
Strategic Overview

The events leading up to, during and after the opening of your business are crucial to its long-term success. The initial messages you send to the marketplace through your marketing “look”, content, presentation and placement will “categorize” your business in the minds of those who see or hear your messages. But there is another underlying result of your Grand Opening communications.....the creation of the *expectations* your target audience will have when they visit your business.

If your marketing messages cause a customer expectation for fun casual dining but your menu features expensive items in a white tablecloth environment, your experience will conflict with your customers’ expectations of price, experience, product, etc. A “disconnect” between the expectations created by your marketing messages and the actual experience caused by your operation can be disastrous. The same is obviously true for a low energy, upscale ultra-lounge that positions itself as a higher energy nightclub.

Conversely, when marketing communications cause the right expectations for your concept, and your operation exceeds the guest’s anticipated value, service and overall experience (Four Walls Marketing), a relationship is created between the operation and the customer that is positioned for success right from the start.



Strategic Overview (continued)

Marketing is only four things.....

1. Programs and tactics to cause new customer (trial) visits.
2. Programs and tactics to increase guest frequency.
3. Programs and tactics to increase/maximize expenditures (guest check).
4. Programs and tactics to increase party size.

In the case of a Grand Opening, every customer visit is a new trial visit. Failed Grand Opening marketing efforts are almost always the result of;

1. Realizing the wrong customer as a result of “disconnected” marketing messages and positioning. This causes customers to improperly react (for whatever reason) to your business and, they do not return. So, your trial visit never becomes a second visit, even though your operation may be good.
2. Failed guest reactions because some area of the guest experience was a disappointment. In this case, they reacted to your marketing and *came* for the trial visit, but a breakdown between their expectations of your experience and the experience they had caused a disappointment and they do not return.



Strategic Overview (continued)

The plan identified in this book covers an “activity period” beginning four weeks prior to opening the doors to the public and up through the first four weeks of operation. Each event (Pre-Opening, Opening, and Four Walls and Neighborhood Marketing) will last anywhere from 1-30 days.

In order to simplify the use of this document, An octagon **STOP** symbol has been inserted at the top right hand corner of each tactic page specifying the period of time the recommended tactics should be launched: pre-opening, grand opening, and post opening phases. Within each **STOP** symbol is the “countdown” for the timing of the launch of each recommended tactic. The letter “T” denotes take-off for Now Open followed by the number of days before (minus sign) or after (plus sign) the Grand Opening. Additionally, a manager’s checklist has been included for ease of implementation following each phase. The steps for each tactic have been listed. TDI recommends that the designee or person responsible for this process should initial and date the checklist once the tactic has been completed.

