



Give Your Restaurant An Eco-Makeover

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Socially responsible marketing is about doing good. Even though your business may do plenty along those lines already, in this current do-good-and-win scenario, image — and the substance behind it — is everything.

For restaurant operators, healthy dining has been a big focus for many years. Now “going green” and socially responsible marketing are key points of emphasis for restaurateurs and consumers alike. With so much powerful scientific data about global warming and other environmental issues now readily available, and with more frequent communication of it via the media, it's hard for consumers to ignore.

Want evidence? In a recent study published in *USA Today*, more than 30 percent of respondents said they “would be willing to sacrifice a percentage of their salary in order to work for an environmentally friendly company.” Organic and sustainable product sales have more than doubled since 2000. The list goes on.

Consumer demand for green and environmentally friendly products and services is growing, but is still in the early stages. Green claims are on the rise and every company now positions itself as green and socially responsible. What does this mean for your restaurant? Socially responsible marketing will soon become standard operating procedure for all operators. Are you ready?

Here are seven steps you can take to get your operation started down the eco-friendly path.

1. Go through all aspects of your business and perform a thorough audit on how all your operations are done. Determine what products you're using and how each one ranks as an eco-friendly item.
2. List all areas of your business that could be changed to incorporate more social responsibility (i.e., something as simple as swapping out standard light bulbs for energy-efficient ones).
3. Be sure to get participation and input from your staff. The best renewable resource is ideas!
4. Begin to formulate your plan to give your brand or operation an “eco-makeover.”
5. Concurrently, hone in on the ideas that will help you determine your restaurant's social vision. What does your brand stand for?
6. Set goals (who will you help, what will you save, etc.) and finalize your plan.
7. Create a time line and estimate the costs of implementing your changes. Develop your budget.

The items below contain tips great and small you can use to get your eco-makeover going.

- Cleanse your mailing lists and encourage recycling of menus, check presenters, point-of-purchase materials, flyers, brochures and catalogs.
- Create CDs, print smaller, use recycled and eco-friendly paper and ink.
- Give consumers “virtual” offers online and allow them to sign up via mobile phones.
- Focus on finding a community partner who has a similar social vision.
- Take steps that will allow your restaurant brand to make a difference in the communities you serve.
- Communicate the changes and all the details to every member of your staff.
- Make sure you communicate with your guests about your efforts. Get them involved if you can.
- Get your products, ingredients and business certified.

Pay attention to certification. From kosher to fair trade to organic, global organizations are setting standards to identify legitimate products and purveyors. If they aren't already, your customers will soon become aware of these standards. The more certifications your restaurant qualifies for, the better.