or metal, it truly conveys a message of old-time European warmth and freshness that psychologically enhances the dining experience for your customers. Just make certain that you keep the chalkboards clean, and that the writing is clear, concise and consistent.

Use bright colors and graphics

You need to use bright colors to attract attention from weary customers. Another benefit from using a chalkboard is that you can use a variety of bright colored chalks like yellow, green, blue, white and pink, which really stand out on a black background.

Take advantage of vendor-provided brochures

Vendors, especially beer, liquor and dessert vendors, usually provide a lot of brochures about their products, so take advantage of these free promotional items. They are an easy and useful way for customers to get information about the origins and tastiness of each product.

Set up POS materials for holidays and big events

Every month, feature a new promo for an upcoming holiday or event. For example, the upcoming Cinco de Mayo day is the perfect opportunity to bundle Mexican beer, tortilla chips, salsa, tacos, and any special Mexican dishes you might want to feature into one set menu. Beer suppliers often hold contests or draws for prizes for big holidays that can be incorporated into your POS display.

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Diane Chiasson, FCSI, president of Chiasson Consultants Inc., has been helping foodservice, hospitality and retail operators increase sales for over 25 years. She provides innovative food and retail merchandising programs, interior design, marketing and promotional campaigns, and much more. Contact her at 416-926-1338, toll-free at 1-888-926-6655 or chiasson@chiassonconsultants.com, or visit www.chiassonconsultants.com