

Introduction

Opportunities in the foodservice industry are abundant. The foodservice industry and its interrelated commerce provide the largest base for employment in the world. It is also an industry without prejudice. Your gender, race, educational, religious or economic background do not matter. I have witnessed success from all segments of society. Your success will be determined by your ability to create and implement your vision. The following chapters compile a guide and an Instruction Manual for opening your foodservice facility. Whether you are creating a coffee shop, corporate cafeteria or full service restaurant, the same principles apply. To make things simple I will use the word “restaurant” to apply to all foodservice venues.

To start with, consider your qualifications. They must be diverse, as in the following list.

Passion

The difference between a great chef and a good chef is not knowledge or skill, it is the ability to unconditionally love and care for their art. Their greatest pleasure comes from delighting his or her patrons. All successful restaurants should have the same goal in mind—providing pleasure to the client. That can only be achieved with passion.

Passionate restaurateurs find a way to make each aspect of the customer and employee experience wonderful.

Organization

Owning a restaurant is very similar to directing a movie. There are different teams of people doing their part to make the production perfect. The ability to organize each team to perform their tasks in a flawless manner will create the best possible experience for the client.

Business

Having an understanding of income and cost analysis as well as expense categories and their relationship to income are paramount to success. The ability to analyze and micromanage your income will have a profound effect on your employees as well as your customers' experience.

Foodservice Knowledge

Using the analogy of a movie director again, he does not act, film or create the score for the movie, but I guarantee you that he or she has detailed knowledge of how each element creates the whole. While most great restaurant owners do not have culinary experience, they know how to surround themselves with people who will create that great steak, mix the perfect martini, and assemble a team of designers and professionals to achieve a wonderful customer experience.

Having acknowledged the necessary qualifications for *owning* a foodservice facility, this book in no way broaches the subject of *managing* a restaurant or foodservice facility. Quite truthfully, when you have the right qualifications, managing the restaurant is the easy part. The hard part is opening the restaurant. Most of what happens in the beginning stages of opening a restaurant has nothing to do with your ability to run a restaurant. Mistakes cannot be accepted in the developmental stages of opening a restaurant. For instance, if a bad meal is served or a drink is spilled, you will have an unhappy customer until your wit, charm and

generosity can repair the customer's experience. It's not the end of the world. On the other hand, if you make a mistake in the developmental stage, it could cost you thousands of dollars and may even be as severe as not being able to open your restaurant. A mistake can cost you the art work for your walls, that great audio/visual system for your sports bar, or maybe the pre-opening operating cash needed to train your staff. In a word, the results can be "catastrophic." As you may have noticed, there are a large percentage of restaurants that close quickly after opening, and it's almost always due to having insufficient operating capital. If your full vision is not achieved, the customer experience suffers greatly. Your pre-opening budget can remain intact only if you do your due diligence.

The following chapters are an organizational guide for each developmental stage of opening a restaurant. Topics include, among others, Business Plan Development, Pre-Opening Budgeting, Permits, Financing, City, Fire and Health Department Regulations, ADA Requirements, Leasing, and all aspects of Design, General Contracting and Purchasing. Each category is a task that requires flawless completion prior to opening. Each task is shown chronologically and each topic area features a checklist with space for your notes and contact information. The checklists not only help you focus on the tasks at hand in a step by step style, but help you delegate some of the tasks to others.

This is such a great industry—it's fun, exciting and profitable! Yet there is no money to waste. My hope is that you will read this manual from cover to cover, do your due diligence with knowledge, care and integrity, and then experience great success as a restaurateur. Nothing would make me happier than to be a small part of your accomplishment.