

## CHAPTER 5

# The Power of Database

Okay, now that we've talked about awareness and the power of expanding awareness to engagement, I want to talk about the be-all and end-all to marketing: your database.

A database is the number one asset all businesses should have. It's a list of people who know, like, and trust you that will allow you to grow your business year over year. It's a list of people who have raised their hands and said, "Here's my name, here's my email, here's my phone number, here's my birthday. Invite me to come do business with you."

Most restaurants do a terrible job of building a database. EVERY DAY you should be asking people for their information. The biggest reason they do a bad job is that they aren't clearing an easy path for this information to be gathered. There are a lot of opportunities for people to give you information, but you have to ASK! In addition to asking, you've got to give them an easy, seamless way to give you their name, phone number, email, and birthday.

Every place a customer can see you needs to have a strong CTA (call to action) bribing them for their information, whether it's in your bathrooms, your check presenters, a Facebook post, or your website. Every time employees interact with customers for the first time, they should be asking questions to help with that visit, which in turn leads them to see if you have their information. During a recent interview for my podcast, *MPTV*, Matthew Borowski of 618 Restaurant in New Jersey talked about bringing hospitality back to the restaurant business. In this conversation, he talked about how they use Open Table for all reservations and, before a customer is seated, the server and manager know if that customer is new or repeat, based on the data in Open Table. Armed with that information, they have better conversations and are able to guide guests' dining experiences.



Consider how this relates to gaining a customer's information in your restaurant. When a server asks a customer if they've eaten with you before, it's not only a question to help guide their suggestions of what food to eat, but it's also a chance to say, "Oh, you've not been here before, so you're more than likely not a member of our VIP club then, right? Great, scan this code and sign up. On your next visit, you'll get a free appetizer." This is by far the easiest and most profitable way to grow your restaurant, by gaining the information of the people who have taken the effort to visit and dine with you.

I'll never forget an experience I had at a national chain I visited a few years back. As I'm paying my bill, the young lady taking my money says, "You don't want to give me your email address, do you?" I thought, wow, that's a heck of an engaging conversation or a great sales pitch. And no, I did not give her my email address.

Now, if she would have asked me in a different manner and maybe said:

"Hey, Matt, are you in our VIP program? No? Well, you're missing out, brother. Did you know that you get a free cookie after you're enrolled in the program? Scan here to join today."

These opportunities are what make a business successful.

You must look at EVERY opportunity in this exact manner. You need to look at all of your marketing touches and have very similar conversations. Your marketing needs to lead your customers down one path, and that path is taking them to where they can give you their information. Once you've done that, you can create a proper relationship.

Your database is the gold mine. As they say in the marketing world, "The fortune is in the follow-up." If you don't know who you're talking to, you can't follow up very easily.

There are three ways you can increase your restaurant sales:

1. New customers
2. Repeat visits
3. Increase average check size



All three of these are harder to accomplish when your marketing plan relies on “hope and pray”!



I like to say “Aim & Expect.” With a customer database, you can AIM at a particular group of customers and EXPECT an outcome. Driving repeat visits relies on knowing who your customers are. Increasing your average check size depends on driving new revenue through upselling or different dayparts, and this doesn’t happen very easily if you can’t talk to your best customers.

It’s a lot easier to find new customers online when you already know who your ideal customers are and have their data.

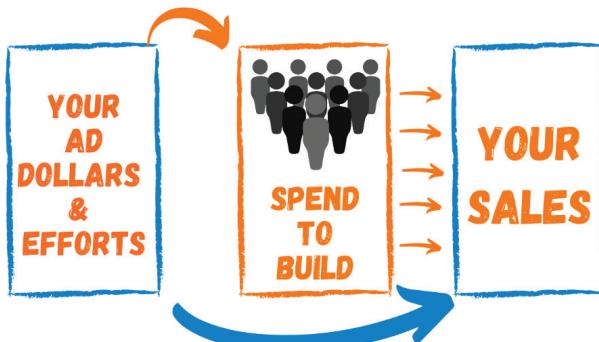
In the next chapter, we’re going to talk about tools to gather data and build your customer list, but in this chapter, I just want to cover the power of gathering data. I want to dig into the “WHY” of gathering data. I plan on hammering this point home because apparently, messages like this have fallen on deaf ears, and not too many restaurants do it. There are a lot of unique places you can get data from, like your point-of-sale and online ordering system, but the easiest place you can collect data is online. After all, where are your customers spending most of their time while their smartphones are in their hands? ONLINE.

When you think about data, I want you to think about the value of data and how other people use it. I want you to think about advertising, radio stations, TV stations, direct mail companies, the Yellow Pages (yes, they still exist). I want you to think about why those media companies can charge you a pretty penny for advertising.

A radio station can charge you \$100 or \$200 per commercial because they have cultivated an audience of people who tune into their radio station every day. Their database is that audience. They might not have their listeners’ emails, phone numbers, or birthdays, but they have their attention and trust. A TV station has cultivated an audience who tunes in to watch their news or TV shows. Billboard companies have built audiences because they have people who drive down a road, they have a captive audience of people who drive down that same path many times.

Where is your audience? What are you doing to build that audience as big as it possibly can be?

## SPEND TO BUILD...NOT TO SELL



**WITH MOST MARKETING YOU'RE RENTING AN AUDIENCE**

If you take ONE THING from this book, take this: "Spend to Build." The graphic above came from a webinar I did a few years back. I was telling a group of restaurant owners that every marketing dollar or effort should be spent to BUILD a database and not sell food. If you focus on this, then you can use your customers' information to sell them food. Restaurants need to stop renting others' audiences or customers' attention and start gaining data.

I want you to think about this If, in five years, your restaurant has a database of 15,000 more customers than it does right now, what kind of impact could that have? If thousands more saw your emails and texts on a weekly or monthly basis, would that help? Of course it would. It would make a huge impact. It would be a game-changer for your business.



Recently, one of our customers saw a 10% increase in sales in 2020 vs. 2019. Yes, in 2020, during the pandemic.

Here's an interview with that restaurant owner:

The only change they made during the first nine months of 2020 vs. 2019 was implementing an advertising strategy: the ROI Engine. This book is based on that strategy, which is building a database and creating engaging conversations

with your customers. They saw this 10% increase during the pandemic because they were able to reach out to people who had raised their hands. They were doing email marketing, text marketing, Messenger marketing, and remarketing via Facebook and Instagram. They were gathering customer data at every turn, inside their "four walls" and on their website.

They spent their time and money to build a customer list, and so should you! I hope you believe me now and that you see the value in "Spending to Build" because in the next chapter, we're going to talk about how you can build your database.

We're going to dig into mechanisms you can use to build your database because there are a lot of avenues that you can use to get people's information. I'm not going to sit here and preach that the method that

we use in the ROI Engine marketing program is the only way. It is a great way, and from what we've seen over five years of testing, it is what I think is the best way. But there are many ways to skin a cat, and in the next chapter, we're going to dig into specific ways you can get customers' data seamlessly.



## CHAPTER 6

# Tools to Build a Database

In the last chapter, we talked about building your database. Let's recap. The goal is to gain attention from all marketing, but that attention must garner amazing engagement. That, in turn, builds a database.

We talked about the importance of the database. Now we want to talk about how to build the database. There are three opportunities that I see as the best opportunities to gain information. Right now, as we are halfway through 2021, the most seamless way to grab people's information is Facebook Messenger, but there are a few opportunities on the horizon that will take a very similar path, and we'll cover those so that you understand why others like Messenger will work just as well.

Why do I like Messenger so much? And what is a weakness of Messenger? First, I'll cover the weakness. I'll go ahead and get that out of the way. You're playing on somebody else's platform. You're in Facebook's sandbox. They can kick you out of their sandbox at any time, which is not something I love. But if you play by the rules at this point, you're doing okay.

So what excites me about Messenger? First, the majority of people we are targeting are already on Facebook or Instagram. When they come into Messenger, you instantly know their names and gender. This allows you to gather key pieces of data without doing anything. Gender is important because it's a key way to segment your database — men and women think much differently, and they respond to marketing differently as well. This creates an opportunity for more success down the road.

Next, Messenger gives you some seamless opportunities to gather information. It's as simple as clicking a button to confirm your email, your phone number, your birthday. As I write this book, we are testing a few other platforms that do this as well, one of which is text messaging. Once those tests are done and we are 100% confident in the ability to

replace Messenger, we more than likely will. When you're thinking about gathering information, you need to think of the EASE of information flowing. The more that consumers have to do, the greater number of them who will abandon ship before finishing. When you're building a database like this, you're going to have leakage. Meaning, for every 100 that come into Messenger, we lose 8-12 right off the top. The harder you make that process, the more you lose. All this does is drive up your acquisition cost.

Now we're going back to where I started and the most popular way to gather data: an online form.

In the early 2000s, this is how I started gathering data with my boat dealership. It was a pretty simple process back then: Click here and give us your information. What I found out in between 2008 and 2014 is that your level of success varies by the type of company you have. Early on, we used this a lot with industries such as auto repair and dealerships. Consumers are accustomed to giving a lot of information to those businesses, but not to restaurants. The more info that a restaurant asks for, the more skeptical consumers become, wondering, "Why do they need this?" This is why making the process as seamless as possible is important. It's also why you MUST spell out what info you want and why. If you make the customer comfortable with why you are gathering that info, you'll have a better chance at succeeding.

Back to online forms. The way you get traffic here is no different than how you drive it to Messenger. Somebody clicks a link or they scan a code, and they go to a page where they give you similar information: name, phone number, email, birthday.

There are some opportunities that make it a little easier, including drop-down menus. People may not disclose their gender on those forms, so you might not get that valuable information. On Messenger, we get as close to 100%, because it's built into their profile. However, on online forms, people are going to be less inclined to click a button to tell you if they are male or female. They might just want to skip over it. And when it comes to online forms, the less touchpoints, the better. BUT don't take the easy route. Stick to it and ask the question. Just keep in mind that, on a few items, you might need to give them the ability to move forward without requiring an answer.

You'll notice that I said "online form," and that's because there are a few ways that this can play out. Most online forms are on your website,

which is fine for your normal website traffic, but it's NOT fine for targeted inbound traffic.

Your website has too many opportunities for people to leave, which is why you don't drive traffic there from a CTA. You want to ONLY drive your CTA traffic to a one-dimensional page, called a landing page. FYI, you might be wondering what a landing page is? A landing page is a 1-page website dedicated to the topic of that page with other course of action than what's on that page. As an example, a client of ours is big with weddings. But instead of driving people to her website where they can get lost on all of the pages and get "click happy" we send people who click the ads to a landing page that is only about weddings and has nothing else to do except inform them about what the restaurant offers and get them to opt-in.

When they are on a landing page, there's only one opportunity to join your program. After they submit the form, you can drive them to your website. Think about it. If you send people to your website, there are links everywhere for them to click. When you give consumers places to click, THEY CLICK! When they click other places, they don't join your program.

So, avoid the temptation to have traffic sent to your website. It's tough, I know, but you'll thank me later.



## CHAPTER 7

# How to Track the Sales of Your Database

Okay. Now we're going to talk about a topic that I wish wasn't as complicated as it is, but it is. And that's tracking your marketing. I've been in marketing since 1999. Since 2008, I have dealt with hundreds of companies one-to-one, and their biggest mystery, by far, is whether their marketing is working.

Are people who see or hear my commercial or who interact with my ads walking in and spending money? If so, how do I know? And if it is working, how do I see it?

In marketing and advertising, there's ZERO TRUST! I don't like it, but it's the truth. As a restaurant owner, you feel like you always spend money on advertising and see little to no return. Odds are, you've gotten a return, but you don't know it. This leads to animosity towards marketing and advertising. I've trained upwards of 1,000 advertising companies on how to sell marketing. One example I use to explain this relationship is: Imagine you bought a house, but you've never seen it. Your banker says it's there, your realtor says it's there — but



The infographic consists of three horizontal bars. The top bar is grey and contains the word "NEW" in white. The middle bar is blue and contains the word "LOST" in white. The bottom bar is orange and contains the word "FREQUENT" in white. Each bar has a large orange gear icon with a white dollar sign inside it positioned below it.

you've never seen it. One day you'll see it, they tell you, but WHEN?

That, my friends, is marketing. It's there, it's helping you find customers, and it's driving business, BUT YOU DON'T KNOW!

My goal is to help you find some answers. I want you to trust advertising and marketing and realize that it's the backbone of your business.

Before we move on, I want to ask you three questions that are the core of WHY building a database of people who spend money with you is important. I want you to answer these questions out loud.

1. Is your food bad? Or is it great?
2. When customers visit your restaurant, do they get great service?  
Or is it blah?
3. Is your restaurant inviting, and will customers want to come back?

These three questions came to me four years ago when a client asked, "Matt, how do I know all these customers are coming back? We have their information, and 20% visited once, but did they come back?"

I said, "Lenny, that's a fair question." Then, I asked him the three questions above, to which he responded, "Yes, our food is great, and we have very good reviews online. And our restaurant is great; people love it!"

I followed up with "Okay, so if your food is great, service is great, and the atmosphere is inviting, WHY wouldn't I come back? I saw your marketing and raised my hand. I gave you five to seven pieces of data, and then I walked into your business and spent money. If I did all of that, and you did your part, then why wouldn't I come back IF you invited me to come by?"

The answer is: THEY WILL COME BACK, but only if you ask them to. Now, back to how to track your advertising.

When it comes to tracking, there aren't many options out there. I wish I had better news for you. I'm fortunate that I've figured out a few tactics that we use for clients that help us do that. Rather than how to do it, I'm going to go into *why* we do it. Why you must put something in place to know what's happening.

In the program that we have for restaurants, called the ROI engine, one of my biggest tactics is to have a way to track the front end of the relationship with the client as it relates to them joining the database. We do this for two main reasons.

First is to have positive attribution that we're reaching the right people.

Second is to see the upfront sales, to recoup an investment of the ad spend. Several businesses tend to focus ONLY on the latter. "Hey, Matt, we spent \$500, and \$2,000 came in. That's a 4-to-1 ratio, and that doesn't pay the bills."

Well, it's really not 4-to-1 because there are a lot more intangibles that come with that — everything that we've talked about in prior chapters.

There are impressions, reach, engagement, emails, phone numbers, and birthdays that you've gained up to this point, but one of the first things that restaurants look at is, "Hey, I spent this, and I had 200 people walk in last month and spend \$2,000." It's the first time they've ever been able to see tangible results that pull through the entire way. Somebody opted in at your program from your restaurant, you got their information, and two weeks later, they visited and spent \$20. It's one of the first times that our clients and businesses have ever been able to see that type of transaction that they can tie back to the beginning of where it started, especially when it comes to Facebook and Instagram website traffic. They can look and see that Matt Plapp commented on a Facebook post three weeks ago, a few hours later joined the VIP program, and a couple of weeks later, walked in and spent money on lunch.

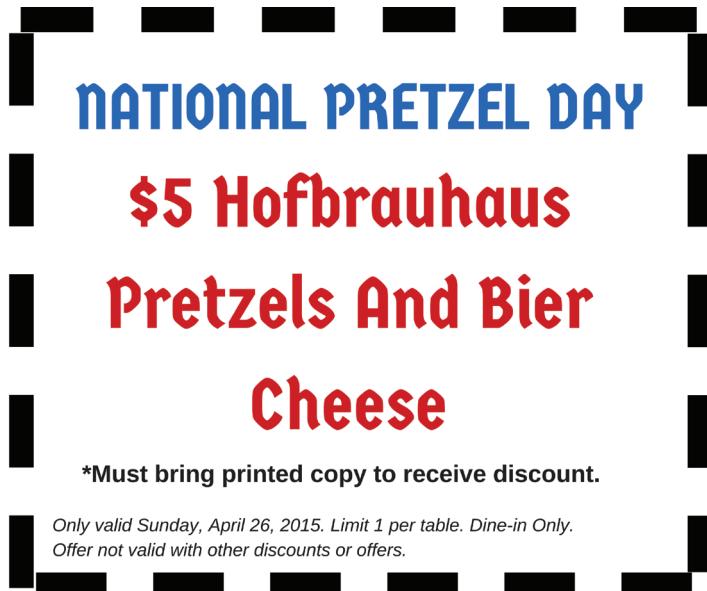
So, we're looking at two main metrics. The first is to make sure that we're on the right path. I need to know that what I'm doing on the front end to build the database is driving people into the restaurant because it determines if I'm on the right or wrong path. I don't want to build a database with the wrong people.

With digital marketing, the most valuable item we can feed back is data. We're giving Facebook/Instagram/YouTube/Google information that says, "Hey, look, Facebook, you targeted these 2,000 people. I don't want to just target those people anymore; I want to target people with the exact interests as the people who engaged, opted in, and visited the restaurant."

So, you're narrowing the funnel. You're going to, what we call in the marketing world, the bottom of the funnel. You're taking a smaller sample size and feeding it back up to the top and trimming the fat.

This allows you to optimize your front-end marketing with information from people who actually spent money with you, which determines if

you're on the right or wrong path. The other aspect of it allows you to see tangible results in your bank account from the marketing.



I'll never forget when we started this journey: April 26, 2015 — National Pretzel Day.

We'd built up a huge online following for this client, and we were on a path to build a giant email database. The issue was that the client didn't appreciate our efforts. They were old-school marketers who preferred to spend money on radio, TV, and direct mail. Email, texting, and digital marketing were foreign to them. They said to me, "Matt, we can't deposit social media likes in the bank. Prove to us that all this digital marketing is worth it."

So, we built a one-off promotion for National Pretzel Day for the restaurant's three locations. This was a "Bring this ad or email in to get half off an order of pretzels and beer cheese" promo. Long story short, it drove \$18,000 in sales across the three locations in one day, 100% attributed to people walking in and showing their phone for the promotion.

That was the positive attribution that we needed. But I wanted more! I wanted to take this to a level that allowed us to see things that we hadn't seen before. I wanted to know WHO the people were who walked in, so that I could take them down a path. I wanted to build a long-term

relationship. I knew the only way to do that was by KNOWING exactly who they were.

Now, I've got to tell you that it's more difficult than other parts of this process so far, because in order to allow you to track your sales you have to have a sophisticated tool that most restaurants aren't able to build in place. I'm not going to dig into that as much as the importance of knowing what's happening.

I want to challenge you. Whether it's through a marketing company or an app, your goal is to figure out a way that you can understand when you spend \$1 on a marketing program and it gathers someone's information, and that person walks into your business and spends money. The minute you can do that, you can more predictably grow your restaurant. As I was telling a client the other day while looking at their program, every time they spend about \$5.75 (that was the acquisition costs from the program), they see, for the first time, somebody walk in and spend money. That \$5.75 means that that person saw an advertisement, engaged in the advertisement, and joined our marketing program.

They gave us their information. They walked in and spent the average check — for this customer, it was \$20. So, we spent \$5 and got all of that social media engagement, the person in the database, and that first spend of \$20. Now I look down the road, and I'm like, okay, I spent \$5 to get Matt. He already came in once. We have his information. How do I get him back 10 more times? When I say that the value of owning a database is huge — and, more importantly, owning the database, so that you know who's visited, is huge — it's an understatement. If you look at your business and sales for the next year, you want to grow your revenue by this much. You can have some understanding of what it costs you to acquire new customers, visits, and people — who actually visit your restaurant — into a database.

You have tangible proof, and you can say, "It cost me \$5.75 to get somebody to walk in from this particular marketing strategy. Next year, we need 5,000 people to walk in. I think we can get a thousand of them from this program — a thousand times \$5.75. Okay, we're going to spend that much money here. We're going to spend this much money here." I implore you, find a way that you can track your efforts. If you're following this book and you're engaging people online, engaging people in-store, building the database, walking them down a path, then please, please,

find a way that you can understand the results of your hard work.

First, it will help you recoup some of that money on the front end, which is important. I always tell my clients that we're funding next month's ad spend, because if we spent \$500 this month to get two random sales, we've got our \$500 back for next month's ad spend. So, in essence, "The ads are free next month." More importantly, we are having positive attribution that we're on the right path. The last thing you want to do is to run a bunch of marketing that gets people into a database without getting them to visit. Why do you want a database of people who aren't spending money with you? The answer is, you don't. So figure it out — find a way to put something in place that's going to help you do it.

If you want to have a conversation, if you're a restaurant owner or operator, I am an open book. My cell phone number is published everywhere. It's (859) 743-2408. If you want to have a conversation to find out if there's a way that you can do something differently in your business that tackles this, give me a call. We'll have a quick conversation. We'll find out what you're doing and what opportunities you have. I have a lot of resources. I know a lot of people in the business. By this point you've probably figured out that my company does this for restaurants, in fact we've helped hundreds across the US. So if you want help just ask us and we'll guide you the best we can.

You can also go to this link and schedule a call with someone from my team, maybe even me. You'll also notice that I practice what I preach. The only link on the page is to schedule a call.

<https://go.restaurantmarketingthatworks.com/>



## CHAPTER 8

# Offers That Don't SUCK

Let's dig into the topic that typically brings up more arguments than any other part of the equation. That is the offer.

Two things happen here. Owners get cheap and say, "I can't give away free food" without seeing the chain of events that will happen when they create the right offer. The goal of an offer is to get someone to RAISE THEIR HAND. Once they raise their hand, we gather their information. An offer is simply a bribe. No one wants to be bribed with ... A COUPON!



In order to understand why your offer can't SUCK, you need to see the big picture. Our goal with this CTA is to gather a customer's information. The reason we want to gather that information is three-prong:

1. Earn the ability to talk to them for free via email and text (on your own terms)
2. Find out deeper information about your best customers to assist in finding others
3. Drive more visits over the customer's lifetime

It's actually quite easy. Walt's, a restaurant I love, sees Matt Plapp about four times per year — ON MY TERMS. If they had my name, email, phone, birthday, and anniversary, they could create a plan to talk to me 12 to 24 times per year. Without a doubt, those messages would drive four more visits annually (probably closer to 10, but we'll shoot low). Let's look short-term: In three years, that's 12 visits.

### Matt's current value to Walt's:

Annual Visits = 4

Average Spend = \$250

Three-Year Spend = \$3,000

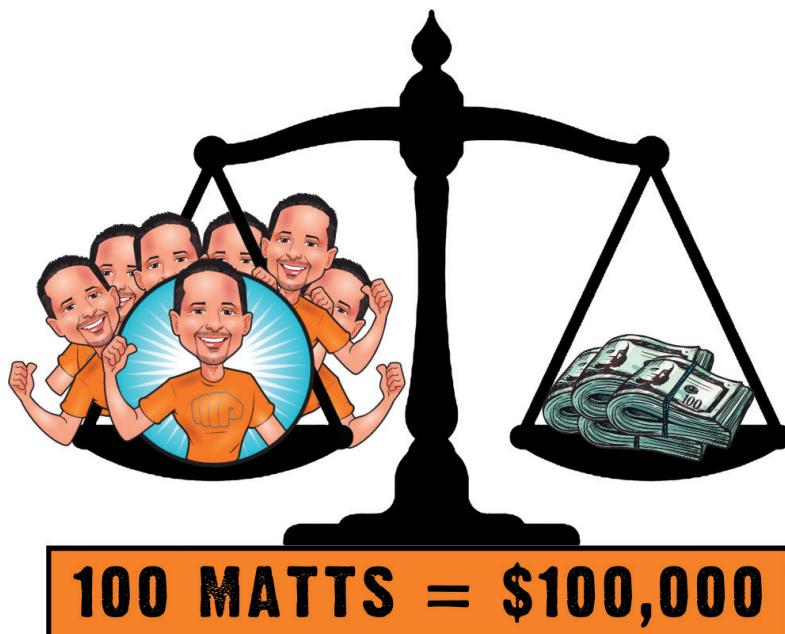
**Matt's possible value:**

Annual Visits = 8

Average Spend = \$250

Three-Year Spend = \$6,000

Customers who LOVE your brand can be upsold. I'm sure that they could easily get me to buy new items, holiday gift cards, etc. I'd bet my spend would be upwards of \$10,000 in those three years.



BIG PICTURE — How many “Matt Plapps” is Walt’s missing? I’m not the only customer they don’t know; there are hundreds. On top of that, this revenue is GRAVY! You already have your overhead; your only added expense to these repeat visits is my food cost. This means that operators are leaving SIX FIGURES on the table every year in OWNER PAY AND BONUSES, ENTIRELY because you refuse to bribe your customers with an awesome offer for their contact information.

And yes, \$250 is a big check average. Most of you reading this are probably an average spend of \$15, but you’re also going to get 10 times more visits annually, so the math is not too far off for you, either.

The better your call to action on the front end, the better your long-term results; the worse your call to action on the front end, the worse your long-term results. And the number one argument I always get comes down to food costs and giving away free food.

I can think of a few clients of mine in the past who have said, “Matt, I can’t keep giving away free appetizers.” Well, when you look at it that way, it’s going to be a pain point. But when you look at it from a different perspective, the correct perspective, you’re not giving away a free appetizer. You’re investing that two, three, four dollars to get the proper attention and the person’s information and to drive a tangible visit early on for the opportunity to swing the bat with them a lot more in the future.

It’s a very small price to pay. When you’re looking at your marketing and at a program like this, where you’re trying to capture attention and engagement — to get somebody to join a VIP program, a loyalty program, whatever you want to call it — you’ve got to bribe them correctly. This is where a lot of people mess up in a big way!

The first thing I want to talk about is the opt-in offer, the upfront offer that gets their attention. I want to ask you one favor, one quick big favor. Please do not have an opt-in offer that sucks. Capital S-U-C-K-S. That sucks. Why? Because it hurts the rest of the equation. I’m going to give you an example, and if you’re listening or watching this, you can hear it. But if you’re reading the book, you’re going to see a chart.

Back in 2016, when we were fine-tuning what we’ve learned along this process, we had a client who had a few restaurant locations, and one of the general managers was adamantly against the offer we wanted to do. We wanted to give customers a free appetizer. This was a casual dining restaurant with an average check of around \$40, and they wanted to do a free appetizer *with purchase*.

I wanted to do a free appetizer because I knew the numbers. So, I said, “Okay, let’s do this. Let’s A/B test it for the next 60 days. Let’s do two offers. Let’s have half the people who come in randomly get the free appetizer, while half the people will get the free appetizer *with purchase*.” We had a couple of different ads out there — a couple different ways for people to go through the flow.

I’m not even going to talk about the acquisition of people on the front end, because if people saw an ad for a free appetizer or saw an ad for a

free appetizer with purchase, the free appetizer would always win. We're not going to go down the path of how many more people we got to opt in; we'll just focus on the path of people redeeming.

We did an experiment and sat down a few months later to review the results. I said, "Okay, we're going to go with the free appetizer." And one GM objected. He went on to say that the free appetizer offer was crushing his restaurant; it was a bunch of cheapos coming in, sitting at the bar, getting their free appetizer, drinking water, and leaving.

Here's the problem: You remember what is obvious and forget what's not. When you're at the restaurant, your bartender/server points out, "Hey, look, that guy came in and got his appetizer and a water, and he's leaving. And he didn't tip me."

You remember that. It sticks out. It becomes the only thing you recall about the promotion.

What you don't remember, because no one pointed it out, are the 20 people before that who came in with four people, had lunch or dinner, ate a bunch of food, tipped great, and left — because it wasn't brought to your attention. That's the main issue that drives this negative thought.

So, then I pulled out a chart to show the actual numbers from both tests. It was pretty clear. For every 100 people who redeemed the offer with restrictions, we had 130 who redeemed the 100% free offer.

Again, this is not taking into account the fact that the FREE offer ad got 40% more opt-ins. We are simply looking at REDEMPTIONS.

So, again, for every 100 offers redeemed with restrictions, we had 130 redeemed of the 100% free promo.

	Promo With Restrictions	100% Free Promo
Offers Redeemed	100	130
Average Check	\$41	\$44
# of comps with \$0 spend	0	10
Cost Of Comp (\$3 per)	\$300	\$390
Sales From Customers	\$4,100	\$5,720

For \$90 in extra comps and 10 cheap customers, they earned \$1,620 in extra sales. That was about our weekly average during the test, so take that difference over 52 weeks:

\$84,240 in sales

Factor in that we got 40% more opt-ins with the better offer, and that number grows BIG TIME!

Do you want to focus on the 8% of the wrong customers, or 92% of the correct customers?

Let's talk about the opportunities, because there are a lot of things here that people look past; that first offer is typically the tip of the iceberg. You've all seen the picture where the tip of the iceberg is above water, but below, there's a lot more. That's the same concept here. It's no different. We're not looking to get that visit. We're not looking to recoup our entire marketing spend on that first visit. As I said in the last chapter, all we're looking for is attribution that we're on the right path and to recoup a little of our spend, to make it less painful on the front end. Because think about it: We've got more information and more opportunities.

First, your goal is to capture somebody's information. Second, your next goal is to get them to come back more often. Third is to get them to increase their average check size, get them to try something that they might not have tried in the past. I was at a restaurant recently that had upgraded burgers. I had not seen upgraded burgers anywhere, but I was able to upgrade my burger, and it made the burger that I typically get a heck of a lot better. It was a \$3 upcharge going live, but I got it for free because of their VIP promotion. Guess what burger I'm getting every time now, when I go there: the upgraded burger! Giving me that \$3 upgrade one time is going to get me to spend \$3 more during my next 10 visits.

They invested, let's say, a dollar cost on that upgrade to get \$30 on the other end. Now let's think about other items, such as appetizers. There are a lot of people who go to their favorite restaurant who do not order appetizers. If I come into the restaurant and have an awesome experience on an appetizer that I wouldn't have ordered in the past, I think man, I have to have that every time. There's a restaurant we go to that has cheese logs, one that has cheese curds, and another that has chips and queso. Those are our standards every single time we visit. In fact, last night, I went with my wife and two friends, who were traveling in from town —

business colleagues coming through town from Michigan and going to Florida — to a Mexican restaurant. My wife walks in — the rest of us had gotten there a little before she did — and she's like, "Where's the queso? You know we always have to get the queso!" And I'm like, "Oh no, not yet." That was \$10 we spent because we were previously given a queso as a promotion, and now, it's a staple every time.

We go to this restaurant 20 times a year, so our check total increases 20 times. I'll say that the amount of the increase is approximately \$9, which comes out to be \$180.. Yeah, around \$180 to \$200 more because of that queso. Think about that from a standpoint of down the road. Also think of other things, such as desserts. How many restaurants have amazing desserts that nobody ever experiences?

Why don't they experience it? Because by the time they get done eating at your restaurant, they're full. Or, if you're a fast-casual concept where somebody goes down a line, gets their food, and sits down, then you've lost them. You don't have that opportunity a lot of times. One of our clients is Rapid Fired Pizza. And there's a link I'll put below in the book to an interview with Chris Wiley, in which he talked about the number of people at his restaurant who were ordering their dessert pizzas in line, based on seeing the person in front of them ordering dessert pizza.



They didn't know that that dessert existed. They had never ordered it because usually, the people come through, order their pizza, get their drink, eat, and leave. They don't go back in line and get a dessert pizza. But when they saw that dessert pizza being prepared in front of them, it was like, "Oh my gosh, I hadn't thought of that. We're trying that!" On the other hand, the person who was actually ordering it did so because they had gotten a digital promotion. And so that's an opportunity to get them to try something that they wouldn't usually try but will have more in the future.

The other aspect is thinking about other items, such as specialty drinks — things that you can upgrade that they might not normally get. To summarize, I want to talk about what I see as the five opportunities for something like this. First, it's about the basics, and the most basic thing is knowing your customers. Number one is getting customer data. That's the reason we're going down this path. That's the reason we get the impressions and the engagements. How do I get somebody to give me their name, phone number, birthday, email?

Second, and most important, is how do I drive a visit? Who cares if I have a database of people who don't visit the restaurant?

Third is repeat visits. I want to drive repeat visits. That is the value of a person's information. You can eliminate the hope and the pray of getting your customers back. There are restaurants that I enjoy going to on a frequent basis that do not have my information. If they had my phone number, email, and birthday, they could get me to come back five to 10 times more per year. You do the math of five to 10 visits per customer, then per a few thousand customers. You have to drive the repeat visit with their information.

The fourth is new-item introduction. How do you get Matt to try an appetizer that he's never had? How do you get Matt to upgrade his burger? How do you get Matt to get a specialty drink? My daughter got this specialty lemonade that costs \$3 instead of the normal \$2. That adds up. How do you get Matt's family to try a dessert — so that they try it once, and they come back and get it more times?

And the fifth item is driving different daypart visits. Think about this: Matt Plapp typically eats out with his family for dinner most nights and lunch occasionally on the weekends. Matt rarely eats with his family for lunch during the week because he's out and about, running the business. But Matt has lunch with friends and colleagues during the week. If you can get Matt, who normally comes to your restaurant on a Friday night with his family, to come back Monday with a business colleague, you just got him back at a different time. You just got an incremental visit.

You might not have gotten him before because he doesn't eat lunch at your restaurant. But even more importantly, Matt just brought somebody else with him who might not have ever experienced your restaurant. The fifth opportunity not only has Matt coming back at a different time, providing incremental revenue that you might not have had, but now Matt also brought somebody to the restaurant and introduced them to your brand, which is an opportunity to gain a new customer.

All of this pertains to the same topic: Do not have an offer that sucks. Your ad and call to action on the front end need to have power. Give away the house on that first visit. All you're trying to do is to get them to engage in whatever marketing you have out there. Whether it's an in-store piece of collateral, your website sign-up, an email you send, or engagement from an online or social media ad, you're trying to get them to raise their hands.