

SEVENROOMS

# 3 WAYS TO DRIVE MORE REVENUE

FROM YOUR  
RESERVATION BOOK





# LOOKING BEYOND THE DISH

## WHAT CUSTOMERS (REALLY) WANT

Food is still the focal point of a restaurant, but the total 'experience' is quickly becoming just as important. Nearly three out of four millennials prefer to spend money on experiences rather than material goods.<sup>1</sup> Cater to these guests by offering experiences that are both memorable and shareable.

Nearly 70 percent of millennials take a photo or video of their meal before digging in.<sup>2</sup> Not only can such social proof help reel in "likes" and "favorites," but they also make it easier to remember

experiences. In fact, posting personal experiences to social media platforms — such as Facebook and Instagram — may help customers recall those events later on.<sup>3</sup>

As the demand for unique dining experiences continues to grow, so will the opportunity to capitalize on this shift in consumer preferences. Learn how you can leverage this growing trend to drive additional revenue from your existing reservation book without adding more seats to your restaurant.





## DID YOU KNOW?

Pairing food with fun can boost your bottom line.



Seven out of 10 millennials love attending food-focused events.<sup>4</sup>



## TIP 1

# LEVERAGE THE POWER OF EXPERIENCES

### MAKING GUEST EXPERIENCES COUNT

Restaurant sales are skyrocketing. After hovering around \$375 billion in 2000, restaurant industry sales made the leap from \$586 billion in 2010 to nearly \$800 billion just seven years later.<sup>5</sup> With more than one million restaurants fighting for a piece of the pie, figuring out what helps you stand out is more important than ever before.<sup>6</sup>











Here's a simple example: When holidays roll around, dish out special packages to help customers make the most of the occasion. For Mother's Day, offer a small chocolate tasting with each meal, or feature floral gift

displays for each table's guest of honor. Make Mom the star of the show by sending her home with a box of chocolates that she customized herself based on her favorites from the tasting.

There are countless ways for your restaurant to grab the concept of experiences and make it your own.

Your offerings should be authentic to your restaurant's vision and unique concept. But the more creative your offerings are, the better chance you have of attracting curious customers and engaging loyal guests.

### Don't be afraid to experiment with a wide range of experiences:

-  Chef's tables
-  Tasting menus
-  Large format dinners
-  Welcome cocktails
-  Holiday packages
-  Special seating areas
-  Themed meals
-  Limited time or off-menu offerings
-  Special menus with rare or otherwise special ingredients
-  Event packages that pair dinner with a hot ticket in town



## DID YOU KNOW?



Nearly 100 percent of diners who rated their overall experience a **5 out of 5** would recommend the restaurant to others.<sup>7</sup>





## REAPING THE REWARDS

Thinking beyond the menu promises to benefit your restaurant in more ways than one.



### ALLOW GUESTS TO PERSONALIZE EXPERIENCES

- Describe seating options — such as street view, bar or patio seating — during the booking process to help each guest choose their perfect table.
- Allow guests to select a “star ingredient” to help theme and personalize their tasting menu.
- Are guests looking to make a curtain call? Allow them to request extra speedy service in advance.



### FILL SEATS DURING OFF-PEAK HOURS

- Drive demand in off-peak hours by offering complimentary champagne or dessert during shoulder times.
- Feature unique events at specific times, such as an opportunity to meet the chef “available only at 5pm.”
- Use off-peak hours to showcase special packages with reduced price points, like ordering a Restaurant Week style menu all year long or adding a kitchen tour to a reservation.







## MORE PROFITS, SAME SEATS

- Enable reservation upgrades during the booking process to help personalize the experience and boost table spend, such as a wine tasting or prix fixe menu.
- Special menus and experiences provide a meaningful reason to ask guests to prepay — and locks in revenue in advance. Upfront payments show a customer's commitment to the dining experience and keeps the focus on the food during their visit.



## FEEL SECURE IN YOUR REVENUE AND INVENTORY FORECASTING

- Featuring a special meat or ingredient on your menu? Allow guests to pre-purchase select menu items or packaged experiences. Doing so provides insight into how much of those ingredients you will need and can help cut down on over-ordering or food waste.
- Set cut off times for pre-purchasing experiences to ensure a sufficient amount of inventory is available.
- Use this strategy to think creatively about trying new experiences that would otherwise be too costly or risky to simply offer to guests the night-of.





# GUEST EXPERIENCES IN ACTION

*Derby*



A I F I O R I



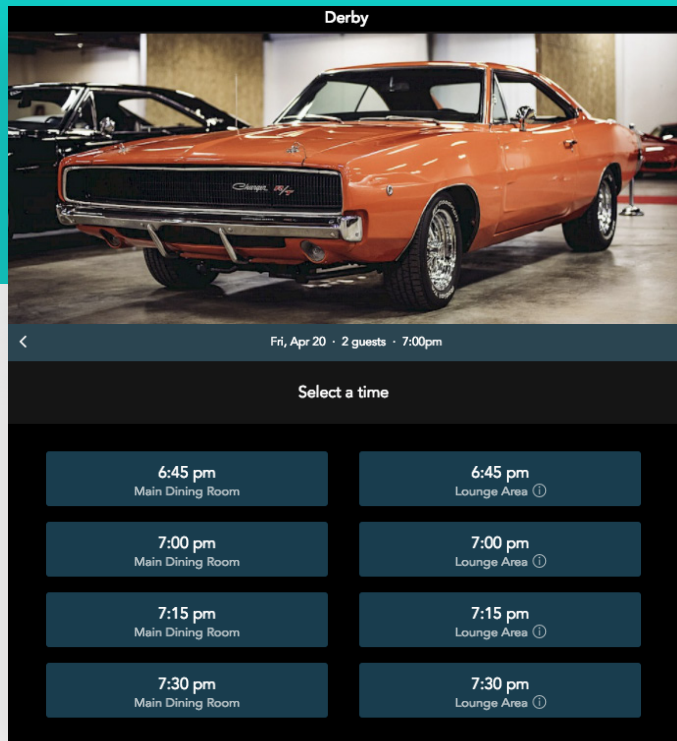
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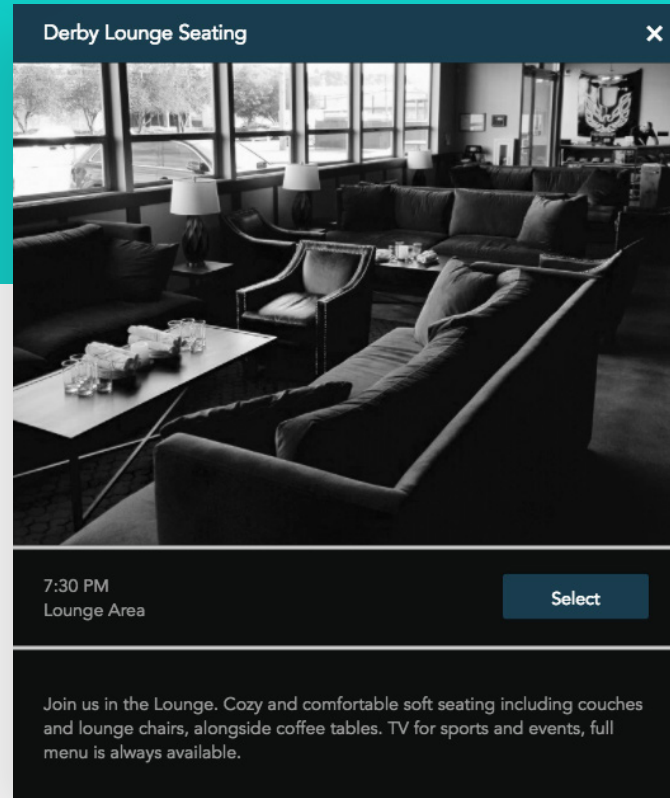
Operating 14 properties across Seattle, Ethan Stowell Restaurants is one of the most innovative restaurant groups on the West Coast. Their commitment to evolving and perfecting the guest experience continues to set them apart.

At Derby, guests have the choice of sitting at a more formal Dining Room table or a Lounge table — and in both scenarios, enough information is provided to ensure guests can select the perfect table for their reservation.

1



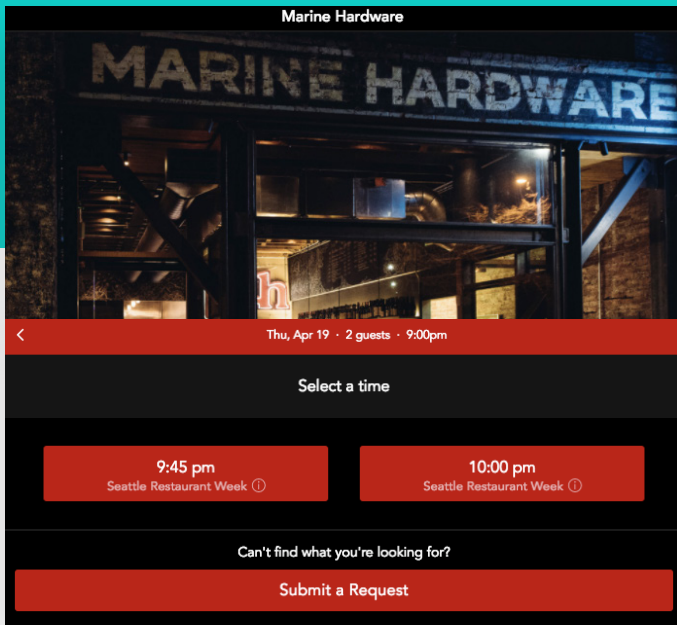
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At Marine Hardware, a smaller restaurant with a vibrant bar scene, they leverage the bar area to attract Restaurant Week diners with a special menu, which is only available at the bar.

1



2



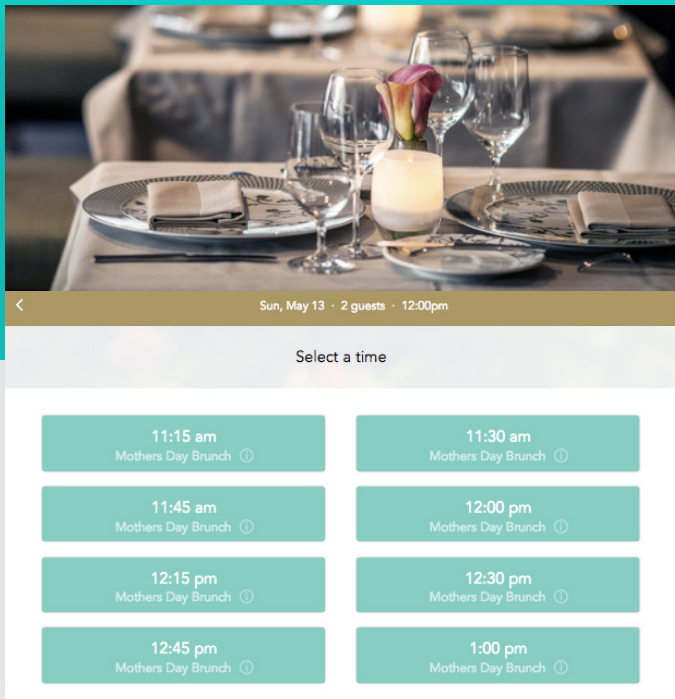


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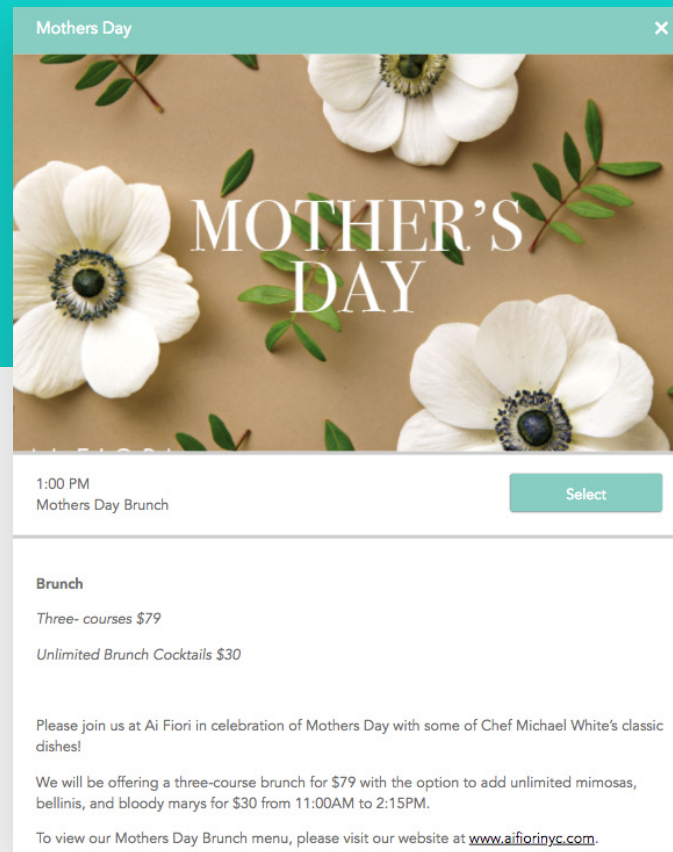
# A I F I O R I

In New York, Ai Fiori, one of the flagship properties from the Altamarea Group, takes full advantage of their high demand during holidays by crafting special packages for occasions like Mother's Day.

1



2



## TIP 2

# LEVERAGE THE POWER OF UPGRADES

### THE UPGRADE FACTOR

The airline and hotel industries have been profiting from the concept of upgrades and customizations for decades. Now, it's the restaurant industry's turn.

The number of businesses presenting consumers with curated and customized offerings is skyrocketing and consumers now expect things to be tailored just for them. Dining out is no exception. Use this trend to your advantage by giving your guests the power to personalize their experience with relevant upgrades. Custom offers — such as an added wine pairing — can make for a memorable dining experience, while also bumping up your bottom line.

Get creative with what works with for your restaurant. The goal is for guests to feel the offerings are special, custom and memorable.

Raise the bar on customer satisfaction by dishing out upgrade options that don't always come at a cost. Something as simple as choosing between a meat or veggie tasting menu can add the pinch of personalization that customers crave. Now they've really made the experience their own and it didn't cost you (or them) a penny.

### Get creative with what works with for your restaurant.



Kitchen tours



Wine pairings



Dessert bar



Tableside preparation of cocktails and other menu items



Truffle shavings added to entrees



Floral and/or candle arrangements for tables



Signed cookbooks



## 3 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE ROLLING OUT AN UPGRADE

01

### WHAT UPGRADES WILL BENEFIT MY CUSTOMERS?

Guest preferences often make or break new upgrades. Review your own data for inspiration. Analyzing purchase and visit history, along with guest preferences, can help you pinpoint which upgrades customers are more likely to choose. Almost 50 percent of customers have made a purchase they did not intend to, due to a personalized recommendation.<sup>9</sup> If you're still unsure which type of upgrade might be a good fit for your

guests — or you just want a little reassurance — ask friends and family of the restaurant for their ideas.

Remember that the upgrades you offer must be compelling and valuable enough that guests are willing to spend a little more to take their experience to the next level or memorable enough that the guests can't help but share.





## 02 IS THE FRONT-OF-HOUSE SET UP FOR SUCCESS?

Before putting an upgrade into practice, review your internal operations to ensure you have the right technology (or manual processes) in place to make sure your ideas become a reality. Next, discuss the logistics with your restaurant staff. Determining who will be responsible for each upgrade can help minimize confusion as business starts to heat up. Plus, when your staff is onboard with the services being offered to guests, they will feel more ownership in making it the best experience they can.

## 03 HOW CAN I GET THE WORD OUT?

Make customers well aware of any new upgrades or offers in your restaurant by spreading the word wherever possible. Target customers early and often through various channels, such as social media, email marketing and even promo cards in the check holder. But most importantly, the option to add upgrades to a reservation needs to be presented as a seamless offering during the reservation process both online and over the phone.



## TIP 3

# LEVERAGE THE POWER OF PERKS

## A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA

Delighting guests with unexpected treats is one of the oldest strategies in hospitality. A little something special can help establish goodwill with customers, but these perks also open the door for additional revenue:



**Complimentary beer and wine tastings for waiting customers** often lead to purchases of those items later on.



**Handing out samples of upcoming menu items while guests wait** for their table may motivate them to return when the offerings officially debut.



**Walking around the dining room with samples of sweet treats** could be all the encouragement guests need to make a little extra room for dessert.



Today, this perks strategy has come full circle and can now be surfaced in your reservation system to help incentivize guests to book hard-to-fill slots, like shoulder times and weekdays.

Consider presenting guests with perks during the booking flow. A complimentary appetizer or glass of champagne before 6 p.m. or after 10 p.m. can go a long way toward getting the most out of your space. Enticing guests to come earlier can help keep staff busy and open up a few extra seats during prime time to accommodate walk-ins and large parties.

When considering if it makes financial sense to offer a free perk, don't forget to evaluate what you already spend to drive traffic to off-peaks times through other channels, including paying premium fees to per cover booking services. It may be cheaper to create your own offerings, which can encourage guests to book direct and seek out your website first for the best offers.





# GETTING STARTED

## IT'S TIME TO CASH IN ON THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

Adding more tables isn't the only way to trigger a significant spike in revenue. Today's diners crave personalization and experiences — they're looking for more than the same menu concept being offered day in and day out.

With a little creativity, these trends offer your restaurant an opportunity to maximize profitability by generating more revenue from your existing reservation inventory and turning more first time diners into loyal customers.

But before brainstorming exciting experiences of your own, it's important to think about how you'll market and execute these offerings. After all, smooth and seamless operation can only be achieved by using the right tools for the job.

That's where a technology partner can make all the difference. By providing deeper guest insights and enabling you to scale up and execute a wide range of experiences, a technology provider can help set the stage for operational success.



## READY TO CASH IN ON THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY?

SevenRooms empowers operators to create and cultivate the direct relationships with guests, that make exceptional guest experiences possible everyday. The company's reservation, seating and guest management solutions boost revenue and enable more personalized service and marketing.

Learn more at [sevenrooms.com](https://sevenrooms.com), or contact us at [sales@sevenrooms.com](mailto:sales@sevenrooms.com).

