

A man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a white chef's coat, is seated at a wooden table in a restaurant. He is focused on a laptop in front of him, with his hands on the keyboard. The background shows a blurred bar area with various bottles on shelves. A large, semi-transparent purple circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text and decorative elements.

MARKETING BEST PRACTICES

Zero Budget Marketing Checklist

Get the word out without
breaking the bank





Times have changed for the restaurant industry. Before COVID-19, restaurants commonly asked how much they should spend on marketing. Now, it's more a question of what marketing you can do to keep guests coming back without eating up revenue. Luckily, there are practical ways you can market your restaurant - even on a zero dollar marketing budget.

Get the word out you're open

- [Post "we're open" signs](#) and new hours of operations in your windows and on your website.
- Change your voicemail to reflect your new hours and remind guests they can book a table or order takeout from your website.
- [Send emails and create social posts](#) to announce that you're open.
- Update your online business profiles, including OpenTable, Google, Facebook, and Yelp, to reflect your new hours, capabilities, and offerings.
- Go the extra mile on your [OpenTable profile](#) to increase the likelihood guests book. Select all applicable cuisine types, keep [menus](#) up to date, and [upload photos](#) of new menu items and interior shots, as well as any shots of any outdoor dining you have.

Communicate your safety measures

- Capture behind-the-scenes photos and video that show how you're going above and beyond to keep employees and guests safe.
- Reinforce your safety measures on interior and exterior signs at your location.
- Post your safety measures on your website. Add a pop-up message on your homepage.
- Highlight the [safety precautions](#) you're taking on your OpenTable profile.
- Arm your staff with talking points to respond to commonly asked safety questions from guests.
- Remind guests of all the ways they can support your business - [takeout](#), [delivery](#), [groceries](#), [gift card](#), or [fundraising](#) options.

Bring your regulars back

- Reach out to loyal guests who love you and are yearning to see you again through personalized emails.
- Identify your big spenders by [integrating your POS system](#) - at no additional cost - and reach out to them with personalized messages and offers that make them feel extra special.
- Integrate your [email marketing platform](#) with OpenTable and export your guestbook to expand your loyal subscriber base.
- Re-engage your regulars with targeted “We miss you” email campaigns designed to welcome them back.
- Connect with guests through [post-dining surveys](#) to deepen relationships.

Get seen online

- Open up your [online availability](#) so people can discover your restaurant when they’re searching for a specific date, time, and party size.
- Offer your [waitlist online](#) and attract walk-in guests on your restaurant website and OpenTable.
- [Aggregate, manage, and respond to reviews](#) to maintain a high average rating, which factors into your search results.
- Manage your Google My Business account to control how you appear in Google Search and Maps.
- Make your website SEO friendly. Optimizing your website can help drive organic traffic from search engines to your website.
- Highlight the occasions you do best, so guests can find you when they’re ready to celebrate a missed graduation, birthday, or anniversary, and promote your [private dining](#) space.
- [Showcase your unique experiences](#), whether it’s an outdoor happy hour or bottomless brunch.

Welcome neighbors and locals

- Create a cross-promotion with neighboring businesses that motivates people to dine and shop locally.
- Offer bounce-back deals or specials for locals.
- Get to know residents by canvassing your neighborhood.
- Host a reopening celebration day to welcome locals back to your restaurant.

Share your story

- Inspire and build connections with guests by sharing your unique story on your website and social channels.
- Get your employees and regulars involved. Encourage them to share or repost your stories with their friends and family too.
- Tap into social conversations that align with your brand using relevant hashtags to increase your discoverability. Aim for 5-7 hashtags per post in the comments section.
- Keep an eye out on geotags and @mentions about your business to know when people post about your restaurant.
- Take advantage of user-generated content (UGC). Repost great things people say. Thank and tag the original poster to show your appreciation.



Learn more about Marketing
Management at OpenTable at

restaurant.opentable.com

