

## 5 essential strategies for guest WiFi in restaurants

### Overview

Guest WiFi, usually offered free, has become an expected customer amenity in restaurants ranging from coffee houses to haute cuisine. Whatever the menu, Cloud4Wi is an expert in restaurant WiFi and offers these tips for a successful program.

#### 1. Educate staff for an excellent guest experience

Successful guest WiFi does not start with technology; it starts with training staff to give customers the same excellent experience with WiFi they receive throughout your restaurant.

A focus on training will seem obvious to restaurateurs already focused on customer delight. The staff may not understand how serving excellent WiFi services can be as important as a proper serving temperature for food and beverages.

- Explain and demonstrate to customers how to access the WiFi network, including account creation and login requirements. Spend time with staff creating demonstration accounts until everyone is clear how to assist customers get online at your restaurant.
- Make this training a standard part of new hire onboarding and ongoing education for all staff.
- Explain security features and reassure customers. Never promise privacy you cannot deliver.

#### 2. Promote your guest WiFi

Many restaurants now offer free guest WiFi. They promote the service in many ways, so look for these promotions as you visit competitors and other businesses.

Make sure your network ID is easy to associate with your restaurant and will not scare or confuse customers. “Network Destroyer” is a funny name for a home network, but “BistroDavid” tells customers where to find your guest WiFi. Pick the most obvious (and shortest) name that makes sense.

Use in-store promotions – especially at the main entrance – so customers know guest WiFi is available. Display your network name on signage, window clings, table tents, menus, etc. But don’t overdo it.

Promote your privacy policy too. The privacy policy should clearly state how customer information will be used.

A reassuring “we will not loan, rent, or sell customer information to anyone” can do wonders, but you must follow it scrupulously. Offer privacy options at initial sign-up, so customers have a choice. But do not dwell on them, as too much attention can seem creepy.

### 3. Engage with your customers

Your guest WiFi can gather customer information, either directly or by silently watching the behavior of guests individually or as a group.

Gather as much information as possible when the customer signs up for free WiFi access and, ideally, your guest loyalty program.

Getting guests to volunteer their personal information is an excellent goal. Capturing their email address and telephone number might be possible for a loyalty program that offers free meals on birthdays and other occasions. Make sure you have customer permission to use the information they supply to contact them.

Offering free WiFi without a sign-up requirement is a recommended best practice for customer happiness. Our experience is that loyal customers will eventually provide their information because they want to receive your emails and messages.

Guest WiFi can tell you how many potential customers walked past your location, how many came inside, how many used your free network without logging in, and how many actually logged in. Analytic information about customer habits can drive both promotions and business strategies. For example, staffing and promotions can be tailored to save money on unneeded staff and bring customers in during historically slack hours and slow days.

### 4. Learn about your customers

Your branded guest WiFi welcome portal should offer ways for customers to interact with your restaurant. You can run online versions of loyalty programs, publish your latest menu, present personalized guest content (such as specials) and promote upcoming events.

One good idea is to send a short message such as an email or SMS, after the guest departs or the next day offering thanks, maybe a promotional offer, and perhaps a survey or request for comments. You can also spread your brand's presence on social media networks, by encouraging customers to "like" your Facebook page and timeline posts, or to "follow" your LinkedIn page.

It is of utmost importance to keep any content including stories, promotions, etc, fresh. Don't let outdated content linger online, making your business seem lazy and even uncaring. If you are not willing to maintain new content, just collect login information and email addresses to use later.

### 5. Keep them coming back

Your guest WiFi is more than a customer amenity. It is a powerful business tool that keeps customers engaged and returning. Regular email newsletters and text messages are reminders that your restaurant is unique and wants the recipients' business. Personalized messages create a cordial relationship with customers and bring them back for more of your excellent food and service. Which, in this case, started with free WiFi.

