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Five ways to attract travellers and tourists

The warmer days are upon us, bringing a lot more local customers onto the street in your neighbourhood and soon summer may bring many tourists to your city or community. Have you developed your spring and summer marketing plan yet?

People will be looking for yummy and healthy meals while attending events and warmer-weather activities, or on their way to or from these events. There will be more potential customers looking to enjoy your pizza after a great day out. You should be sure to capitalize on all the opportunities this presents for your pizzeria or restaurant.

Here are a few tips to improve your pizzeria's popularity with the outdoor crowd.

1. UPLOAD A GREAT MENU, PHOTOS

Today many people love to research online before visiting a restaurant. They can find you locally when in your area through your website and social media sites. Be sure to update your website frequently with an easy-to-read menu and many high-quality, drool-inducing photos of all the great food items you have to offer. As a pizza restaurant owner, you must provide high-quality images, even if it means hiring a professional photographer. It is incredibly cheap to do these days and it lets people see and get excited about what you can deliver.

With Facebook, Twitter and various apps you can generate a following by offering social media deals. Giving a 10 per cent reward to followers who bring their friends into your restaurant could make you the destination of choice for someone going to an event in your area.

2. UPGRADE YOUR DECOR

One of the simplest ways to earn new customers this season is to make your pizzeria appealing to the people passing by. Creating visual appeal through the pizza on

display is a key element. Neglecting your front area could mean missed opportunities to catch the potential new customer wandering by, so make sure your storefront is free of debris, clean and inviting. Once inside, customers will be cheered by a fresh coat of paint, new plants, vases, tablecloths, sunny umbrellas and colourful wall décor.

3. TRAVELLERS LOVE WI-FI

As the weather warms, far more people travel for business or pleasure, so offer them something they might need, such as Wi-Fi. Being able to connect to the Internet via Wi-Fi is on the minds of many tourists. Most people travel with their smartphones and need to keep up to date with their emails, but many do not want to pay the exorbitant roaming charges telecommunications companies often charge. By providing free access, you can help them out, attract them to your homepage when they log in and take that opportunity to ask them to write a review.

At the top of most travellers' lists are the local food offerings. They are looking to try new flavours and experience local and regional foods. Making local specialties prominent in your menu and online could make you stand out from the crowd for the out-of-region visitor.

4. GET GOOD CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Travellers and individuals going to events out of their area often use online reviews to find the best hotels, coffee shops and restaurants. Your website and social media platforms should have customers' reviews on them and should encourage customers to review your restaurant and menu items.

This will improve your star rating. Surveys show that star rating is the number 1 factor used by consumers to judge a business.

5. CATER TO PARENTS AND KIDS

Many restaurant customers are families with children under 12, and these kids are pizza-loving patrons! Pizza can be a nutritious meal for kids or a welcome alternative to greasy fast food. Finding a pizzeria serving healthier pizzas can be a saving grace for parents in a strange place, where perhaps their kids are not familiar with the food. When trying to draw families to your

pizzeria, make sure you have some fresh, delicious and healthy items available that are bound to be an easy choice for parents away from their local neighbourhood and a winner with kids. A free balloon is also an easy and inexpensive way to attract kids, along with their parents, to your restaurant. It is a great way to advertise your name around town and wherever people are wondering what to feed their kids on or

after a day out.

There are lots of ways to attract parents, kids, tourists, travellers and people drawn outside by the warm weather. Just make sure you do some of them this season. •

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Diane Chiasson, FCSI, president of Chiasson Consultants Inc., has been helping food service, hospitality and retail operators increase sales for over 30 years by providing innovative and revenue-increasing food service and retail merchandising programs, interior design, branding, menu engineering, 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