# Making the Most
# of your Online Ordering

Savvy restaurant owners know that an effective online ordering solution can boost ticket averages, cement customer loyalty, and reduce costs while improving the customer experience. Once you've decided to implement online ordering in your restaurant, take advantage of these tips to make sure that your online ordering solution pays off.

About This Guide: This guide is provided by Granbury Restaurant Solutions, a leading provider of restaurant technology, including online and mobile ordering solutions, POS systems, and multi-store customer loyalty and marketing solutions.   While specific suggestions mentioned in this guide may refer to features available in our products, many of these tips are general solutions that apply to any restaurant online ordering application. To learn more about Granbury's solutions, please visit us at www.granburyrs.com or call 800-750-3947.

Step 1: Spruce up the Sales Pitch

One of the biggest benefits of online ordering is your ability to control the flow of the order -- and present customers with additional options along the way.   You may never succeed at training or motivating your phone staff to ask customers "Would you like a 2-liter with that" but you can guarantee that your web site will never forget to ask every customer, every order.

Pictures Tell The Story
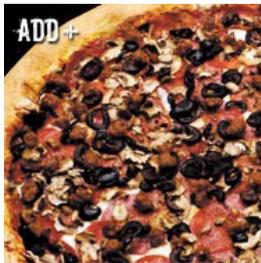
Ideally, you'll give your customers a visual taste of your food with as many pictures as you can throughout the ordering process. Be careful though, to make sure that your pictures are appetizing.   A professional food photographer & stylist may be out of your budget, but get creative to find a resource to help. Your local college or art school may have students who would be happy to photograph your food in exchange for a free meal or two.   You may also find photos available, especially of more generic items, on stock photo sites such as www.istockphoto.com for just a few dollars each.   A search here for onion rings turns up 509 photos - surely one of these looks like yours?   If you can not manage photos for all your items, focus just on those you will be promoting with specials or suggesting as upsells.

Every Item Has A Suggestion

Beverage

Would you like to order a 2 Liter Beverage with your meal?

☐ Coke - Add $1.79
☐ Diet Coke - Add $1.79
☐ Sprite - Add $1.79
☐ Dr. Pepper - Add $1.79

[Remove from Order]   [Next]

Time to pair up! Every item on your menu should have an "ideal companion" that you can suggest.   Customer orders pizza - you suggest breadsticks. Customer orders a sandwich, you suggest the chips.   Don't waste any opportunity to add item-level suggestions at every turn. Pick your most profitable items to pair with the most popular items on your menu.   If a menu item is in itself complicated to order -- requires a choice of sauce, bread or side, then limit your item suggestion to just one companion item. If the menu item is simple, you may choose two or more .   And don't forget to add profit to the item itself with suggested add-ons.   Ordering salad? Add chicken or avocado! Ordering fries? Add cheese.   Your customers may not even realize all the options you have available!

Ask Again At the End

Would you like to add an order of Parmesan Garlic Bites to your order?   Add

As the customer wraps up their order, now is the time for a final pitch!   Don't miss this opportunity to present the customer with additional suggestions.   The website should analyze their order and pick from a prioritized list of profitable add-ons to suggest any items not already on their order.

A Final Message

After the order is complete, the sales pitch is not quite over. Here is the opportunity for a final message, which the customer will see on screen & on their confirmation e-mail.   This is a great chance to promote your loyalty club, in-store events, merchandise available for purchase, catering, your facebook / twitter page, or your mobile ordering app.

Hot Online Deals

Customers love deals, so it's always good practice to promote 5-10 of your "Hot" online specials. You may want to set up a special menu page which just lists these special deals or combination packs. If you are serious about driving phone orders online, consider running some "online only" special offers. If you have a lot of offers and want to make all coupons or offers available online, don't try to list them. Just print your coupons with an "online offer" code that customers can enter when they place their order.

User Friendly Policies

To maximize the success of your online ordering, you'll want to make it as user-friendly as possible. When your customer first starts their order, don't make them "Register" or "log in" immediately. You might turn them off before they have a chance to get interested in ordering. The longer you let them view the menu, create an order and spend time on the site the better. According to Forrester Research, 23% of shoppers will abandon when asked to register before checking out. Unless you absolutely must require registration, test a guest checkout and see how much it impacts conversion. They can register at the last moment, entering just the basic information needed to complete their order.

Find a Marco's Pizza Close to You

Fresh toppings & dough made from scratch daily. It's quality you'll crave

See a listing of all Marco's locations

Zip:

[Find my Marco's]

Choosing a store is another important step. You can ask customers to choose their preferred location from a list, but this doesn't guarantee they will pick the store nearest to them.   A store locator is a convenience that helps your customers get to the correct location once they type in their zip code.

Finally, allow your customers to use a credit card online, or to pay cash for the order when it is delivered. Many restaurant owners are hesitant to allow the cash option for fear of prank orders. But according to CreditCards.com, in 2010, 29% of Americans do not have a credit card! Rather than cutting out a potential ⅓ of your online customers, try the cash option. We've never seen a restaurant owner go back to credit only.

Step 2: Mastering Your Website

When you set up your online ordering site, you'll most likely want to incorporate the ordering portion into your overall website, maintaining a similar look and feel throughout.   You can embed the ordering portion into a "frame" on your main site, so that the domain (the web address the user sees in their browser) remains the same throughout the transaction rather than directing your users to a 3rd party site. Of course, if you don't have your own website, hosting directly on your online ordering providers site may be preferable.

Make it Obvious
Now that you have online ordering, make it obvious throughout your website. Every page should have a prominent link to order online.   Anywhere you may list your phone number should also have a link to Order Online. If you feature any specials on your website, you can program these so that clicking on them will direct the user right into the online ordering process, with these items already selected.   If you are offering a mobile ordering app, be sure to link to the iPhone and Android downloads as well.

Master of Search
When setting up your website, make sure that your webmaster is familiar with "Search Engine Optimization" (SEO for short). Your goal is to the top of Google's search results when your customers search for "order pizza, your city".   SEO is a science with many experts available to help, but for starters, make sure that your web pages have descriptive titles and "meta tags" describing the keywords that customers may search for.   GRS client Portland House of Pizza (below), for example, shows up well in the search results due to their clear page titles, great page descriptions, and good reviews.

Portland House of **Pizza** | Home of **Portland Maine Pizza**
www.**portlandpizza**.com/ - Cached
HOME · **ORDER** ONLINE · MENU · DELIVERY · OUR STORY · VIP/GIFT · CATERING ...
"We are now Gluten Free and are checking out all the local **pizzerias**. ...
1359 Washington Avenue, Portland - (207) 797-9030
"I love Portland House of Pizza soo much ! Whenever my family orders pizza
..." - yahoo.com (4)
superpages.com (3) - insiderpages.com (2)

★★★★⯪
12 Google reviews

One advantage of embedding your online ordering within your website rather than linking to a separate URL owned by your online order provider is that keeping the traffic under your own domain will improve your search engine results.   Other ways you can improve results are by getting links to your site from other, external sites. Make sure that food review & local city listings have your store listed AND link directly to your website, with an option to directly "order online".

Advertising with Google Adwords
Google adwords is a popular way to promote your restaurant. Because you can limit your ad reach to a specific geographical area, and you only pay when someone clicks on your ad, it can be quite cost effective even for a small operator.   Make sure your advertising is working by connecting Google's free analytics software to your online ordering account! This will allow you to track exactly how many people who clicked on your ad proceeded all the way through checkout, and how much they spent.   You can vary the google ads that run, so if you promote a special offer and a customer clicks to order, it will automatically populate their shopping cart with the promoted items.   By tracking the results, you'll know which specials lead to the most profit.

Step 3: Get the Word Out!

Old habits are hard to break, so when you are just getting your online ordering going, make it a big splash!   Repetition will help your customers remember to order online. We've seen restaurants have great success adding to their hold message - "Don't wait on hold - order online now!"   Make sure that your printed menus, boxes, bags, customer receipts, flyers, advertisements and coupons all say "Order Online at www.yourrestaurant.com".   Add some signs to your windows so customers driving by your place will not only think about ordering food tonight, they'll be inspired to order online.   Another powerful strategy is to hang a sign in the restaurant at a designated register that says "Advanced and Online orders pick up here". This will let customers know that online ordering is convenient and can save them time at pick up.

Promoting your Mobile App

Offering a mobile ordering app is another great way to boost convenience for your customers. Promote the mobile app download everywhere you mention your online ordering. To make it easy for customers to find your mobile ap, add QR codes to your printed materials and signs. QR codes are easy to create - try this website http://qrcode.kaywa.com/ to generate the code for your URLs! Customers can easily scan the code with their phone to link directly to your site or the app download.

GRS customer Pizza Guys did a great job of promoting their mobile ordering app on their website, with a link to download the iPhone or Android version at the top of the page, and a QR code that users can scan with their phone.

Got some positive reviews for your mobile ordering app? Why not share these with your customers and invite them to join the conversation! (Example below from the pizza guys android app download page)

Awesome application. A better alternative to ordering pizza. Love the fast, easy ...

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ by Paul – August 5, 2011

Awesome application. A better alternative to ordering pizza. Love the fast, easy ordering process and the great design!

Use Facebook & Twitter
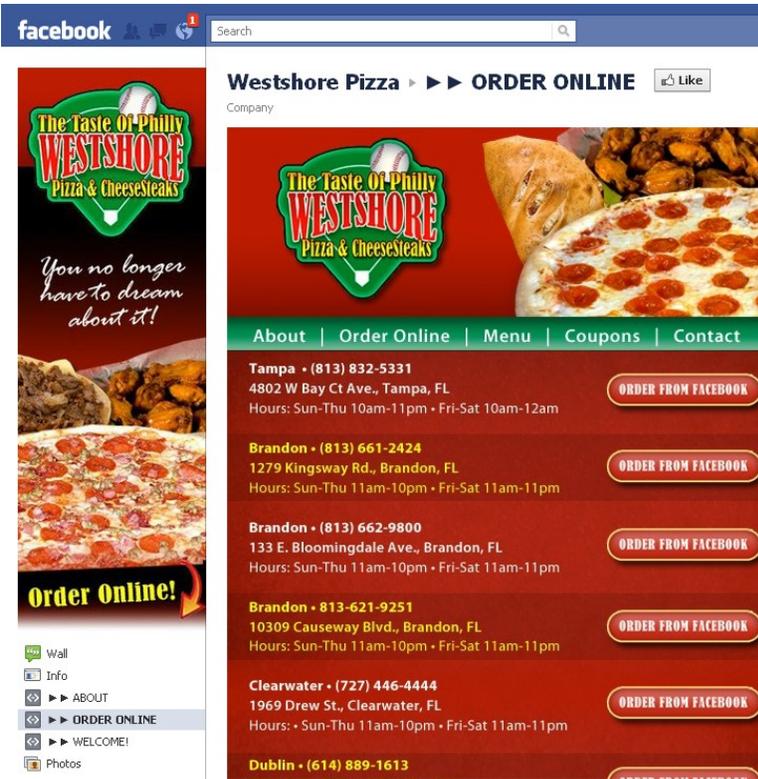
Use your Facebook page to promote your online ordering site! You can add a link directly to your page to promote online ordering, as GRS customer Westshore Pizza has (left).

Don't forget to Tweet about your online ordering, links to your mobile ap (the Android marketplace gives you a convenient Twitter link), and any special online deals you may have going!

All Around the Web
It can be overwhelming to keep up with all the web-based restaurant sites these days. But if you spend just a few hours setting up your restaurant's page on the major sites, such as Yelp, Urban Spoon, CitySearch, Google Places, Foursquare, TripAdvisor, InsiderPages, SuperPages, etc. you'll see better search results and many more new customers will have the ability to find you!   Be sure to prominently feature your "Order Online" link and consider a special offer for customers who order from these sites.   If you have already set up your pages on these sites, don't forget to update them with your new Online Ordering and Mobile download information!

Change Customer Habits

If you have an existing customer list, you can mail or e-mail them information about your new online & mobile ordering options. You may consider sending them an introductory offer than can only be used on their first online order!   Keep in mind that any coupon code you publish will likely go "viral" and be shared online with the masses, so don't give deals that are money losers unless they are restricted. You can restrict offers as "once per customer" or you can issue a set of unique offer codes to mail-merge to your customer list, with each code only valid for one time use. This is a great way to reward loyal customers, "wake up" lazy customers, or even apologize for mistakes.

Stay in Touch
Now that you've got online ordering customers, your e-mail list is growing daily. You have a powerful new way to reach out to your existing customers to promote specials, remind them to visit, or just thank them for their business.   Don't neglect this resource - plan to send out weekly emails to your customer list.   Too busy to keep up with this marketing task? Try an automated solution such as Salesbuilder from Granbury Restaurant Solutions.   Customers will be regularly mailed with offers based on their purchase history.   Issue rewards for loyalty and incentives for lazy customers automatically.

Conclusion

With online ordering in your restaurant, you're reaching out to give customers convenience and to find new customers in new ways.   Don't forget to measure your success, keep it fresh, and have fun with this exciting source of increased profits!