Restaurant PR Planning Ideas

Most of this chapter has been adapted from http://www.restaurant-public-relations.com
What is your restaurant PR objective?

• What is most important to your client’s bottom line?
• Obviously, they want to increase profits, but what else is important to them?
  – Higher visibility?
  – A repositioning strategy?
  – Greater brand recognition?
  – A higher profile for their chef?
• You will need to ask them these things.
What is your restaurant PR objective?

• A carefully crafted restaurant public relations campaign will raise both media and consumer awareness of the restaurant.

• Combining in-store marketing with public relations will help sustain the public-relations effort as well as provide a constant stream of activities to increase sales and generate favorable press coverage.
Restaurant Public Relations Plan

• A restaurant public relations plan brings new people in to dine.

• Hospitality public relations and food PR tips include the grand opening and ongoing public relations.

• A restaurant public relations plan includes food PR for the grand opening, ongoing hospitality public relations and restaurant email marketing.
PR Launch Event

• Send out press releases and media alerts two weeks before a restaurant’s grand opening to get coverage in local event calendars and include location, hours and opening details.
• Make sure that the food PR person is at the grand opening to provide a media kit, including a restaurant fact sheet, key employee/owner biographies, menu, promotional items and press releases.
• Have a photographer on hand at a restaurant grand opening for photo opportunities.
• Team with a non-profit for additional food public relations.
• Nonprofits will quite often share email marketing lists with restaurants who want to sponsor a benefit.
• Team with the local chamber association or other local organization for additional hospitality public relations and food PR.
• Partner with another local event for the grand opening for more restaurant public relations.
Ongoing Public Relations

• Once a restaurant opens for business, it's time to talk about ongoing PR for the restaurant.
• The ongoing public relations plan is a tasty way to increase a restaurant's business!
• Create a restaurant PR plan, calendar of upcoming events, and determine how to capitalize on them.
• Examples of hospitality public relations opportunities might include a national wine month or other food-related “holiday.”
• Team up with a local art show or other local event for more food public relations.
• Partner with local organizations like the chamber of commerce to boost an ongoing public relations plan.
Email Marketing and Website Plans

• Use online press releases, a website, blogging, social networks and email for restaurant marketing.

• Ideas for the food PR plan include:
  – Best wine pairings for dinner.
  – Best recipes for holiday parties.
  – Best recipes for working families.
  – Informally partnering with the National Wine Month group to provide accompanying recipe ideas.
Ongoing Public Relations

- Start an annual / semi-annual event- a national wine week or Chardonnay Festival offers excellent restaurant PR.
- Become a news source to capitalize on the restaurant PR plan.
- Invite food editors to the restaurant; offer ideas for their columns.
- Let local radio and TV stations and trade associations know the chef or owner is the go-to PR person for stories on food pairings and party preparation.
- Work with other business owners to combine resources for an ongoing public relations plan (the restaurant hangs a gallery's art; the gallery has restaurant menus available).
- Establish a loyalty program as part of the food public relations plan.
- Start by collecting customer e-mail addresses and permissions for long-term restaurant email marketing plans.
Local Community Restaurant Ideas

• Piggyback with available PR opportunities in the community to increase the public’s "appetite" for the restaurant:
  – Sponsor a run; work with local running organizations or retail outfits in the area on a marathon public relations plan.
  – Host a singles night; partner with a local organization and drive hungry singletons to the restaurant.
  – Offer a wine tasting event to drive locals into the door and then dazzle them with the menu!
More ways to create news

- Tie in with the news event of the day.
- Arrange a trip
- Make an award
- Tie in with another publicity person.
- Hold a contest.
- Tie in with a newspaper or another medium on a mutual project.
- Pass a resolution.
- Appear before public bodies.
- Conduct a poll or survey.
- Issue a Report.
- Arrange an interview with a celebrity.
- Take part in a controversy.
- Stage a special event.
- Write a letter.
More ways to create news

• Release a letter you have received.
• Adapt national reports and surveys for local use.
• Arrange for a testimonial.
• Arrange a speech to be made.
• Make an analysis or prediction.
• Form a committee and announce the names of its members.
• Hold and election.
• Announce an appointment.
• Celebrate an anniversary.
• Issue a summary of facts.
• Start a debate.
• Tie into a well-known week or day or holiday.
• Honour an institution.
• Organise a tour.
• Inspect a project.
• Issue praise or issue a protest.
Other PR and Marketing Ideas

• **Market your Restaurant in Hotel and Motel Rooms**

  People on vacation and people who do a great deal of travelling, will want to know where to find an excellent meal in your town.

• An excellent restaurant marketing strategy is to call or visit hotel and motels within a 5 mile radius of your restaurant, and ask them if you can place menus and coupons in their rooms and lobby areas.

• Some hotels and motels provide a list of area attractions for their guests, ask them if you can add your restaurant to their list.

• When the guests get hungry they will see your menu or your name on the list and will think of your restaurant.
Other PR and Marketing Ideas

• Enter and Sponsor Contests
• One of the biggest ways to use a restaurant marketing strategy, is to enter and win a contest.
  • You can enter your cook or chef in a cooking contest, or enter contests in restaurant magazines and browse the internet to find contests to enter.
• You can create contests in your restaurant that will bring in customers.
Other PR and Marketing Ideas

• **Form an Alliance With Local Event Sponsors**
  • This is another great restaurant marketing strategy!
  • After any local concert or sporting event, people may be ready to have a meal before they go home.
  • Many people come from quite a long distance to these events, and they will be looking for a place to eat before they head home.
  • You can advertise on existing monitors, or have someone stationed at the door and give out menus when the patrons go inside.
  • Remember women are more apt to keep flyers than men.
  • In exchange for the advertising you can advertise the event in your restaurant.
Other PR and Marketing Ideas

• **Sell Gift Certificates**

• As another restaurant marketing strategy, offer gift certificates that your customers can buy for their friends so that they can try your cuisine.

• Each gift certificate is a referral to your restaurant.

• Make sure the gift certificates come in several different amounts, so the buyers can decide how much to spend.
Other PR and Marketing Ideas

• **Give Out Samples in Busy Locations**
• Have some of your staff go to busy locations such as shopping centres, parks, malls etc., and give out samples of your most popular fare.
• When someone stops to sample your fare, you can hand them a menu, a specials flyer, a business card, and a coupon for savings at your establishment.
• This should give you more traffic and so many satisfied customers.
Other PR and Marketing Ideas

• **Offer Specials**

• You can offer special prices on great food on special days.

• You can also offer a buffet of finger foods at special prices from 11 to 2 for the lunch hour.

• A great restaurant marketing strategy is offering frequent diner cards so that they can get a free meal after buying so many at the restaurant.
Last Project

Design a PR programme for your restaurant

1. Write up a PR Plan (See Chapter 8) - include your revised Communications Audit

2. Media Relations
   - Include your press kit
   - A database of publics (including ALL publics, customers, press, surrounding guest houses, etc)
   - Calendar of upcoming events and special days.

3. Social Media
   - Set up and prepare all the various social media platforms for your restaurant. (include links to all)