

Restaurant Marketing Trends for 2011

1. Surprise Me

Today's consumer has been through a tough couple of years—nothing they can't do without and holding back expenditures has been the name of the game. Consumers want to be surprised. In order to open their wallets and pocketbooks today's timid consumers want something special. We're not talking about a surprising discount, but a surprising call to action. If recession wary consumers are going to let the moths out of their coin purses it better be good! Creativity is the key.



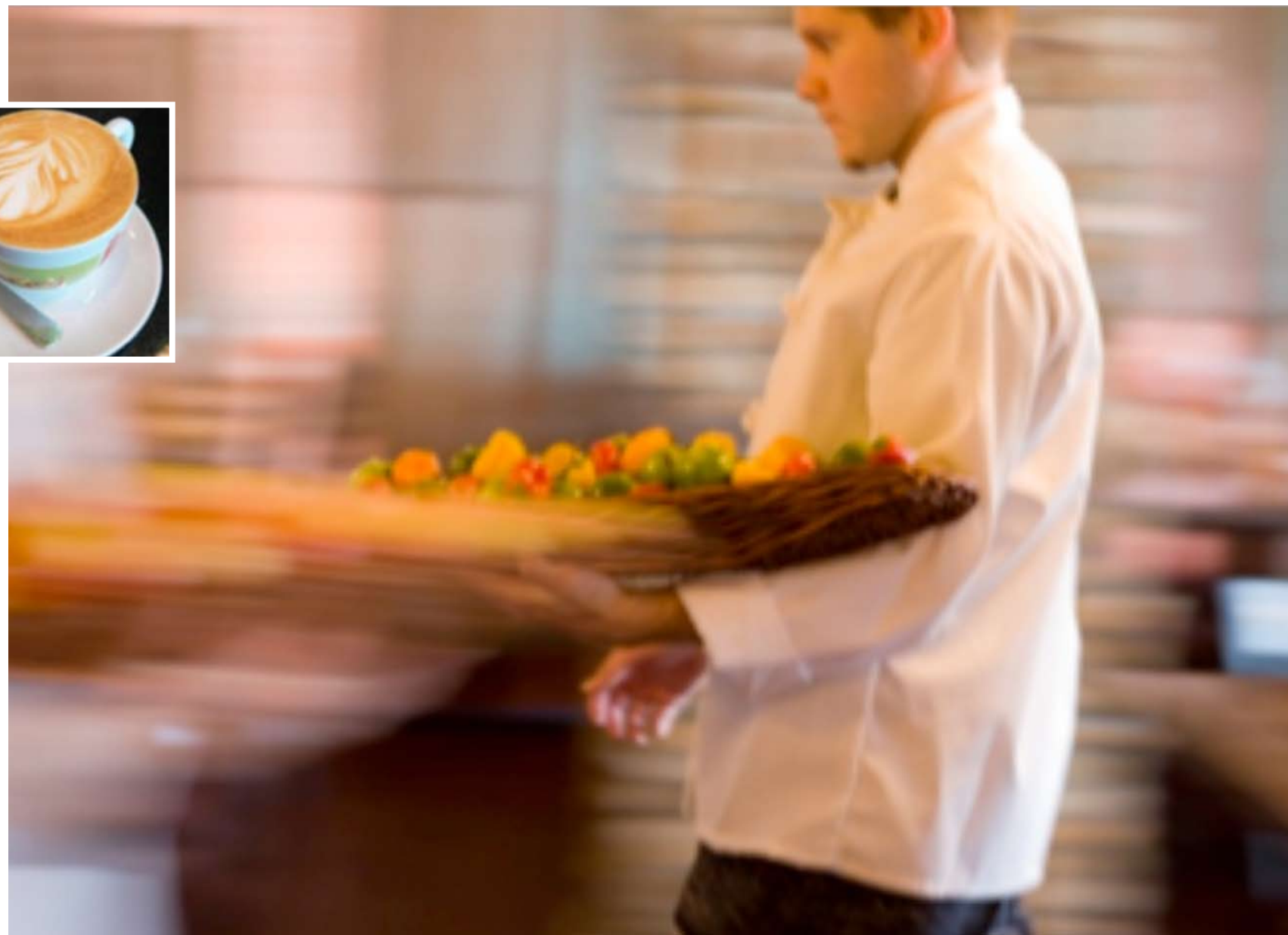
2. Hispanics Muy Bueno

The Hispanic influence in the U.S. is growing. The future of our nation and the restaurant industry depends on what happens to this population. This wake-up call has been around for a couple of years, but it's only making it louder this year. The numbers bear out that in the next several years, the U.S. will increasingly have a more Hispanic flavor to it. How your brand markets itself effectively to this group of growing influential consumers in key in the years to come.

3. In Pursuit of the Social Consumer

While who owns social media may be the wrong question to ask, social media for the time being, appears to live in one primary department. Over time however, social media will extend the capacity of any business unit or division affected by outside behavior. In a recent marketer's survey*, when asked which departments are currently involved in social media

90 percent of participants pointed to marketing. Public relations followed with 64 percent. Sales showed a strong presence with 46 percent and customer service also made the list with a solid 39 percent. I found it interesting that investor relations made an official appearance the list. Even with 8 percent, it's a telling sign of things to come.



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Social Marketing Spans Departments

Q: Which departments are involved in your social media marketing? Select ALL that apply
Base: All respondents

Marketing	90%
Public relations	64%
Sales	46%
Customer service	39%
Investor relations	8%
Other	15%

In 2011, marketers plan to increase usage of social media by 75%.

Social Customers: Led By Millenials, but Present at All Ages

Q: Within each of the following ranges, what percentage of consumers in the United States would you estimate are "social consumers"? Select ONE in each row
Base: All respondents

	Average Estimate of Respondents
11-20 year olds	57%
21-30 year olds	61%
31-40 year olds	43%
41-50 year olds	27%
51-60 year olds	17%
Over 60 year olds	10%

An Investment in Time & Resources

Marketing professionals revealed how they plan to spend their time over the next 12 months. For those of us trying to figure out whether or not we're focused on the right outside resources and opportunities, benchmarking against peers is as helpful as it is telling.

Social Media: In 2011, marketers plan to increase usage of social media by 75 percent. 19 percent will remain at current levels and only one percent of respondents actually plan on decreasing usage.

Mobile: Apps for iPhone and Droid will see a rise of 62 percent, 21 percent will remain constant and 1 percent will decrease.

Microblogging: 61 percent will increase use of streaming apps such as Twitter and Yammer, 27 percent will stay the course and 5 percent will reduce current usage.

Video: 55 percent of marketers will increase video production and distribution with YouTube, Vimeo and the like, 31 as is, and no one plans to decrease their efforts in this category in 2011.

Blogs: Contrary to a recent story in the New York Times insinuating that the stratosphere would spell the end of the blogosphere, brands will increase their focus on top tier blogs to reach customers and peers by 52 percent, with 35 percent staying constant and 5 percent reducing focus.

Who are Social Consumers?

Participants in a recent study were asked to estimate the age range of social consumers. 61 percent estimated 21-30 years old. 57 percent guessed 11-20. 43 percent targeted 31-40. 27 percent cited 41-50. For the record, Millennials currently fall between the ages of 16 and 31. The answers are surprising however. Social consumers represent all ages on the chart and are aligned by psychographics as we move forward, not demographics.

2011 is a pivotal year for social media. While many brands believe in its importance, there is still a great deal to learn. What's clear however, is just how early brands are in this



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growth curve. Social Consumers are expanding beyond the Millennial demographic as social-savvy individuals are migrating from the edge to the center of technology adoption and prowess. As they do, social networks and new media apps and services become their platforms of choice. All signs, according to this study, point towards greater investment in time, money, and resources to better understand and excel in social media.

*Pivot Survey

4. New Day Parts and New Revenue Channels

There will be a greater focus on developing new day parts for restaurant marketers. Breakfast is one of the fastest growing day parts in the restaurant industry today. Breakfast offers an excellent revenue opportunity, however, it is one of the hardest day parts to convince consumers to switch to your brand or change their morning eating habits. "When we opened a new Noah's Bagels it took at least five appetizing offers to get consumers to change their behavior and make Noah's their morning ritual," said Linda Duke. "Why do you think Starbucks added breakfast items? They already captured consumers' morning drink ritual and they just needed to increase their average ticket and offer food."

Catering is not a new revenue channel, but with today's new online

social media applications, catering is a whole new ball game for restaurant marketers. Guests are now able to access their favorite restaurant in any city and with a click of their cell phone they can place their order.

Today's savvy restaurant marketers are using online catering resources and some are creating custom catering platforms such as Boudin Bakeries to manage their multi-unit catering operation with an enterprise web-based program. "The technology is there, but it takes time and planning to create a customized catering program," says MonkeyMedia Software CEO, Erle Dardick. "With Boudin Bakeries it took 9 months and now they are seeing the benefits with increased catering sales by 300%." Today Boudin fulfills a high volume of catering orders including box lunches, platters, baked goods, fresh sandwiches, soups, salads and pastries.

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Developing new revenue channels such as offering products online, bottling signature items and partnering with grocery retailers is a must for restaurant marketers. Huge brand awareness is garnered by having your brand in the grocery store freezer or bottled products sections. Taking your signature menu item and partnering with a food manufacturer to produce proprietary products is a channel worth exploring.

5. Integrate, integrate, integrate!

Integration of all marketing communications is essential to garnering the best results. For example, if you plan to introduce a new menu item how will you communicate that to drive awareness and trial? One method or medium isn't enough today to break through the clutter and reach consumers. "It's about consumer touch points," says Linda Duke. "Every place a guest can see,

hear or touch has to be part of the marketing plan. The email blast, the Facebook post, the twitter and coupon drop and advertising all have to work together to create a louder voice to be heard most effectively."

6. Communicate Sustainability, Health, Ingredients, and...

Yes consumers want to know where their food is coming from. Those brands that can articulate their ingredients and product sourcing are winning big with consumers.

Communicating and marketing these facts to guests is another thing. Marketers must weave multiple messages to include social responsibility, recycling, product sourcing, and now share calories, the amount of sodium and more.

It's as though the wizard has come out from behind the velvet curtain. Creating communications to get "credit" with guests is imperative today.

7. Fast Casual is the Name of the Game

Today's consumers want better quality food but without taking too much time away from their busy schedules. The Fast Casual segment of



the restaurant industry has changed the way people eat. Restaurant marketers of these fast growing and revenue positive brands are the ones to watch. If your brand is a casual dining restaurant, find ways to offer a faster service for your guests such as boxed lunches to go, beef up your catering sales team, book groups, banquets, and try a quick lunch menu to see if you can capture some of those guests with little time but appreciate your brand and food.

8. Responsible Marketing

Today's marketers need to be socially responsible. With soy based inks and recycled paper products readily available, point of purchase materials should be printed using recyclable materials whenever possible. Consumables such as cups, tray liners and other logoed to-go packaging needs to be made with recycled materials for today's green and sustainable-savvy consumers.

9. Clutter Test

With so many restaurant brands for consumers to choose, the most important test a restaurant marketer should use BEFORE rolling out any promotion, publicity stunt, new advertising campaign or packaging is the clutter test to ensure your brand is standing out from the rest. Collect one of each of your brand's direct competitors cup or packaging or ad campaign and compare ALL of them together to be SURE your brand stands out. For instance, planning to redesign your drink cups? Try getting one of each of your competitors and before making the final decision, see if your cup stands out in the clutter of the rest. "Another test I like to use is called the gutter test," says Linda Duke. "Smash your cup



in the gutter and see if you can tell which your brand is when you drive by! Cup logos should be seen from your car to the curb!"

9. Get Moving!

This isn't Lady Obama's rally cry; it's time for restaurant marketers to get moving! Local store marketing is still the most effective and least expensive strategy for smart restaurant marketers. Local store marketing takes time and effort and someone has to get moving! Most every patron at your restaurant comes from within the three mile radius and being a part of the community has never been more important to stand out from the competition. Get your general managers or franchisees moving—give them tools and tips and send them into their 3 mile radius to introduce themselves. Arm them with menus, offers and samples and when they get moving, so will your sales!

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