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**Millions of dollars of sales are the result of creating a competitive advantage - by Dennis Serpone**

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Dennis Serpone

There's a saying that I'll always remember regarding success in "any" business but especially in the food and beverage industry, "If your business is not growing, it is dying." That hit me as being pretty profound. "If my business is not growing, it's dying"? Your competition is nipping at your heels, trying to win your customers away. You're in a life and death struggle to keep your business alive.

No matter you've just started a small burger joint in a tiny town or are running a fine dining downtown restaurant in a bustling street in a large city, you should always be on the lookout for ways to secure your position in this highly competitive industry.

Inherently you know, even if you don't think about it, your competition is doing everything in their power to win your customers.

Every day, more and more people eat out or use food delivery services. Yes, this means bigger opportunities for growth, but it also means the sprouting up of new competitors. Whether you admit it or not, everyone is jealous of your success. Your competitors are constantly thinking, "Why is he busy and I'm not?" If you're at the beginning of your business, they may not allow you to gain a foothold in the first place, and if you've already made a name for yourself, they may steal your customers. In either case, you need real competitive advantages to survive or flourish. Gaining a competitive advantage in the restaurant industry requires a thorough analysis of the demographics of your area. It also entails keeping a close watch on the developments of the market, existing competitors, food trends, and more.

What is a competitive advantage in the restaurant industry? Competitive advantage is defined as an attribute, quality, or aspect of a restaurant's products, services, or environment that makes it a preferred choice for people when compared to other options (competitors), that is other restaurants. In fact, your competitive advantage is the reason your customers choose to at your restaurant not the other restaurant down the street. In a sense you already have a competitive advantage.

If you have been in the restaurant business for years, you still might be looking for competitive advantages or seeking out strategies to preserve or strengthen your current competitive advantage. This is because you may be well aware that competitive advantage must be sustainable so that it could not be easily broken or copied by competitors. Our restaurant consultants have been helping owners, all across the country strengthen their position against their competitors.

After over 44 years of helping buyers choose one available restaurant over another. It simply comes down to which one is more able to have the all important COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.

Here are a couple of suggestions that every restaurant owner should do to gain or retain their sustainable competitive edge over rivals.

Create your own culture, blended with professionalism.

Your restaurant's culture is the identity of your restaurant. Just as no two people are exactly the same because each has a unique personality, your restaurant too should have something unique to offer that defines its identity. Why should customers come to you?

So a unique culture is a good example of a sustainable competitive advantage for a restaurant.

Equally important, 'people love to be respected and treated kindly'.

They want to be received with friendly smiles when they step into a restaurant with their loved ones.

Having highly skilled chefs, waiters/waitresses, expeditors, and cashier are crucial in offering a smooth and positive experience of eating out to your clients.

The professionalism of a restaurant's employees is one of your most important competitive advantages.

Dennis Serpone is the founder of The National Restaurant Exchange, The Hotel Exchange, and Cannabis Business Brokers, Wakefield, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540