



SELLING THE EXPERIENCE

GUIDE FOR IDEAS, SUGGESTIONS,
INSPIRATION & BEST PRACTICES

SELLING THE EXPERIENCE

tips and best practices for generating more revenue and brand value



AS A STANDARD, WE WANT TO PROVIDE FANTASTIC GUEST EXPERIENCES, REGARDLESS OF HOW BIG OR SMALL THE CLIENT BUDGET

Simplistic menu requests are easy to honor based on practicality, familiarity in execution, and typically cost.

However, there is value in providing an elevated experience even in the smallest ways, when it makes sense. Identifying those opportunities to make an impact is key and takes thought. You may not always get more revenue from an elevated experience, but there is brand value in adding those extra touches when it comes to achieving that ultimate goal of acquiring more business.

It is common for us to design experiences with the motive of creating more traction, a great online presence, and a wider reach to the event booking world. But, we need to be smart about our time, our effort and be able to predict the amount of impact we can make with elevating an experience in order to determine ways to charge the client more, while avoiding “loss” associated with not charging enough.

EXAMPLES OF EXPERIENCE VALUE ADDS:

- + **Storytelling pieces/ signage**
- + **Notation of local ingredients & partners used, in menu writing**
- + **"Talking Tables" signage**
- + **Interactive guest experiences**
- + **Demonstrative chef experiences**
- + **Chemistry inspired food and beverage interactions**
- + **Unique or trending ingredients in menu items. Continue to research the food and beverage trends or forecasts for the year**
- + **Incorporating client brand elements for a personal touch**
- + **Highlight sustainable practices**
- + **Take display and equipment pieces that you already have in-house, and use them in a different & unique way**
- + **Custom menu signs, labels on food packaging, menu cards for plated functions**
- + **Incorporate technology**
- + **Create visual client proposals to generate excitement**



THERE ARE ALWAYS WAYS TO ELEVATE AN EXPERIENCE WITHOUT CREATING MORE COST TO YOUR UNIT

It takes some thought and a unique approach to use what you have in-house as far as display and team resources, goes.

+ Sometimes it doesn't need to be anything visually impactful. Sometimes it's just the "story" behind what you are serving that triggers interest and separates the standard experience from the elevated experience. Challenging ourselves to figure out what that narrative is, and how we present it for our guests should be a constant part of what we do.

+ Take a look at the equipment and display pieces you have in-house. Can you see it being used in a different way than how it has been used in the past? Can you modify its design to use it in multiple ways? We get so used to seeing the same setups and looking at objects in the same light based on pattern, and often fail to exercise the creative side of our minds to view these items in a different way. The more function a particular item has, the more variety we can create in the sell and the guest experience, without incurring additional cost.

+ Crafting the experience so that it is unique to the client's brand creates an emotional response that could be memory lasting. Even just incorporating their company color into a menu item or arranging their food and beverage displays to incorporate their logo or spell out their company name, are really ways to elevate without additional costs or extreme effort.

SHOULD WE BE UP-CHARGING OUR CLIENTS FOR ELEVATED EXPERIENCES AND CUSTOM FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONCEPTS?

Yes. Ultimately, the answer to lead with is always, yes.

+ Definitely up-charge the client when you are certain that the type of product, quantity of product and additional costs for display and execution of the product are going to exceed what the cost would be for the "standard experience". Confirming costs associated with any vision, is a collaborative process typically with the Culinary, Purchasing, Banquet and Experience Design Departments.

+ Develop a formula or an internal "tiered pricing guide" amongst your Sales Team. Perhaps you determine what the "base price" is for a standard experience and then what the cost would be for the "elevated experience". In the end, everything is a negotiation, but always pushing for some sort of an up-charge is how we are able to quantify the value associated with elevated experiences and fun food and beverage concepts.

+ Even if the elevated experience or concept does not incur additional costs... push for the up-charge. These types of experiences are our bread and butter!



We have done a GREAT job in creating excitement and collectively, as a team, coming up with unique experiences. So, let's keep up that momentum and determine more ways to create exponential revenue in the guest experiences we craft.



DESCRIBING WHO YOU ARE

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WHO WE ARE

and how we relay that message



Defining your Brand Starts with Sales

How well do we share our brand with our clients? For most of us, we can probably say that we internally *feel* our brand more than how we describe it to our clients from a storytelling perspective.

So, how about we provide our clients with an introduction of who we are and what we do? It can be as specific as far as identifying what our missions and guiding principles are, yet vague in actual detail. It's a great way for the Catering Sales Managers to have a positive first interaction with their clients, to capture their attention from the start, in a visually interesting and selectively informative way.

Thoughts behind recommending a "Sales Welcome Document" as the first step in the Catering Sales Process:

- + Sets the "tone" of what to expect
- + Generates the interest & buy-in from the client side
- + Sending a contract with the first client interaction, mentioning that a deposit & contract is due before they even know what they want to order, has always been a hot button topic with clients. This is a way around that.
- + We can do better. We can lead with excitement
 - Excitement triggers trust
 - Trust generates potential for more revenue
 - "Marketing Psychology" at its finest

BRAND IDENTITY EXAMPLE TOPICS TO HIGHLIGHT

- + FOOD STORY
- + LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS
- + COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
- + AWARDS
- + CREATIVE F&B EXAMPLES
- + SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS
- + CUSTOM MENU GOALS
- + CLIENT FRIENDLY PROCESSES SUCH AS ONLINE ORDERING
- + VENUE SPECIFIC UNIQUE EXPERIENCE SUCH AS DRAFT COFFEE VS. REGULAR DRIP COFFEE
- + STORYTELLING OF UNIQUE EXPERIENCES
- + LIST OF KEY DATES IN PLANNING PROCESS
- + LIST OUT LEVY OPERATED RESTAURANTS & CAFE LOCATIONS
- + "MEET THE TEAM"



STORYTELLING

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STORYTELLING

tips and best practices for connecting with our guests



GOOD STORYTELLING HAS POWERFUL EFFECTS

Stories are scientifically proven to get a person's attention. It enables us to develop a deeper connection with our guests to help unite our relationship based on the exchange and sharing of information.

Guests are not just looking for different experiences, they are looking for different deliveries as well. Some "inside scoop" makes everything more meaningful, while allowing us to get credit for the things we have worked hard on to create or achieve.

When we pair up interesting content or a fun backstory with the food & beverage offerings we display, we are allowing the guests to have an entirely different entry into our brand.

Because of this, a little storytelling can go a long way, and most of the time it doesn't cost us anything to provide it.

At the end of the day, know your audience and determine what kind of stories will trigger engagement and add value to their event. Our experiences are intended to be memory-lasting, and good storytelling can help stamp that imprint.

EXAMPLES ON HOW TO USE STORYTELLING:

- + **Local vendor/ partner biographies**
- + **If a sustainable practice is being featured in some way, explain it**
- + **"Talking Tables" signage: Get playful with using different phrases that either highlight our menus or speak to the client brand**
- + **Guest take-aways. i.e. our Seed-bomb give aways help to extend the story of our SmartFarm**
- + **QR Code digital links for guests to scan with their mobile device to obtain more "behind the scenes" information**
- + **Instructional step-by-steps at stations if offering something less traditional**
- + **If your property is known for something or just achieved something, why not find a way to incorporate those stories?**
- + **Are you doing something that nobody else is doing? Brag about it**
- + **Can you work tidbits of information into custom menu signs, labels on food packaging or menu cards for plated functions?**
- + **Have your team members interact with our guests. i.e. if a Chef Attendant is carving fresh meats for a charcuterie station, equip them with knowledge about the product to share with guests**



VISUAL SALES PROPOSALS

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VISUAL SALES PROPOSALS

when you need that "extra" help, beyond the BEO



WHY VISUAL EVENT PROPOSALS FOR CLIENTS HELP IN THE SALES PROCESS

There is strong power in persuasion when you use visual elements (“mood boards”) combined with well thought-out language, when trying to get client buy-in and commitment on what it is that you are selling.

Many people are “visual people” and a visual sales proposal could be the difference maker when deciding between event visions/ budget price points.

Think of how many clients ask for pictures on a regular basis....

BEO’s will always do the necessary trick... but some events need that extra attention. Creating something tailored to their event shows YOUR investment in them and how well we, as a team, consider details in everything we do.

It’s helpful even for yourself and for the rest of your team to have these as event “guides”. It allows everyone to get immersed in the event vision and perhaps even touch on details earlier on in the process because of targeted focus, rather than noticing certain details later on, when being highlighted in BEO meeting.

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

Our catering competitors are more than likely not doing what we do, to the level we do it, when it comes to capturing the sale with a visual event proposal.

When we talk about points of difference within our corporation, this could be one of them

Not all events require a visual proposal. It’s up to you as the Catering Sales Manager to determine the level of value. Ultimately, you will be investing your time into these proposals, so make sure it’s worth it. In that same vein, if you are making a visual proposal... make sure its good, clear and gets your point across the way you intended.



CONNECT WITH YOUR CLIENT BY ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR BUSINESS IDENTITY AND BRAND, THROUGHOUT THE DESIGN OF THE PROPOSAL

+ Use their logo/ brand colors/ mission:

- You can typically google image search any company's logo and save that to your computer to use
- Go to their website and "snip" anything that you think would be a good page to capture "their identity". Usually the "About Us" page has information that gets to the root of who they are. "Mission, Vision, Core Values" are a perfect area to pull from.

DESIGN TIPS

- + Choose GREAT quality photos. Alternating between Google and Pinterest is a sufficient practice!
 - If you want to dive deeper, www.unsplash.com is a great site for free photos. The "professional pictures" are what makes the visual proposals look, professional. Pictures sourced that are blurry or dark, or clearly taken by someone's camera phone should be steered away from. It takes time to find the right photos!
- + Be selective with the photos you source, beyond their composition. You don't want to lock yourself into a concept that shows something you wouldn't be able to replicate or produce in high volume. Sometimes vague is better. Though, it should be made clear when presenting the visual proposal to the client that, "this serves as a conceptual presentation of ideas and that not all imagery should be taken in a literal fashion".
- + Content and descriptive verbiage is also key. Use "Power" (descriptive words) that pertain to food and beverage, wherever and whenever you can. i.e. "House-made, Fresh, Local, Crafted..."
- + Describe the menu... but also describe the "experience" or "interaction". Explaining the "fun" behind the menu is a great way to add value to the sell.



you don't need to be a graphic designer to design

www.canva.com is a great, free, web based design program that is easy to navigate, has tons of pre-made templates AND sharing capabilities so you can create templates and share with your team