

DRIVING MORE WORD OF MOUTH AND SOCIAL SHARING



By Gerry O'Brien

What's Your Because?

Is word of mouth critical for your restaurant? How about sharing on social media? Yes, but how do you *proactively* get people to share your restaurant with others? The biggest reason that people don't refer others is one simple thing—we haven't given them the words to say or pictures to share! It's our job to create the repeatable statement or the sharable moment.

If you try to stand for everything, you end up standing for nothing—and people have no idea what to tell others about you. When people share or recommend a restaurant, they want to say something *specific, unique, and compelling*. They want you to actually take their recommendation and eat at the restaurant.

So, I ask you this—What's Your Because?

What do I mean? If one of your customers were to tell a friend that he or she should eat at your restaurant, how would your customer finish this sentence: "You've got to go to XXXX because..."

Now, it's easy to say something *general* that pretty much anyone would say: "We've got better service" or "We've got better food." The reality is that most customers don't see our restaurants as favorably as we do. Lots of restaurant owners say these things—that doesn't make them true. If everyone is saying it, it's not powerful. Great restaurants grow word of mouth by creating food, service, and experiences with specific, unique, and compelling differences from competitors.

Let's use an example. Can you think of the slogan for Papa John's Pizza? "Better Ingredients, Better Pizza." They're trying to convince you that they have better pizza, but that just sounds like marketing fluff until they say *Because*—we have better ingredients. Add in the "because" they have better ingredients, and it's more believable and more repeatable.

Pizza Hut sued them over the saying, and Papa John's won the lawsuit only because they use filtered water and fresh sliced tomatoes. I didn't say your *Because* had to be that good—just *specific, unique, and compelling*. Papa John's built a \$3B company on a simple *Because*—better ingredients.

Why does adding "because" make a difference? Because people want to know why. Consumers today are bombarded with between 500 and 3,000 advertising messages every day—not even including all the stuff on social media from friends. Their natural instinct is to try to cut through the clutter, and to filter out anything that is not credible or authentic.

As social media has increased customers' ability to share instantly, your *Because* has increased in importance. When we're recommending a restaurant to someone, we tell them what we think, but when we put it on social media, we want to show them. So in addition to creating great food, service, and experiences that people will talk about, it's important to create "wow factor" visuals that people will want to share through pictures or video.



Case Studies

Sometimes it's good to see things in action, so here are a few case studies...

In rural Missouri, there is a famous restaurant called **Lambert's Café**. They're known as the home of "Thrown Rolls." They constantly have servers coming around with carts of hot, fresh-baked rolls, and they literally throw them to you. It creates a fun, jovial atmosphere. They regularly have wait times of two hours or more. People come from all over the country to Sikeston, Missouri, for Thrown Rolls. They've created a wow experience that is both chat-worthy and picture-worthy.

Twelve Restaurant in Denver is a fine dining restaurant that serves a constantly changing menu. The chef is committed to creating an experience unlike anything else. To accomplish that, he changes the menu 12 times a year. He always has

12 items on the menu: six small plates and six entrées. He's made it easy for people to know what to say when they're talking about his restaurant.

Marco's Coal-Fired Pizza cooks their pizza at 1,000° in a coal-fired oven. The bottom of the pizza is deliciously charred and visually appealing. Their *Because* "1,000-degree coal-fired oven" is *specific, unique, and compelling*. It's believable, repeatable, and visually shareable.

So I ask you again—What's Your Because? What is the believable and repeatable statement you want your customers to make about your business? Have you given them the words to say or the visuals to share? Is your Because specific, unique and compelling? Create one and get your word-of-mouth and social media machine up and running!

Want to craft a powerful Because? The process for crafting a Because for your restaurant is included in The Restaurant Formula™ program—available exclusively through Maines.

If you want to drive more sales, attract more customers, generate more profit, and ignite your word-of-mouth marketing, ask your Maines representative about using The Restaurant Formula for your restaurant.

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