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Marketing Tips for Promoting Your Restaurant Business



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Introduction

To say the Restaurant industry has seen a great deal of change since March 1, 2020 is an understatement. COVID-19 and the resulting pandemic has touched nearly every aspect of restaurant operations: how you serve your customers, manage operations issues and more. Restaurants, in particular, are some of the hardest hit businesses in our economy with many mandatory restrictions in place. It has caused restaurant operators to rethink — and sometimes reinvent — how to conduct business.

The same can be said for marketing. Though many of the tools are the same, the ways in which your restaurant business uses them must change.

Marketing for restaurants has never been more critical. Your online presence is now a key component and a lifeline for the future of your business. The following are recommendations on how to use your online platforms during the upcoming weeks and months.

Update your Business Listings

It is crucial to keep your audience informed of your restaurant's current hours of operation and to-go/carryout options as the public health situation changes from day to day. This includes updating your restaurant's website, social media profiles, Google My Business listings and review sites such as Yelp and Tripadvisor.

Because of how search engines like Google work, when you make these updates it will help your restaurant show up in search results for the additional keyword phrases you've added. For example, if you are now offering delivery services, but you don't make these changes, Google will not display your restaurant as a result for a valuable search phrase like 'restaurant delivery near me.' Don't miss that opportunity.

Social Media

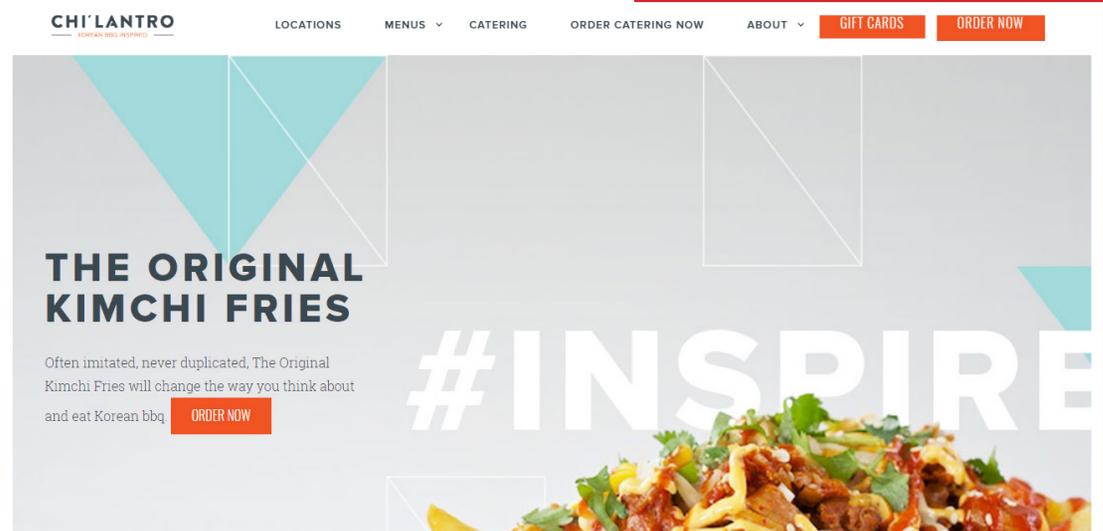
Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and others also allow you to describe your business. Add your new hours and any updated information regarding takeout and delivery.

Website

Update your restaurant's website to prominently promote what services you are still able to provide, or any services you have added, and mention any specials you are running or temporary changes to your hours of operation.

You will also want to be clear if you have made any menu changes, as well as link to an updated menu.

Chi'lantro has taken a clever approach to providing customers an easy way to order right from their website's homepage.



Google My Business / Review Sites

Google My Business is Google's platform that fuels its Google Maps directory of businesses through its search engine and Maps mobile app. Adding delivery and to-go services to your listing will enable your restaurant to show up in search results where customers are looking for you.

Google has updated features for many businesses impacted by COVID-19. In the screenshot to the right, you'll notice that the types of services these restaurants are offering is now easy to see with green checkmarks next to their offerings.

You can also create posts in your listing specifically for changes related to COVID-19. These will appear in the search results so customers know what changes you have made.

 Hours or services may differ

Golden Thai Cuisine

4.3 ★★★★★ (251) · \$\$ · Thai

1600 Keller Pkwy #140 · In Keller Crossing

✗ Dine-in · ✓ Takeout · ✓ Delivery



Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers

4.3 ★★★★★ (663) · \$ · Hamburger

1471 Keller Pkwy

✗ Dine-in · ✓ Takeout · ✗ Delivery



Snooty Pig Cafe

4.1 ★★★★★ (243) · \$ · Brunch

1540 Keller Pkwy #130

✗ Dine-in · ✓ Takeout · ✗ Delivery



 [More places](#)

PRO TIP

Follow these steps to make changes on Google My Business

1. Log in to Google My Business at www.google.com/business and select your location
2. In the left hand column, select 'Posts'
3. Select 'COVID-19 Update' and add your order online information.
4. Once you publish your Post, go to Services and click 'Add another business category'
5. Add the category 'Takeout Restaurant'

Create post ✕

 COVID-19 update  Offer  What's New ➤

 **Changes to your business?**
Let customers know about any changes to your business due to COVID-19

Update your status

We are offering takeout and curbside service with a limited menu.

Add a button (optional)

Order online ▾

Link for your button

<https://www.myrestaurant.com/order-now>

(Example: google.com)

[Preview](#) [Publish](#)



Advertise Wisely

Most restaurants have slashed advertising or stopped altogether. However, if you take a targeted approach it could net high returns for a very limited investment.

Setting up Facebook campaigns is typically aimed at increasing website traffic or reservations. The goal of your campaigns now can be simple: Let your audience know you are open, what you are serving, and how they can order.

By creating a Facebook campaign with a 'Reach' objective, you can target people near your location to let them know you are open and taking orders.

Follow the steps on the next few pages to set up a reach campaign.

Step 1: Campaign-Level Basics

- Log in to your Facebook Advertising account and click 'New Campaign' in the upper right.
- For your campaign objective, select 'Reach' and click continue
- Now you will set up your campaign details. Start at the highest level, the campaign, and then move down through the Ad Set and Ads.
- Turn on 'Campaign Budget Optimization' and change it from 'Daily Budget' to 'Lifetime Budget.' Then you can enter how much you want to spend during the campaign.
- Click on Advanced Options and set your ad scheduling to 'Run Ads on a Schedule.'
- Once you have completed these steps, click 'Next' to move on to the Ad Set.

Campaign Budget Optimization ON

Campaign budget optimization will distribute your budget across ad sets to get more results depending on your delivery optimization choices and bid strategy. You can control spending on each ad set. [Learn More](#)

Campaign Budget ⓘ Lifetime Budget ▼ \$500.00

Campaign Bid Strategy ⓘ Lowest cost ▼

Ad Scheduling ⓘ Run ads all the time
 Run ads on a schedule
You'll set the specific schedule within each ad set.

Delivery Type ⓘ Standard - Get results throughout your selected schedule
[More Options](#)

[Hide Advanced Options](#) ▶

Step 2: Set Up Your Ad Set

First things first; be sure to set your Facebook page to the restaurant you are promoting.

Budget & Schedule - Select your start and end date for the campaign here.

NOTE: You set your budget at the campaign level. \$20 per day for this type of campaign is recommended. Divide your total budget by the number of days you select for the campaign so that your budget is allocated at the recommended minimum of \$20 per day.

Then set the hourly schedule for your ads. The schedule doesn't need to be the same for every day of the week. If you expect a larger lunch crowd on weekdays and more dinner business on weekends, schedule your ads accordingly.

Budget & Schedule

Start Date
Pacific Time

End Date
Pacific Time

Ad Scheduling ⓘ Run ads on a schedule

We'll schedule your ads based on the time zone of the person seeing it.
For example, if you select 8am to 5pm, we'll only show your ads to people from 8am to 5pm in their local time.

	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Monday					■	■	■	
Tuesday					■	■	■	
Wednesday					■	■	■	
Thursday					■	■	■	
Friday					■	■	■	
Saturday					■	■	■	
Sunday							■	
Every Day							■	

■ Scheduled hours

Step 2: Set Up Your Ad Set (Cont...)

Audience - Set your location to target a radius around your physical address. You can just paste it into the field where you see 'United States,' Depending on the density of the population surrounding your restaurant, set your radius for 3-10 miles from your location.

For your age, gender and detail targeting, simply select the attributes that describe your customers (e.g., if you run a deli, target people who are interested in your top competitors by typing their name into the targeting parameters). If you type in a company and it doesn't show up, it's likely because the restaurant is too small.

Once you type in a few options that have audiences, more will show up in the suggestions.

Optimization and Delivery - This is the most important step. We want to make sure that as many people as possible see your ads at a frequency with the greatest likelihood to place an order.

Set your impressions and days to control how often people see your ads.

Detailed Targeting ⓘ Include people who match ⓘ

Interests > Additional Interests

- Jason's Deli
- Jersey Mike's Subs
- Quiznos
- Subway (restaurant)

Add demographics, interests or behaviors | Suggestions | Browse

Narrow Audience

Exclude people who match ⓘ ×

Add demographics, interests or behaviors | Browse

You can exclude people to help refine your intended audience. When you choose to make exclusions, keep in mind that our Advertising Policies prohibit wrongful discrimination. [Learn more.](#)

Expand your detailed targeting to reach more people when it's likely to improve performance.

[Learn more about detailed targeting expansion.](#)

Optimization & Delivery

Optimization for Ad Delivery ⓘ **Reach** ▼

To help us improve delivery optimization, we may survey a small section of your audience.

Frequency Cap ⓘ 3 impressions every 5 days

Cost Control ⓘ The lowest cost bid strategy doesn't have a cost control. Facebook will aim to spend your entire budget and get the most 1,000 impressions using the lowest cost bid strategy.

When You Get Charged ⓘ Impression

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PRO TIP

- 1. Geography** - People are not travelling far from home right now, so try to keep your targeting to people who live within 5-10 miles of your restaurant.
- 2. Frequency caps** - Nobody wants to get spammed with ads, so cap the frequency of your ads at three impressions for every five days.
- 3. Lifetime budgets** - Don't use daily budgets. If you set up a lifetime budget, you can use a technique called dayparting. This means that you can choose what times during the day you want your ads to run. Consider running your ads to correspond with meal times: run ads for breakfast from 6:00 a.m. -9:00 a.m., lunch from 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m., and dinner from 4:30-7:30 p.m.
- 4. Budgets** - To let Facebook do its work, spend a minimum of \$20 per day. Don't feel the need to go big as this strategy doesn't require a large budget.
- 5. Small business grants** - Both [Facebook](#) and [Google](#) have programs for small businesses impacted by COVID-19 to receive advertising credits for their platforms.

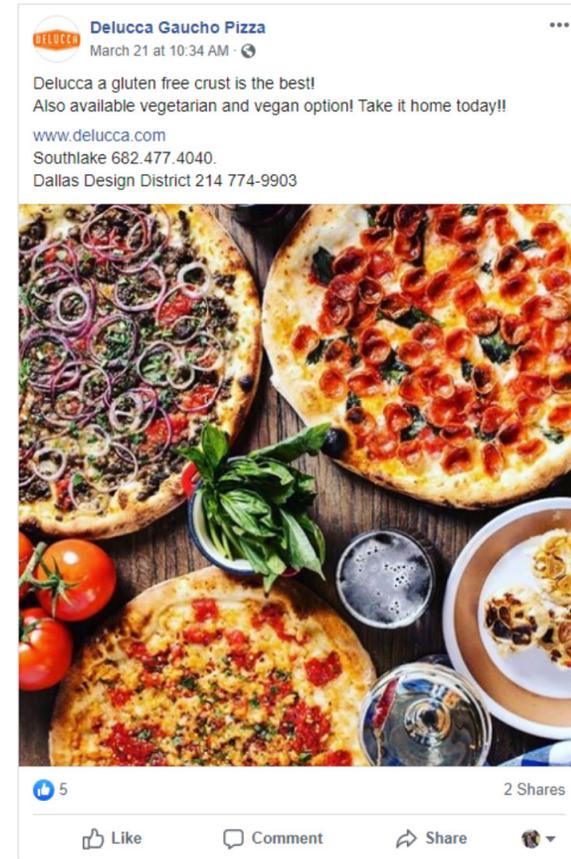


Create the Perfect Post

Even if you aren't advertising right now, there are small, but powerful changes you can make to your social media content that will make it easy for people to order and share the fact that your restaurant is open on their social platforms.

Include these essential elements in your advertising or your organic posts promoting your takeout/curbside options:

1. Use a quality photo of your best-looking menu item (do not use stock photos).
2. Describe the type of food you offer. To increase your per-check cost, recommend your high margin items or menu items that include inventory you're trying to move.
3. Tell customers how they can order from you. Provide your phone number, online ordering options, your address, and list any delivery services that work with you.
4. A link to your menu is a must. Ideally, it is on your website so they do not have to download a PDF to their smartphone.
5. If you include a promotion, ask customers to show you the post so you can track how many sales it drives.



R365 PRO TIP

Social media is still social, so be sure to include some posts that aren't self-promoting. There are a lot of charitable causes and community organizations you can post about, or use some of the tactics previously mentioned to grow your social media reach.

Grow Your Social Media Reach

Social media has never been more crucial to restaurants, or our economy. Whether or not you have been active on social media in the past, your guests have been busy engaging about you and other brands.

Recent data from Campaign Live shows that users have become even more active on social media since March 1, 2020. The company saw a 76% increase in likes on Instagram and 22% more impressions on Instagram stories.

Live video - Do a live video each day featuring an item from your menu. Not only will it drive social interaction, you may even see a bump in sales that day for that special item. Consequently, it's smart to feature your high margin items in these videos.

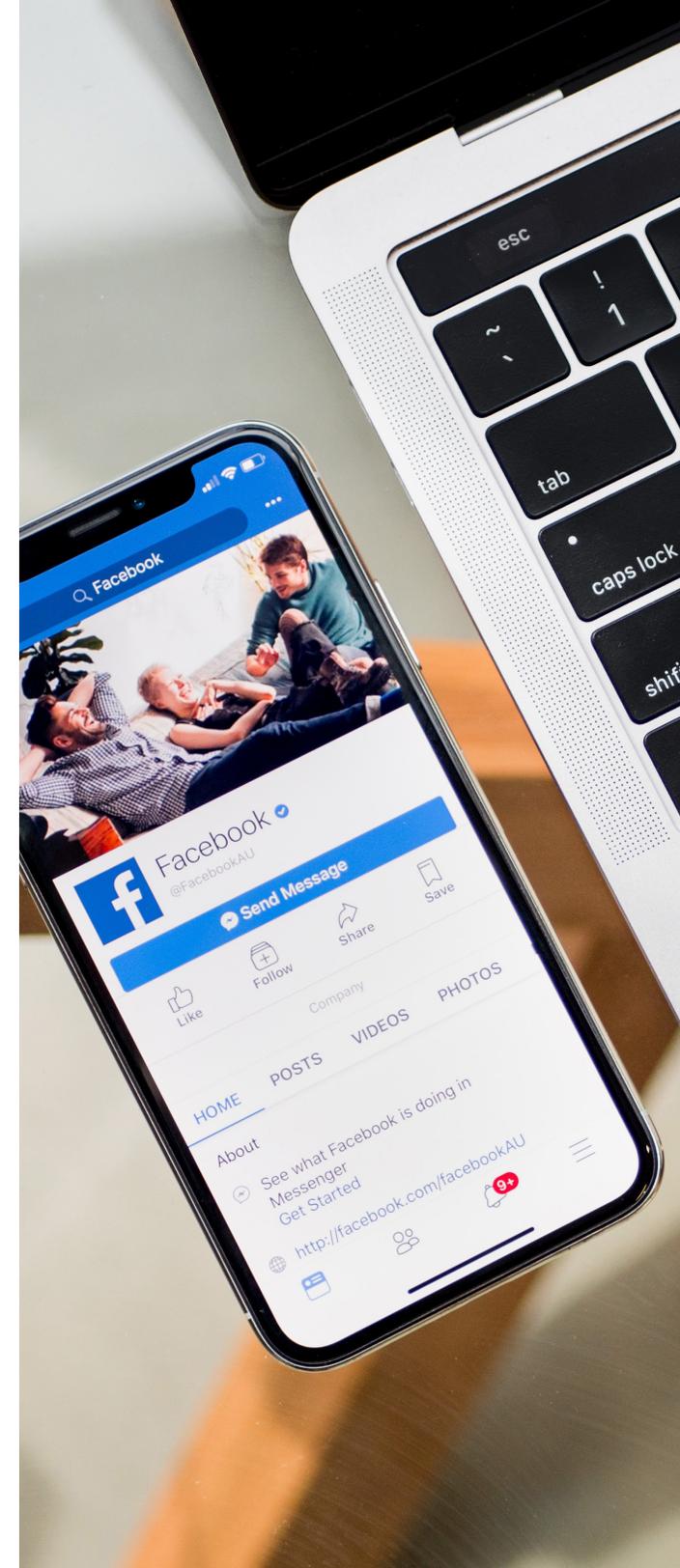
Install the Facebook Pages Manager app on your mobile device and log into the Facebook account from which you manage your restaurant's page.

To go live on iPhone:

1. Go to your Page and tap Publish.
2. Tap Add to your post.
3. Tap Live Video.
4. Write a brief description that can also include tagging other people and Pages.
5. Tap Start Live Video to start a 3-second countdown to broadcast.
6. To stop broadcasting, tap Finish at the bottom of the screen.

To go live on Android:

1. Tap Post.
2. Tap Go Live.
3. Write a brief description that can also include tagging other people and Pages.
4. Tap Start Live Video to start a 3-second countdown to broadcast.
5. To stop broadcasting tap Finish at the bottom of the screen.





Join local groups on Facebook - Even most small communities have groups on Facebook now and if you post something to the group, everyone will see it. Search for community groups in your area at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/>

Branch out of Facebook - Facebook's algorithm drastically limits the number of your fans who will see your content. If you are not on Instagram and Twitter, now is the time to add those platforms to your social media mix.

Tag locations - Tag your city in posts you make on Facebook and Instagram. Users engage with these feeds to find new content and since they likely live in your area, it's a great place to find some potential new customers.

Interact with your followers - Data shows the engagement on social media has increased as people have become more physically isolated. Create posts that get locals commenting — those actions will increase your reach on Facebook and other platforms so their friends, many of whom likely are closeby, will see them.

Share user-generated content - If your customers are sharing photos about you, share them as well. Show other potential customers the delicious food they can enjoy by ordering from your restaurant.

Run promotions - It is more crucial than ever to frequently communicate any and all promotions and specials your restaurant is offering through the use of organic posts on your social media platforms.



Pivot Business Strategies

With local and state-wide restrictions in place, dine-in service is not an option, however, restaurants have the ability to utilize their inventory supply with the following options:

1. **Provide meal kits or take-and-bake meals** - use social media to provide cooking demos and promote meal kits and/or take-and-bake meals.
2. **Provide grocery lists for pick up or delivery** - Many grocery stores are out of stock of popular items such as paper products, eggs, bread, dairy, flour, rice, etc. Your restaurant can serve as an alternative source for these items.
3. **Gift card pre-sale** - Since dining in is not currently an option, promoting gift cards from your restaurant — even if offered at a discount — will promote sales to continue to flow in during the next few months while many of your customers are quarantined at home. Be sure to mention all of your gift card options, including any specials you might be offering on them, in your social media posts and customer emails.

Our friends at Toast are now offering a free platform called [Toast Now](#) to set up digital channels, like online ordering, a mobile ordering app, contactless delivery, and e-gift cards. Restaurants can get started with three months free. No hardware or POS purchase is required.

Use Your Email Database

One of the most difficult aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent quarantine measures has been feelings of isolation and complete disruption of normal routines. People are looking to feel connected to the rest of society and seeking some level of normalcy. Reach out to your customers via email and/or text message with important updates to your business, new promotions, and measures your restaurant is taking to keep the public and its employees safe during these times. It can go a long way toward boosting morale, keeping customers connected to your business, and maintaining their confidence in your safety and integrity.

Suggested email messaging

- Updated hours of operation (if applicable) and ways diners can still order their favorite food from your restaurant (curbside pickup, carryout, delivery service, etc.)
- Frame emails around your new hours of operation. Get timely with promotions.
- Speak to cleanliness and safety measures you are taking to protect employees and patrons.

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PRO TIP

1. Resend your campaign to users who didn't open the email after 2 days.
2. Your subject line is gold! Make it count. Try emojis and avoid using the word 'free.'
3. Make your email easily shareable by adding a "forward to a friend" button.





That's a Wrap

This is an unprecedented time in U.S and world history. The impact COVID-19 has had on the restaurant industry was unfathomable mere months ago. But, it's the new reality. The restaurant industry is a unique community. Love of food and feeding people is at the heart of every restaurant business. Keep that in mind when promoting your business during this challenging time.

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Restaurant365 provides a restaurant-specific accounting and back-office software platform that alleviates the significant burdens placed on restaurant operators – allowing concepts to operate more profitably and efficiently in a digital world.



Helping Restaurants Grow

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