How “Drive-Thru” Business Hurts Your Bottom Line



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There’s a huge difference between a fast food burger and a gourmet deluxe burger, don’t you think? In the first scenario, you trade a few bucks for a quick, greasy, paper-wrapped “meal.” It’s not much to look at. It tastes … okay. But it does the trick and satisfies your hunger. In the second scenario, you wait a little longer, pay a little more, choose how it’s cooked and receive something absolutely delicious. It comes out on real dishes. You get full service. And there may even be options for fancy drinks and decadent desserts!

When it comes to your own business, you know which version you’d like to be.

Providing the full “dining” experience

All the gurus tell you to “create urgency” and “close the deal.” But if all you’re focused on is making the sale, you’re just running a drive-thru business: fast in and fast out.

On the other hand, if you focus on creating a full and enjoyable experience – that’s when you become memorable! You make an impression, and you linger in your clients’ minds so that the next time they want quality, they think of you. That’s when it all comes together!

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Guide them through the menu if they’re uncertain. Invite them to start with an amuse-bouche. Offer them a cocktail. Suggest they treat themselves to dessert, because that almond torte is positively dreamy. You’re not being pushy – you’re letting them know what’s available so they can create their own ideal dinner.

What options and extras are available in your business that your clients might enjoy? Be ready to give your clients the “full dining experience.”

The same goes for being attentive. A good server knows when to make conversation (and when not to), when to fill the water glasses, and how much time to give between appetizers and entrees. They nurture their customers throughout the entire meal.

How do you nurture your clients and make sure they consistently feel taken care of? How do you make sure you don’t overwhelm them?

Listen to what they say (and what they don’t)

This perspective is particularly helpful when it comes to objections. From the “full experience” angle, you can view it as simply an ask from your audience to help them make a decision. It’s an opportunity for communication and engagement.

Only when you are both fully informed can you make an offer that will truly benefit them. (Do they want the Angus burger or a vegan burger? Ketchup and pickles or mushrooms and Swiss? Is it extra for a side dish, or is that included?)

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Most clients need extra time to process your menu. You likely offer something unique, or they have a different name for your dishes (offers) in mind. So, patiently adapt to your audience. Perhaps:

- They might need you to explain it differently. Can you be clearer? Either more concise or more detailed?
- They might need more information. Can you elaborate on what it entails and its impact or results?
- They might not be ready for this particular product or service. Maybe they’d appreciate something a little different.

Listen to what they have to say, but also read between the lines. Ask questions, anticipate their needs, and watch for cues. If they turn down dessert at first, it’s possible that nothing on the dessert menu sounds good … or maybe they’re too full, but “now that you mention it,” they’d love to take home a piece of that torte for later.

Create a connection

It gives you warm fuzzies to visit a place “where everybody knows your name.” The servers have your beverage ready before you’ve even taken off your jacket, and they’re asking how Jimmy’s soccer game went last weekend. They remember you. They’re invested in you. And that makes you feel *good*. Maybe it makes you feel *so* good that you tip more than you normally would.

Emotions are a powerful thing. They move us in a way that nothing else can — not even that sales-y sense of urgency.

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As you cater to your clients, how can you connect with their emotions? Especially if someone is on the fence about buying your offer. Is there a way for you to give them an emotional reason why they’ll love it? How does your product or service set off those feel-good chemicals in their brain?

- Does it support a cause or spread awareness? (philanthropy)
- Can it improve their productivity or efficiency? (accomplishment)
- Will it also somehow positively impact their loved ones? (nurturing/caring)

The bottom line

When you provide these small but valuable qualities through your brand and business, as opposed to an urgency-fueled drive-thru, you won’t just gain clients. You’ll gain loyal fans and followers who believe in your message, your vision and your purpose, because what you offer is so much bigger than business.

So, don’t just create a business that allows your client to dine and dash. Be more intentional with the service you’re offering, and provide them with an impactful and enjoyable “full dining experience” that they’ll remember for years to come.

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