

BORING KILLS

The word BORING is to the restaurant business what the word SHANK is to golf.

Fatal!

There are so many aspects of the restaurant business, so many moving parts, segments, zones, and quadrants. It's truly an art to keep people interested in your place the entire time they are there. When planning a new restaurant, there are always certain inescapable topics that come up as part of the discussion.

The following list consists of topics that represent the core items of a restaurant which will either make or choke your ability to succeed.

Ambiance: Ahhh yes, that old, "how does our design make you feel"? Warm and cozy? Do our colors make you hungry or want to come back for more? What about the carpet design? Ceiling too high? Are the booths comfortable? Plastic or cloth? I remember walking into a restaurant in Montreal and was totally floored simply by the design of the tables and chairs. "This place is really cool!, I think I'll try the food." The purpose of all of those things is to make the business interesting. Why should your restaurant be interesting? So it is not boring!

Your menu: Is it colorful? How big is it? Have you ever been to Bern's steakhouse in Tampa? They hand you a menu the size of the king james version of the bible. Are similar menu items conveniently gathered together on a page so as to make the ordering process easier on your menu? Appetizers together, sides together, desserts, etc. What about the pictures? Are there pictures of a sizzling steak or a hot fudge drenched dessert, or people mouthing a forkfull of something? The menu and the resulting ordering process have to grab your customer's interest so that they will want so many of the items you offer, they literally can't make up their minds. Now you know why French Fries on most menus are preceded by the word "*golden.*" How exciting!

The food: Square plates, how cool. Glasses that tilt, Wow! How does the chicken cordon bleu *look* when it comes out of the kitchen? How many colors can we get on one plate? Let's see red pepper, yellow pepper and, of course, the old standby, green pepper. How pretty! The sides neatly placed in designer fashion as to make the entrée look even more desirable. I personally think the short ribs should be placed directly on top of the garlic mashed. And those garnishes are a must. Do you really believe that sprig of parsley will make the burger taste better? I don't think so. But, aesthetically, it works! It is no longer just a dessert, now it's a work of art!

I know from experience, having eaten at more places than I can count, that what the back of the house at any eating establishment longs to hear are the words, "that dish *looks great!*" Why? Because if the way the dish *looks* peaks the interest of your customers, it cannot possibly be boring!

Frontware: As I've talked to owners over the years, the most often heard complaint relates to theft. Little things. Whether it is the salt and pepper shakers, a soup spoon, crab fork or steak knives, restaurant goers seem to have a penchant for wanting to take various and assorted table and service items home with them. So, if an operator wants to put some really cool and interesting items on the table, he has to build into his budget a certain dollar amount to replace them over time. That being said, nothing generates anticipation more about a meal than that of the table itself. Fresh flowers in a tapered bud vase, a small candle, interesting silverware that does not look like it was bought at the dollar store, all contribute to the anticipation of what is to come. So,

Do what you must to keep your business interesting, exciting and vibrant because
BORING KILLS!