



CHICK N MAX WANTS TO RULE THE 'BETTER CHICKEN SANDWICH' SEGMENT



HOW THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST RESTAURANT FRANCHISEE MADE THE DEAL OF A LIFETIME



WHERE DOES THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY GO FROM HERE?

6 Ways to Deliver an Innovative Off-Premises Experience

Families are a good place to start.

OUTSIDE INSIGHTS | MARCH 26, 2021 | JENNIFER LOPER



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There's a huge opportunity to stand out by giving customers of all ages an enhanced experience.

There's no question that off-premises dining has become an **essential part** of people's lives. During the pandemic, it was a necessity. After the pandemic, it will live on as the ultimate convenience option, especially for busy families.

But let's be honest—for most casual dining brands, the off-premises dining experience just doesn't live up to in-restaurant dining. (And how could it?) When your guests dine in, you have the ability to orchestrate exactly how they experience your brand through your ambiance, service, food quality, décor, personality—and so much more! It only makes sense that when your customers dine off-premises, much of what makes your restaurant brand so memorable gets lost on the way home.

That's why it's time to think innovatively about how you're going to keep your brand character—even off-premises.

One great place to focus your innovations? Families. Families with young children drive 81% higher-than-average checks and account for 28 percent of restaurant traffic. That number gets even bigger when you include families with older kids and multi-generational families, as well as households comprising couples, roommates and/or friends. Giving all kinds of families a fun, memorable experience is just good business! And parents think so, too: The majority told us they'd be more likely to order from restaurants that offer family entertainment in the to-go bag.

There's a huge opportunity for your brand to stand out by giving your customers of all ages an enhanced off-premises dining experience.

Here are six ways to do just that:

1. Bring everyone together with a fun activity.

One of the things that parents miss most about going out to eat is special family time. Send a little bit of quality time home with families by including a fun, branded, all-ages activity in the to-go bag and turn a to-go dining experience into a chance to bond. Games, trivia, conversation cards, movie night tie-ins—the possibilities are endless!

2. Get more impact out of your takeout packaging.

The to-go bag can be a meaningful touchpoint for your guests. Lose the plain plastic bag and elevate your brand with custom, printed paper to-go bags that include clever branding, thoughtful content and attractive design. You can even print multiple versions to keep content fresh for repeat customers! Or, take it one step further—take advantage of the real estate on to-go bags to include entertainment, activities or conversation starters. You're sending something home with customers no matter what; why not use it as another channel to express your brands' personality and voice?

3. Use brand treasures to make staying in feel more like going out.

What's special about your brand's in-restaurant experience? The wall art, the playlist, the hustle and bustle of a full, happy dining room? Or maybe the unlimited refills, or the visible expressions of your brand values? Don't be afraid to explore tangible or digital ways to send your brand treasures home to give your guests a little taste of that in-restaurant experience, no matter where they are. From pop-up centerpieces and branded souvenir cups to a streaming soundscape of your restaurant's dining room, there are lots of unexpected and surprising ways to bring your brand to life in your guests' homes.

4. Win over the kids with something just for them.

Put kids center stage by including something special for them in the to-go bag. Include a kids' activity with each kids' meal, or make the kids' meal stand out with unique, entertaining packaging—every extension supports your brand. Parents tell us that including a kids' activity in takeout or delivery orders gets their kids more excited about ordering food from that restaurant in the future. (For more details on this, see one of [our previous insights articles](#) on including kids in your off-premises strategy.) And since over 90% of parents are influenced by their kids when choosing a restaurant, it can't hurt to give them one more reason to choose yours!

5. Let your brand's "Family Night" go anywhere.

If your brand has a weekly or monthly family night, find a way to make it work no matter where your guests are by throwing something special in the to-go bag for kids and families. Whether it's special deals, toys and activities or something else entirely, there's no reason to let something you're already known for fall through the cracks just because some guests are dining at home instead of in-restaurant.

6. Keep them coming back with loyalty incentives.

Explore loyalty with a twist! Give a great big thank-you to your guests by giving them bounce-back discounts with something more exciting than a simple coupon, e.g., an activity, a game or a rare "golden ticket" in a set of collectible cards or tokens. There are lots of unique tactics you can use to build loyalty and make your guests feel like winners.

At the end of the day, we know that off-premises dining is never going to be exactly like dining in a restaurant—nor should it be! They're two different experiences. That's why we at C3 believe there's an opportunity for every restaurant brand to make off-premises dining an awesome experience *all on its own*—with the same ultimate goal: increasing your guests' satisfaction and return orders.

C3 is a Kansas City-based marketing and brand activation agency that brings brands to life for families with children through experience, entertainment and more. C3 uses strategy, guidance and award-winning design to create programs and products that get results for major restaurant and hospitality partners in the US and abroad. More information about C3 and their kid and family expertise can be found at www.c3brandmarketing.com.

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