



Restaurant Marketing Plan Template

2021





How can a restaurant stand out from the one million other restaurants in the country to accumulate a market share, earn loyal customers and stay profitable?

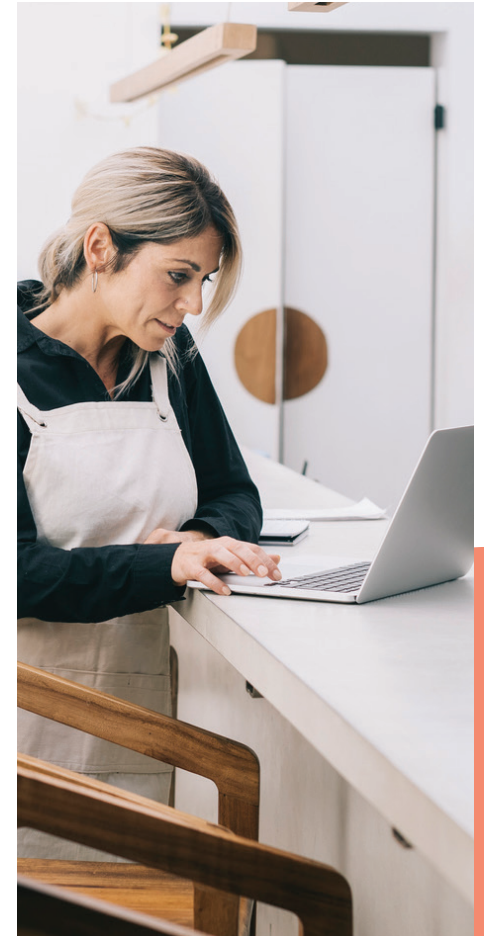
Put simply, it needs a restaurant marketing plan. From branding, to budgeting, to advertising, there's a careful combination of both high-level and tactical decisions a restaurant needs to make to position itself in its market and serve as many guests as possible. That's why BentoBox has created a free Restaurant Marketing Plan Template.

This template includes outlines for the most essential sections for a restaurant marketing plan, including branding & positioning, online marketing strategy, offline marketing strategy, promotion timeline and marketing budget. The template is completely customizable to fit the needs of any restaurant – whether it's for a seasonal promotion or a brand new restaurant's opening day strategy. With BentoBox's Restaurant Marketing Plan Template, restaurants will have the direction and purpose they need to appeal to their market and start serving more guests.

[Download the Template](#)

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Branding & Positioning

This section should speak to the restaurant's overall brand and positioning strategy. An explanation of what the intended perception of the restaurant in its market should be provided. This section should not go into detail about specific channels or marketing tactics, which will be explained in the following sections.

BRAND OVERVIEW

This section should provide a one-two paragraph overview of the [restaurant's brand](#). Some questions worth answering in this section include:

- What **words should come to mind** when someone thinks of the restaurant?
- What circumstances would **make someone want to go to the restaurant**?
- Ideally, how would guests **describe the restaurant to their friends and family**?
- What **slogans or taglines** does the restaurant utilize in marketing?

TARGET MARKET

Who will be the restaurant's regular customers – office workers looking for a grab-and-go lunch or families of four looking for a meal after a long week? This section should also estimate the size of the target market in the area alongside any demographic information known about people in that market.

MARKET POSITIONING

How exactly will the restaurant live up to its intended brand in its current market? How will it appeal to its target market on its own and – more specifically – how will it stand out from any and all competitors in the area?

CREATIVE ELEMENTS

These are the rules to follow when developing creative elements for the restaurants. Rules on logo use, fonts, tone of voice and colors should be made clear to ensure all messaging remains on-brand in any advertisement, post or video. If available, this section should link out to any dedicated resources, such as a downloadable logo file or a full brand style guide.

Online Marketing Strategy

An online marketing strategy is the optimal way for a restaurant to get discovered by new guests in the digital world. To capture demand on the internet, restaurants need a fleshed-out website in addition to a presence on social media sites, search engines, and review sites.

RESTAURANT WEBSITE

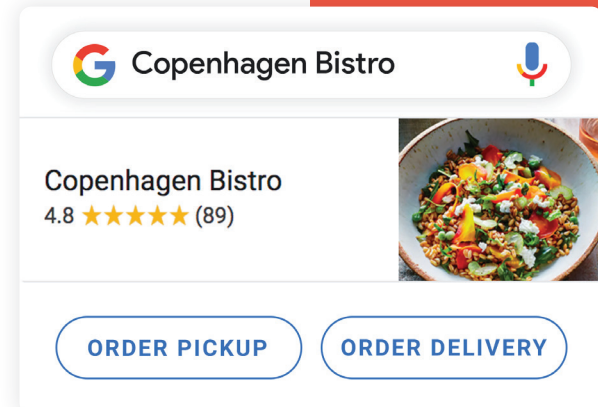
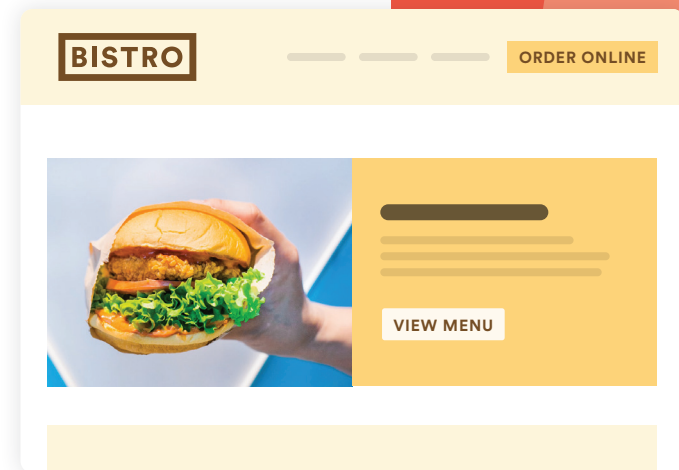
This section is arguably the most important, as [three out of four diners](#) will visit a [restaurant website](#) before visiting the restaurant itself. Plus, a restaurant's website helps the business get discovered online through SEO and can generate reservations and immediate sales through online ordering. This section should explain how the restaurant website will be developed, designed and utilized for all of these purposes.

SEARCH ENGINE

Everyday, diners search “best restaurants in (city)” on sites like Google. As such, this section should highlight the restaurant's status on claiming its Google My Business listing and any plans to update it, as well as whether or not the restaurant will be participating in paid search ads.

REVIEW/REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

[Restaurant reviews](#) pop up all the time on sites like Google, Yelp and TripAdvisor. Restaurants should have a dedicated strategy for claiming their businesses on these sites and responding to reviews (yes, every review) to manage the restaurant's online reputation.



Online Marketing Strategy

SOCIAL MEDIA

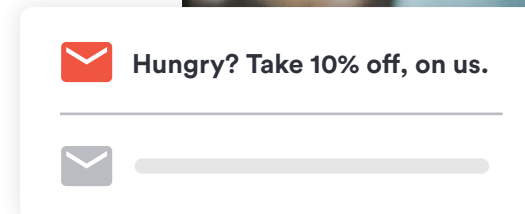
Between organic social media shares and paid social media ads, [social media](#) remains a popular channel for both restaurants and their diners. This section should cover which social media channels are used, as well as the posting cadence, types of posts (images, video, text, etc.) and social media advertising strategy. Popular choices for channels include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and TikTok, but the restaurant might not need an active presence on all of these platforms.

EMAIL MARKETING

For restaurants, [email marketing](#) is a way to personally connect with customers to alert them of menu specials and offer special discounts. This section might include what email marketing tool will be used, what kind of messages will be sent to those on the recipient list, the frequency at which messages will be sent and the strategy for getting more email newsletter signups.

VIDEO MARKETING

Not all restaurants need a video marketing program, but those that do are able to use custom video for social media posts, online ads or even a restaurant YouTube channel – reaching guests with cooking videos or behind-the-scenes content of their staff, guests or kitchen.



Traditional Marketing Strategy

Traditional (or non-online) marketing tactics are how a restaurant markets itself without using the internet as a primary marketing tool. While modern restaurant marketing should have an emphasis online, there's still plenty of value in traditional alternatives – particularly when used as supplements for online initiatives.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations helps a restaurant find a wider audience with press releases, secure placements in high-profile media publications and make a bigger name for itself. PR can be done in-house, but many restaurants hire a PR agency to simplify the process.

GUEST ENGAGEMENT

Guest engagement tactics – such as [loyalty programs](#) – increase the likelihood of a one-time guest becoming a repeat customer. Other guest engagement programs could include sourcing and incorporating guest feedback, hosting happy hours or running contests in the restaurant.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Restaurants often have a special place in their communities. To foster this involvement, restaurants might have a program for fundraising and donations, a presence at local events, or sponsoring good causes in the area. The restaurant might also position itself as an events venue for locals and rent out parts of the dining room for parties and special occasions.

DIRECT MAIL

A popular option for new restaurants and restaurants in college towns, direct mail sends menus, coupons and deals to potential guests through the mail. Note that most of these mailing lists need to be purchased – something to factor in alongside printing and shipping costs for any direct mail program.

Traditional Marketing Strategy

TV ADVERTISING

A common tool for nationwide and regional chains, restaurant commercials have provided some of the most popular ads of all time, ranging from “Where’s the Beef?” to Larry Bird and Michael Jordan playing HORSE for a Big Mac. TV ads require a bigger budget to produce and secure placement for than off-the-cuff online videos, and these costs should be accounted for in budget and ROI planning.

NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE ADVERTISING

Ads in newspapers and magazines provide visuals to potential local or nationwide customers. Since readership of paper-based publications remains low, this strategy won’t be the right fit for every restaurant. Local publications or publications that have a high percentage of readers in the restaurant’s target market might be worth considering.

RADIO/PODCAST ADVERTISING

Audio ads on radio stations and podcasts can catch an interested listener’s attention. As podcasts grow in popularity, partnering with a radio or podcast network may be a viable advertising option for a restaurant.



Marketing Timeline

This section should provide a glimpse of which marketing activities will be performed when. If this template is being used for a specific time period (i.e. “this year” or “next quarter”), this timeline will help break down each important initiative.

If there are multiple different initiatives, it might be worth making multiple timelines for the time period (i.e. one for online marketing activities and one for traditional marketing activities).

DATE/TIME	INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
June 1st	Launch New Restaurant Website	The new website redesign goes live. Posts should go out on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to alert customers.
—	—	—
—	—	—
—	—	—

Marketing Timeline

The overall cost of the marketing program should be outlined in this section, with specific references to the vendor and – if known – any expected return on investment.

INITIATIVE #1 — SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING			
Vendor	Cost	Return on Investment	Description
Facebook	\$500	\$1000	\$500 worth of Facebook ads to promote online ordering
Instagram	\$1000	\$1500	\$1000 worth of Instagram ads encouraging loyalty program signups
TOTAL COST \$1500		PROJECTED RETURN ON INVESTMENT \$2500	

INITIATIVE #2 — DIRECT MAIL			
Vendor	Cost	Return on Investment	Description
Staples	\$1000	See bottom line ROI	Menus for the September direct mail send
TOTAL COST \$1000		PROJECTED RETURN ON INVESTMENT \$5000 for the entire campaign	

Get free restaurant marketing ideas from BentoBox

Visit [Beyond The Meal](#) to read interviews and guides on how to effectively market a restaurant and increase sales, profit and guest satisfaction.

