

Reach for the Stars

How to make
your restaurant
snap friendly
– and boost
your business



Think ahead.

The importance of the overall dining experience can't be emphasized enough. A study by Tork shows that during a restaurant visit, a guest notices as many as 7,000 details across all areas of the restaurant – make them count!

See page 9 for more





Creating an experience that goes beyond the plate

In a world where people can get great food delivered to their home at any time, brick and mortar restaurants need to go beyond the plate and build unique experiences to draw people through their doors. When competition is tough, food quality will always remain key, but other factors such as ambience and interior design – even the choice of napkins and sugar packets – become more important for the overall guest experience. We are taught not to judge a book by its cover, but first impressions can stick. For restaurants, it means that the environment in the dining area, restrooms, and even kitchen will impact everything from the experience, social media effect and ultimately the success of your restaurant.

This report builds on the knowledge that the increased sharing of moments on social media

directly impacts your business, and that you have the power to benefit from it. Today, nothing escapes the eye of your customers and every detail can instantly be shared on social media. Therefore it is crucial that your current and potential guests like what they see in the dining area as well as in other parts of the restaurant – including the restroom. A great way of doing this is to create a more eye-catching setting, as it will make for a fun and sharable guest experience. Tork is a long-standing expert in the restaurant segment. Through this report, we hope to inspire and guide you through the ever-changing demands in the market; helping you turn challenges into opportunities, level up against competitors, and boost your business towards the stars.

Social media: Our time's no. 1 marketing tool

It is not news that social media is growing, both in terms of time spent on it as well as the role it plays in the marketplace. Where people spend time, companies will follow. And because of this, digital reviews are becoming business critical.

According to an international survey conducted by TripAdvisor, between 87-94 percent of diners will be influenced by online reviews when deciding where to eat. Both TripAdvisor and Yelp are among the most important platforms where customers share both positive and negative experiences, and diners worldwide use them as guides when deciding where to eat¹ – entirely based on others' opinions.

Needless to say, word of mouth has officially moved online, and another key player is Instagram. The photo-centric platform allows customers to share their feedback by posting their own pictures as well as commenting on others', and popularity is surging. In 2018, the number of restaurants using Instagram for promotion skyrocketed from 24 to 78 percent.² As a result, shops, restaurants, museums, and





hotels all over the world have started to adjust their interior design with social media in mind. Flower walls, branded mirrors, and neon signs are just a few examples of how snapshots, and online sharing, are encouraged.³

The shifting focus to aesthetics combined with heightened competition in the restaurant industry makes the ability to attract new customers a make-or-break factor. As the dominating communication channel and our time's firsthand marketing platform, social media needs to be acknowledged as the powerful marketing force it is. A good tip is to stay updated with the latest social media trends to learn about how to engage your guests better, and encourage them to share their moments in your restaurant, ultimately expanding your reach online.

Get up to a

9%

boost of revenue with a half-star increase on Yelp⁴

Up to

94%

of diners will be influenced by online reviews in the decision-making process⁵

“All my friends check out a restaurant’s Instagram page to see what we want when we go out for a meal.”

**23-year-old Londoner
Georgie told The Independent¹**



The power of social media

91%



of U.S. restaurants use Facebook and 78% use Instagram²

30%



of the UK millennials would avoid a restaurant if their Instagram presence was weak¹

45%



of US diners have tried a restaurant because of a social media post from the establishment²¹

Percentage of diners who are influenced by online reviews when deciding where to eat⁵



90%
French



91%
Spanish



93%
Italian

Is your restaurant Insta-friendly enough?

Up until recently, restaurant guests mostly posted photos of food, and the Instagram rage was all about decadent milkshakes, rainbow lattes, cakes, and toast with artistically cut avocado. However, focus is increasingly placed on capturing things beyond the plate. Because of this, restaurateurs make serious efforts to design their interior to be as “Insta-friendly” as possible. Initiatives range from tables that frame the food, lighting that flatters both the food and guests,

custom flooring, to eye-catching takeout packaging, and napkins that match the personality of the brand. These initiatives show results through location-specific tags, but also through the trendwave of hashtags. **#ihavethisthingwithfloors** and **#accidentallywesanderson** are two examples showing how the setting itself can drive traffic to your restaurant.



Kitchen and restrooms enter the spotlight

As diners are on the hunt for unique and intimate experiences, restaurants work hard to meet their guests' demands. One of the most prominent trends in the last few years is the evolution of open kitchens and "chef's tables." Giving the guests an opportunity to get a glimpse "behind the scenes" and experience the kitchen through all senses takes the dining experience to a whole new level. However, having diners sit front row means that hygiene perfection is more crucial

than ever. Dinner guests are likely to snap photos and videos of the kitchen heroes showing off their talent, and it is your job to make sure that the content will sell and not scare. As many as 75 percent of customers will not visit or patronize a restaurant with negative reviews about its cleanliness⁷, making consideration of staff appearance and high hygienic standards a must.

In addition to the kitchen, restrooms have entered the customer spotlight, and the opportunity this brings to actually enhance the entire restaurant

75%

of customers will not visit or patronize a restaurant with negative reviews about its cleanliness⁷



experience has made it an increasingly common branding tool. As people continue to place more value on the overall atmosphere, it is important that guests are enjoying the space wherever they go in the restaurant, and the restroom is no exception. Snapping photos in restrooms has actually become so pervasive that magazine *Restaurant Hospitality* is now giving advice on how restaurants can “Instagram-ify” their restrooms, from adding graphic wallpaper to stenciling hashtags on the mirror to hanging disco balls³, and top lists with “the world’s most

Instagrammed restaurant restrooms” are popping up on the internet.⁶

Safe to say, for any restaurant owner, it should be top priority to make sure that guests are welcomed in a clutter-free environment, with proper waste management solutions that keep the floors and bins free from excessive paper towels – in the kitchen as well as the restrooms. Make sure that these areas give your guests the impression you want them to have – and share!

Technology experiment reveals the secrets to getting better restaurant reviews

A study by Tork provides a greater understanding of the importance of all the details in the customer experience. The initiative included a survey of 3,000 restaurant guests and a unique eye-tracking experiment devised to learn how a restaurant is perceived through the eyes of a guest.⁹



Guest notice 7,000 details across all areas of the restaurant during a visit

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Over 50 percent of those surveyed have shared photos taken at a restaurant on social media, of everything from food to table décor

.....

Nine out of ten think that it is important that the restrooms maintain at least the same standard as the dining area



The power of personalization

75% of napkin users will notice the print, and

70%

will remember the message

Fun and engaging napkin prints will increase the likelihood of social media sharing and are an effective marketing tool that allow you to spread the right message according to your brand story. If a phrase or tagline is not your vibe, why not use your restaurant's signature color to make the experience more fun and sharable?¹⁰

Here's what to do – some inspiring examples

We have collected a few inspiring examples of how cafés, bars, and restaurants worldwide have made their places “Instagrammable,” and thereby let customers tell their story in the restaurant setting as a clever way to build their brand.

Eye-catching and engaging settings

The graffiti mural outside **The Riddler** bar in San Francisco features a large champagne bottle. It is a smart, strategic setting that successfully engages visitors and triggers them to both take photos and decide to enter the restaurant.

Meanwhile, **Cosmic Diner** in Bali, Indonesia has interior design themed 1960s in New York. The restaurant features red shiny booths, retro cartoons, and comic book cut outs. Oh – and the milkshakes are served in cowboy boot-shaped glasses.¹¹ But sometimes simplicity is just as powerful.

Zenith in Portugal serves cocktails and brunch, letting the food speak for itself in front of minimalist and Instagrammable brick walls.¹¹

Sugar packets that make you smile – and photograph them

Regardless if guests will sit down and lounge in your restaurant or swiftly order a coffee to go, there is an opportunity to make them notice the details. Perhaps offer an addition to their purchase that makes them smile.

For example, New York City hotspot **Jack's Wife Freda** has designed sugar packets with phrases like “I Love You A Latte” and “Sugar For My Honey,” that customers have regularly posted on

Instagram since the restaurant opened in 2012.¹² The details can also be picked up in a more ambitious theme, through colors, lighting, and music.

Signature-colored everything

MaMa Kelly in Amsterdam has claimed the color pink and uses it in their entire venue, from walls and chairs to, of course, the napkins.¹³

Colors are powerful

A Tork study shows that they have an important impact not only on how guests perceive a restaurant, but also on how they experience the taste of a dish. Pairing your food with the right color is a great opportunity to improve the entire guest experience.¹⁴



In London, fast-casual chain **Pret A Manger** also uses the effective power of color, especially for their vegetarian subsidiary **Veggie Pret**, where a signature green color is prevalent throughout their venues.¹⁵

Another color-coordinated café is **Matcha Mama** in Tulum, Mexico. The mix of rustic material and quirky signs painted in turquoise make it worthy of nomination as “the most Instagrammable little café ever.”¹¹ Cases like this support the notion that the devil sure is in the details.

Packaging, neon signs, and selfie-compatible restrooms

Burger joint **Shake Shack** started off in 2004 at one NY location and has since grown into a global chain. Part of their success is linked back to the brand identity, and as a fast-casual chain, the packaging is at the core of it. The look is inspired by 1950’s fast food restaurants, with neon signs and symbols. When expanding internationally, it was of highest priority to ensure that the brand image was aligned, and that guests worldwide could identify the iconic bags, boxes, and uniforms wherever they went.¹⁶ The

poppy designs continue to be an important marketing tool, as they make attractive social media posts that are easily recognizable to both existing and new customers.

Media Noche, a Havana-inspired restaurant in San Francisco, is famous for their colorful floors and banana-wallpapered restrooms – and it pays off. The owners estimate that half of the female guests post their visit on Instagram. While it is an investment, the marketing coverage is likely to have a generous effect on guest count.¹⁷

Clean kitchen design and clean staff

At Hong Kong restaurant **VEA**, where up to 80 percent of the guests are seated along the counter, the kitchen is designed for the particular purpose of optimising the guest experience, with sleek marble countertops and interiors that provides a better view of the culinary preparations. Before each service, the entire staff lines up for a physical check to confirm fingernails are trim, teeth are brushed, hair is tied back and uniforms are ironed.¹¹



62%

of restaurant guests are more likely to return if they've had a personal experience¹⁸



Five easy tips

How to inspire guests to share their experience

By implementing some simple changes in the details, you can ensure that the guest experience will be enhanced. Smart and social media-friendly design solutions can make your restaurant stand out and encourage your guests to spread the word – say cheese!



Make it open

Your guests will view every part of the restaurant as an opportunity to expose it on social media – so invite them to. Tag along on the open kitchen trend, but make sure that the hygiene dispensers are matching throughout the entire kitchen, because your guests will notice, and Instagram will too.

Tork recommends: Tork® Foodservice Cleaning Towels and small dispenser bracket



Make it stick

Your guests will notice details on products such as napkins, sugar packs, and takeout packaging, so use the opportunity to make an impression by printing your slogan or signature phrases that make the experience stick with your guests.

Tork recommends: Tork custom printed napkins and Tork Xpressnap® AD-a-Glance®



Make it match

Use a supplier that supports the design aesthetic of your restaurant. In addition to leaving a visually appealing impression on your guests, strategic supplier partnerships are a great way of saving time and money, as well as receiving tailored advice for your business

Tork recommends: Tork Image Design™ Line dispensers



Make it pretty

Decorations deserve attention. Napkins, straws, and salt and sugar dispensers will impact the way your guests experience the food and environment. Give the colors, napkin folding, and disposition of table settings an extra thought - there are endless opportunities, choose yours.

Tork Recommends: Tork LinStyle® Napkins and Tableware



Make it spread

Make sure that the settings across the restaurant are Insta-worthy, with aesthetically pleasing details and personal messages that make customers want to share them with others – and let the word be spread.

Tork recommends: AD-a-Glance® DIY Social Media Tool



Think ahead.

Sources

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