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Excuses, Excuses ... Or Just Big Mistakes

I recently was reading one of the daily restaurant foodservice newsletters that I receive, which show up along with those committed to convenience stores, petroleum, supermarkets and other retail industry sectors. In all of them, some appropriate words of wisdom and insight often float by.

On this specific morning, the snippet I noticed was titled “8 Mistakes Restaurants Make.” When reading through the highlighted “mistakes,” I realized they could apply to each sector within this industry with just a little manipulation of words and application.

Speak the Truth

I also realized the “reality of eight” is not necessarily the relevant number. All of us experience many moments when we witness some universal mistakes being made, and we find ourselves trying to decide how to deal with the best methods of correcting the mistakes. Some of the mistakes in the newsletter combined with some others might prove enlightening for all of us. So here are some of the best:

“We can’t take this off the menu; it’s a best seller.” However, when you really begin to analyze the true significance of the item or product category, it becomes apparent that such a statement does not necessarily represent profitability. Relinquishing what is old and traditionally associated with that location might be exactly what’s needed to create space for new and more rewarding options.

“The kitchen can’t handle it.” Change the wording a little and I bet this is familiar to many of us. How about, “If we add a fresh grab-and-go offering, our store associates can’t deal with the added responsibility of ensuring quality delivery.” It’s the avoidance without even the consideration.

“It won’t sell in our community.” This is often said without the person realizing the

product is being offered successfully by a direct competitor, without asking customers if they would embrace such an addition—and/or without seeing the relevance of making such a product category available to customers.

“We will lose our customer base.” Such thinking limits a store to whom it can serve and how our customers are indeed served. Maybe a segment of the existing customer base should be restricted in some ways to allow an expansion of potential customers to be attracted to the store.

“We can’t afford a remodel/upgrade.” I must add here that many times you cannot afford *not* to. There are many reasons for that statement, but one of the most pressing is simple: Ninety-eight percent of all competition is self-created.

And the List Goes On

“Suppliers don’t carry the products needed to offer different categories.” This always remains a prime reason that we should remain open to and accepting of alternative sources of products, services and ideas that exist outside of the routine and sublimely satisfying—even though such routine consistently costs in terms of yet another lost opportunity. Suppliers can almost always be found; you just might have to consider alternative possibilities.

“There’s too much happening right now; changes will just add more work and demand

Reality does always set in, and when it does, it can be very ugly.

more of management and employees.” Ever hear the phrase “cutting off your nose to spite your face”? Success comes from accepting challenge, adjusting to changing circumstances and environments and creating a strategy that leads to fulfillment of goals. It is the attitude that is at risk, not the ability to find and experience success.

“I didn’t need you to tell me to change. I need you to improve my profits without making any changes.” This aptly identifies one of those “Hello?!” moments. It reflects a person not being able (or willing) to recognize the need to modify, change, adjust, etc.,

how we might go to market, and identifying the potential level of success. This is indicative of not being willing (or able) to feed the golden goose and only wanting to harvest the eggs.

Reality does always set in, and when it does, it can be very ugly.

“Success attained is never an opportunity lost.” When we are blessed with moments of clarity, we must immediately respond to them in a way that honors both our business associates and our customers. It is through recognition of the potential represented by the spontaneity of opportunity that we nourish and realize so much true, long-term success.

“Does this existing facility have greater potential within its reach?” Take the necessary steps to identify where true potential growth exists within current operational assets. Determine where targeted capital investments can be best used; analyze the potential value of success and return for our stores in tomorrow’s marketplace.

The realization of what is conceivable in tomorrow’s universe is something we can easily envision today. We simply have to know what tools and information available out there can help us identify and evaluate where the future lies.

Ninety-eight percent of all competition is SELF-CREATED.