

Foodservice Marketing Still Crucial

By Marilyn Odesser-Torpey, Associate Editor

Rolling out a foodservice program can require a lot of time, effort and, in many cases, expense. But the buck doesn't stop there. Retailers have to be willing to commit their resources to getting the public to equate their brand with quality.

INCREASING INCENTIVES

New York-based foodservice restaurant, retail and hospitality consultant Arlene Spiegel agrees that coupons (“either old-fashioned printed ones or online through an app”) can be effective incentives.

She added that when distributing coupons in-store, their value as a marketing tool can be increased when coupled with food sampling at the point of sale.

An easy way for stores to reach all customers with their foodservice message is to put a menu and ordering information in every bag, regardless of what is being purchased, Spiegel said. And weekly circulars that promote packaged goods should also feature foodservice specials.

FINDING WHAT WORKS

For c-store retailers that don't have the budget for in-store television or ordering kiosks, food suppliers can often provide high quality product photos for displaying on indoor and outdoor signage, circulars



and ads, said Spiegel. Photos can also be used to define the space for foodservice and draw customers to it.

Social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, also provide dynamic, yet inexpensive platforms for, according to Spiegel, “keeping the brand on the customers’ radar and insuring that you are reaching critical demographics.”

Loyalty programs can allow operators to know what customers really want and make personalized offers to them, Spiegel said. Rutter’s Reward Card holders, for example, can earn cents off per gallon of gas with in-store purchases.

C-stores with apps can use them to offer coupons, other special promotions and reminders to customers about the availability of foodservice, particularly at traditional mealtimes, Spiegel noted.

“The best time for dinner alerts is from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. when customers are thinking about ‘What’s for dinner,’” said Spiegel. ■