

How to Make Safety a Marketing Plus, Not a Nuisance - By Ken Burgin

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We all know about the bureaucracy: forms to fill out, insurance costs, extra training and endless inspections.

Tough regulations and the employers' Duty of Care are here to stay - if you're doing the right thing, let's see how can you turn it into a marketing advantage...

Talk about safety in your marketing material. Sure, the main message focuses on good food, beverage and service, but find a place to also say something like:

'We're proud of our strong commitment to safety and hygiene. All staff undertake regular work and food safety training, and management is committed to the proper implementation of all OH&S regulations. We believe that safe food and safe work practices are the foundations of a successful business.' Your website is a great location for this.

Impress corporate and government customers. Increasingly, these clients are required to patronise venues (especially for large functions) that can show their health and safety standards - in writing. Have the information readily available on your website or in the function package. Use the pro-forma Health, Safety & Capacity Statement from this website - we've done it for you.

At every turn, demonstrate cleanliness. The toilets are fresh and dry, staff wear clean uniforms, and if customers see behind the scenes, prep areas are neat and hygienic. Gloves are used properly (they're designed to protect customers, not the delicate hands of staff) and questions about ingredients and allergies are met with a knowledgeable answer. Bar staff wash their hands between collecting dirty glasses and making fresh drinks. Etc etc...

Use safety as a plus in recruitment. Share information about your safety policies and procedures at the interview, and make it part of your questions. With so many school students doing hospitality, young applicants may arrive with safety and hygiene training. They're expecting your workplace to do the right thing - will you impress them? Include OH&S responsibilities in all Job Descriptions and show them the OH&S and Food Safety Manuals. You want the careful, methodical ones...this is something they respond to positively.

Build staff engagement through your safety committee. Motivation is built through meaningful activity - it can't be applied with a spray! There's the daily work of preparation and service, and an extra focus on improving safety (and also environmental issues) is a great way to raise everyone's horizons. Not everyone is passionate about safety, but when someone shows extra enthusiasm, give them a chance to pursue it - everyone benefits.

Profitable Hospitality offers management and cost-control systems (Manuals & CD-ROMs) for restaurants, cafes, hotels, bars and clubs. The systems are based on the extensive consulting and operating experience of CEO Ken Burgin, and enable busy owners and managers to set up complete operating and cost-control systems in minutes, not months. Profitable Hospitality also runs regular management training workshops in the areas of kitchen profit & efficiency, restaurant marketing and functions management. A free monthly e-newsletter keeps you up to date on the latest industry management issues. www.profitablehospitality.com.

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