



Developing a Menu of Services

by Chanon Collins

On your next trip to a restaurant, take a moment to examine the mode of operation for serving customers. Any restaurant will do, from McDonald's to Tavern on the Green. While your overall experience in these varied settings will be extreme, the primary purpose remains the same – dining. When you place your order at McDonald's, you select your food from a lighted board displaying the offerings of hamburgers, salads, and combo meals. When ordering at The Tavern, your selections are presented in a leather-bound menu, complete with delectable descriptions of entrée's and accoutrements. In some instances, prices are listed while market value will dictate the prices of seasonal items. In either establishment, you are presented with a menu from which to select your meal.

Business owners who recognize the power of a menu of services are already ages ahead of their competition. It is reassuring to be presented with the complete offering for a business on the initial visit. We have all experienced times when we received a bill for a service and many, somewhat insignificant items, were added to the final bill creating a higher and unexpected fee. Most any customer would welcome the opportunity to guide her or his service or shopping experience by selecting the activities or products desired.

A menu of services should not be a complicated document that takes hours to decipher. Depending on the type of business, a menu of services could be as simple as a checklist or a description to explain the particular services offered. In developing the menu of services for your organization, take a moment to list the products or services you offer to your customers. For instance, if your business focuses on interior design, list the types of services you offer to your customers, from designing and decorating a room to installation of carpet or tile. Most business owners will be surprised to discover that most of their devoted customers are unaware of a number of services offered. This illustrates the power of a menu of services.

The appearance of your menu of services is just as important as the verbiage to describe your services. Your menu can be a single sheet of paper listing your offerings or it can be a brochure or booklet describing the services you provide to your customers. Graphics and photographs draw a reader's attention, so use photos that are appropriate and

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clear. Nothing destroys a menu more easily than distorted or grainy graphics of products. If the product photo is not attractive, it is most likely that your customers will not be attracted to it either.

Once your menu of services is complete, do not let it rest on its own. It is a powerful tool, if used correctly. Spending time and money on a brochure that will rest in peace on a table in your lobby is a waste of paper. Use your menu of services to introduce your customers to your services and allow the descriptions to initiate dialogue. It is very likely that your customers will read your menu of services and discover a service of which she or he is very much in need. Take that opportunity to expand your relationship with your customer by exploring the options of other services. Your characteristic of a trusted provider will make an indelible mark for continued stellar service.

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