

So you want to sell fresh food!

In today's convenience environment, do you need to offer fresh food to your customers (and potential customer)? The answer today is a resounding yes.

Of course, we still sell tobacco, candy, and chips, but nothing drives repeat business like a great cup of coffee complimented by a wonderful breakfast. Our point of differentiation, as a channel, is the ability to offer everything to consumers, not just breakfast for example, but an entire shopping experience, including a multitude of fresh made to order or grab and go food, a myriad of cold vault beverages, perhaps a packaged lunch offer for the fridge at work, and fuel to drive to collect your million dollar pay off on that lottery ticket we just sold you!

However, if you are new to foodservice, or limited in your current offer and have a desire to expand, there are many areas to consider. When I am asked to speak on foodservice, or to work hand in hand with a retailer, I always offer that there are 100 things you need to do right to have a great foodservice offer. Today, let's focus on the top ten.

1) Determine why you want to sell food

Are you losing traffic to declining fuel and cigarette trips, or is there a competitor in the market who has an offer that is pulling customers, or maybe you have requests from current customers? All (and many more) are valid reasons.

2) Where do we begin

It's been often said in our business that if you own the morning, you own the day. Maximize your breakfast offer, developing as much as you are able, and then when you think you have it perfect...improve it again...and again...and again. Once you have all processes and systems running smoothly, and are consistently able to execute and delight on breakfast, then it may be time to seriously consider expanding to other day parts.

3) What food category do you want to focus on

Where is the opportunity in your market? Can you offer a great sandwich or is a great fried chicken offer what is needed? There are a lot of pizza shops in most towns, but can you have a compelling offer that wins? What about a phenomenal burrito offer priced right? Measure the opportunity as part of your assessment.

4) Assess your company capabilities and commitment

Commitment to foodservice needs to begin at the top. Adding a foodservice operation is not the same as taking in the newest snack chip or candy bar. Think about your biggest investments...real estate, fuel, people...foodservice is as important...and just as long term. You need to be committed at all levels, from senior management through all of store ops and support center.

Develop a corporate structure that facilitates foodservice process and systems, and the people to manage them...where does that one person, or five, fit in...Do you have the correct people for food development and daily management.

- 5) Distribution partner
Is your current grocery distributor forward looking and food focused? You may want to assess the need for a foodservice partner, or, perhaps work with a local foodservice operator to provide fresh made grab and go direct.
- 6) Advertising and promotions
There are a few keys to driving food sales. Innovation. Promotions. Limited time offers. There is a reason that local coffee shop always has some new variety to offer, typically for a set time period...it drives sales! Great promotions can drive trial, and if a great product, repeat sales.
- 7) Proprietary or branded
There are pros and cons to proprietary or branded foodservice: from advertising, systems and processes, to the effects on sales and net profitability. Be careful in analyzing, with a thorough and thoughtful review of your current and future capabilities.
- 8) Quality/Value strategy
“I want to sell the best sandwich anywhere!” Yes, you can, however there is a cost of goods and retail factor to analyze. Assess the market, know the competitors, and find your best price point and quality for your customers.
- 9) Develop a Strong Plan
You wouldn’t build a store without a ground up plan would you? Of course not, and foodservice needs long term and short terms plans to drive people, products, and profits.
- 10) Know the near future
What does the future bring? Read the convenience trade and restaurant magazines. Follow the food bloggers. One of the best ways to learn what’s happening is to take a tour in a great food city and see what concepts are flourishing. Go out to eat at new places!

Yes, there is a lot to think about...a lot of work to do before saying “I want to sell food”. Do your analysis, bring in external assistance if needed, but done right, following these ten and the rest of the 100 things to do right, and your customers and team members will be thanking you.

**Contact b2b Solutions to learn more about how we can help you
develop or improve your foodservice offer.**

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