

Why Every Restaurant Should Hire a Consultant — And How Consultants Actually Help

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Running a successful restaurant today requires far more than great food and a friendly smile. It's an industry built on tight margins, unpredictable labor, rising distribution costs, shifting consumer expectations, and an ever-changing landscape of technology and regulations. In this environment, even seasoned operators can benefit from an outside expert who brings clarity, structure, and proven systems. That's exactly where a restaurant consultant provides tremendous value.

Whether a business is a family-owned neighborhood café, a multi-unit franchise, a hotel outlet, or a startup food truck, a consultant offers the perspective, experience, and operational discipline that most operators simply don't have time to develop on their own.

Here's why every restaurant should strongly consider hiring a consultant—and the measurable ways consultants drive performance and profitability.

1. Consultants See What Owners Can't

Operators live inside their restaurants every day. They know their teams, regular customers, and daily pain points, but this familiarity often creates *blind spots*. A consultant approaches the business with fresh eyes—evaluating flow, menu mix, staffing, inventory, cost structure, guest experience, and operational habits objectively and without emotional bias.

This unbiased perspective can identify:

- Operational inefficiencies
- Point-of-sale loopholes and theft exposure
- Waste, over-portioning, and controllable cost problems
- Issues with guest flow, speed of service, or menu layout
- Training gaps and management weaknesses

A good consultant tells you not what you *want* to hear, but what you *need* to hear.

2. Consultants Bring Industry-Proven Systems

Most restaurants don't fail because of bad food—they fail because of bad systems. Successful concepts run on tight, repeatable processes across:

- Food & labor cost control
- Inventory management
- Recipe standardization
- Scheduling
- Vendor negotiation
- Kitchen workflow
- Sanitation, safety, and compliance

Consultants bring established systems developed across hundreds of operations. These systems create consistency, reduce waste, and improve profitability almost immediately.

3. Consultants Optimize Menus for Profit, Not Preference

Menu engineering is one of the fastest ways to improve margins, yet most restaurants base their menus on emotion, personal taste, or legacy items.

A consultant analyzes:

- Contribution margin
- Plate cost accuracy
- Velocity
- Popularity vs. profitability
- Design layout and psychology

The result is a menu that performs like a business tool—not just a list of dishes.

4. Consultants Improve Guest Experience and Reputation

From service choreography to table-turn efficiency to online reviews, customer experience is everything.

Consultants can:

- Train front-of-house teams
- Develop hospitality standards

- Improve service timing
- Rework seating flow and reservation strategies
- Resolve negative review patterns
- Build systems to improve consistency

Better service = higher checks, better reviews, and return customers.

5. Consultants Fix Labor and Training Problems

Labor is the most volatile part of the business. A consultant helps stabilize it.

They provide:

- Training manuals (often neglected or outdated)
- Standard operating procedures
- Clear systems for hiring, onboarding, and evaluations
- Scheduling efficiency
- Cross-training structures
- Manager development

Better training reduces turnover, lowers costs, and improves morale.

6. Consultants Understand Market Positioning and Branding

Your restaurant isn't just selling food—it's selling a story.

Consultants assist with:

- Branding alignment
- Digital strategy
- Marketing and promotions
- Website optimization
- Social media presence
- Packaging and off-premise strategy
- Local partnerships

In a crowded market, positioning can make or break growth.

7. Consultants Prepare Restaurants for Big Moves

Whether you're planning to expand, franchise, rebrand, renovate, or launch a new location, a consultant ensures it's done strategically—not emotionally.

They help with:

- Site selection
- Concept development
- Forecasting
- Budgeting
- Capital planning
- Vendor sourcing
- Compliance

Consultants reduce costly mistakes and accelerate timelines.

8. Consultants Save Owners Money—Often More Than They Cost

A seasoned consultant doesn't just charge a fee—they generate ROI.

Owners commonly see:

- Lower food costs
- Reduced labor waste
- Increased revenue
- Improved guest retention
- Better vendor pricing
- Streamlined purchasing
- Stronger cost controls

In many cases, the savings and improvements exceed the consulting fee within months.

The Bottom Line

Hiring a restaurant consultant isn't an admission of failure—it's a strategic investment in expertise, structure, and profitability. Restaurants operate in one of the most competitive environments in business. Those who succeed do so because they surround themselves with the right experts.

A consultant gives owners:

- Clarity
- Control
- Systems
- Accountability
- Professional insight
- A path to long-term success

The restaurant business is hard. You don't have to do it alone.