



5 Steps to Reaching New Customers for your Cafe, Pub, Bar or Restaurant And Keeping Them Coming Back

Hospitality is all about people. It doesn't matter how good your coffee is, or that you have the tastiest tapas in town or the best craft beer, if people don't know about you locally, and further afield, your business can't thrive.

Here are our 5 steps to getting your name out there and customers through your door.

1. Make the most of Google My business – a must for any local business – it's free and without it you are literally handing customers to your competition

Google My Business is essential to help locals find you online (local SEO) as it enables your business listing to appear in local search results for queries specific to your products or services. It will also help build your reputation via reviews from existing customers telling potential customers (and search engines) how great you are - So get yourself a Google account and head to google.com/business.

2. Ensure your website shows off your business in the best possible way

When potential (and existing) customers have found you online they'll want to check you out on your website.

- Ensure all the information on your website is up to date
- Add recent, good quality photos showcasing your venue and menu
- Help visitors navigate easily around your site via clear headings and links to tell your story and encourage them to make a booking or purchase.
- Finally (and crucially) make sure your website is optimised for SEO to enable all search engines (not just Google) to include you in search engine results pages (SERPS) for venues like yours. This may sound complicated but there are basic SEO checks that can be done on your site and quick fixes that can be made to ensure the right people find you and visit your website.

3. Create a digital shop window and build a community around your business on social media

Potential customers are taking their window shopping online. They are using social media to explore, to find the best local experiences, like-minded communities and to help them to decide where to spend their money.

This provides an opportunity to promote your businesses and communicate with customers. If done correctly social media can drive traffic to your website and bookings for your venue. While all social platforms are free to access getting the most from them can take time, so choose one or

two social platforms that are used most heavily by your target customers. Social media is instant and visual - ideal for promoting a special event or menu and the better the image the greater the impact. Try to create a social handle that is the same across for each platform and the same as your web address. Take time to get to grips with the way each platform works, the hashtags, links and other functions and seek help when you need it.

4. Establish a direct relationship with your customers and keep in touch with them

Whether a customer returns depends on the experience they have had, but it is not the only factor. People lead busy lives, and they have many options to choose from making it vital for you to find ways to keep your venue top of mind.

First Party data (in this case email addresses) collected accurately and responsibly from customers is gold dust for your business enabling and allowing you to send news, information and reasons to book directly to their inbox. Opportunities to sign up to your emails should be included along the customer journey; on your website, when making a booking and in your venue. You'll also need to include a clear privacy policy that offers people transparency and control.

5. Make your customers feel special and give them reasons to return

We all love a treat and to be made to feel special. Doing this for your customers will incentivise them to return more often. Rather than discounting, which simply trains people to expect lower prices, consider how to add value and at the same time promote what makes your business unique and different - such as an event, chef demo, mixology masterclass or glass of wine on the house.

Partner with a complimentary, like-minded business or brand that shares your target audience to offer a prize or package of goodies. This can also be very effective on social media. Exclusive rewards for new email subscribers can help boost sign-ups.

Remember to check the following:

- What do your customers want? Tailor all your incentives to appeal to them
- Keep incentives fresh and exciting by changing them regularly
- Check that any offers or competitions comply with regulations and are cost effective for your business.

Hopefully you are already doing some of the activities outlined in our 5 steps – If not you are missing out on essential opportunities to grow your business. Make sure you maximise each step and if you need some help, training or struggle to find the time – [Wise Bird Marketing](#) is here to help make your business fly.

About the author

Sascha began her career in ad agencies working on campaigns for some of the UK's most well-known brands. Most recently she has provided consultancy services to clients in hospitality launching restaurants, bars and hotels and running digital marketing activity to drive awareness and revenue.