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10 Commandments to Open Your Own Restaurant

by Chris Tripoli

From my years of opening my own restaurants and those of my clients, here are 10 factors that often contribute the most to the ultimate success or failure of any new restaurant.



1. **Work in the industry first.** Cook, clean and manage some personnel. Hands-on experience working with staff and serving the public will tell you if you are in the right business.
2. **Define your concept.** Don't try to do too much. You can add and modify a little as you go to stay fresh, but don't confuse the guest with too much at the opening.
3. **Research.** Travel, review, and ask others for input on your concept. Develop a mission statement and define how you are going to measure its success.
4. **Site selection.** Use an expert to assist with market analysis. Select a real estate consultant who specializes in retail (check references). More than just demographics and traffic count around a site, you want to know spending patterns and area growth as well.
5. **Budget and finance.** Don't forget the little things. Allow for contingency and operating capital.
6. **Supervise the pre-opening.** Be involved in layout and construction. Check and double-check your schedule. Openings require proper planning, realistic timetables and diligent follow-through.
7. **Training and development.** You only get one chance to open. Allow managers time to put systems in place and train staff. Have two or three dry-run test parties before opening.
8. **Select your purveyors.** Visit and compare your bakery, produce, and meat and grocery companies. Team up with companies based on service and quality, not just price.
9. **Stay the course.** Maintain your concept's integrity. Be consistent.
10. **Never fear failure.** You risk in order to get a reward. Believe in what you are doing.

Contact the Author

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