

Food & Beverage - Make Room For Special Events - By Joe Dunbar

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Eliminating the uncertainty of a covers forecast is helpful for everyone in restaurant management. Restaurants with a line around the block estimate with confidence their cover count on a busy night. They are less likely to over staff or miss their production requirements. The long line insures they will hit the maximum cover count.

On the other hand, operators with spotty dining room counts and no line wrapped around the building experience major forecast errors. Management typically over staffs and over produces prior to the shift. Employees know the drill. They report for work expecting an early night. They can call friends on their cell phone if they get a surprise. How long would you stay at a job if you had no way to predict your weekly income level? Certainly, these operations experience tremendous turnover.

One way to help with the forecast certainty is to include a few catered affairs at your restaurant. Caterers have contracted guest counts. They staff for a specific party size. The guests choose their menu selections prior to the event. No over staffing and demoralizing early shift exits occur for these events. The food production exactly meets the contract. Huge advantage!

If you do not have a separate party room or conference salon, consider the investment. Many of my clients receive over 50% of annual revenue from special event orders. The impact on income is quite favorable. You can groom new wait staff at these events. Since the guests have already made their menu choices, timing is easier and the staff is more focused on quality control issues.

Ordering food is greatly simplified. The chef knows exactly how much food to prepare and a very small safety factor is required. You may even be able to include some chef specials in the event offerings. These specials allow some creativity and the ability to use in season ingredients.

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