

Marketing for Restaurants — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into a running marketing operation for your own restaurant. You will optimise your Google Business Profile field by field, stand up a review-generation and reply system, plan and shoot a month of food content, build email and SMS lists you control, run a local creator collaboration, and tie it all to a one-page monthly calendar measured against covers. Work through one section per course module, then use the action plan and the editable templates to keep your tables full and your reviews climbing.

Get Found Locally: Google Business Profile and the Map Pack

Claim and fully optimise the local listing that decides who appears in the Map Pack and walks through your door.

Exercise: Audit your restaurant the way a hungry stranger would

Open an incognito browser on your phone and search the three or four terms a new diner would actually use to find a place like yours tonight. Record exactly what you see, do not assume, write down the real result. The point is to see your listing as a stranger does.

- Which near me and cuisine-plus-neighbourhood searches did you test, and did your restaurant appear in the top three Map Pack results for each?

- When you tapped your listing, were the hours, menu link, ordering or reservation link, and category all correct and complete?

- How many photos are on the profile, are they appetising and yours, and is there any auto-pulled image that misrepresents the place?

- What is your current review count and average rating versus the two restaurants ranking above you, and what does that gap tell you to fix first?

Worksheet: Google Business Profile optimisation record

Record the current and corrected state of every ranking-relevant field so you can see exactly what you changed and what remains. Fill each cell with your real values; leave the completeness score for you to total after you finish.

Listing claimed and verified (yes / no / in progress) and verification method used

Primary category (specific cuisine or format, not generic Restaurant)

Secondary categories that genuinely apply

Regular hours plus special and holiday hours entered (yes / no)

Menu link, online-ordering link and reservation link added (yes / no each)

Number of real photos uploaded (food / interior / exterior / team)

Attributes set (outdoor seating, reservations, dietary options, accessibility, alcohol)

Business description written with searched terms, no stuffing (yes / no)

Profile completeness score out of 10 (you total after completing the fields)

Checklist: Map Pack readiness check

- Listing is claimed and verified so you fully control it, with no duplicate listings live
- Primary category names your cuisine or format specifically
- Hours are accurate, including holidays, so you never show open when closed
- At least 10 to 20 of your own appetising photos are uploaded
- Menu, ordering and reservation links are present and working
- A Google Post has gone out in the last two weeks
- Common questions are seeded and answered in the Q&A section
- Insights have been checked for the search terms diners actually use

Reviews and Reputation: Yelp, TripAdvisor and Replies That Convert

Build an ethical system that generates a steady flow of reviews and reply to them in a way that wins the next reader.

Exercise: Design your one-tap review ask

Build the simplest possible path from a happy guest to a posted review, then write the exact words your team will use. Keep it specific to your restaurant and compliant with each platform's rules. Do not skip the wording, vague training produces no reviews.

- Which one or two platforms matter most for your restaurant given your guests and market, and why those?
- What is the exact, warm sentence a server will say to a happy table right after a great meal?
- Where will the Google review QR code and short link physically appear (check presenter, receipt, table tent, follow-up text)?
- How will you stay compliant, for example not directly soliciting on Yelp and never offering any incentive for a review?

Worksheet: Review reply builder

Draft reusable reply skeletons for the situations you will face most, so any manager can respond well and fast. Fill each field with your own brand-voice wording; these are starting templates, not scripts to send verbatim.

Five-star reply skeleton (thank by name, name the dish, invite them back)

Three-star or mixed reply skeleton (thank, acknowledge, note the positive, invite to improve)

One or two-star reply skeleton (thank, acknowledge the specific issue, apologise, state the fix, take it offline)

The named contact and email or phone you will offer to move complaints offline

Your target maximum time to reply to any review (in hours or days)

Criteria for flagging a review for removal (fake, competitor, hate speech, wrong business)

Checklist: Reputation system live check

- Every server knows the exact review ask and when to use it
- A direct Google review QR code and short link are on checks, tables and follow-up messages
- Yelp is handled with a visible cling rather than a direct solicitation, per their policy
- No discount, free item or incentive is ever offered in exchange for a review
- All reviews, positive and negative, get a reply within your target time
- Negative replies follow thank, acknowledge, apologise, fix, take offline, and never argue
- Rule-breaking reviews are flagged through the platform rather than fought in public

Visual Social: Instagram and TikTok Built Around Craveable Food

Plan content pillars, batch-shoot a month of craveable food content, and use the formats that reach new local diners.

Exercise: Plan and run one batch shooting session

Schedule a single shooting block and plan exactly what you will capture so one afternoon feeds two weeks of posts. Use the light and angle rules from the course. Actually book the session before you finish this exercise.

- When is your recurring shooting block, and who is responsible for shooting and for posting?

- Which specific dishes and behind-the-scenes moments will you capture, and what angle and light suits each?

- Which content pillars will the month rotate through (food, behind the scenes, people, promotions, community)?

- Which scheduling tool will you use (Later, Planoly, Meta Business Suite) and how many posts per week will you queue?

Worksheet: Instagram and TikTok profile conversion setup

Record the profile settings that turn followers and viewers into diners. Fill each field with your actual setup so nothing that drives reservations is left switched off.

Account type set to business or creator (yes / no) for insights and action buttons

Bio line stating cuisine, neighbourhood and a hook

Profile link destination (reservations, menu, or a Linktree of several)

Location and food action buttons enabled (Reserve / Order)

Three best posts pinned to the top of the grid (yes / no)

Standard local hashtag set (city plus cuisine plus signature dishes)

Default caption call to action used on posts (e.g. book this weekend, link in bio)

Checklist: Craveable content check before posting

- Shot in soft natural light, no flash, no yellow overhead lighting
- Flat dishes shot overhead, tall dishes shot from a low 45-degree angle
- Action captured, the pour, cheese pull, first cut or rising steam
- Plate styled, rim wiped, garnish added, background simplified
- Reels and TikToks hook in the first second and use a trending sound
- Location tag and local hashtags added so nearby diners find it
- A clear, low-friction call to action is in the caption or video

Owned Channels and Partnerships: Email, SMS and Local Creators

Grow email and SMS lists you own, run a tracked creator collaboration, and tie every channel to a measured monthly calendar.

Exercise: Stand up your list capture and a slow-night promotion

Decide the incentive, the capture points and the tool, then design one promotion aimed at a real slow night. Keep SMS compliant with express opt-in and opt-out. Make the promotion specific enough to schedule, not a vague idea.

- What incentive will you offer to join the list (free dish next visit, birthday reward, VIP event access)?

- Where exactly will guests sign up (table QR, host stand, website, online ordering, reservation flow)?

- Which email and SMS tool will you use (Mailchimp, Klaviyo, or your POS loyalty feature) and how will you stay compliant?

- What is your first slow-night promotion, which channel sends it, and how will you measure redemptions?

Worksheet: Local creator collaboration brief

Plan one creator partnership end to end so it is trackable and on-brand. Fill each field for a specific shortlisted creator; leave any result fields blank until after the post goes live.

Creator name, handle, follower count and rough local engagement rate

Why this creator fits (local audience, style match, real engagement)

Deal type and cost (comped experience or set fee) and budget

Signature dishes to feature and the one or two key messages

Required tags, location and disclosure hashtags (ad / sponsored)

Tracking method (unique code, dedicated link, or how-did-you-hear ask)

Result after the post: tracked covers, redemptions and tagged traffic (fill in later)

Worksheet: Monthly marketing cadence plan

Turn the course's rhythm into a one-page plan with named owners. Fill the owner and timing for each cadence; leave any count or result columns for you to complete as the month runs.

Weekly Google Post owner and day

Weekly review-request and reply owner

Weekly social posting owner and target number of posts (you fill the actual count)

Monthly email and SMS owner and planned send dates

Monthly creator-collaboration owner and target

Quarterly metrics-review owner and date

Upcoming local events, holidays and slow stretches to plan around

Checklist: Owned channels and measurement check

- A clear incentive and one-field sign-up exist at every guest touchpoint
- SMS uses express opt-in and a clear opt-out, and email has a working unsubscribe
- Email is sent monthly to a few times a month; SMS is reserved for truly time-sensitive offers
- At least one creator collaboration is briefed, disclosed and trackable
- A simple monthly tracker records covers, reviews, rating and list size
- Every recurring marketing task has a named owner
- Channels that demonstrably drive covers are doubled down on; the rest are dropped

Your Action Plan

1. Claim and verify your Google Business Profile, then set a specific primary category and remove any duplicate listings.
2. Complete the profile fully: hours and holiday hours, menu, ordering and reservation links, attributes, description, and 10 to 20 of your own photos.
3. Publish your first Google Post and seed and answer the common questions in the Q&A section.
4. Build the one-tap review ask: a Google review QR and short link on checks and tables, with a trained server script, and choose your top one or two platforms.
5. Write and store your five-star, mixed and negative reply skeletons, and reply to every existing review within your target time.
6. Book a recurring batch shooting session, plan your content pillars, and queue two weeks of feed and Reels or TikTok posts in a scheduler.
7. Set up your social profiles to convert: business account, a clear bio, a reservations or menu link, action buttons and pinned best posts.
8. Choose a list incentive and tool, place sign-ups at every touchpoint, and capture guests through your POS, ordering and reservation flows compliantly.
9. Brief and run one trackable local creator collaboration with a unique code or link and clear disclosure.
10. Stand up a one-page monthly calendar with named owners and a simple tracker for covers, reviews, rating and list growth, and review it quarterly.

